



2026 Livable Communities Grant Programs

Alignment with Imagine 2050



Background

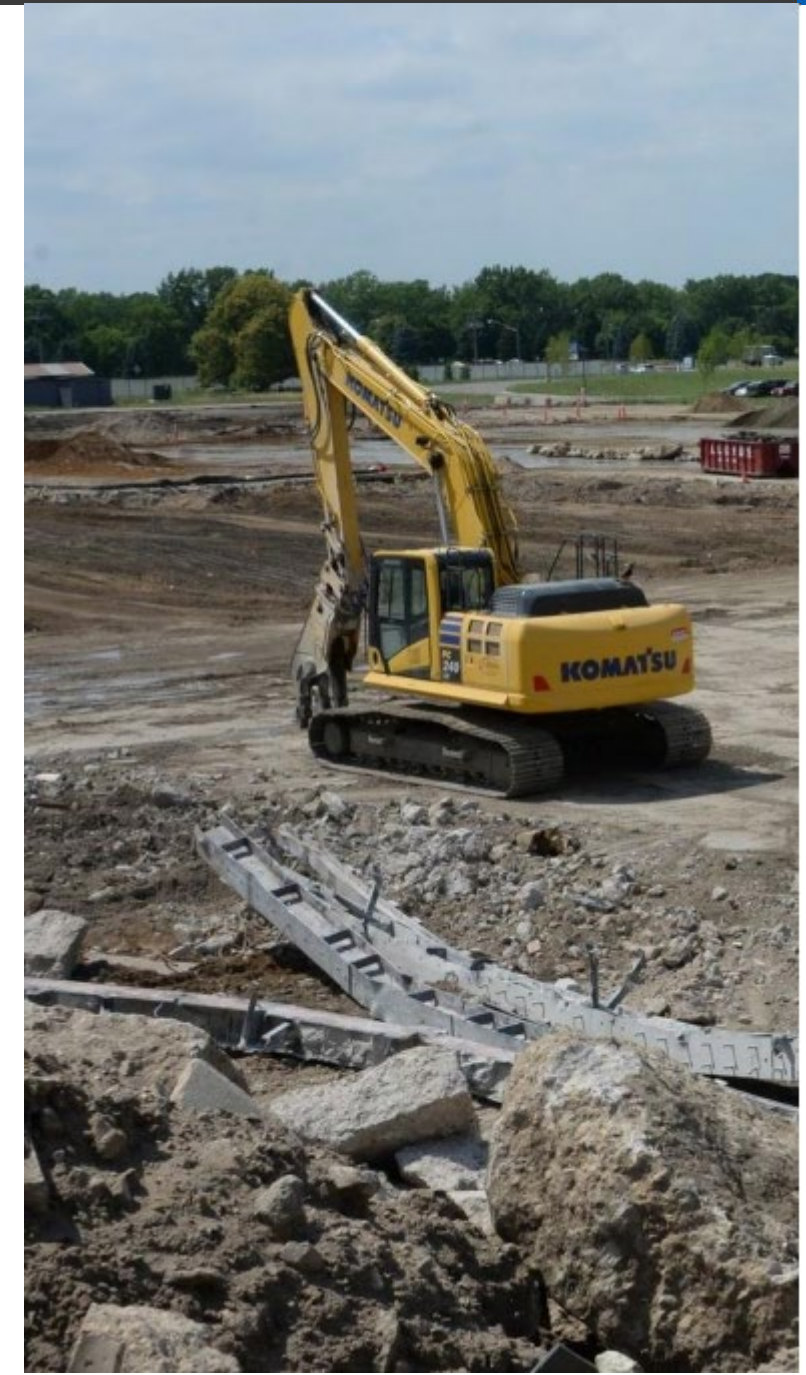


What is the Livable Communities Act Grant Program?

- Voluntary, incentive grant program
- Advances regional housing, economic opportunity, and equity goals
- Popular program
- In the past decade, LCA funds have helped:
 - Create more than 20,000 affordable homes
 - Support more than 18,000 living wage jobs
 - Increase the region's annual net tax capacity by more than \$53M

Key Themes

- **Alignment with Imagine 2050.** There are no major changes to the program goals. But there are changes to how we prioritize projects within those goals to follow the new policy guidance.
- **Focus on outcomes, less on acronyms.** We are simplifying the process.
- **Every community is part of a livable region.** Projects in all participating communities and projects of all sizes that align with regional goals will be competitive.



What's the same in 2026?



What you can expect not to change . . .

