



## NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANTS PROGRAM

### FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

#### **1. *What kinds of projects are eligible for the matching grants program?***

First and foremost, the project must serve a public purpose, benefit a neighborhood, meet the match requirements and be conducted by an established neighborhood association or community watch group.

Examples of eligible projects include but are not limited to:

- beautification/landscaping
- neighborhood park improvements
- traffic calming
- support money for seeking 501(c)3 status

If your project involves City departments, such as Parks and Recreation or Public Works, you should coordinate with them prior to submittal and document their input in your submittal. Landscaping and beautification projects must be in compliance with the City of Arlington's Smartscape Policy.

#### **2. *What types of projects are ineligible?***

Generally projects that only benefit an individual or restricted group of people, such as those inside a gated community are not eligible. Other reasons for ineligibility include

- Inability to make the grant match
- Requests for educational/social services, salaries or operating expenses
- Requests to supplant current funding already being received
- Projects that conflict with City improvements or that do not comply with local, state or federal laws.

#### **3. *My Neighborhood Association is not a 501(c)3. Can we still apply for a grant, and, if so, what must I provide as proof that we are an established association?***

Both 501(c)3 and 501(c)4 nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for grants. The nonprofit status requirement is waived for neighborhoods if they request a grant from \$500 to \$2,000; however, recipients will still need a separate bank account for their respective neighborhood organization as well as an EIN number from the IRS. You must also be registered with the Neighborhood Network (see #4 below) and provide a copy of your association's bylaws, current Board of Director/Officer list, a recent bank statement and the minutes from your last meeting. If you are applying as a Citizens on Patrol or Community Watch Group, the same requirements apply, but you should be registered with the Arlington Police Department, rather than the Neighborhood Network.

#### **4. *How do we register our Neighborhood Association with the City?***

A form is provided on the Community Development and Planning Department's website linking you to the Arlington Strong Neighborhood Initiative (ASNI) website at:

[http://www.arlingtontx.gov/planning/asni/network\\_initiativesform.html](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/planning/asni/network_initiativesform.html). Submit this form electronically to become a member of the City of Arlington's Neighborhood Network.

**5. *How can my neighborhood association become a 501(c)3? Can we apply for a matching grant to help cover the costs?***

Established associations are eligible to apply for matching grants to cover the cost of the 501(c)3 application. You will need to complete and submit IRS form 1023 requesting 501(c)3 status. The IRS can take up to six months to process non-profit applications and the application cost is \$850. This is a one time request. A copy of your IRS Determination letter will be required as part of the project close out.

**6. *What if my neighborhood doesn't have an association yet?***

If you are starting from scratch, the Neighborhood Organizational Handbook is a good place to start. You can find this guide at [http://www.arlingtontx.gov/planning/asni/pdf/Handbook\\_Neighborhood\\_Organizational.pdf](http://www.arlingtontx.gov/planning/asni/pdf/Handbook_Neighborhood_Organizational.pdf).

**7. *How do we submit our project idea or request for a matching grant?***

First you will need to send a letter of intent. The city will accept full grant proposals by invitation only.

**8. *What are the dollar limits on grants?***

Grant requests can be made for a minimum of \$500 and a maximum of \$10,000\* to be matched equally by a private source of funds, donated funds, volunteer labor valued at \$10/hour, or in-kind contributions.

\*An additional \$5,000 (up to \$15,000) can be requested for projects where implementation includes at least 66% (2 to 1) of the volunteer labor being provided by youth, and youth are encouraged to take other leadership roles in the project. (Youth representation must include at least 10 volunteers.)

In addition, program money is reserved for grants of \$500 to \$10,000 for youth organizations that propose projects in neighborhoods where neighborhood organizations currently are not established. Match stipulations still apply.

**9. *What are the match requirements?***

Volunteer labor must comprise at least 25% of the applicant's match, though exceptions will be considered for projects requiring professional work exclusively. You will be required to obtain in-kind commitments prior to submitting a full grant application. You will also be required to demonstrate how the match will be met on the full grant application form and document that you fulfilled the match obligation once the project is complete. These are some of the types of records that will serve as documentation.

