

## Communication Funds

### 2024 Guide

### Your Communication Funds Are Now Available!

Communication Funds are intended to generate awareness of and participation in neighborhood activities and events, provide residents with information about local issues, and build relationships between neighbors. We have updated the model of the program to create more opportunities for neighborhood associations and community organizations to have access to this resource.

Neighborhood Associations are required to submit a filled Communication Funds online application form to receive their Communication Funds. We expect neighborhood associations to prioritize the use of these funds to meet a minimum standard, or baseline, of communication strategy.

In order of significance, this baseline includes an updated website, at least one form of regular non-digital communication, and at least one event with robust outreach prior to and during the event. You can read more on how we identified this baseline [here](#). If you would like to use these funds for any other purpose, please contact your [neighborhood staff liaison](#). We encourage folks to use these funds in a way that furthers outreach to all communities in your neighborhood.

To access the funds, you must:

1. Meet with your board and decide to accept your Communication Funds.
2. Submit an online application form stating how you plan to use the funds to your board for discussion and approval.
3. When approved for your project, have your neighborhood's appointed contacts (typically the Chair or Treasurer) review and sign the grant agreement verifying that they understand how funds can be spent and the deadline for spending funds.

4. Complete your project and submit receipts along with an updated budget form reflecting how the funds were before **December 31, 2023**.

Please reach out to your [neighborhood's staff liaison](#) if you would like support brainstorming ways to be more effective at using these funds or need support executing your plans. If you have questions about accessing your funds or the online application, contact Alex Cherin at [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org).

## Communication Strategies:

### Social Media

In the digital age, a great (and free!) method to reach a broad diverse audience is through social media. Social media allows for continuous and direct connections with people in your neighborhood and throughout the world. You can create an intriguing social media presence through consistency and relatability.

Here are a few tips for enhancing your social media accounts:

- Canva ([www.canva.com](http://www.canva.com))  
Canva provides free customizable templates, icons and images that can be used for various promotional materials.
- Instagram ([www.instagram.com](http://www.instagram.com))  
Instagram is a free social sharing network app from Meta. Reels and videos generate more engagement. Complimentary apps exist to reshare posts (remember to give credit to the original content creator), generate videos and more.
- Regular updates!  
Posting frequently makes your organization a familiar account for your followers. The more frequently you post, the more engagement you will accumulate. Try to respond to your followers comments on your posts, comment on other peoples posts. Create a virtual community that reflects the welcoming space your neighborhood cultivates.
- Social Media Ads:

Most social media websites allow for individuals and groups to pay for targeted ads. With \$10 Instagram will promote your post to your target audience. This increases engagement and participation.

## Collaboration

As a neighborhood association, you have many resources and partnerships available to you. A quick and easy way to save money and make your communication funds go a long way is to collaborate with partners and consolidate expenses. Partner with a neighborhood association to create one zoom account that you can both use and pay for. This can cut virtual communication costs in half! Find a neighborhood association that has different meeting dates to avoid overlapping use.

## Print

Printed media can bring a personal touch to engaging with your neighbors. Whether you are printing flyers or a seasonal newsletter, printing costs can eat up a big chunk of the budget. For advice on how to cut down on printing cost, checkout the following resources:

- [How to Reduce your Newsletter's Printing Costs](#)
- [6 easy ways to save money on your next print project](#)

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **1. How do Neighborhood Associations access Communication Funds?**

Neighborhood Associations can accept their Communication Funds by submitting last rounds receipts and a new updated online application form. NAs must have the budget proposal form approved by their board and returned to SE Uplift. NAs may submit their budget proposal sheet electronically to [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org).

### **2. Can funds or grant money be spent on items the group plans to sell?**

Sorry. No, Communication Funds cannot be used to purchase items the group plans to sell.

### **3. Can we change our mind about how we want to use the funds or grant money after we have submitted our communications budget proposal?**

Communication Funds are more flexible and fund proposals can change or be updated throughout the year with board approval. Any major changes (10% or more) will need to be approved by the Neighborhood Association and board and submitted to SE Uplift for review.

### **4. Can we use Communication Funds or grants to sponsor or make a donation to another organization's or group's project?**

Communication Funds given to Neighborhood Associations are intended to be used for outreach related expenses only and may not be used to make donations. Sponsorship may be considered an appropriate use of funding depending on level of visibility offered in exchange for the sponsorship. The same considerations for partnerships described above apply. Please contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org) if your neighborhood wishes to use Communication Funds to sponsor a project/event.

## **5. Can we use Communication Funds in partnership with other groups/orgs?**

Yes, but it must be part of a strategy to support your group's engagement and communication goals. If you are uncertain about whether or not a partnership effort qualifies as an expense, please contact [alex@seuplift.org](mailto:alex@seuplift.org), to discuss the matter before taking action.

For example: a \$500 contribution must result in \$500 worth of publicity, whether you are co-organizing the project or not.

Some of the ways you might receive recognition or visibility include, but are not limited to, having your logo on all outreach materials and online communications associated with the project, having a physical presence during culmination of the project (ex: tabling at an event), or by receiving public acknowledgement at the project site (ex: formal, verbal or visual, attribution at an event, permanent plaque)\*.

\*Must provide documentation to SE Uplift to support rationale behind using Communication Funds to partner (IE flyers, screen shots of website postings, sponsorship benefits, etc.).

## **6. Can funds be spent on food for neighborhood association events?**

No. Unfortunately, as much as we all love food, Communication Funds cannot be used on snacks or food for meetings.