

Title	Richmond Community ToolBank	07/15/2024
	by Toby Vernon in Impact 100 Richmond Grant Application (2024)	id. 46998323
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Original Submission	07/15/2024
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Score	n/a
1. Name of Organization	Richmond Community ToolBank
2. 501C3 Number	90-0386790
3. Geographic Area(s) Served:	Chesterfield County City of Richmond Goochland Hanover Henrico Powhatan
4. Application Contact Name:	Toby Vernon
5. Application Contact Phone Number:	+18042190606
6. Application Contact Email:	toby@richmondtoolbank.org
7. Organization Website (if applicable):	richmondtoolbank.org
8. Organization Executive Director/CEO Contact:	Toby Vernon

9. Organization Executive Director/CEO Phone Number:	+18042190606
10. Organization Executive Director/CEO Email:	toby@richmondtoolbank.org
11. What is your highest rating on GuideStar (we recommend at least Gold):	Platinum
Provide a link to your GuideStar organizational profile, if applicable.	
12. Please confirm that the following grant criteria are met by the applicant:	<p>Organization has an annual operational budget above \$250,000.</p> <p>Organization has been in existence for 36 months or longer, and is currently in good standing in the state where the entity was formed.</p> <p>Project will serve needs in the City of Richmond and/or the surrounding counties (Chesterfield, Goochland, Hanover, Henrico, and Powhatan).</p> <p>Funds will be utilized within 12 - 18 months, and the program/project has demonstrated sustainability following the use of Impact 100 Richmond funds.</p>
13. Select ONE of Impact 100 Richmond's focus areas where your proposed work best aligns:	Family
14. Summary: Provide 1-2 sentences that summarize your specific funding request and the goal of this project or program effort?	We seek to empower 2,500 low-middle income individuals with skills, tools, and resources to make home care & repair affordable and attainable.

15. Organization: Briefly describe the history and mission of the organization.	<p>Richmond ToolBank serves community-based organizations by providing tools, equipment & expertise to empower their most ambitious goals. ToolBank is Virginia's only source for high-quality, low-cost physical tools and the education & training to use them. We steward an inventory of 10,000 tools at our facility located in Richmond's Diamond District that is dedicated for use of social impact projects that make Richmond a safer, more vibrant, and equitable place for everyone.</p> <p>Richmond ToolBank is an affiliate of ToolBank USA which parents a network of community ToolBanks and Disaster Service programs nationwide. We opened in 2015 with just 10 members and one full time staff member. Since then, we've loaned more than \$9M in tools & equipment to 540 organizations that have equipped 133,000 volunteers on 14,000 projects. During that time we've developed two new programs, expanded to four full-time team members, engaged over 10,000 volunteers, and led approximately 6,000 hours of tool instruction. We've kept our business and program model lean and efficient by leveraging volunteers as a reserve labor force and being excellent resource stewards.</p>
16. Community Need: Describe the community need(s) that the program/project will address.	<p>Richmond faces a critical need for affordable home maintenance education and resources, particularly in low-middle income and BIPOC communities. We know from the literature that these communities enjoy far lower rates of homeownership than their white and higher-earning peers due to lost generational knowledge around home care & tool use, lacking confidence in ability to care for their investment, and distrust of contractors. These same communities are also at greater risk of predatory lending and buying practices, higher energy costs, and involuntary displacement stemming from a cascade of deferred home maintenance.</p> <p>Through our own market research, community engagement, focus groups, and a deep reading of the regional housing affordability literature, we understand that there is a significant unmet demand for home care and DIY maintenance education focused on home safety, comfort, and performance.</p> <p>The RVA ToolBOX Program directly addresses these needs by empowering homeowners with the skills and resources to confidently tackle repairs, improve their homes' efficiency, and ultimately build wealth through property ownership.</p>

17. Community Need: Describe how a \$100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant for this program/project would be transformational for your organization and/or the community.

