Young people don’t have to leave their hometowns to build their dreams.

My Community, My Vision (MCMV) is a youth planning partnership between the Indiana Housing and Community Development Authority (IHCDA) and Ball State University (BSU). The program is in its fourth year and was developed with the belief that young people in Indiana should not have to leave their hometowns in order to achieve their dreams. Previous participating groups have developed community vision plans that lay the groundwork for student entrepreneurship opportunities, community gardens, bike-share programs, farmer's markets, and other programs students wanted to see brought to their hometown. Past youth-driven plans have been adopted by local units of government and one group even raised about $4,000 in grant funding and in-kind donations to implement projects developed in the MCMV planning process!

My Community, My Vision has the following goals:

- Empower Indiana youth to discover and develop a vision for their communities.
- Connect youth and community leaders.
- Inspire Indiana’s youth to become Indiana’s leaders.
- Encourage youth to return to or stay in their hometowns.
- Educate youth about civic involvement.
- Promote youth-driven comprehensive community development with a focus on affordable housing, agriculture, leadership, transportation, community health, entrepreneurship, and art.

Program Requirements.

Local units of government (LUGs) and high school student groups will work in partnership with a BSU urban planning student mentor to create a youth-driven community vision plan. With input from the high school students and support from the LUG, the BSU mentor will create the vision plan based on the students’ ideas for their communities. Student teams will be required to devote time each week (an average of 1 to 2 hours, with occasional travel) toward the creation of the plan, as well as attend several all-group meetings throughout the course of the program year. The MCMV program year will be from September 2017 to April 2018.

The BSU mentor will be responsible for leading and attending regular meetings with the high school groups and the creation of the plan. The BSU mentor, the high school students, and a representative from the LUG will be expected to attend, and occasionally travel to, three Saturday meetings, one meeting during the school day, and one evening meeting. Groups selected to participate will receive $500 as seed money to implement a community supported, youth-driven project.

Outcomes.

- Meaningful youth involvement in the planning process.
- An increased likelihood that students will return to their hometowns.
- Adoption of plans by local government.
- Implementation of a project.
LUGs interested in having their community’s young adults play a key role in community planning efforts should apply to the 2017-2018 MCMV program. The LUG will recruit a group of high school students, work with them to write the essay submit the essay application to IHCDA, maintain the group’s involvement during the MCMV program year, and provide support to the BSU mentor throughout the process. The brief essay application must include the following information:

- Community description including demographic info, community strengths, and community weaknesses;
- Why the community will benefit from a youth led plan;
- Identify the student group. This includes: group affiliation (ex: FFA, Mayor’s Youth Council, after-school art group, etc.), number and names of students. Student groups must be between 5-10 members.;
- Description of the student participation plan (LUG contact person for the program, when, where and how often students will meet, etc.);
- How the LUG will support the process, from brainstorming to implementation;
- Preliminary ideas of how the seed money might be used (note: applicants will not be held to only the ideas presented in the application as plans and ideas may change over the course of the year);

The following MUST be included in your submission but do not count toward the five page essay limit:

- Include signed commitment pledges from: (1) The LUG contact person, (2) the supervising teacher/adult of the high school group that will be participating in MCMV, and (3) each participating student.
- Include Photographic Consent and Release Form for each participant. Pledges and forms can be found here: [http://in.gov/myihcda/mcmv.htm](http://in.gov/myihcda/mcmv.htm)

Up to five communities will be chosen to participate in the program. Participating groups will receive $500 as seed money to implement a youth-driven project. Other project implementation funding may be available. Applicants are encouraged to think about how the award could be used to help students create tangible results of their year-long planning efforts.

Submit the application in essay form. The essay must address the above questions and can be no more than five pages in length. To be considered for participation in the program, all essays must be submitted no later than 5 p.m. on Sept. 11, 2017 to the following email address: mcmv@ihcda.in.gov

**Submission deadline: Monday, September 11, 2017, 5 p.m. Eastern Time**

Selected participants will be contacted the following week and should plan on attending a kick-off event in the Indianapolis area on September 23, 2017.

Questions and applications can be submitted to mcmv@ihcda.in.gov