

READINESS CHECKLIST

For towns that want to join Hometown Pride

Thank you for your interest in Hometown Pride! This checklist outlines the support you will need to gather for your County or region to request to join Hometown Pride.

Reach out to Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) before beginning this process – we'll help you determine if Hometown Pride is the right fit and support you through the process below.

1. Identify 6-10 towns in your County or region that have interest in joining Hometown Pride

- New Hometown Pride communities are added as a group of 6-10 towns in a County or region. Typically, a local organization or ad hoc group will coordinate buy-in from all.
- **Action step:** Reach out to leaders in each community to gauge interest.
 - Examples of leaders/organizations to connect to: Mayor/City council, City staff, Chamber of Commerce, County Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Agency, Community Betterment Organizations.
- **Action step:** Hold virtual or in-person meeting with KIB staff and interested local leaders

2. Recruit at least one community “champion” for each participating community

- The “champion” agrees to help complete the remaining items on this checklist, and later works with the Hometown Pride “coach” to get things started in their town (e.g. connecting the “coach” to community members and recruiting volunteers for the committee).

3. Submit “statement of interest” to Hometown Pride (2026 deadline: February 6)

- Submission form at keepiowabeautiful.com
- You do not need to complete all items on this checklist *before* submitting a “statement.” An ideal statement will demonstrate strong, growing support from leaders in multiple towns in your area.
- Eligible towns who submit a complete “statement of interest” will be invited to complete a full application, due in early May.

4. Secure pledges for local funding “match”

- KIB pays 75% of the cost and each group of 6-10 towns jointly pays 25% (\$20,000/year). Funding covers the cost of the coach and KIB staff support. Participating towns typically split the cost, with the average town paying somewhere between \$250-\$2,500 per year.
- **Action step:** Identify organizations that could contribute to the match (e.g. City, County, Economic Development, Local Foundation)
- **Action step:** Decide how you will split the cost between participating towns (e.g. evenly, by population, etc) You may provide the match any way you choose. We do recommend having all participating towns contribute.
- **Action step:** Get written 5-year pledges from your financial supporter(s)

5. Get approval from local governments

- **Action step:** For each participating community, obtain a resolution of support from the city government. It should include endorsement of starting Hometown Pride in the community, and a pledge to provide a city representative for the Hometown Pride committee.

QUESTIONS

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BENEFITS OF PARTICIPATING IN HOMETOWN PRIDE

- Hometown Pride achieves **5 primary goals** for participating towns:
 - Cultivate local leadership
 - Create and enhance community amenities
 - Foster civic pride
 - Boost economic vitality
 - Increase collaboration
- Keep Iowa Beautiful (KIB) provides each group of communities with **up to \$300,000 over 5 years toward the cost of hiring a professional “community coach.”**
 - Your Hometown Pride Coach will assist with forming the Hometown Pride committee, creating an action plan for the committee, attending committee meetings, identifying betterment projects, and advising the committee on how to complete projects, including fundraising and grants.
 - The “coach” is a 3-day/week position, and each coach works with only one group of 6-10 towns.
 - Participating towns contribute a portion of the cost (see checklist item 4)
- A typical town will complete ~20 community betterment projects and raise ~\$200,000 (or more!) over 5 years. Multiply that by 6-10 towns in your region and you have an **excellent return on investment**.
 - Projects include things like: park amenities, clean-up events, public art, festivals, fundraising, leadership programs, trails, welcome signs, memorials, beautification, and more
 - Hometown Pride provides “on the job” training for volunteers, helping grow your base of local leaders.
- Participants become members of Hometown Pride’s state-wide network, with access to our materials, resources & publicity outlets.

EXPECTATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING TOWNS

If selected for participation in Hometown Pride, your region will be expected to:

- Hire a “coach” within 3 months of joining Hometown Pride (Communities decide who to hire, with guidance and support from KIB).
- Form a Hometown Pride committee (5-10 members) in each participating town and hold a first meeting within 3 months of hiring a coach.
- Work with coach and committees to develop a basic vision plan for what Hometown Pride will accomplish in each town, drawing on direction from existing community plans.
- Committees will start at least one community improvement project in each town in the 1st year.
- Committees will continue to meet regularly and complete community betterment projects and programs for a minimum of 5 years.
 - Committees are encouraged to continue their work beyond 5 years, and most do so.
- Committees will operate under the name of “___[town name]___ Hometown Pride” (except in special circumstances)
- Committees are responsible for securing funds needed to complete the projects they choose to work on (coaches will support and advise).
- Through the coach, provide quarterly updates of committee activities to Keep Iowa Beautiful.

