
COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION PROGRAM
Application Template.

Please feel free to use this template as a guide to developing your submission for funding from the Community Participation Program. The level of detail should be appropriate to your organization's proposed activities, and to the level of funding allocated for your organization.

CONTACT INFORMATION:

Organization Name:	East Phillips Improvement Coalition, EPIC
Address:	2536 18th Avenue S. Minneapolis, MN 55404
Website burl:	
Organization email:	cpass@runbox.com
Federal EIN:	32-0036350
Board Contact:	Name: Carol Ann Pass
Staff Contact:	Name: Same Phone: Email: Address:

FUNDING ACTIVITIES.

Use the following questions as a guide for your submission.

Question 2: This question seems to be an appropriate first question: What regular outreach and engagement activities will your organization carry out in 2011? Since the level of diversity is so high in Phillips, this discussion includes a partial answer to question 3. Regarding under-represented groups. How will your organization reach out to under-represented groups in your community?

The East Phillips Improvement Coalition, EPIC, is a resident-led citizen participation organization established in 2000 to serve the **East Phillips Neighborhood**, which is located in the near south side of Minneapolis, relative to downtown. (The boundaries are 24th St. on the North, Hwy.55 on the east Lake St. on the south and Bloomington Ave. on the west) It is one of the most diverse and most challenged neighborhoods in the City of Minneapolis and possibly the State of Minnesota. EPIC serves a community of close to 5,000 people, part of the Greater Phillips Community of approximately 20,000 residents, which is well known to be roughly 80% ethnically and racially diverse. East Phillips is also well known to be intensely low-income with family incomes sometimes as low as \$15,000.00 per year. The mission of EPIC is to "promote the social, educational and economic health of the community by involving citizens in its activities and to reach out to all segments of the community including traditionally under-represented groups to create a safe community that contains open communication between neighbors."

The East Phillips Improvement Coalition has an all-volunteer staff. Our board is one of the most diverse in the City, with 50% leaders from diverse communities. We are proud to have depended entirely on community leadership and volunteers for all of the efforts pursued by the neighborhood organization. Though this has sometimes proved difficult, it has meant that all funding

goes directly into programming with much less administrative overhead. EPIC does not consider funding appropriately spent, unless it benefits our residents as broadly and inclusively as can be managed. This is understood as meaning economic, ethnic, gender and age inclusivity.

The issues of very low income, little formal education, a major proliferation of ethnic groups, limited skill sets for running an organization, and many having experienced incarceration are in view when most people, professional or otherwise, reflect on or endeavor to work in Phillips. It has been the experience of our board and many residents that the character of this neighborhood setting and its implications for how to organize, what to fund, how much to fund, what is possible and what is probably not, as well as what actually constitutes help ...these things are not well understood. Some key issues anyone must consider while organizing is that most East Phillips residents have NO discretionary income at all, often work two jobs and frequently have no car.

These critical features of the organizing landscape along with a fair amount of transience and many non-English speakers (nearly 50% have English as a second language) have a great deal to do with the success of any organizing effort or any program. On the one hand, we have found that many things caring people would like to do here, or think we should do here, too often undermine rather than assist the residents or turn out to be nonproductive and come to no long term gain. On the other hand, too often we also find that once the difficulty of dealing with these issues becomes apparent... there is a throwing up of hands and giving up in futility, blaming the intransigence, lack of education and/or claims of the low ability of the residents. However, through listening to residents carefully in less of the traditional "meeting oriented" settings and seeking nontraditional methods of organizing, EPIC has had some real successes in serving the East Phillips residents, despite these difficulties and has found the typical resident wonderful to work with as well as extraordinary and enterprising in working great things with very little economic support.

We don't believe we have a magic wand or overwhelming powers of insight. The EPIC Board simply has found some things that have worked very well, especially in places and situations where others have thrown up their hands. We want to stick to these things and hope that we can fit them into the new funding structure of the CPP. We are confident that we can.

