



Early Capacity Building Grant Fund

Investing in the organizations, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and resident-led initiatives serving Houston's Third Ward.

Applications open September 1, 2026



YOUR FUND ADMINISTRATOR

Why Houston Land Bank

Our mission is to strategically acquire, steward, and return vacant, abandoned, and damaged properties to productive use, catalyzing transformative community and economic development for the City of Houston. That same stewardship is what we bring to this fund.

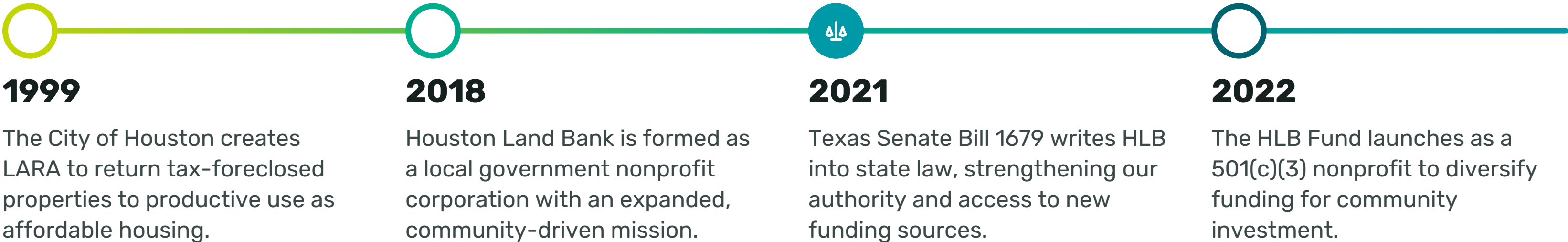
-  **Publicly accountable**
A public nonprofit corporation of the City of Houston, governed by a 13-member board appointed by the Mayor, City Council, Harris County, and HISD
-  **Authorized by state law**
Named in Texas statute as Houston’s land bank under Senate Bill 1679, with clear legal authority to steward property, funding, and public resources.
-  **Proven community steward**
Our model of acquiring, maintaining, and facilitating development with partners has reactivated \$125M+ in property value and put 1,000+ affordable homes in reach of Houston families.



OUR FOCUS AREAS

- Housing**
- Economic Development**
- Food Access Solutions**
- Parks & Public Spaces**
- Conservation & Resiliency**

Our Story, Our Authority



THE TEAM • HANDS-ON EXPERIENCE

People who know grants, and know Third Ward

Rooted in Third Ward

Our offices are on Elgin Street in 77004. We work where we serve alongside residents and partners

Grants management

A program manager focused solely on this fund, from outreach through awardee reporting

Team Experience

Trained and experienced staff with 30+ years of cumulative experience serving neighborhood investment across Houston

Community Experience

For over 20 years, Houston Land Bank has led community transformation, empowering residents and organizations in the Third Ward and other historically underrepresented areas

THE PROGRAM

Program Overview

The Third Ward Early Capacity Building Grant Fund is a community-centered funding initiative administered by Houston Land Bank, designed to strengthen organizations, small businesses, entrepreneurs, and resident-led initiatives actively serving Houston's Third Ward.

- ◆ Builds long-term organizational capacity and supports economic opportunity
- ◆ Invests in projects aligned with the Third Ward Complete Communities Action Plan
- ◆ Awarded through a competitive application process

\$1,000,000

Distributed through a competitive application process.

- ◆ Grant Funding will now total \$1,000,000 and represents 100% of our funding partner's commitment to be available for community capacity-building grants.

Original fund • \$850,000

Today • \$1,000,000

Five Priority Focus Areas



Workforce & Small Business Development

Driving economic growth by supporting small businesses, helping create jobs, and serving residents through targeted programs and funding initiatives.



Community Health & Food Access

Improving food access and promoting health and wellness by enhancing local resources and community engagement initiatives.



Youth & Education

Uplifting young people ensuring youth receive quality educational opportunities and resources to support their growth and development.



Community Leadership

Empowering residents, supporting initiatives that engage residents in leadership roles and foster shared responsibility for local improvement.



Cultural Preservation

Supporting the arts and cultural events, serving residents while preserving the community's rich heritage and traditions.



