



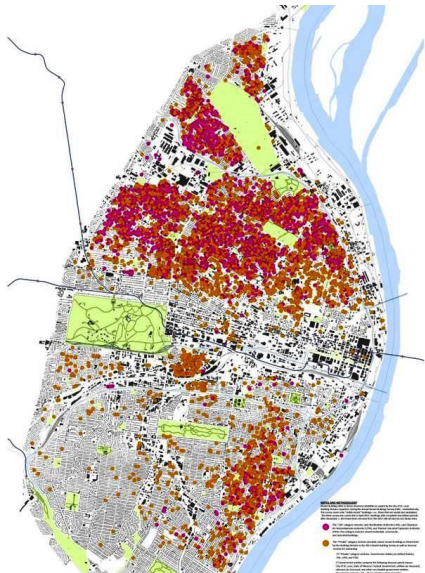
Vacancy to Vibrancy Small Grant Initiative



Agenda

- Welcome & Introductions of VC Team
- VC Overview
- Small Grant Opportunity
- Questions and Answers

The Challenge: Vacancy in St Louis



3rd highest vacant property rate in the country ([source](#))

2,500 acres & ~25,000 parcels:
~10,000 buildings & 15,000 lots

65% of Black population lives in a high vacancy census tract compared with 19% of white population

40% of fires are in vacant buildings

The impacts of concentrated vacancy – lower property values; higher rates of drug and gun crimes and illegal dumping; poorer environmental health; lower quality of life and sense of community pride – **disproportionately affect the health and wealth of low-income communities of color.**

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Who We Are

COLLABORATIVE

Origins in 2015 w/ SLACO & community

Launched in 2018 w/ public workshop

40+ organizations and groups

12+ City departments

100s of individual volunteers

Steering Committee and 5 Project Groups:

- **Guide to Community Conversations About Displacement & Neighborhood Development**
- **Policy and Legislation**
- **Recognized Community Organizations**
- **Small Grants for Greening Vacant Lots**
- **Strategic Code Enforcement**



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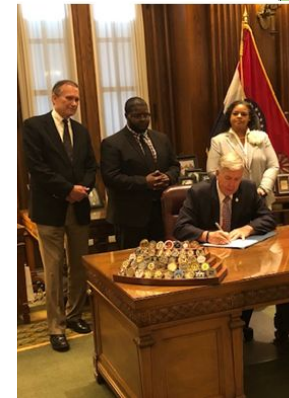
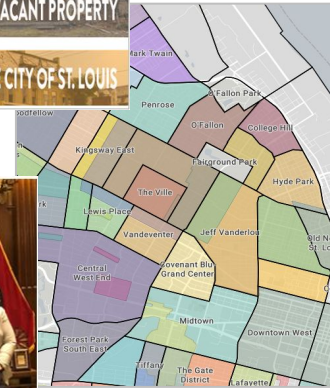
COLLABORATIVE

What We Do

- Develop and share information about vacancy solutions
- Support training and outreach for residents, rehabbers, and groups
- Host and develop data tools to provide critical information on vacant properties, demolition, and community groups
- Advocate for legislation to improve our response to vacancy
- Support City pilot programs in lot maintenance, deconstruction, public health, and stabilization

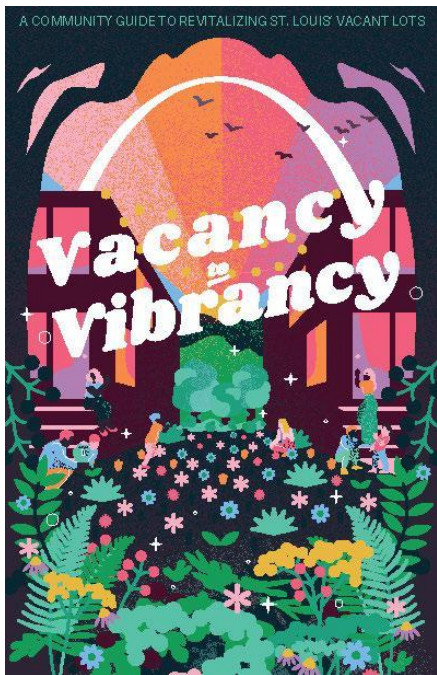


January 24	Which Financing is Right for Me – Ask a Lender	May 23	LRA, Tax Sales & Proposition Neighborhood Stabilization
February 28	Permits, Inspections, Zoning, & Historic Districts	June-July No Training	Summer break
March 28	Ask a Lawyer – Ask an Accountant	August 22	Risk Management Fundamentals
April 25	Cash Flow, Maintenance, & Major Repairs	September 26	Historic Tax Credits & Tax Abatement





Small Grant Initiative



The Opportunity

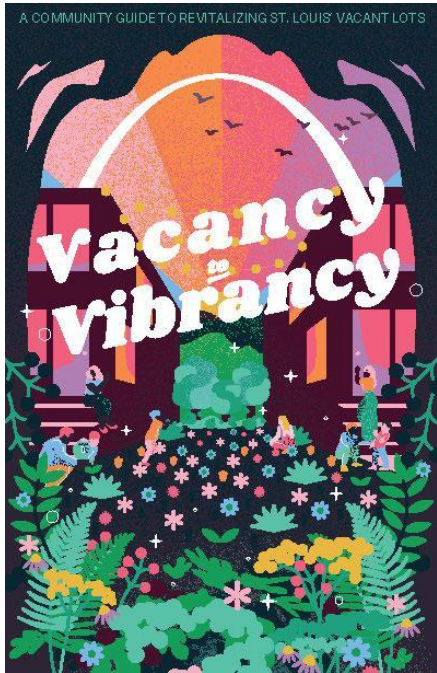
The Vacancy to Vibrancy grant is a small grants program for **vacant lot beautification and activation** in St. Louis City. Local organizations and nonprofits can apply for **\$1,500-\$5,000** to create a vibrant green space on a vacant lot in their community.