Here are examples. EPIC has cut back on the usual funding for administration and gone to an all-volunteer process to be able to funnel most of our resources to the residents themselves. We would not advocate this in most circumstances, because few neighborhoods have people who could provide the needed skilled personnel. However, this has worked for us for the time being. This means that we want our CPP funding to go to actual support for programs and activities and less for traditional paper, ink, copying and staff. More examples follow.

EPIC 2011: present and future community organizing:

First, since the retention and involvement of leaders of the diverse communities as members of our boards and planning groups has been key and central to all EPIC organizing, we will build on what we have been doing. The under-represented groups are inseparable from our organization and all our activities. EPIC is their 'go-to' place for help, information and collaboration. Their active participation and loyalty has come in part from EPIC's efforts at service and collaborative work to respond to their needs. EPIC has supplied assistance in setting up and organizing small nonprofits and written 501©(3) applications for several Latino and Somali organizations, helped them write their own bylaws and set up bank accounts so they can collect their own donations. This service is very effective "outreach". We assist their leadership and they become a part of ours through working on their projects as well as our own. Strong personal relationships and partnerships working across cultures evolve from these activities.

Our neighborhood board currently includes a Somali man, an African American man and woman and a Latino woman, all of whom are leaders in their respective communities. EPIC also has a seat for an ex-felon, since we have so many with special needs as well as insights in the community. This brings in an additional community member anxious to rejoin society and has proven useful in

work on crime prevention. Diversity on our board is a key method of reaching and developing unity among our various groups. EPIC has a monthly board meeting and, unlike most neighborhoods, which meet as an entire neighborhood quarterly, we have a monthly general membership (community) meeting. Our Annual meetings are well attended, translators are provided and we take in and disseminate information in multiple languages as well as elect the new EPIC board with candidates recruited from the various ethnicities.

Until the new East Phillips Park Community Center arrives next month our board will continue meeting in the local hardware store. But we also meet in garages, homes, our garden, other Phillips park buildings, any place close to the neighbors who want to gather. The lack of cars and computers and the expense of mailers mean much of this must involve flying and/or phoning. EPIC invested in a meeting-sized tent to accommodate the moving of meetings closer to the specific resident groups we are trying to gather. We also publish in the local Alley newspaper for communication and are working on a website.

The EPIC Board has been engaged in and is committed to continue to use and expand on nontraditional methods to listen to Phillips residents. One of our key strategies in this regard is EPIC's organizing and funding of **East/Midtown Youth Sports and Rec**. This collaboration sponsors soccer games, basketball tournaments and other sports initiatives, after-school tutoring for youth and ESL classes for adults, where, during these activities, we can work with the families of the Latinos and African Americans, including Church leaders, the families and Imam of the local mosque, members of the Native people, and especially the youth from all these groups. In this setting where families come to watch their kids, we can pull people together, who ordinarily don't go to meetings, for listening and time to work on problem solving and neighborhood priorities. There is nothing compelling about these gatherings, but the chairs are there and folks are talking and translation is going on. We have found this approach exciting and amazingly productive.

Parents coming to their children's games and school functions are provided with chairs, treats, a white board, a public person and an interesting topic in their language, so listening and interactive discussions, Q & A, and simply presenting new or important information can take place. We have invited elected officials, such as Commissioner McLaughlin, Lydia Lee from the School Board and others representing leaders in these communities. A key simple question often guides this effort: residents will be asked what will make the East Phillips neighborhood better. A 'spin off' question is: what are your most serious struggles, which you believe all of us can work on together to actually make change for the better. We will seek realistic solutions and implementable change, determine the group's priorities and then really try to make things happen.

One example has been the desire for more soccer fields. We assisted in organizing a petition drive with Latino youth taking the lead and they had hundreds of postcards filled out. They took these to Commissioner McLaughlin at which point he began a plan to access the tax set-aside from the new stadium to build 5 new soccer fields in south side parks. This has been an amazing success, empowering these youth and teaching them a way to get things done. The fields are being built and these youth made it happen. We are now working to restore the Phillips Swimming Pool. Native youth have been included in presentations to the Park Board. These are our organizing, empowering and leadership development tools and some things that we will continue to do and add to in 2011.