GRANT FUND QUALIFICATIONS

Who Can Apply

To be eligible, applicants must:

- ✓ Demonstrate a clear connection to Houston’s Third Ward
- ✓ Serve Third Ward residents through programs, services, or business activities
- ✓ Propose a project aligned with one of the five grant priorities

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

- ◆ Nonprofit organizations
- ◆ Small businesses
- ◆ Entrepreneurs
- ◆ Community-based organizations
- ◆ Resident-led initiatives

GRANT PRIORITIES

- ◆ Workforce & small business development
- ◆ Community health & food access
- ◆ Youth & education
- ◆ Community leadership
- ◆ Cultural preservation

To be considered for funding, applicants must be legally organized as a registered business, nonprofit, or other recognized legal entity, or have a registered DBA.

FUNDING SUMMARY

Two Grant Tiers

\$1,000,000 deployed across both tiers

TIER 1 • COMMUNITY MICRO GRANT

2+ years established

Up to \$15,000

For early-stage and grassroots organizations beginning to grow their impact in Third Ward.

Designed for

- Grassroots organizations
- Emerging nonprofits & small businesses
- Entrepreneurs & resident-led initiatives

Funds will be released in installments pending approval

TIER 2 • GROWTH FUND

5+ years established

Up to \$75,000

For established nonprofits and businesses with a proven track record of impact in Third Ward.

Designed for

- Established nonprofits
- Established small businesses
- Organizations scaling programs & community impact

50%

30%

20%

Funds released in three installments (50% / 30% / 20%), based on milestone achievements

7

HOW TO APPLY

Required Application Components

- 1 Completed grant application**
Submitted through the HLB online application portal
- 2 Organization or business description**
Mission, services, and organizational overview
- 3 Project proposal**
Project description, community need, goals, activities & expected outcomes
- 4 Completed budget template**
HLB template plus a budget narrative justifying how funds will be used
- 5 Proof of Third Ward connection**
Service to residents and/or operations
- 6 Business / organization documentation**
Business registration or nonprofit documentation, as applicable
- 7 IRS Form W-9**
Current signed form for your organization or business
- 8 Applicant certifications**
Is your organization in good standing?

All applicants must submit a complete application through [the Houston Land Bank online application portal](#).

Required Materials: Tier 1 vs Tier 2

TIER 1 • COMMUNITY MICRO GRANT

2+ years

Designed to stay simple:

- ◆ Completed application form
- ◆ Brief organization description (300 words max)
- ◆ Brief project description: use of funds, experience, community need, expected outcomes
- ◆ Timeline of your project proposal
- ◆ Completed HLB budget template
- ◆ Proof of Third Ward connection and experience
- ◆ Business registration documents (LLC filing, DBA, or nonprofit registration)

TIER 2 • GROWTH FUND

5+ years

Everything in Tier 1, plus:

- ◆ Legal formation documents: LLC registration, Articles of Incorporation, IRS letter, or fiscal sponsor agreement
- ◆ Most recent financial statements: P&L, tax returns, or balance sheet
- ◆ Organizational structure: leadership, staff, board, and key roles
- ◆ Detailed project proposal: scope, timeline, outcomes, Third Ward impact
- ◆ Minimum of three letters of recommendation from community leaders
- ◆ Organization-wide operating budget
- ◆ Audited financials (for-profit) or IRS Form 990 and board roster (nonprofit)
- ◆ ACH payment information: voided check or bank verification letter

PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Eligible Use of Funds

Grant funds may be used for reasonable and necessary expenses that directly support the proposed project, including but not limited to:

- ◆ Program implementation and project-related expenses
- ◆ Equipment and supplies
- ◆ Professional or contracted services
- ◆ Marketing and outreach
- ◆ Training and capacity-building activities
- ◆ Other eligible costs that directly advance the proposed project
- ◆ Personnel and administration costs (May include project management, office supplies, utilities, and other indirect costs necessary to administer the grant)



PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Important Policies

- One **application** per organization or business will be accepted.
- One or more eligible project activities may be proposed, provided the total request stays **within the tier maximum**.
- Houston Land Bank reserves the right to **partially fund a proposal** based on available funding, project scope, budget reasonableness, and alignment with program priorities.
- Applicants may apply to **only one grant tier**, not both Tier 1 and Tier 2.
- A completed **HLB budget template** must be submitted with every application.