For the full grant application:

- Neighbor labor commitment form
- Donation commitment forms for donated/ discounted goods or professional services
- Bank Statements from the organization showing funds available
- Letter of commitment for cash donations

**10. *Can letters of intent be submitted on multiple projects by the same organization?***

Yes. An applicant may propose multiple projects to increase the possibility that one will actually be funded. When submitting multiple projects, please prioritize your requests for the selection committee, as typically, only one will be funded during any given grant cycle.

**11. How will I know if I've been invited to submit a full grant proposal?**

You will receive either an award or denial letter via e-mail to confirm the status of your proposal and a full grant application packet if you are invited to submit a full proposal. An invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee your project will be funded.

**12. Who decides if a grant proposal is funded?**

Grant proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a selection committee of City staff, chaired by a Deputy City Manager. Their recommendation will be presented to the City Council for final approval.

**13. What criteria will be used to evaluate the full grant applications?**

Grant proposals will be evaluated on the following:

- Serves a public purpose
- Builds neighborhood cooperation and involves a significant number of neighbors
- Benefits an area of focus or is within the boundaries of the Building Equitable Communities (BEC) initiative
- Provides a detailed budget reflecting accurate project costs
- Provides a detailed and achievable timeline including a plan for long-term maintenance
- Meets applicable codes and has identified necessary permits

**14. Is there an appeal process if we are not invited to submit a full grant proposal?**

A letter of appeal may be sent to the Selection Committee Chair requesting reconsideration if the submitter can provide additional information which supports that the project does in fact meet the criteria for which they were denied an invitation to submit a full grant proposal. Applicants will still be held to the same grant submission timelines if their request for reconsideration is accepted and an invitation to submit a full grant is extended. If you submit a full proposal and are not chosen for funding, you are encouraged to further develop your project and apply again in a future grant cycle.

**15. What happens if our grant proposal is approved?**

Your award letter will be followed by a contract that will need to be signed by the grantee and returned to the City. This agreement must be returned before money is distributed.

Once signed, contracts are returned to the City, and a check for the amount approved will be distributed to the fiscal agent for the awarded project. The grantees will be able to obtain their funding and coordinate documentation of expenditure through their fiscal agent.

**16. How long do we have to complete the project?**

All work should be complete within 180 days of signing the letter of agreement. If additional time is needed, based on unique project circumstances, submit a request in writing to your contact in Community Development and Planning. You'll be asked to check in with your contact in the Community Development and Planning Department monthly during your project implementation.

**17. What happens if we successfully complete the Neighborhood Matching Grant Project and have available funds left over? Can we use them for other projects?**

If there are any remaining funds available at the successful completion of a Neighborhood Matching Grant Project, the Neighborhood Association may request to retain this money to be spent in a manner relating to the approved grant project. The Grantee should request approval from their contact in Community Development and Planning no later than 90 days after contract execution. If grantee does not submit in writing prior to the 90 day deadline, no request for expenditures related to the original project will be accepted.

**18. What happens if we need to adjust our budget or program during the course of the project due to unexpected costs or occurrences?**

You will not be able to apply for additional funds once your check has been awarded; however, you can submit a request in writing to your contact in the Community Development and Planning Department if you feel you need to make significant changes to your program or budget. These changes must be approved by the Selection Committee prior to implementation.

**19. What needs to be done once the project is complete?**

Within 30 days of project completion, the project will need to be closed out with the City. Failure to close out a project will result in future ineligibility to apply for grants by both the grantee and the fiscal agent.

To close out the project the grantee will need to provide:

- Post-completion photographs of the project site or event
- A final list of all volunteers working on the project
  - time sheets for each volunteer w/ activities, days & number of hours worked
  - dollar match equivalent for the combined hours worked with labor valued at \$10/hr
- Release and Hold Harmless Agreements for all volunteers that worked on the project, if not already submitted
- Receipts for all cash purchases, with the items purchased identified if it is not clear from the receipt.
- Logs documenting volunteer professional services, with the days and numbers of hours worked and fair market value of donated work
- Donation letters for any donated or discounted goods