A \$100,000 Impact 100 Richmond grant would be transformative for both the Richmond Community ToolBank and the community we serve. This investment would allow us to:

- Triple the Number of Homeowners Served: Expand our reach to 2,500 low-middle income and BIPOC homeowners in just two years, providing them with the skills and resources to maintain their homes safely and affordably.
- Transform Our Facility: Optimize our space to create a welcoming and functional learning environment for ToolBOX workshops, complete with workstations and ample storage for materials.
- Equip Homeowners for Success: Purchase new tools specifically for the ToolBOX program, ensuring participants have access to the resources they need to put their skills into practice.
- Reach Underserved Communities: Invest in mobile workshops and outreach initiatives to reach residents in Richmond's Southside and East End, breaking down barriers to access and ensuring equitable distribution of resources.
- Build Community Wealth: By empowering homeowners to tackle repairs themselves, we reduce their reliance on expensive contractors, allowing them to save money, build equity, and invest in their neighborhoods.

This grant is not simply about funding a program; it's about investing in the long-term well-being and resilience of Richmond's communities, fostering a sense of pride and ownership among residents, and creating a more equitable and sustainable city.

18. Program/Project: Provide a high-level description of the program/project for which you are seeking funding.

The RVA ToolBOX Program is a transformative initiative designed to empower Richmond homeowners, particularly those from low-middle income and BIPOC communities, with the skills and resources to maintain their homes affordably and sustainably. Addressing a critical need identified in the RVA 300 Master Plan and the Analysis of Impediments to Fair Housing Choice, the program aims to break the cycle of deferred maintenance, which can lead to unsafe living conditions and displacement.

Key Components:

- Empowering Workshops: Hands-on workshops led by industry experts cover essential home maintenance skills, empowering participants to tackle common repairs like plumbing leaks, electrical issues, and carpentry needs. Workshops are designed to be accessible and engaging, with a focus on building confidence and practical know-how.
- Culturally Relevant Curriculum: The curriculum is tailored to the specific needs and experiences of Richmond's diverse culture and the historical housing stock, addressing common issues found in these contexts.
- Targeted Outreach: Strategic partnerships with local organizations like Habitat for Humanity and the Better Housing Coalition facilitate outreach to underserved neighborhoods, ensuring the program reaches those who

need it most.

-Tool Access: Participants gain access to the Richmond ToolBank's extensive inventory of tools and equipment, enabling them to apply their newfound skills and complete home repair projects without financial barriers.

-Experiential Learning Space: The program leverages space within the ToolBank's facility and at partner construction sites to create engaging, realistic learning environments that foster collaboration and hands-on learning.

Impact and Alignment with Community Goals:

The RVA ToolBOX Program directly aligns with the City of Richmond's goals around environmental sustainability, community wealth building, and housing affordability. By promoting housing stability and affordability, fostering community engagement, advancing racial equity, and enhancing community well-being through essential skills training, the program contributes to a stronger, more resilient Richmond.

Proven Success and Scalability:

With over 6,000 hours of tool training provided to hundreds of individuals, the Richmond ToolBank has a proven track record of empowering community members. The RVA ToolBOX Program builds on this success, having already led 24 successful workshops with overwhelmingly positive participant feedback. This funding will allow us to scale the program significantly, reaching 2,500 homeowners within two years and transforming the landscape of homeownership in Richmond.

By fostering self-sufficiency and empowering homeowners to take control of their living spaces, the RVA ToolBOX Program is a transformative solution to a pressing community need, contributing to a more equitable, stable, and vibrant Richmond.

19. Program/Project: What challenges are you likely to encounter? How will your organization address them?

The RVA ToolBOX Program's expansion faces two key challenges: 1) Reaching and engaging low-access communities who may lack trust in traditional institutions and/or face digital literacy barriers, and 2) Bringing workshops directly into these communities, which may lack adequate facilities.