- About \$28 million available
- Grant program prioritizes affordable housing, sometimes funds community commercial, and occasionally industrial
- Support projects at different stages of development
- Still apply through the Minnesota Housing Consolidated RFP for Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) funds

What's New in 2026

Program Changes

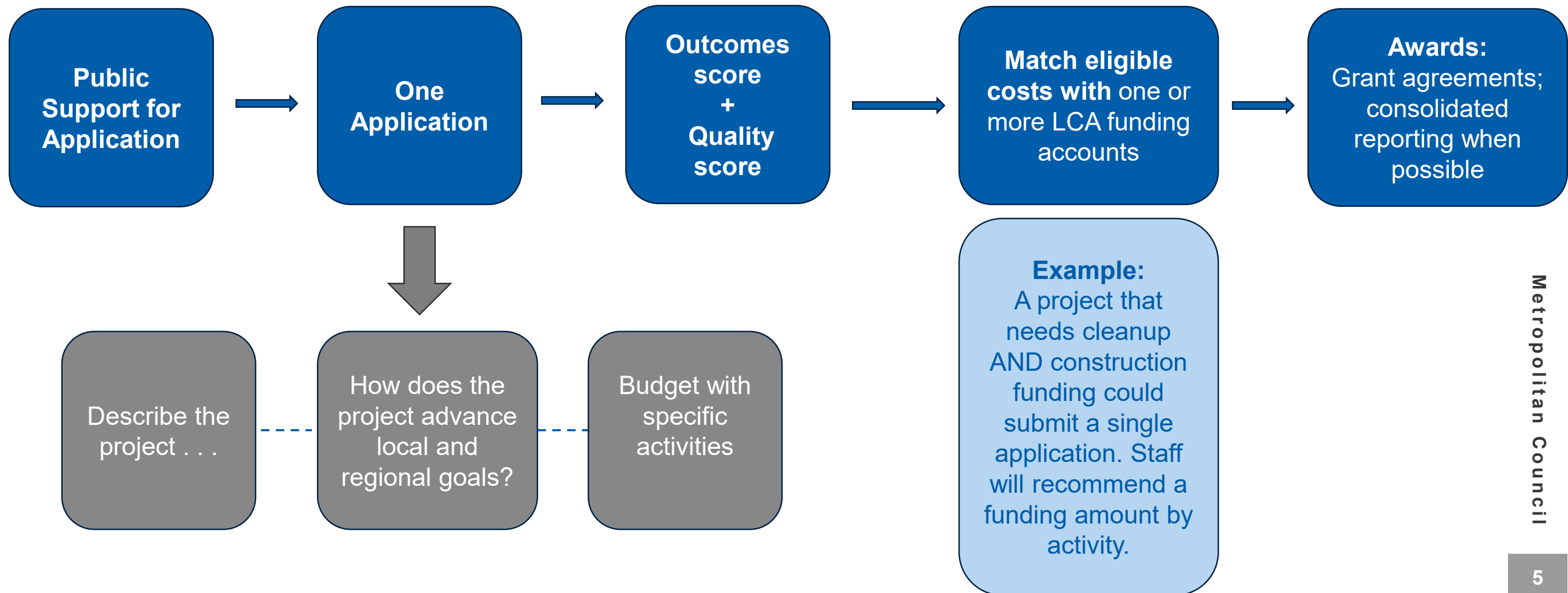
- One application per project per round (unless applying through MN Housing Consolidated RFP)
 - Policy Development
 - Small Area Plan
 - Development Project
- No limits on the number of applications per city
- Applications due in April and October
- New eligible uses of funds
- New software (Fluxx)
- New re-application policy
- Program guidelines approved for 2 years

Application Scoring Changes

- All projects scored together
- Projects scored on Outcomes and Quality
- Advisory committee will score all construction-stage applications (including site investigation and cleanup).
- Small-scale projects are more competitive with large projects
- Priority for development projects led by emerging developers of color

