ADOPT-A-BLOCK
HANDBOOK
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OUR MISSION

WHO WE ARE

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful (KIB) is an environmental and community nonprofit with a mission to help people and nature thrive. We’re an award-winning affiliate of Keep America Beautiful, Inc., a national organization dedicated to preserving the natural beauty and environment in American communities.

We believe in shared responsibility, and we know that sustainability starts with love. So we engage and empower citizens of all ages and backgrounds to take action. From tree planting to block-by-block cleanups, we roll up our sleeves to keep Indianapolis beautiful and make our city proud—both today and for generations.

OUR MISSION

Our mission is to engage diverse communities to create vibrant public places, helping people and nature thrive.

WHAT WE DO

We work with neighbors and volunteers to plant trees and native landscapes, create community spaces, pick up litter, and engage students of all ages in nature. Each year, KIB supports over 800 community projects with nearly 20,000 volunteers. For over 40 years, we’ve partnered with neighbors, the public sector, and Indianapolis community groups and businesses to achieve our vision of a beautiful city.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The Adopt-A-Block program energizes neighborhood volunteers to participate in community activities that bring beautification and neighborhood revitalization down to the city’s smallest unit: the block. Street by street, neighbors inspire each other by setting an example of environmental and community stewardship, dramatically improving their quality of life.
BLOCK CAPTAIN RESPONSIBILITIES

Adopt-A-Block Captains sign up to care for your block for a two-year period. If at any time you move or need to end your participation for any reason, you may do so by notifying us. At the end of your two-year period, you are able to renew your block adoption.

As a block captain, your commitment is to maintain your block, and any storm drains within it, free of litter and debris on an ongoing basis, to communicate with your neighbors about your efforts, and to encourage them to get involved as well.

Spend ~4 hours per month (weather-permitting) cleaning up your block and reaching out to neighbors. This could include picking up trash when you return home from work each day, a once-a-week pick-up with family or a few neighbors, or a larger monthly cleanup where everyone is involved.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES

Each block captain receives a cleanup kit that includes a litter grabber, garbage bags, gloves, an Adopt-A-Block T-shirt, door hangers, and your choice of four (4) of the following items:

- Broom
- Shovel
- Protective gloves
- Scoop
- Bucket
- Reflective vest

We will provide you with additional gloves and trash bags as needed during regular business hours.

Example: 3700 block of N. College. The block captain is responsible for cleaning up both sides of College Ave. starting at 37th St. and ending at 38th St. The block captain is also responsible for cleaning up the east side of the west alley, and the west side of the east alley, because these areas pertain to the houses and businesses on the block of 3700 N. College.

BLOCK BOUNDARIES

The size and shape of the block you would like to adopt is entirely your choice. A block is considered to be between two streets. Some captains choose to adopt multiple blocks.

You are responsible for cleaning up both sides of your street, and the side of each alley that pertains to your block, including storm drains. If you have any questions about your boundaries, please do not hesitate to contact us!
MONTHLY NEWSLETTER & BLOCK SCORING

In the monthly Adopt-A-Block Captain newsletter, we share an array of information relevant to your work, such as news articles, online resources, and other KIB volunteer opportunities!

Along with the above, your block will be scored at least two times between May and October by KIB. We will include your most recent score along with your newsletter.

Your block is scored on a scale of 1 to 4.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No litter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Some litter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Moderately littered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Heavily littered</td>
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This litter index was developed by Keep America Beautiful and is used across the country.

Your block will only be scored on the amount of litter present in the public areas of your streets and alleys (i.e. street, curb, sidewalk, and public parts of the alley).

However, the assessor may also note other issues on public or private property that you may wish to report to the Mayor’s Action Center, including:

- Trash and debris
- Illegal dumping
- Graffiti
- Abandoned and inoperable vehicles
- High weeds and grass; etc.