Members of the various ethnic groups are involved in the **East Phillips Park Community Design Team**, which took over organizing to fund raise and determine programs for the new Center, now that the push at the legislature for funding the building is over. This group meets monthly and includes members of the other Phillips Neighborhoods, the Park Board and staff, and leaders of professional organizations that will be bringing their programs to the residents.

Phillips Community Parks Initiative, which involves the four quadrant neighborhoods of Phillips along with Waite House and Freeport West, also meets monthly and bonds these similar

neighborhoods together in an effort to manage, from a neighborhood point of view, all the Park facilities of greater Phillips. So far we have stopped the Park Board from tearing down or selling off the Phillips Community Center, created and successfully lobbied the Park Board to accept a multi-ethnic group of lease holders from community organizations, and helped sponsor a feasibility study which has saved the pool from being filled with cement and built a future for it with Minneapolis Swims taking leadership. This year one major EPIC project will be to work together to help equitably schedule and problem-solve all the Park facilities in all of Phillips, including the new East Phillips Center as well as raising money for the pool. This is a major management strategy and partnering effort of these multi-ethnic groups.

These methods EPIC is using now, along with specific focus groups and surveys, will also continue to be used to gather all East Phillips diverse residents, hear their opinions, help define priorities, work on projects together and add additional volunteers from the various groups for the years after 2011. The EPIC board prides itself in the popularity of its projects in the ethnic communities and the loyalty, volunteerism and responsiveness from those communities toward EPIC's leadership and organization. The board is always looking for new strategies, but we are pleased with how things are and need to work to retain, maintain and build on these positive gains.

3. How will your organization reach out to under-represented groups in your community? Who are these groups?

In some ways this question assumes that the under-represented groups inquired about are a minority within a larger group or groups. Phillips has an approximately 80% diverse population. If there is to be a meaningful community organization at all, the diverse groups must be at the table from the ground up. The EPIC board has sufficient diversity, so that it is the daily order-of-business to try to meet the needs of all the people. There is no real division between the Board and the diverse population. So the idea is to serve and hear all the groups at the table who bring their larger specific communities with them, in a sense, and do this as well as we all can, with the methods described in question 1 and 2 and new strategies as we discover them.

At present these groups are comprised of approximately 35% Latino, 16% Somali, 14% African American, 17% white, 12% Native American and 6% Asian. There are approximately 7,000 children in Phillips, 40% of whom live below the poverty level and East Phillips has the largest percentage of children and the smallest percentage of older people of the four quadrants of Phillips. There has been a 48% increase in families with children in Phillips and East Phillips has the largest percentage, according to the last census. In addition, East Phillips has almost no elder population, unrecordable to very small numbers over 65 yrs of age and very small even over 45 yrs. of age. Our focus has rightfully been on young families and their children, since that is where we find the overwhelming population numbers. (These figures come from the Mpls. Planning Office and reflect some numbers beyond the 2,000 census.)

East Phillips also has a large percentage of linguistically isolated households, where no one speaks English and a significant number of homes have no car or phone. These are very real challenges for any community organization.

Organizing Strategies:

A. Direct Community Organizing: Some of the ways of serving our various groups and dealing with these situations, while gathering information, choosing priorities and giving a reason to be

involved are described in question 1 and 2. Making use of those strategies EPIC is applying them and adding to them in the following efforts:

- Working to be sure the all following strategies are used to inform residents of impending city decisions and ways of making their opinions and concerns, support or objections, needs or offers of assistance regarding City policies, developments, actions and/or inactions.
- Mentioned already, organizing around soccer, and other sports as well as school functions, and after-school homework help...using these events to hold meetings with parents and youth for Q & A, information dissemination, idea-sharing and relationship-building with elected official, professionals, police, local artists, and others.
- Helping create multi-block crime patrols and residents' unions in apartment buildings to combat crime and build relationships between people and the police and one another.
- Moving tent meetings for focus groups and block parties, bringing the meetings to the people. We have done this, since we have no office and it has been intriguing.
- Inviting financial literacy folks in focus groups to teach banking, checking account use and other financial skills,
- Encouraging multi-block National Night Out Parties and other celebrations where various ethnic foods are shared,
- Garden Parties in our community garden where many ethnic groups share new vegetables or garden foods from their home countries with others. Garden work parties bringing folks together.
- Working as a collection of ethnic groups to raise money, to petition the County for new soccer fields, (we were successful) to flyer for events, to send multi-ethnic groups to the legislature to press our concerns.
- Using volunteers, especially youth, from a variety of groups to coach, referee, translate, and lead meetings, so everyone has a chance to learn, to act and to lead.
- Business organizations have been an under-represented group and with the demise of the Bloom/Cedar/Lake Business Assoc. this has been even exaggerated. We chose to form a business task force at the last EPIC board meeting, so this issue can have a response. Two of our Board members will be consulting regularly with members of our Lake Street business community as well as our Bloomington/25th Street business node.