Application Process

Met Council Goal: Simplify the application process



Eligibility

All projects must

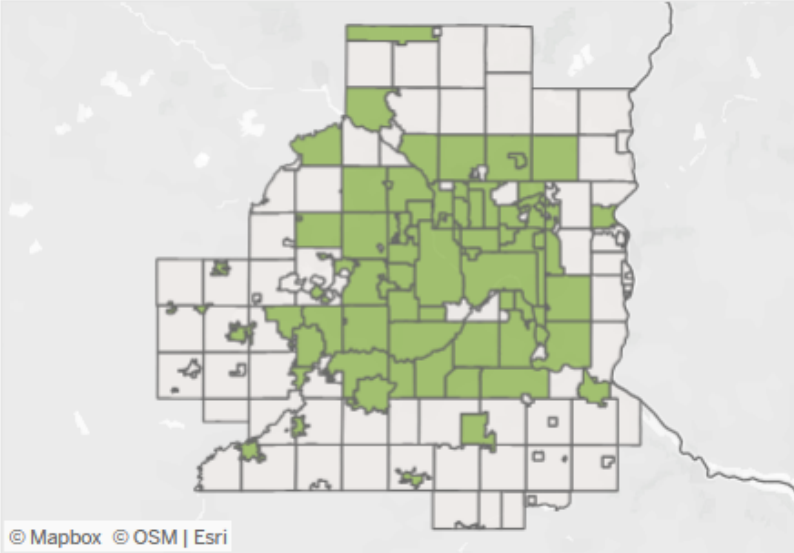
- Have a funding gap
- Be in an LCA participating city that is eligible to apply
 - You can check city eligibility on the LCA website

Check your city's enrollment and eligibility status

See also a [static list](#) and [PDF](#) at the bottom of this page

Select City or Township:	Select Eligibility Year:
(All) ▼	2025 ▼

You can select a location using the dropdown or by clicking a location on the map. To deselect a location just click on the map or select "All" in the dropdown. Enrolled LCA Participants are in green on the map.



© Mapbox © OSM | Esri

LCA Eligibility for 2025
City/Township:
LCA Participant:
Eligible to Apply:
Eligible to Drawdown Funds:

Scoring Structure

Outcomes Score

Outcomes A

Project meets 1 – 3 priorities
Earn 16 points

Project meets 4 or more priorities
Earn 24 points



Outcomes B *(Development Projects Only)*

Project meets 1 – 3 priorities
Earn 8 points

Project meets 4 or more priorities
Earn 12 points



Quality Score

Reviewer's assessment of how well the project is meeting Met Council objectives
Points vary by objective

Development Projects



Development Projects Eligibility



All development projects must...

- Meet at least one Outcome in the Outcomes score
- Have completed a comprehensive plan amendment, if an amendment is required for the project
- Have site control or an executed purchase agreement, unless you are only requesting funds for early-stage activities or acquisition

Housing projects must...

- Remain affordable for a minimum of 15 years.
- Accept housing choice vouchers and offer some rents that are not more than [voucher payment standards](#)
- Homebuyers must complete homebuyer education before purchase

Site investigation and cleanup projects must...

- Not be a tax-exempt site after redevelopment.
- Not have a viable responsible party.

Development Projects Outcomes Score A

Outcomes A

Housing

- Build housing that is 100% affordable **OR** the income of residents in all units in the project averages to an affordability band [needed in the city](#)
- Create new affordable homeownership opportunities for households earning 80% AMI or less
- Rehab or preserve existing homes affordable to households living at 60% AMI or below for rental projects or 80% AMI or below for ownership projects

Commercial

- Create or rehab business incubators and/or small business development spaces
- Future site use will add at least 10 living wage jobs and/or provide job training for at least 10 residents annually

Any Type of Development Projects

- Environmental cleanup in [Environmental Justice areas](#)
- Reduce vacant or underutilized land through infill or redevelopment, **OR** project is in an eligible transit area

AMI=Area Median Income (30% AMI= \$39,700, 60% AMI=\$79,440, 80% AMI=\$104,200 for a family of four in 2025)

Development Projects Outcomes Score B

Outcomes B

Housing

- Build new rental housing with at least 10% of units in the project affordable to households living on 30% AMI or less **OR** the project meets 10% of the city's need for units affordable to households living on 30% AMI
- Project includes at least three 3+ bedroom units for families, affordable to households living at 60% AMI or below for rental units **OR** all units are 3+ bedrooms and affordable to households living at or below 80% AMI for ownership projects
- Create senior (55+) or youth-serving (aged 16-24) housing affordable to households living at 60% AMI or below
- Build or rehab housing that serves people who have experienced homelessness

Any Type of Development Projects

- Project includes permanent community space that is accessible, open to the public, and intended to provide gathering space through amenities, community rooms, or other infrastructure that supports community gathering
- Energy-saving activities, beyond in-unit fixtures and furnishings, that result in decarbonization, water efficiency, or reduced energy costs for cost-burdened residents
- Design beyond minimum Americans with Disabilities Act requirements through universal design or similar strategies
- Project serves American Indian people and is led by an American Indian organization