Failure to follow program guidelines or submit all required documentation may result in an incomplete application and disqualification

GET READY TO APPLY

Grant Writing Workshop

A hands-on workshop designed to help applicants successfully prepare and submit their grant application.



WHEN

August 11, 2026 • 5:00 PM



WHERE

Virtual. Register at houstonlandbank.org



WHY

To prepare organizations and businesses with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to submit a complete and competitive application

PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN HOW TO

- ◆ Develop a strong and compelling project proposal
- ◆ Clearly define project goals, activities, and expected outcomes
- ◆ Complete the grant budget template and prepare a realistic project budget
- ◆ Align budget requests with project activities and eligible expenses
- ◆ Understand required application materials and supporting documentation
- ◆ Receive technical assistance and ask questions before applications open

REVIEW PROCESS

How Applications Are Evaluated

Each eligible application is reviewed by Houston Land Bank staff using a standardized 100-point scoring rubric designed to ensure a fair, transparent, and community-centered review process.

- 1 Applications are first screened for eligibility and completeness
- 2 Eligible applications are independently scored using the rubric
- 3 Scores reflect proposal strength, organizational readiness, project feasibility, and alignment with program priorities
- 4 Tier 2 applicants must also receive community input through letters of support

MINIMUM SCORE TO QUALIFY

75 / 100

Applicants must score at least 75 points during the staff review process to be considered for funding.



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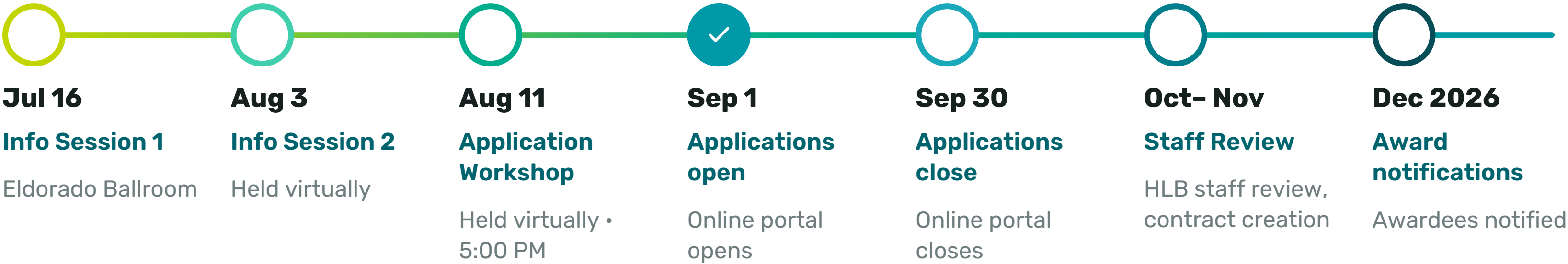
Application Scoring Rubric

EVALUATION CATEGORY	POINTS
Community Impact & Third Ward Alignment	20
Project Plan & Feasibility	20
Equity & Community-Centered Approach	20
Budget & Cost Effectiveness	20
Sustainability & Long-Term Impact	20
Total	100



IMPORTANT DATES

Full Program Timeline



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

With Thanks

Grant Funding will now total \$1,000,000 and represents 100% of our funding partner’s commitment to be available for community capacity-building grants. We are grateful to everyone whose support makes this investment in Third Ward possible.



Rice University

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Houston City Council

For championing Third Ward and supporting this program and all Houston neighborhoods.

The CAC

The Community Advisory Council, for their guidance and steadfast support of Third Ward priorities.

Questions?

We're here to help you put together a strong application.
Reach out to us.

Kadiatou Fofana

Early Capacity Building Grant Fund Program Manager

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Register for the workshop at [houstonlandbank.org](https://www.houstonlandbank.org)

NEXT WORKSHOP August 11 | Virtual | 5:00 PM

www.houstonlandbank.org



[houstonlandbank.org](https://www.houstonlandbank.org)
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