B. Indirect Community Organizing:

Another critical strategy in addition to these has been to assist various groups that either are composed of or serve our diverse East Phillips residents in the formation and growth of their organizations. These collaborations have been requested by these organizations and the EPIC has listened. We have helped a variety of organizations write their own bylaws, their own 501©(3)s, set up their banking system and raise their own money. In the past we have seen many groups try this and fail, wasting resources, talent and morale. EPIC has stepped in to teach, assist and guide these fledgling organizations as a cultural bridge-building effort, assisting in important transformation where it is needed and wanted. Many immigrant residents come from societies that lack the financial literacy necessary to safely manage their donations. They are among what are referred to as the 'unbanked' by the financial community. They are also unfamiliar with the procedures of nonprofit

boards and the kind of accountability and transparency that is necessary. In guiding them through these processes they learn lessons they will need to operate on their own.

EPIC has gained impressive support from these ethnic groups as a result of these efforts. They assist us in organizing, which becomes much simpler since they have organized their own people and they are very supportive of EPIC since they are receiving the help they really wanted. They are proud of their organizations and proud to be a part of and real assistance to EPIC. You will see this work with these organizations reflected in the EPIC budget on page 9 and 10.

All these efforts and events share an agreed upon EPIC commitment: that they actually provide some sort of recognizable help, useful information and bridge building for our residents. These are ways EPIC has successfully bridged the communication, organizing and relationship-building difficulties among this neighborhood of very under-represented people and begun to change this situation. These are the things we are doing now and wish to sustain and do more of with the CPP funding.

Struggling to find a way forward and discovering as a board the success of these efforts and experiences accounts for the methods of organizing the EPIC board has arrived at. We are still learning. Community organizing requires different tools and different expectations from those neighborhoods with mostly monochromatic, nuclear families having comparatively few financial challenges and few needs.

1. 4. What planning activities would your organization like to carry out in 2011? (This could include strategic planning, land use planning, NRP planning, etc?) We wish to include Question 1. at this point, since these questions both involve EPIC's planning year. How will your organization engage residents and other stakeholders in 2011 to develop your three-year proposal?

NRP and CPP Planning: Since EPIC must complete the organization's NRP planning this year as well as planning for CPP's three years of funding, creating plans that harmonize and enhance each other is critical. While one cannot supersede the other, they should be done each with an eye to the other. For example, some funding is restricted in one and not the other, and some funding is flexible in specific ways and not the other. They can enhance each other and fill in gaps in each other. Our plan is for the EPIC Board and organization to complete the Phase I review and work on the Participation Agreement with the CPP funding in mind. Our Board has agreed to set up a task force to consider the issues for strategies for both these funds and come up with ideas and direction on ways these might go together. This task force will be announced at the February meeting, where we will seek volunteers and meet for the first time that month. The meetings will be announced and anyone can be involved. Any decisions will need ratification at our community meetings and follow the same organizational requirements as do NRP decision-making. Our full Participation Agreement is in process and involves a somewhat different set of issues, but NRP is a major part of this year's activities.

We have and will have focus groups in various areas, possibly in homes, and use our tent and new Park Building. These can be led by one of the variety of ethnic volunteers. Information regarding the requirements of these two grants and possible uses will be made available to the neighborhood. We have used surveys and 'dot-mocracy' and will do so again. Since the CPP grant is a sustaining grant, the board needs to be sure EPIC's future operation is secure while opening this up for suggestions for other possibilities.

