

What is the Renaissance Block Challenge ?

The Renaissance Block Challenge is a neighborhood revitalization program that encourages clusters of neighbors to collaborate on exterior improvements to their properties in order to build confidence in Jamestown's neighborhoods and inspire others to reinvest.

Benefits of Participation:

Neighbors who apply for and receive designation as a "Renaissance Block" will have access to resources that will accelerate their home improvement projects and their neighborhood's revitalization, including:

- Matching funds for exterior improvements, up to **\$2,000**.
For example, if \$500 is spent, a \$250 match will be made. If \$4,000 is spent, the match is \$2,000. If \$5,000 is spent, the match is \$2,000.
- Access to discounts from sponsoring hardware stores and garden centers
- Discounts from coordinated neighborhood purchasing of materials or services
- Access to design assistance

Challenge Components:

- Exterior improvements that enhance curb appeal, completed by the participating property owners (or their chosen contractors) during 2018.
- Events, such as block parties, organized by the participating neighbors to celebrate the completed work and strengthen their neighborhood.

What are examples of eligible improvements?

- Painting
- Mailboxes
- Driveways
- Porch repair
- Exterior lights
- Driveway aprons
- Soffit repair
- Front yard landscaping
- Replacement windows
- Sidewalk repair
- Front doors/screen doors
- House gutters

How is the Challenge supported ?

- John A. and Oscar Johnson Memorial Trust provides funding for the matching grants
- Sponsoring businesses offer special discounts to participants
- The Jamestown Renaissance Corp. (a not-for-profit corporation) administers the program and collaborates with other public and not-for-profit agencies.

What are the selection criteria?

The number of blocks designated in any given year is based on resource availability and the quality of applications received. The following criteria, part of a 100 point evaluation scale, will be used during the process of designating Renaissance Blocks in 2018.

• **Number of participating properties:** Proposed neighborhood clusters must have a minimum of **FIVE** and should not exceed **FIFTEEN** participating properties. Clusters may include homeowners, landlords and businesses. If your proposed cluster exceeds **FIFTEEN** properties, contact the JRC for prior approval.

- **Contiguousness of properties:** This criteria will count for up to 25 points of your cluster's evaluation. In order to make a significant change in a concentrated neighborhood area, proposed neighborhood clusters should have as many shared property edges or boundaries touching as possible. Neighbors directly across the street are considered adjacent. A map showing the location of the properties in each cluster must be submitted with this pre-application. The map may be hand drawn or created using a parcel map from Chautauqua GIS (www.Chautauquagis.com) or by using Google Maps (www.google.com/maps/)
- **Strategic considerations:** This criteria will count for up to 25 points of your cluster's evaluation and may include considerations such as the following: Would investing in the cluster align with the Jamestown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan's principle of reinforcing streets that exhibit market strength or stability (i.e., sale prices and assessed values that reflect the 'middle market' range for the City of Jamestown: \$40,000 to \$80,000)? Are improvements to the cluster likely to support & protect a nearby community asset (such as a park or school)? Is the cluster visible in a way that influences public perceptions of the city and the condition of its housing market? For more information about the Jamestown Neighborhood Revitalization Plan, click on "Healthy Neighborhoods" at jamestownrenaissance.org.
- **Organization:** This criteria will count for up to 50 points of your cluster's evaluation. Proposed clusters should demonstrate a commitment to cultivating strong communications between neighbors and a shared sense of identity so that momentum gained in 2018 can be carried forward and result in a sustainable neighborhood impact. As part of the pre-application process, please share with us, in writing, how your cluster plans to achieve these goals. Do this as a group activity.
 - **35 points**
 - Quality and reasonableness of plan to build cohesiveness and carry momentum forward
 - **5 points each**
 - Demonstrated communication between neighbors (i.e., phone tree, email list, Facebook page)
 - Demonstrated sense of neighborhood identity (i.e., a name, established boundaries)
 - Past and present group activities that demonstrate neighborhood building

How do I apply?

1. Recruit a minimum of FIVE and not more than FIFTEEN properties to participate in the Challenge with you. Note: a property chosen as a Renaissance Block Challenge cannot participate in two consecutive years. Sixty percent of a proposed cluster must be first-time applicants for the cluster to be eligible. This restriction is designed to get as many first-time participants as possible. Please note on your application those properties that have been granted Renaissance Block Challenge approval in the past and which properties are new to the program.

2. Fill out the pre-application (see pages 5, 6 and 7) and submit it to the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation (JRC). Include in your pre-application:

- **A list of participating property owners**, their property address and if they are new to the program or if they are a repeat participant. A property owner is considered to be returning if they were part of a previously granted RBC cluster, even if they did not take advantage of the grant.
- **The cluster leader's contact information**
- **A map of your cluster** - Note on the map those properties that have been granted Renaissance Block Challenge approval in the past.
- **A brief outline of** how your cluster's plan demonstrates a commitment to cultivating strong communications between neighbors and a shared sense of identity so that momentum gained in 2018 can be carried forward and result in a sustainable neighborhood impact.

Pre-applications are available at the JRC, online at www.jamestownrenaissance.org, and via email (mary@jamestownrenaissance.org).

Pre-applications are due by 5:00 p.m. Friday, December 8, 2017.

Helpful Hints:

- **Learn more about the RBC pre-application process by attending an informational workshop Tuesday, October 10, or Thursday, October 12, at 6:00 p.m. at the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation, 301 East Second Street, Suite 301. Please call 489-3493 for reservations and directions.**
- **Call a neighborhood meeting and fill out the application together.**
- **Have each property owner begin to consider which projects they wish to complete and secure estimates. Securing estimates in the fall is particularly important for asphalt and concrete projects for the coming year.**

What is the next step?

Pre-applications will be reviewed by the Jamestown Renaissance Corporation. Several clusters from the **pre-applicants will be invited to participate in the final application.** **The invitations will be issued in January**, by phone or by email, with a follow up by written correspondence. Those clusters that were not invited to participate in the final application will be notified at that time also and in the same manner.

In the final application phase, each property owner will be asked to outline the projects they wish to complete during the 2018 grant period. **Written estimates for those projects must be obtained from contractors or from a retail price list** and submitted to the JRC with each property owner's final application.

Final applications will be due Friday, March 9th, by 5:00 p.m.

The final applications will be assessed using the same criteria used for the pre-applications, in addition to the following:

- Estimate amounts will be reviewed to help determine how many properties the JRC will be able to assist in 2018.

The final selection of the Renaissance Block Challenge clusters will be announced Friday, March 23rd.

This initial communication will be by email and phone calls with follow up by written correspondence. During the GROW Jamestown Garden Fair and Home Show, Saturday, March 24th at the Northwest Arena, the 2018 RBC clusters will have the opportunity to showcase their neighborhoods.

Important Dates to Remember

Monday, October 2 - Pre-application will be available

Tuesday, October 10 - Pre-application informational workshop, 6:00 PM

Thursday, October 12 - Pre-application informational workshop, 6:00 PM

Friday, December 8 - Pre-applications are due

January 2018 - Invitations to submit final applications will be distributed

Friday, March 9, 2018 - Final applications are due

Friday, March 23, 2018 - RBC grant awardees announced