

Government of the District of Columbia



Office of Advisory Neighborhood Commissions
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Suite 11
Washington, DC 20004
(202) 727-9945

MEMORANDUM

TO: ANC 3B
FR: Denise Wiktor, General Counsel
DT: 06/10/2025 Memo #2
RE: Miracle in the Alley Grant Application as Amended.

After my initial memo, the OANC received a copy of an amended grant request from the 3800 W Decorating Committee which removed impermissible expenditure and clarified the supplies budget. I have reviewed the **amended** application and amended budget sent to the OANC and have found that the request is **permissible** expenditure of ANC monies as outlined below. As amended the full grant application is permissible.

There are five prongs a grant must meet to be a permissible expense¹ and a 6th requirement of the D.C. Official Code that limits the amount of a grant that can be spent on overhead². They are:

1. **Public Purpose:** ANC grants must be for “public purposes within the Commission area.”³ A public purpose is one “that includes a significant benefit for the community and is not done for the primary purpose of benefitting a private entity.”⁴ This is a community event in a public space that is open to everyone in the ANC and meets the public purpose requirement. The reviewer will admit to a bias towards big showy light displays for the winter holidays, all of them⁵—but it is up to the ANC to determine if this is a public purpose they support based upon their budget and priorities.
2. **Local Benefit:** A grant must “benefit persons who work or reside in the Commission area.”⁶ This does not mean the grant may only benefit Commission residents; it simply

¹ See, *Letter to Schanette Grant on Seasoned Settlers and Grants Generally*, April 14, 2022, found at <https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/Letter-to-OANC-Re-Seasoned-Settlers-Grant-and-Grants-Generally-.pdf>

² D.C. Official Code 1-309.13(m)(2)(D) “No Commission shall provide a grant for which the grantee estimates that the overhead costs would exceed 15% of the entire grant amount.”

³ D.C. Official Code § 1-309.13(l)(1).

⁴ *Id.*

⁵ Diwali, Hannukah, Christmas, New year, Solstice and Kwanzaa. In addition to being festive, the lights add a safety element.

⁶ D.C. Official Code § 1-309.13(m)(1).

means the grant's benefits should be focused on those residents.⁷ This is an alley within the ANC and the most immediate beneficiaries are ANC residents.

3. **Proposed Project.** A grant must be for a proposed project.⁸ This is a discrete single event.
4. **Organization.** A grant must be to an "organization," not an individual or a government entity,⁹ although the organization need not be incorporated.¹⁰ The 3800 W Decorating Committee is an organization within the meaning of the code. However, as I suspect they are not incorporated they will need a fiscal agent to have the check made out to. This could be a local non-profit, main street or business. Checks should not be made out to individuals. Since the Committee indicated they will not purchase the items until closer in time to the event, I recommend the ANC not issue the check until it is closer to the event so as not to have a large time gap between the check and receipts as it can cause delays in processing the QFR the check is written in.
5. **Non-Duplication.** A grant cannot duplicate any services offered by the D.C. government.¹¹ D.C. does not provide this service.
6. **Overhead.** Overhead cannot exceed 15% of the grant amount.¹² None of the grant monies will be used for overhead as the Code defines it.

Conclusion

For the reasons stated above this grant is a **permissible** expenditure of ANC funds.

⁷ See *Letter to Deborah K. Nichols*, Nov. 9, 2006, at 2 n.2 found at [Letter-to-Deborah-Nichols-Re-Whether-an-ANC-may-approve-a-grant-to-commission-plans-and-drawings-.pdf](#) (ANC 4C grant was permissible where the "[b]enefit to other ANCs would be incidental to the benefit conferred on ANC 4C residents," because a grant's benefits need not "be exclusive to the ANC that gives the grant funds"); see *Letter to Comm'r Fletcher*, Mar. 15, 2022, at 2, available at <https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/ANC-7E-Letter-to-Commissioner-Fletcher-RePublic-Purposes-Within-the-Commission-Area-.pdf> making the same point with respect to the public-purpose requirement).

⁸D.C. Official Code § 1-309.13(m)(2)(A).

