

**PROGRAM OVERVIEW:** Neighborhood Association Leaders often lack access to funds, tools, mentoring and resources it would take to start, grow, and accelerate progress in their neighborhoods.

The FORT-ify Neighborhood Accelerator was designed by the City of Fort Wayne’s Neighborhood Planning & Activation Workgroup (NPAW) for neighborhood leaders who want to take their efforts to the next level by 1) building their knowledge and skillsets in key areas, 2) obtaining access to mentoring and support from City staff, and 3) working alongside other neighborhood associations. Accelerator participants will take part in monthly in-person workshops, work with city staff to develop a Quick Action Plan (QAP), and complete hands-on activities between workshop sessions to put what they’re learning into practice in their neighborhoods.

The key areas include:

- Community Listening & Asset Based Approaches
- Governance and Succession
- Civic Engagement
- Fundraising & Grant Writing

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:** 11:59 pm, Friday, March 3<sup>rd</sup>

Applications can be submitted by using the online form or by completing the PDF application form and emailing it to [rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org). Both the online and PDF forms can be found on our website at [www.fortwayneneighborhoods.org](http://www.fortwayneneighborhoods.org).

**ELIGIBILITY:** Fort-ify is open to voluntary resident-led Neighborhood Associations registered on the City of Fort Wayne’s Neighborhood Association Page.

**PROGRAM STRUCTURE & TIMELINE:** Fortify is organized into workshops, hands-on learning activities and coaching sessions. Workshops will last 3-4 hours and take place once a month in April, May, June, and July. Coaching sessions/ hands on activities will take place in between workshops each month.

- **February**– Applications Open
- **March**
  - Applications Close – March 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Participants are notified- March 17<sup>th</sup>
- **April- August**– Workshops and Activities are held
- **August** – Associations Host Block Parties
- **September** – Graduation/ Celebration

**WHAT IS A NEIGHBORHOOD ACCELERATOR?** Like all accelerators, FORT-ify supports growth-driven, organizations through **education, mentorship** and **financing**, but unlike most accelerators FORT-ify is designed to provide the accelerator experience for Neighborhood Associations and their leaders. Neighborhoods will participate in the accelerator for a fixed period of time, and as a cohort of neighborhood associations. The accelerator experience is a process of intense, rapid, immersive, and experiential education aimed at accelerating the progress of neighborhood associations – compressing years’ worth of learning into just a few months.

### **HOW WILL MY NEIGHBORHOOD BENEFIT FROM PARTICIPATING IN THIS PROGRAM?**

Each Neighborhood Association enrolled from the 2023 Forti-ify cohort will...

- Obtain printed and digital copies of the Quick Action Plan they create with City staff
- Obtain a new association logo
- Be funded to host an end of program block party/ community engagement session for their neighborhood in August
- Be eligible for \$5,500 in funding to implement a project from their QAP
- Have access to 1:1 coaching with city staff for 12 months
- Have the opportunity to build relationships with other local neighborhood associations

### **WHAT ARE THE PROGRAM COSTS & REQUIREMENTS?**

- **FEES:** None! FORT-ify is offered free of charge to registered neighborhood associations located within the City of Fort Wayne.
- **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS:** Applicants must submit an online or type-written application by 11:59 pm EST, March 3<sup>rd</sup>
  - Online applications can be submitted in the following location:  
<https://form.jotform.com/230306741770148>
  - Application questions can be previewed by downloading the application PDF.
  - Completed PDF applications can be emailed to [rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org).
- **NEIGHBORHOOD REPRESENTATIVE LIST:** One component of the application includes listing 2-3 residents/stakeholders who agree to attend Fort-ify workshops. Ideally each representative will attend 100% of the workshops and activities. However, the NPAW staff understands that circumstance may arise that impact attendance. In the event that a representative cannot attend a workshop each association should consider a backup representative who could act as a substitute attendee as necessary.

## WHAT IS EXPECTED OF PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS?

- **ATTENDANCE:** Each association must have at least one (1) representative of their neighborhood present at all learning sessions as well as the end of program block-party. Two (2) or more representatives should be present during activities and coaching sessions.
- **PARTICIPATION:** In addition to attending, each program participant is expected to actively engage during workshops and activities, and with workshop facilitators, coordinators, other participants, volunteers, etc. Fort-ify offers basic tools, information, access to funding, and coaching. It is ultimately the role of each association to gain as much as possible from the program and put those lessons into practice.
- **DELIVERABLES:** In addition to actively engaging, each neighborhood association will be expected to organize and host a block party/ community engagement session in August.

## HOW MANY ASSOCIATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM THIS YEAR?

The 2023 cohort will have a maximum of four (4) neighborhood associations participants (including 8-12 individuals). Neighborhoods must be located within the city limits of the City of Fort Wayne: <https://www.cityoffortwayne.org/resources-neighborhoodsfw/maps-neighborhoodsfw.html>.

Up to three representatives of each association can be part of the neighborhood's application. One of the participants must be the association's acting president or vice-president and at least two participants must be neighborhood residents.

## HOW MANY ASSOCIATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED INTO THE PROGRAM THIS YEAR?

Associations that complete the accelerator and their Quick Action Plan (QAP) will be eligible to apply for \$5,500 in funding to implement a project from their neighborhood's QAP. Details about the application process will be shared with eligible applicants once those requirements have been met.

## WHEN WILL ACCEPTED ASSOCIATIONS BE NOTIFIED?

City staff will notify accepted applicants via email...

- within two (2) business days that their application has been received, and
- by 5:00 pm EST, March 17<sup>th</sup> if they have been accepted into our 2023 cohort.

## WHAT IS A QUICK ACTION PLAN?

Unlike long-range neighborhood plans that take up to 18 months to complete and required approval of various City departments, Quick Action Plans are documents adopted only by the neighborhood association to record their goals and priorities for the next five (5) years.

## HOW WILL MY NEIGHBORHOOD'S APPLICATION BE EVALUATED?

Projects must be reviewed and evaluated by City of Fort Wayne staff members. Using the rubric below, staff members will score each application on a scale of up to fifty (50) points. The City retains sole discretion in determining how proposed projects, programs, and activities meet the program guidelines and criteria.

- **Completeness** – Maximum score of 6 points
- **Relevance** - Maximum score of 7 points
- **Team skills and background**- Maximum score of 7 points
- **Perceived need of assistance** (high or low) - Maximum score of 15 points
- **Potential benefit** from Programming offered/ How aligned interested are with workshop topics - Maximum score of 15 points

## WHAT ARE THE TOPICS AND ACTIVITIES THAT WILL BE COVERED?

Below is a list of Workshops & Activities that will take place each month.

- **April**
  - Workshop: Community Listening/ Asset-Based Community Development
  - Activity: Plan Listening Events
- **May**
  - Workshop: Governance & Succession
  - Activity: Community Listening Activity
- **June**
  - Workshop: Civic Engagement
  - Activity: Update Association Docs & Infrastructure
- **July**
  - Workshop: Fundraising & Grant Writing
  - Activity: Signature Gathering + Promotion (for community engagement event)
- **August**
  - Event: Host Block Party
  - Workshop/ Activity: Brainstorm & Draft grant applications
- **September**
  - Event: Celebration/ Graduation
  - Activity: Celebration Day/ Presidents Meeting Presentation

## WHO SHOULD I CONTACT WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS?

If you have any additional questions about the accelerator or the application process, contact Réna Bradley at [rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org](mailto:rena.bradley@cityoffortwayne.org) or by calling 260-427-2284.