Livable Communities Advisory Committee

2025-2026 Members

Michael Giovanis – Consultant

Jason Gottfried – Minnesota Department of Transportation

Libin Hashi – Social Service Provider and Developer

Stephanie Hawkinson – City of Edina

Aron Johnson – DJR Architecture

Nate Kabat – City of Chaska

Roxanne Kimball – Minnesota Homeownership Center

Nichole Klonowski – City of Brooklyn Park

Samantha McKinney – TKDA

Valerie Quarles – City of Saint Paul

Matthew Ramadan – City of Minneapolis

Suzanne Schefcik – Colliers

Kou Vang – JB Vang Real Estate Advisors

Der Yang – Greater Twin Cities United Way



Development Projects Quality Score

Criteria	Max Score
How is the project helping the city to meet its identified development needs that are aligned with regional goals?	9
How is the project benefiting people who are Black, American Indian, or part of another community of color?	9
How does the project improve access and safety in the neighborhood and provide direct, convenient connections to existing or planned transit or multi-use trails?	5
Whose perspective is represented in the project through community engagement and/or as part of the development team? And how are their perspectives represented?	9
How does the project maintain residents' and businesses' ability to stay in the community and maintain cultural and social community connections?	9
Are the project team and funding sources identified?	4
Is the project led by an emerging developer of color?	2
Total possible Quality Score without cleanup request	47
What is the severity of and risk of exposure to environmental contamination?	20
What is the impact on the property tax base?	20
Total possible Quality Score with cleanup request	87

Policy & Program Development Projects



Policy & Program Development Eligibility

All policy or program development projects must

- Meet at least one Outcome defined in the Outcomes Score.
- Create an enforceable policy, ordinance, or program that is presented to the city for adoption



Policy & Program Development Projects Scoring Criteria

Outcomes Score
Meet at least 1 priority = 16 pts
• Encourage more development or preservation of affordable housing, both rental and ownership • Incentivize environmentally sustainable development and green infrastructure • Mitigate or prevent future displacement of residents and businesses • Increase housing choice through type, tenure, and/or accessibility

Quality Score	
Criteria	Max Score
How will the proposed policy or program support housing stabilization, enabling residents to remain in their homes and communities?	5
How will the city prioritize racial equity when implementing the proposed policy?	5
Do you have a clearly defined work plan/scope? What is it?	2
What is the per capita net tax capacity (NTC) of the city? Cities with lower per capita NTC are prioritized.	3
Total possible Quality Score	15

Small Area Planning Projects



Small Area Planning Projects Eligibility

All Small Area Planning Projects must...

- Meet at least one Outcome defined in the Outcomes score.
- Cover part of the city, like a station area or commercial corridor
- Create a small area plan that is adopted by the city and added to the comprehensive plan



Small Area Planning Projects Outcomes Scoring Criteria

Small Area Planning Projects Outcomes Score
<i>Meet 1-3 Priorities = 16 pts</i>
<i>Meet 4+ Priorities = 24 pts</i>
• Situate affordable housing near transportation options and amenities • Plan for mixed-use areas on infill or redevelopment sites • Create or improve small-scale commercial spaces and/or commercial corridors • Establish or improve multi-modal transportation options with housing, jobs, and transit • Establish or improve a cultural corridor • Protect areas of ecological significance within planned development areas and/or incorporate strategies to promote public and ecosystem health • Include public gathering space or incorporate green infrastructure elements

Small Area Planning Projects Quality Scoring Criteria

Quality Score	
Criteria	Max Score
How will future amenities and connectivity be designed to prioritize residents who have been impacted by disinvestment?	5
How will the city prevent displacement or other potential negative impacts of the plan on Black, American Indian, or other residents of color?	5
Do you have a clearly defined work plan/scope? What is it?	2
Whose perspective will be represented in the plan through community engagement and/or as part of the planning team? And how will their perspectives be represented?	5
What is the per capita net tax capacity (NTC) of the city? Cities with lower per capita NTC will be prioritized.	3
Total possible Quality Score	20