To report these conditions, call the Mayor’s Action Center at (317) 327-4622, visit the City of Indianapolis’s RequestIndy portal online at www.indy.gov/activity/request-indy or download the RequestIndy app from your phone’s app store.
EVENTS

VOLUNTEER & DONOR APPRECIATION EVENTS

Every year we host the Volunteers and Donors Appreciation Event to recognize and celebrate all KIB donors and volunteers, including Block Captains, who served the previous year. At this event, you will hear about past successes, upcoming projects, and an array of awards to honor special attendees for accomplishments across all KIB programs. We typically provide refreshments and an opportunity to socialize with others citywide that are passionate about block beautification.
BLOCK CAPTAIN BENEFITS

NATIVE PLANT & TREE DISTRIBUTION

In the fall, your block scores will be averaged. If your yearly block score averages out to be a 2 or better, you are eligible for FREE native plants based on availability. Details on the dates of the distribution and plants that will be available will be shared in the Adopt-A-Block Captain newsletter to find out more!

Each block captain, regardless of the cleanliness score, can receive a FREE TREE in the fall! Depending on availability, captains can choose the species they want. These trees will come to you 5-15 feet tall, and you water them with 15 gallons of water a week, May-October, for the first two years.

For those wishing to plant a larger number of trees in your neighborhood, KIB’s Community Forestry Program provides 20+ trees to plant along your residential streets or in neighborhood common areas. To apply or for more information, please check out kibi.org/trees.

LITTLE BIG AWARDS

This Adopt-A-Block Block Improvement-Grant program is a way for you and your fellow captains to get together and make your neighborhood better! Keep Indianapolis Beautiful will be funding at least three Adopt-A-Block community projects each year, up to $500 each.

Your Little BIG grant proposal can fund any project that you and at least two other Adopt-A-Block Captains in your neighborhood believe will make your community better. It should be a project you can accomplish on your own with seed money from KIB. Maybe it's adding signage, fixing up a community greenspace, or throwing a neighborhood party. We want to hear from you about what's important to you and your neighbors!

Grant applications will be reviewed on a rolling, monthly basis by KIB staff and the Adopt-A-Block Steering Committee. Applications will be accepted from January 1st until the funding pool has been depleted. Your committee must consist of at least three current Adopt-A-Block Captains. Awards will be reimbursed in the form of a check from KIB when the budgeted work has been completed or, if a reimbursement method causes financial difficulty, other options may be considered.
KIB is looking for new ways to engage community members and help you increase the quality of life for everyone in your neighborhoods. Below are some examples of projects that have been completed, but we encourage you to use your imagination in how we can support you in making your neighborhood better!

**Past Project Ideas:**

- T-shirt design as fundraiser for community greenspace care
- Invasive removal and gateway planting
- Murals
- Park Beautification
- Streetscaping/Litter Prevention

**BEFORE**

**AFTER**

- Crime Prevention/Fire Safety Block Party
- Community Picnic/Greenspace Celebration
- Block Party/Park Cleanup
- Supplies for community garden
- Community Pocket Park Planting
WAYS TO ENGAGE YOUR NEIGHBORS

ORGANIZE EVENING OR MORNING WALKS (WEEKLY, MONTHLY):
• While walking your dog, meet with neighbors.
• Organize a nature walk of a nearby nature area or park.
• Pre-cleanup walk:
  • Scope out with your neighbors what needs to be cleaned in the blocks and alleyways before your actual cleanup.

OFFER FOOD (TAKE TURNS WITH OTHERS IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD):
• Host an ice cream social.
• Meet for brunch (weekly, monthly).
• Hold a fish fry at a local park.
• Offer coffee and doughnuts for morning cleanups.

GO DOOR TO DOOR:
• Pass out the Adopt-A-Block door hangers from KIB. Leave some cleanup supplies (trash bag, gloves) for the neighbor to get started.
• Drop off invitations and reminder fliers for events.
  • Print your fliers and newsletter in both Spanish and English.

HELP A NEIGHBOR:
• Clean a neighbor’s yard, especially an elderly or disabled neighbor.
• Have a “Gutter Clean-Out Day”.
• Do a tool swap—borrow a shovel and let them borrow a rake!
• Clean up the yard of a vacant house or abandoned house. Pick up the trash, weed, eat and mow.
• Encourage neighbors to identify properties that continue to have issues around littering and regularly report violations, such as illegal dumping and graffiti.

