

Choice Neighborhoods Early Action Activities Planning Tool

Topics to consider when selecting and proposing your Early Action Activities

Topics to Consider	Questions to Consider
Early Action Activity Description	
Early Action Activities Goals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this activity enhance and accelerate the transformation of the neighborhood? • How will this activity encourage additional investment in the neighborhood? • How will this activity build neighborhood confidence (i.e., confidence that the neighborhood is improving)? • How is this activity responsive to neighborhood needs? • How will this activity have a lasting impact on the neighborhood? • If this is an economic development project, does your market study suggest this use is appropriate and sustainable? • How will this activity benefit the residents of the original target housing and/or redeveloped target housing?
Community Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will this activity build community capacity or social cohesion through the way in which it is designed, led, and/or implemented?
Alignment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does this activity align with other improvements/assets in the neighborhood? <i>Example: Homeowner façade improvements on 5 blocks will enhance area where garden and recreation center was recently constructed.</i> • Is the activity located in a strategic place, such as a prominent corner, near the target housing, or near other neighborhood improvements? • If you are proposing multiple activities, do these activities build off of each other and is the proposal cohesive?
Outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What will the final outcome be? How will you measure success?
Administration	
Capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is going to be responsible for implementing or overseeing the activity? • What is their capacity to effectively implement this activity?
Administrative Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are there sufficient leveraged funds to cover Administration effectively? Note Choice Neighborhoods Early Action Activities funds cannot be used toward administration. • Are Administrative costs reasonable?

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Project Development Budget	
Highest & Best Use of Funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the budget for this activity? • Does this activity represent the best use of flexible funds or could this activity be funded in other ways or addressed by existing programming? • Is this activity an improvement for which cities or other parties are typically responsible, and therefore is not the best use of funds?
Leverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has this activity attracted additional leverage and firm commitments from partners?
Project Operational Budget	
Sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How will the project be maintained and financially sustained? <i>Example: If establishing neighborhood Wi-Fi, what funding/organization will sustain Wi-Fi maintenance and operations?</i>
Project Schedule	
Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the estimated schedule with milestones for this activity? • Are there factors that make this activity highly likely to be completed in the required time frame? <i>Examples: Site control has been established; environmental review for site is likely to have a finding of no significant impact; similar activities have been completed in a shorter timeframe.</i> • If applicable, have you consulted with your State Historic Preservation Officer?
Use of Program Income	
Program Income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is there a possibility that program income will be generated from this Early Action Activity? Please include even if income is not expected to be generated until after grant closeout. • If so, is there a clause in the program guidelines or other Early Action Activity documentation that incorporates program income language from the grant agreement?
Program/Policy Guidelines	
Guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review relevant sections above.