To address these challenges, we will:

1. Build trust with community partners like churches, neighborhood associations, and local leaders to build relationships and credibility within target communities.
2. Employ multi-channel outreach through a mix of digital and traditional methods, including social media, flyers, door-to-door canvassing, and community events, to reach individuals with varying levels of digital access.
3. Offer mobile workshops by investing in portable tool kits and partnering with community centers, libraries, and other spaces to bring workshops directly into low-access neighborhoods, eliminating transportation barriers for participants.
4. Prioritize cultural relevance: Ensure all program materials and communication are culturally sensitive and linguistically accessible to the diverse communities we serve.
5. Foster Community Leadership: Recruit and train community ambassadors who can promote the program within their networks and provide ongoing support to participants.

By proactively addressing these challenges, we will ensure that the RVA ToolBOX Program reaches and effectively serves the communities who stand to benefit most from its empowering resources

20. Program/Project: Will you collaborate with any other organizations? If so, who will be your partners, and what will they contribute?

The RVA ToolBOX Program thrives on collaboration. Our successful launch and ongoing development have been made possible through partnerships with diverse stakeholders.

- Academic Institutions: VCU's Executive MBA program conducted a market study to assess audience interest and preferences.
- Corporate Partners: Altria and Morning Consult provided valuable consumer insights to inform program structure and pricing.
- Community Consultants: The Spark Mill led extensive community engagement efforts to ensure the program's relevance and effectiveness.
- Nonprofit Partners: Habitat for Humanity provides workshop venues and promotes the program to their partner families. We partner with Better Housing Coalition's Homebuyers Club to support their vision of preparing 5,000 low-medium income residents for homeownership.
- Industry Experts: We hire skilled tradespeople and contractors from local construction companies to lead workshops and mentor participants.

We will continue to deepen these existing partnerships and forge new ones as the program expands. These collaborations are essential for reaching underserved communities, ensuring cultural relevance, and providing participants with the highest quality instruction and resources.

21. Program/Project: Using metrics appropriate for your program/project, describe your goals, indicators of success, and plan for achieving success (i.e., people served, dollars raised, community outcomes, etc.).

The RVA ToolBOX Program aims to achieve the following measurable goals within two years:

1. Empower 2,500 homeowners within two years, focusing on low-middle income and BIPOC residents.
2. Increase workshop capacity by 50% annually, offering diverse topics relevant to the community's needs.
3. Achieve an 80% improvement rate in participant knowledge and confidence through pre- and post-workshop assessments.
4. Reduce reported deferred maintenance issues by 25% among participants within one year.

We will achieve these goals through targeted outreach, culturally relevant curriculum development, tool library expansion, facility enhancement, and continuous evaluation.

1. Targeted Outreach: Partnering with community organizations to reach underserved populations and promote program benefits.
2. Curriculum Development: Creating engaging, culturally relevant content that addresses the specific needs of our target audience.

Tool Access Expansion: Ensuring access to necessary tools and resources for participants to apply their skills.

3. Facility Enhancement: Leveraging existing space to create a dedicated learning environment that fosters collaboration and hands-on learning.
4. Continuous Evaluation: Regularly collecting and analyzing data to measure progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure the program's long-term sustainability and impact.