Funding Limits

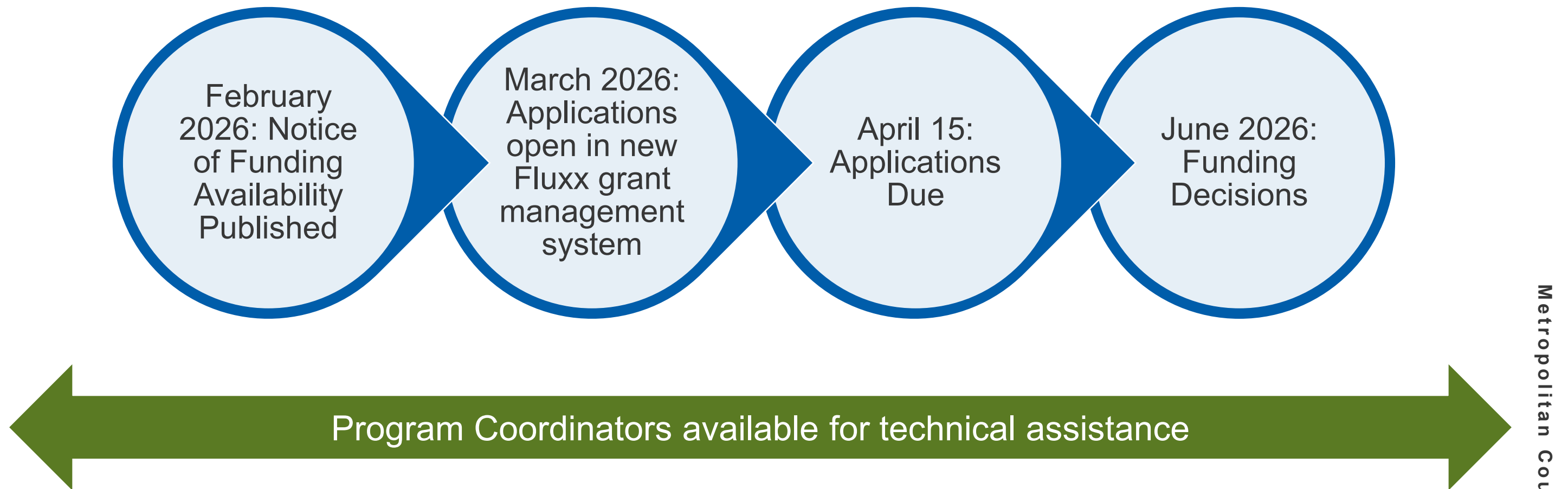
Award Limits

- \$100,000 per application for policy and small area planning projects
- \$500,000 per application for early-stage development projects
- \$2 million per application for construction-stage development projects

Geography

- For non-cleanup costs: no more than **40%** of the funding will go to Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- For investigation or cleanup: no more than **75%** of the funding will go to Minneapolis and Saint Paul.
- No more than **50%** of the funds available will be awarded to a single city.

2026 Livable Communities Round One Timeline



Local Housing Incentives Account

Awarded in coordination with the Minnesota Housing Consolidated RFP

- Local Housing Incentives Account (LHIA) grants fund multi-family affordable rental housing projects only.
- Grant awards must be matched dollar-for-dollar.
- Applications are accepted through the annual Consolidated Request for Proposals issued by Minnesota Housing
 - Typically, intent to apply is due in June with the full application due in July
 - Awards are announced in December
- Applications are scored using the same criteria as applications submitted through the Met Council's application process, with one additional "Quality" criterion:
 - Cities that have contribution net tax capacities that exceed their distribution net tax capacities by more than \$200 per household will earn an additional two (2) points



Post Award



Important considerations

- All grant activities should be completed within three years
 - Two-year extension if needed
- Reimbursement-based
- Semiannual reporting and a final report due at the end of the grant.

We know things can change during project planning and implementation; **if anything changes between your application or award and project completion, please let us know as soon as possible.**

Next Steps



We are here to help

- [Talk to a Livable Communities Program Coordinator](#)
- Join us at an in-person information session
 - December 11, 2025 | 2:00-3:00 p.m.
|North Regional Library, Room 208,
1315 Lowry Ave N, Minneapolis, MN
 - Session in Blaine and Eagan in January 2026
- [Sign up for email updates](#) and select "Livable Communities Act Grant Programs" from the "Community Development" list.
- Look for announcements about Fluxx training in early 2026

Thank You

Emily Seddon

Manager | Emily.Seddon@metc.state.mn.us

Hannah Gary

Program Coordinator | Hannah.Gary@metc.state.mn.us

Marcus Martin

Program Coordinator | Marcus.Martin@metc.state.mn.us

Andrew Tran

Program Coordinator | Andrew.Tran@metc.state.mn.us

Kelly Nezworski

Sr. Grant Administrator | Kelly.Nezworski@metc.state.mn.us