New this Year!

Pocketparks is excited to join the **Vacancy Collaborative** in supporting the **Small Grants for Greening Initiative**. This collaboration will provide **comprehensive support** to grantees and **implementation assistance** through a **Placemaking Blitz** at the end of the program!



Project Goals



1. Reduce Vacancy
2. Engage Community
3. Equity and Inclusivity
4. Sustainability



Grant Outcomes

1

Reduce
Vacancy

2

Strengthen
Community
Health

3

Improve
Quality
of Life

4

Increase use
& Awareness
of toolkit



The Grant

- Awards from \$1,500 - \$5,000
- Approximately ~3-5 projects selected
- Projects awarded May of 2025 and completed no later than October. 31st, 2025
- Use of Vacant Lot Toolkit and Grant Worksheets
- Meet grant goals and outcomes

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Grant Requirements

- Vacant Lot Transformation - Greening Project for Community Usage w/ Native Plants
- Privately owned property by a group, organization, nonprofit, or an individual that is part of a group dedicated to the lot's revitalization.
- New Project - Your project should be on a vacant property with no existing developments, buildings, garden beds, etc. If you have an existing project that was abandoned and needs revitalized, you are eligible.
- Community Engagement
- Ongoing Maintenance Plan
- Grantee required to attend monthly meeting to support project development & implementation



Community Engagement

Groups applying will be required to engage the community for feedback. Some ideas for capturing feedback include:

- Get feedback from neighbors of the project location
- Present or ask for feedback at a community event
- Posted signage, flyers, or mailers
- Obtain Letters of support
- Online surveys or voting

The more efforts you can show for community engagement the more points will be awarded to your application.



Who Can Apply?

- Community Organizations and Groups
- Nonprofits - Not necessary to be a 501(c)(3)
- For-Profit Groups - may be considered if the LLC or corporation is community based & is truly doing work in the interest of the community

Grant applicants must use the grant for projects that are accessible to the public.



Eligible Spaces & Practices

- **Eligible Spaces:** Lots that are open to the public. Vacant lots on private property, such as private schools, churches, or HOA's, that extends or connect projects on public land providing stormwater conveyance, habitat connectivity, or other public benefits are also eligible.
 - Can **NOT** be an extension of someone's residential home.
- **Eligible Practices:** Land management activities necessary for habitat restoration, native plant establishment, terrestrial and aquatic habitat enhancement, invasive species control, and tools.
 - Other resources may be eligible (*e.g.: hiring native landscape contractor, etc.*); please speak with the small grants committee before applying.



Property Access

Property Access Explained

- If your group owns the property, you are eligible to apply.
- If your group has a current garden lease, and have plans/funds to purchase the property, you are eligible to apply.
- If your group plans to purchase a lot from LRA, and you have plans/funds to purchase the property, you are eligible to apply
- If your group has access to an existing project that has been abandoned, you are eligible to apply.

NOTE: Grant funds are not for purchasing property, only for activation and transformation of a vacant property.



Budget

- Use the Small Grants budget template
- Funds will be utilized in accordance with project plan and budget template.
- Note: Grants may be partially awarded or fully funded

Changes for 2025 Grant Cycle

- STLVC will manage all awarded funds internally for each grant project & assist in ordering and procuring materials on behalf of grantee
- No funds will be sent directly to the grantee, but grantee will be the primary decision maker in how funds are spend



Meetings & Reporting

- Grantees will be required to attend a monthly meeting with a their SGGVL subcommittee to plan, further design, and implement their project
 - Meeting minutes from these meetings will act as reporting for the grant
 - Grantee will not have to send any other reporting documents outside of these meetings



Project Timeline

- **June** – Align project goals, review community feedback, design review, material sourcing and budgeting.
- **July** – Finalize design and approve selected materials, plants, etc. Start procurement and purchasing.
- **August** – Plan the implementation day, finalize volunteer needs, develop a maintenance plan.
- **September** – Confirm all implementation details, review materials, and ensure all items are procured.
- **October – Implementation Day!** Final maintenance plan provided to grantees with a list of resources for ongoing care.



Placemaking Blitz!

Your project will be installed in **one day over 3-5 hours** with the help of volunteers. All materials, tools, and supplies will be brought to the site in advance, and activities will be strategically planned to ensure a **seamless, efficient installation**. Volunteers will work together to transform the space, leaving behind a fully realized, activated park by the end of the event.





Important Details

BEFORE YOU APPLY

- Do you have a team of at least 3 people?
- Do you have a vacant lot selected?
- Can your project be successfully completed in 6 months?
- Will your project Improve community health and quality of life?

IMPORTANT DATES

- Grant opens **March 13th**
- Resource Fair **March 29th**
- Questions due **March 31st**
- Updated FAQ released **April 2nd**
- Proposals submitted by **April 18th**
- Grants Awarded **May 15th**
- Contracts signed in May & introductions to grant committees made in June



How to Apply

- Fill out the grant application including all worksheets and budget template
- Submit your application and budget via email to admin@stlvacancy.org
- You may also mail or drop off your application in-person if requested.
- **Applications are due April 18th**



Questions?