

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 Oswego'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 (dollar-for-dollar match, up to **\$1,000**)
- Access to discounts from sponsoring hardware stores and garden centers (TBA)

Challenge Components:

- Exterior improvements completed by the participating property owners (or their chosen contractors) during the summer/fall of 2025
- Events, such as block parties, organized by the participating neighbors to celebrate the completed work

What are examples of eligible improvements ?

- Painting
- Porch repair
- Soffit repair
- Sidewalk repair
- Mailboxes
- Exterior lights
- Front yard landscaping
- Front doors/screen doors
- And more...

How is the Challenge supported ?

- Foundation and corporate sponsors provide funding for the matching grants
- Sponsoring businesses offer special discounts to participants
- The Oswego Renaissance Association (ORA) administers the program and helps facilitate coordination with the City of Oswego if necessary

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 will be taken into consideration during the process of designating Renaissance Blocks in 2025.

•**Number of participating properties:** Proposed neighborhood clusters should have between **FIVE and FIFTEEN** participating properties in the same block or street. Clusters may include homeowners and landlords. If your proposed cluster exceeds **FIFTEEN** properties, contact the ORA for prior approval.

•**Organization:** Proposed clusters should demonstrate a commitment to cultivating strong communications between neighbors and a shared sense of identity so that momentum gained in 2025 can be carried forward.

•**Strategic value:** Proposed clusters in the [2025 Target Areas](#) (see Map at www.oswegonyonline.com) will receive special consideration. For details, email oswegorenaisance@gmail.com, or call the ORA at 315-216-4338.

How do I apply?

1. **Recruit neighbors to participate in the Challenge with you.** Note: A property cannot participate in two consecutive years.
2. **Fill out a pre-application and submit it to the Oswego Renaissance Association (ORA).** Pre-applications are available online at www.oswegonyonline.com.
3. **Meet with the Challenge coordinators.** Your cluster will get an assessment of your block, ideas for neighborhood activities, and application assistance.
4. **Fill out and turn in the final application** Your cluster will have to outline the scope of work at each house, how you propose completing the work, other resources you can provide, and how you plan to develop and sustain a neighborhood identity.

Key dates:

Pre-applications due by **Tuesday April 1st, 2025.**

Final applications due by **Saturday May 2nd, 2025**

Awards announced by **Monday, May 12, 2025.**

Improvement projects and events: **Summer and Fall 2025**

Questions?

Contact Paul Stewart at the Oswego Renaissance Association
453 Mahar Hall, SUNY Oswego 13126

Phone: 315-216-4338 E-mail: oswegorenaisance@gmail.com

Making a More Competitive Block Challenge Grant Application

Block Challenge grants are competitive. It is expected that the number of applicants will exceed the available funds each year. Therefore, priority for funding is made on the criterion below.

1. Location in a Target Zone

Clusters of properties that are located inside, or within a block of, the target zones will be more likely to be funded than clusters outside the target zones. Please See [Target Zone FAQ](#).

2. Close Proximity of Clustered Properties

Properties that are physically close together will create more of an impact than properties that are scattered. Applications where the property improvements are occurring in a concentrated area are more likely to be funded than applications where houses are separated by great distances.

3. High Numbers of Participating Properties

Although at least 5 households on the same block are required to participate, that is just the minimum. Competitive applications have 10 or even 15 houses participating on the same block. It is important that these houses are on the same street. If many more houses are recruited, but they are scattered around other blocks, streets, this will weaken the application. Houses on other streets must be encouraged to form their own group application.

4. Teamwork on Projects

All things being equal, groups that demonstrate specifically how they will work together and assist each other in their block improvements are more competitive.

5. A Plan to Sustain the Momentum

This is a significant factor in the competitiveness of an application. Block Challenge grants are designed to do more than improve homes. The ORA seeks to partner with residents to revitalize whole neighborhoods over several years. This is accomplished both through physical improvements and -- just as importantly -- stronger connections among neighbors. A strong grant application will indicate future plans for how the neighbors will work together to improve their block - not only physically, but socially as well. Having your group meet with a Resident Leader to discuss your neighborhood, and get ideas on how sustained revitalization can be sustained, will likely strengthen the application. Please [contact the ORA](#) to set up an appointment.

Pre-Application

Please complete this short pre-application to signal interest by your group of neighbors in the Renaissance Block Challenge. The signature of each person you have contacted and their street addresses should be in the space below, followed by contact information for the group's designated contact person.

Signature of group member

Street address

| | |
|-----------|-------|
| 1. _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ |
| 6. _____ | _____ |
| 7. _____ | _____ |
| 8. _____ | _____ |
| 9. _____ | _____ |
| 10. _____ | _____ |
| 11. _____ | _____ |
| 12. _____ | _____ |
| 13. _____ | _____ |
| 14. _____ | _____ |
| 15. _____ | _____ |

Your group's primary contact: Name _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

Submit pre-application by April 1st 2025 to:

Paul Stewart
Oswego Renaissance Association
453 Mahar Hall
SUNY Oswego
Oswego, NY 13126
Email: oswegorenaiance@gmail.com Phone: 315-216-4338