⁹ D.C. Official Code § 1-309.13(m)(1); see also *Letter to Deborah K. Nichols*, Jan. 14, 2010, at 4, available at <https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/2018-02/ANC-January-14-2010-Guidelines-for-Use-of-ANC-Funds.pdf>

¹⁰ See *Letter to Deborah K. Nichols*, Aug., 4, 2000 at 3, available at <https://oag.dc.gov/sites/default/files/201802/ANC-August-4-2000-Grants-by-ANCs-Public-Purpose-and-Corporate-Status-of-Recipients.pdf> ("The plain meaning of the term 'organization' includes unincorporated associations").

¹¹ D.C. Official Code § 1-309.13(m)(1).

¹² D.C. Official Code §1-309.13(m)(1)(2)(D).

OANC Form 100 – Advisory Neighborhood Commission Grant Application

1. Date of Application

6/2/2025

2. Date of Project or Activity

12/6/2025

3. Which ANC is the recipient of this application? ANC 3B

4. Title of Grant or Name of Event/Project

Miracle in the Alley

5. Project start date?

11/8/2025

Project end date?

1/18/2026

6. Applicant Organization Name and Address, and current source of funding

3800 W Decorating Committee, 3811 W St NW Washington, DC 20007. Privately funded through individual contributions.

7. Is the organization or group a 501(c)(3)?

☐ Yes

☒ No

(If yes, please answer the following questions)

• When was the incorporation date?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

• Is the incorporation for profit or not for profit?

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

• EIN#:

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Please provide a list of board members:

N/A

8. Primary Project Contact Name

Dan Theisen

9. Title

Click or tap here to enter text.

10. Address (if different from above)

Click or tap here to enter text.

11. Telephone

202-352-7878

12. Fax

Click or tap here to enter text.

13. E-mail Address

Theisen.dan@gmail.com

14. Please list prior experience of primary project contact with similar projects.

Since December 2017, we have completed the Miracle in the Alley project annually and follow this approximate timeline: 1.) Early November: Inventory and replacement purchasing. 2.) Late November: Installation of decorations. 3.) First Weekend of December: Grand opening celebration. 4.) December: Decorations remain in place for public enjoyment. 5.) January: Decorations removed and stored.

15. Description of Proposed Project/Activity (continue on separate sheet of paper if needed)

Since 2017, the residents of the 3800 block of W St's north alley have come together each December to create a magical neighborhood tradition known as Miracle in the Alley. This community-driven event features festive overhead lights, whimsical holiday inflatables, and a grand opening celebration complete with hot chocolate and candy canes. Each year, the event kicks off on the first weekend of December and transforms the alley into a winter wonderland for all of ANC 3B to enjoy. What started as a modest effort among neighbors has grown into a cherished seasonal attraction. The grand opening typically draws over 300 attendees, with many more strolling through the alley nightly throughout December. The event fosters community spirit, provides a safe and joyful gathering place, and brings people of all ages together in celebration. We respectfully request a grant to support the continuation and improvement of Miracle in the Alley. Funding will help cover the installation of the lights and event supplies. Most importantly, we are seeking support for a safer lighting installation solution, as the current method requires residents to scale ladders over 20 feet high—an increasing concern as volunteers age.

16. Projected Total Cost

\$2,000

17. Amount Requested

\$2,000

18. Amount of Overhead Costs

\$0

19. How are Overhead⁸ Costs calculated?

N/A

20. Other Sources of Funding (be specific, provide names/continue on separate sheet)

⁸ Project Overhead refers to the costs of a project that an organization incurs indirectly – also called indirect costs. These expenses cannot be directly attributed to one project, but instead are costs related to running the organization and therefore apply to all projects the organization completes.

In 2024, community members generously contributed \$2,403.31, allowing us to sustain the tradition. These contributions demonstrate the high value the neighborhood places on this event. Additionally, volunteers contribute countless hours to setup and hosting, reinforcing the deep-rooted local support for Miracle in the Alley.