In addition, and importantly, we will use all of the strategies already outlined in the preceding pages, the gatherings at soccer and sport events, the groups at ESL classes and afterschool homework

help, hearing and documenting concerns, needs, ideas and priorities. There are sewing circles at Holy Rosary and the local Mosque is also a place to hold meetings to discern opinions of various groups. The endorsing process of the Participation Agreement and Phase II Plan will follow the NRP guidelines.

Development Planning for East Phillips Commons Apartments on the Greenway: This is an NRP initiated project. It has been an effort to bring work force housing, transit-oriented development and places for large families to Greenway living. This is beginning this year and will be part of our planning agenda.

2909 Bloomington Planning for Policing Strategies and other issues- Apartment meetings are being arranged to set aside a room for this in or near the building. Police and community leaders will be invited and translators will be available. Action items will be charted, ways of carrying them out will be decided and care will be taken to see that things happen.

Phillips Community Parks Initiative (PCPI): This group is already continuing to meet and has begun planning for the re-opening of the Phillips Community Center, planning the scheduling and access of the organizations, which want time and space.

East Phillips Park Community Design Team: This team of residents and organizations providing programming for the new center have been meeting for several years for design and fund raising efforts. Right now we are all looking forward and working on the Grand Opening on January 22nd.

After that the meetings will be devoted to management, fund raising and working out scheduling of the building. Residents from various ethnic groups are a part of the planning group to be sure everyone gets their needs met as much as possible.

5. How does your organization provide information to the community? How do you gather information from the community?
 - EPIC has an E-News service used for immediate news. This is sent out frequently and as needed. The Alley News for meeting announcements.
 - EPIC General Membership Meetings: Monthly all-community meetings. Agendas have enough information so people interested in a topic can decide to come.
 - The Alley News for meeting and other announcements and articles on special topics.
 - Flyering, Posters and Phone Trees
 - EPIC uses the organizational channels of the new organizations we have helped initiate.

In addition, EPIC's most effective means of gathering and disseminating information as well as real discussion of issues and needs remains the strategy already outlined of meetings emergent from sporting and other events that draw residents for other reasons and providing a setting where discussion and opinions can be voiced and information shared. Minutes, opinions and needs are all written down and shared or presented at relevant places. The concerns voiced in these sessions have guided many of our actions. Please see the previous explanations. We hope to use these methods for obtaining input and responses to NRP and CPP planning.

6. What festivals and events will your organization host or support in 2011?

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- 1) Grand Opening of East Phillips Park Community Center
 - 2) EPIC's Annual Meeting in April.
 - 3) National Night Out in our Block Clubs.
 - 4) Fall Harvest Party in EPIC's Garden.
 - 5) Soccer Championship in spring.
 - 6) Basketball Tourney in summer.
 - 7) Grand Re-opening of the Phillips Community Center.
7. What else would you like the Neighborhood and Community Engagement Commission know about your organization?

We need our full NRP allocation. Beyond this, come to our soccer games and our Grand Opening of East Phillips Park Center. See what we can do...and remember that these neglected spaces were dying before NRP and would be dead by now without it. Look at Franklin Station Townhomes...Costing \$250,000 NRP, which leveraged a \$7,000,000.00 row of owner occupied homes, generating over \$80,000.00 a year in taxes. This is a tax-rendering device for years...not the Mayor's one-shot deal.

8. Besides funding, what are some other ways that the NCR and NCEC can help your neighborhood organization?

Figure out a way to fully fund the neighborhoods. We spend money far more responsibly than the City...Look at today's paper for another million-dollar lawsuit. And please refrain from claiming the neighborhoods waste money. We have leveraged over 25 million in housing with less than a million dollars of NRP. Also please do not state that we have not yet spent our Phase II money because we do not need it. We have worked as volunteers because we need it so much, and to save it for a better use for our disadvantaged residents, only to be punished for our carefulness. Also spending money in neighborhoods like Phillips is more complex, more expensive (matches for loans and grants are not realistic) and spending wisely must cross many barriers of understanding and language. The low-income and diverse neighborhoods should be honored for their hard work and not have to deal with those who try to discredit the people working for a better, kinder city in the most challenging neighborhoods, while many of these critics sit in affluence.