ENGAGING WITH KIDS IN THE NEIGHBORHOODS:
• Meet with the parents of children interested in helping to clean the street. Get their permission to involve the child and explain to them what you are trying to do.
• Ask the children to offer refreshments at your cleanups.
• Encourage your school-aged children to engage other kids in the neighborhood.

ENGAGE INSTITUTIONS TO HELP:
• Recruit university students to help canvass the neighborhood and help with cleanups.
• Partner with a neighborhood school, church or business and invite their youth groups and/or staff to volunteer at your community cleanups.
• Invite a KIB representative to a block meeting to encourage and inspire your neighbors to get involved in cleaning up the neighborhood.
• Speak with local merchants to see if they would be willing to donate goods and/or services for your projects. Don’t be afraid to ask, they may even join you in the cleanup!
• Use your neighborhood organization as a platform to recruit more captains to be involved, enhance communication and reach a larger audience for volunteers.
FORM A GARDENING ACTIVITY CLUB:
• Work on each other’s yards or focus your energy on common spaces such as medians, neighborhood entryways or community gardens.
• Organize a neighborhood Garden and Flower Show, where neighbors can take tours of each other’s gardens, or neighbors can create competitive bouquets with flowers from their own gardens.
• Hold a beautification contest for the most beautiful yard – Award the “best yard” with the flowers that KIB grants every year through the Spring Flower Distribution.
• Choose a new neighbor every year to be the recipient of a “garden.” – All of the other neighbors get together to design and plant up the yard using the flowers that KIB gives through the Plant Distribution. Leftover plants are divided amongst the rest of the neighbors to be put in their own yards.
• Organize a tree planting with KIB.

USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO CONNECT WITH TECH-SAVVY NEIGHBORS AND SHARE YOUR EFFORTS:
• Facebook, TikTok, Blogging, Twitter, Snapchat, and/or Instagram.
• Join our Adopt-A-Block Captain Facebook page to connect with other captains.

OTHER HELPFUL TIPS:
• Wear a KIB T-Shirt when you work to formalize your cleanup activities.
• Always smile and wave.

KEEP AN UPDATED ROSTER OF ALL ADOPT-A-BLOCK CAPTAINS IN YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD (ADDRESSES, PHONE NUMBERS AND E-MAILS):
• Organize regular weekly (such as Saturday mornings or afternoons) or monthly cleanups and rotate the blocks you will work on.
• Hold monthly front porch meetings or social gatherings.
• Make personal phone calls inviting and reminding neighbors of community events, using the block roster.
• Create a block newsletter, highlighting events, personal stories, and neighborhood history.
• Find out who adopts a block in your area by using our Adopt-A-Block map.

RECRUIT NEW MEMBERS:
• Invite someone you want to get involved in Adopt-A-Block as your guest to the Adopt-A-Block Appreciation events. Have them sign up that night.
• Recruit new Adopt-A-Block captains during your annual neighborhood cleanup, if you already do one.
• Ask neighbors who are already cleaning up in their yards to participate officially through Adopt-A-Block.
GREAT INDY CLEANUP

KIB’s Great Indy Cleanup (GIC) is an anti-litter, community empowering program in partnership with the City of Indianapolis. We provide litter removal resources to people who want to lead the charge against heavy litter, illegal dumping, and debris in the public spaces of their neighborhood. Adopt-A-Block captains often combine their year-round efforts with larger Great Indy Cleanup projects.

WHAT KIB PROVIDES
• Cleanup supplies:
  • Trash bags
  • Gloves
  • Litter grabbers and reflective vest may be borrowed
• A dumpster: In partnership with the City of Indianapolis and through a generous donation from South Side Landfill, dumpsters are available for your community cleanup, on a first-come, first-serve basis. During April and October, a city garbage trucks is also an option on Saturdays, with availability.
• How-To Planning Guide: We’ve laid out a checklist to help you organize your own cleanup.
• Media resources: Need fliers? KIB’s logo? Media resources are available to help you publicize your event.

WHAT YOU PROVIDE
• The desire to make a difference in your neighborhood: You provide the volunteers, we provide the resources to make you successful!
• The completed request form: You can request two cleanups per year, April through October.
• Your voice: Let your neighbors know about the resources available for cleanups through Keep Indianapolis Beautiful. Share your cleanup photos on our Facebook page!