21. Applicants must submit a detailed budget of their proposed project or event. Does your budget clearly identify the purposes for which you are seeking ANC funding?

☒ Yes

☐ No

21. Statement of Community Benefit (detailed description of project or activity and how it primarily benefits the people who live and work in the ANC area (continue on separate sheet)

Miracle in the Alley is entirely community-powered. Residents donate time, materials, electricity and funds to bring the alley to life each year. Planning begins in the fall, with volunteers coordinating installation logistics, purchasing replacement decorations, and preparing refreshments for the opening event. The lights are hung, inflatables placed, and safety measures enacted with collaboration and care. The event directly engages more than 300 people during opening weekend and impacts more throughout December. Families, children, seniors, and individuals of all backgrounds participate. It is inclusive, accessible, and free, offering a low-barrier way to experience holiday joy and neighborly connection.

22. Please explain how this project does not duplicate services provided by the DC Government

As far as we are aware, this is not a service that the DC Government provides in ANC 3B.

23. How will success of this project/event be measured and documented (i.e. number of participants, outcomes)?

Success of this project will be measured by the number of attendees at the grand opening event.

24. Are any permits or consents required for this project?

☐ Yes

☒ No

25. If permits or consents are required, have they been obtained?

☐ Yes

☐ No

26. Have you requested an ANC Grant before?

☐ Yes

☒ No

(If yes, please answer the following questions)

- When was the previous request?
- Did the ANC grant or deny the request?
- How much money or in-kind services was requested?

27. Statement of Good Faith

By signing below, I certify that the information provided in this application is true and correct to the best of my knowledge and belief and understand and agree that I have a continuing obligation to advise the OANC and ANC if there is any change in circumstances. I also understand that use of funds for non-permissible uses may result in the loss of funds to the ANC and that grant funds unused at the end of the project or used contrary to the grant request, must be returned to the ANC.

Signature

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	6/2/2025
(Print Name)	Title	Date

(For OANC/ANC use only)

Date received: _____

Date approved: _____

ANC Vote: _____

Amount Granted: _____

Comments: _____



Advisory Neighborhood Commission Grant Application Checklist

Please review this list to ensure that your Grant Application is complete.

- ☐ Did you provide all information requested on the application form?
- ☐ Did you include a description of your proposed project?
- ☐ Did you include a detailed and itemized budget showing all projected expenses?
- ☐ Have you **clearly stated the public purpose** -- how the use of ANC funds will primarily benefit the people who live and work in the ANC area?
- ☐ If a recurring event, have you provided supporting documents, including financial statements, newspaper clippings, brochures, etc., in support of the grant application?
- ☐ Have you submitted the application to both the **OANC** (oancs@dc.gov) and the ANC for review?
- ☐ Have you scheduled a presentation before the ANC during a public meeting to review and vote on the application?

Advisory Neighborhood Commission Grant Closeout Form

GRANT INFORMATION	
Grantee:	Click or tap here to enter text.
Grant Title	Click or tap here to enter text.
Date Awarded	Click or tap to enter a date.
Date Completed	Click or tap to enter a date.
Check #	Click or tap here to enter text.
Statement of Public Purpose	Click or tap here to enter text.

Advisory Neighborhood Commission Grant Closeout Form Continued

CHECKLIST		
<input type="checkbox"/>	Completed invoice statement	Complete a list of final expenditures and details about how the grant funds were spent in support of the community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Receipts	Include all receipts for purchases made with grant funds
<input type="checkbox"/>	Photos or other publicity (optional)	Please share materials for promotional purposes with the ANC if you would like them to share your work in the community
<input type="checkbox"/>	Refund	Return any unspent grant funds to the ANC
<input type="checkbox"/>	Copy of all materials to the OANC	Please submit copies of all materials to the OANC in addition to the ANC

Signature

Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap here to enter text.	Click or tap to enter a date.
(Print Name)	Title	Date

Miracle in the Alley

Itemized Budget

Item	Cost
Light installation	\$1,500
Food, beverage and supplies for grand opening	\$500
Overhead costs	\$0
Total Grant Budget	\$2,000