ESTIMATED BUDGET

The EPIC budget is project and collaboration based and estimations are based on experience in the past. We do not have staff or office. None of these categories, including occupancy, is a fixed sum. See the following pages.

The listed collaborative grants are explained previously on page 5 and 6 and are available to the designated organizations. Their use must be specified and accepted by the EPIC Membership with accounting and evaluation of how they have been spent.

East Phillips Improvement Coalition
Projected CPP Budget for Year Ending December 31, 2011
Board Approval January 8th, 2011

Revenue Sources and Uses	Projected Expenses	Actual Expenses
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EPIC Administration: \$19,100.00

1) Mailings, copying for monthly meetings, Materials, food	\$2,500.00	
2) Annual meeting, copying, entertainment, hall rental, food	\$1,500.00	
3)) Office supplies	\$4,000.00	
4) MN Council of Nonprofits, membership MN Council of NonProfits Membership, Conferences,Materials	\$300.00	
5) Professional Services, Legal Fees	\$2,500.00	
6) Software, computer upgrades & equipment	\$2,500.00	
7) Computer Classes, QuickBooks, Conferences, Tech Support	\$1,000.00	
8) Volunteer Development, Conferences, Leadership Training	\$2,400.00	
8) Liability Insurance	\$1,500.00	
9) East Phillips Community Garden Organizing Expenses	\$900.00	

Total Admin. Expenses **\$19,100.00**

Somali/Latino Outreach:

Soccer/Afterschool Tutoring program \$22,400.00 **Projected Expenses** **Actual Expenses**

1) Anderson Elementary School Bilingual Tutoring Program: Stipends for Bilingual Tutors, Class Materials, Refreshments, Leadership Classes	\$3,000.00	
2) Somali After-School Classroom Rental, Stipends for Bilingual Tutors, Class Materials, Refreshments Leadership Classes	\$3,000.00	
3) East/Midtown Phillips Youth Hispanic/Somali Soccer and Events, Gym/Hall Rental	\$7,800.00	
4) Soccer Equipment and Uniforms,	\$3,000.00	
5) Coaches and Referee Stipends	\$2,000.00	
6) Community Organizing/Family Events/Leadership Stipends/Food	\$2,600.00	
7) Trophies, Celebration Materials, Flyers, Food	\$1,000.00	

Total Somali/Latino Outreach: Soccer/Tutoring Expenses **\$22,400.00**

AfricanAmerican Outreach/Basketball Tournaments \$1,430.089 **Projected Expenses** **Actual Expenses**

1) Organizing, materials, copying, Outreach, Leadership stipends	\$1,130.89	
2) Trophies, Celebrations	\$300.00	

Total African American Outreach	\$1,430.89		
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NRP Phase I Completion/Phase II Planning Process	\$4,500.00	Projected Expenses	Actual Expenses
1) NRP Phase I Review Completion and finish EPIC's Participation Agreement		\$1,000.00	
2) NRP Phase II, focus groups, food, printing, copying, surveying		\$3,500.00	
Total NRP Completion		\$4,500.00	

EPIC Celebrations/Events	\$4,000.00	Projected Expenses	Actual Expenses
1) Harvest Party, National Night Out, Mid Winter Gathering		\$2,000.00	
2) Block Parties		\$1,000.00	
3) Winter Doldrums Party, entertainment, food		\$1,000.00	
Total EPIC Celebrations/Events		\$4,000.00	

Organizational Collaborations	\$7,000.00	Projected Expenses	Actual Expenses
Somali American Community Organization		\$2,000.00	
Somali American Autism Project		\$1,000.00	
Minneapolis Swims		\$1,000.00	
Liga Hispana de Beisbol		\$1,000.00	
Freeport West-African American		\$500.00	
Little Earth Youth Sports		\$500.00	
Banyan Foundation		\$1,000.00	
Total		\$7,000.00	

TOTAL EPIC CPP BUDGET:	\$58,430.89		
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