The Great Indy Cleanup runs every weekend, from April through the end of October (and depending on resources, sometimes other months). Resources are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis. Cleanup request forms are available on the web at www.kibi.org/great-indy-cleanups, or contact someone from the Clean Neighborhoods department.

This program is not intended for personal use (garage/basement cleanouts, etc.), but is based on generous donations from the City of Indianapolis’ Department of Public Works and South Side Landfill to assist volunteers dedicated to making a difference in their community.
OTHER KIB PROGRAMS

For the past three decades, KIB has partnered with neighborhoods, the public sector, and Indianapolis community groups and businesses to achieve our vision for a beautiful city.

AES INDIANA PROJECT GREENSPACE
We partner with neighborhood-based organizations to help eliminate blight and to revitalize public spaces. The program transforms vacant lots and underused spaces into natural, beautiful, and functional pocket parks and greenspaces. Community-created and maintained parks build connections for a healthy neighborhood and the native landscapes that benefit people and wildlife. We, with our partners, not only build the space but make sure that they have the tools to take care of the space and can continue to keep it vibrant.

YOUTH TREE TEAM (YTT)
The YTT is a seven-week summer job for high school students who are interested in improving their community through tree care. YTT seeks to promote professionalism, respect, personal and environmental responsibility, and teamwork in today’s high school students. We work outdoors to water, mulch, prune, stake, and plant trees through the Community Forestry program. Hard work helps us connect Indy youth to the environment and each other, fostering a commitment to service and cultivating lasting friendships and a connection to their community.

COMMUNITY FORESTRY PROGRAMS
KIB’s goal is to plant trees in strategic locations throughout Marion County. With your help, we can grow our city’s tree canopy and make Indy a better place to live, work, and play. Our Community Forestry program gives neighbors the opportunity to plant, collaboratively raise support, and care for trees in the neighborhood. Trees produce clean air and water, helping create a beautiful, healthy, and safe environment for everyone.

KIB EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
KIB provides educational material for everyone on our website at www.kibi.org/education-homepage. The Nature Activities for Kids page offers fun, easy, and educational videos and activities your kids can do at home. Dive deeper into topics like litter, Native Plants & Pollinators, and Trees.

TRASH BOXES & RECYCLING BINS
KIB has trash boxes and portable recycling bins (ClearStreams) for your next event! Prices can be found on our website at www.kibi.org/trash-boxes-recycling-bins.
MARION COUNTY CITIZENS’ TRANSFER STATION
Need to transport items for disposal? Hours of operation, location information, and cost per car/truck load can be found at www.indy.gov/activity/citizens-transfer-station. All items must be within one vehicle. Trailer loads and construction materials are not accepted.

SOUTHSIDE LANDFILL
South Side Landfill accepts household waste, mulch, leaves, and brush for a fee at 2561 Kentucky Ave, Indianapolis, IN 46221. For more info visit www.ssidelandfill.com/faq

TOXDROP & RECYCLEFORCE ELECTRONIC WASTE DISPOSAL
Take your broken or outdated electronics to ToxDrop to be recycled and managed responsibly. Find more information about what is accepted in addition to when and where you can drop it off at www.indy.gov/activity/electronics-recycling-sites. ToxDrop also accepts household hazardous waste as well, such as cleaners, paint, and batteries.


YARD WASTE DROPOFF
GreenCycle accepts clean yard waste and wood debris. For information or to find a location near you, visit their website www.greencycleindy.com.

MAYOR’S NEIGHBORHOOD ADVOCATES
Mayor’s Neighborhood Advocates connect residents and business owners directly with city government and departments and provide a communications link to the Mayor’s office. Find out who your Mayor’s Neighborhood Advocate is and how to contact them by searching your address at www.indy.gov/workflow/my-neighborhood-advocate.
CONTACT US

CONTACT US WITH ANY QUESTIONS!

Keep Indianapolis Beautiful

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ADOPT-A-BLOCK IS SUPPORTED BY:

The City of Indianapolis
Mayor Joe Hogsett
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