<p>22. Program/Project: Is there a specific timeline for your program/project, or will it be ongoing? If ongoing, describe the metrics used to evaluate it in the long term.</p>	<p>The RVA ToolBOX Program is designed as an ongoing initiative with distinct phases to ensure both short-term success and long-term impact.</p> <p>Phase 1: Scaling Up (Years 1-2): This initial phase, funded by this grant, will focus on rapid expansion, tripling the number of homeowners served to 2,500 within two years. Success will be measured by increased workshop capacity (50% annual growth), diverse participant enrollment (with an emphasis on low-middle income and BIPOC homeowners), and demonstrated improvement in participants' skills and confidence (80% showing increased knowledge). We will also track the program's impact on reducing deferred maintenance, aiming for a 25% decrease in reported issues among participants within one year.</p> <p>Phase 2: Long-Term Sustainability and Impact (Years 3+): Beyond the initial grant period, the program will shift focus to long-term sustainability and broader community impact. We will continue to track program reach and participant engagement, but our primary focus will be on measuring the program's impact on housing stability, affordability, and equity. This will include tracking metrics like reduced displacement rates, increased property values in target neighborhoods, and overall improvements in quality of life for participants. Additionally, to ensure the program's longevity, we will develop a diversified funding model that includes earned income, individual donations, and ongoing grant support.</p>
<p>23. Funding: Describe your organization's financial position, including current financial state, cash flow, endowments, annual fundraising, and goals related to revenue.</p>	<p>Richmond ToolBank leadership upholds high standards of fiscal responsibility by diversifying revenue sources, maintaining a strong forward-funding cash balance, and continually seeking new funding opportunities. Over the last nine years of operation, we have increased our annual budget and grown our staff size consistently without having to retract at any point. In 2023, we generated \$502,664 in revenue through a mix of foundation and corporate grants, program fees, special events, sponsorships, and individual giving. Our expenses totaled \$448,441, primarily covering program costs, staffing, and facilities.</p> <p>We currently hold \$473,428 in assets, primarily comprised of cash reserves. While we do not have an endowment, we actively engage in annual fundraising efforts to support our programs and operations.</p> <p>Our revenue goals for 2024-2025 include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increasing tool lending revenue by 10% through expanded outreach and membership growth. 2. Generating \$20,000 in program fees from the expanded RVA ToolBOX Program. 3. Securing \$150,000 in new philanthropic support through grants and individual donations to support program expansion and facility enhancements. <p>We are committed to diversifying our revenue streams and building a sustainable financial model that allows us to continue growth & expansion without compromising on fiscal responsibility principles.</p>

24. Funding: What is the total program/project budget request? Have you raised any other funds to date to support the program/project? If awarded, how will a \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Richmond be used?

The total budget request for the RVA ToolBOX Program expansion is \$282,500 over two years. This budget covers the following key expenses:

- Labor Costs: \$177,500 for program management, workshop facilitators, and a program assistant.
- Equipment & Supplies: \$105,000 for new tools and equipment, workshop supplies, and technology investments.

We have successfully raised \$90,500 towards this goal through a combination of corporate sponsorships, foundation grants, government funding, earned income, and individual donations. This includes a significant commitment from corporate sponsors.

A \$100,000 grant from Impact 100 Richmond would be instrumental in scaling up the RVA ToolBOX Program in three key categories:

1. ToolBOX Training Center: \$40,000 to optimize our existing space for workshops, including additional tools, storage solutions, workstations, and organizational systems.
2. Workshop Instruction: \$40,000 will be dedicated to providing free workshops to hundreds of individuals using our “pay-what-you-can” fee structure which ensures anyone can receive training and education regardless of financial position.
3. Program Outreach: \$20,000 will cover costs to promote ToolBOX workshops and bring them to community members where they are.

This investment will catalyze the growth and scale of the RVA ToolBOX Program, ensuring its long-term impact on empowering Richmond homeowners and transforming the landscape of affordable home maintenance in the city.

25. Funding: How will you fund ongoing expenses associated with the program/project if awarded the Impact 100 Richmond grant? If funding is for a capital project, what are the anticipated ongoing expenses (maintenance, utilities, etc.), and how will you sustain these expenses?

The RVA ToolBOX Program's ongoing expenses will be funded through a diversified revenue model that prioritizes sustainability and community impact. Sliding scale workshop fees from participants will cover a portion of program costs, ensuring accessibility while generating income that offsets some costs. We will actively cultivate relationships with mission-aligned corporations who recognize the value of investing in affordable homeownership and community development. By offering sponsorship opportunities and highlighting the program's impact, we aim to secure ongoing support from companies that share our commitment to empowering Richmond homeowners. Additionally, we will continue to pursue grants from local, state, and national funders who support housing stability and community development, leveraging our strong track record to secure ongoing funding.

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