



Partnership for Stronger Neighborhoods

Neighborhood Matching Grant Program Policy

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Neighborhood Matching Grant Program Policy

I. NEIGHBORHOOD PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City implemented the neighborhood program, Partnerships for Stronger Neighborhoods, in 2000 to build relationships with the City's existing neighborhoods, while encouraging and assisting new neighborhood groups, in an effort to enhance the quality of life in the City and stimulate activity within neighborhoods and in City events. The Neighborhood Program is designed to foster greater communication between neighborhood groups and the City of Concord.

II. NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM PURPOSE

The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program provides eligible recognized neighborhood organizations with access to funds to implement projects that will improve the quality of life in City of Concord neighborhoods. Up to \$3,000 per neighborhood is available for qualified projects. All projects are planned and implemented by neighborhood residents in partnership with the City.

The goal of the grant program is to facilitate neighborhood self-improvement. The program gives neighborhood organizations incentive to raise funds, build partnerships, cultivate volunteer and community support to complete projects that improve the neighborhood physically or address a need through active involvement of the neighborhood residents themselves. Community building is core to the project success. The value of the neighborhood's contribution (cash, volunteer labor, donated materials, or donated services) must be equal to or greater than the City's grant. The program is administered through the City Manager's Office.

III. ELIGIBILITY

Matching Grant funds are available to City of Concord Recognized Neighborhood organizations that have been formally recognized by the City of Concord's Neighborhood Program for at least a year. NMG awards are not made to individual persons, or applicants who have failed to successfully carry out NMG projects funded in the preceding year.

What types of projects are eligible for funding?

Single projects that address a neighborhood issue or need in one of five categories are eligible for funding:

1. **Physical Improvement Projects:** landscaping or beautification of a subdivision entrance, planting trees, retention pond rehab, adding playground or recreation equipment, community gardens, street light installation, and neighborhood clean-ups.
2. **Neighborhood Identity Projects:** entrance signage, street sign toppers, markers, banners, and public art.
3. **Community building events** -- neighborhood-based events and celebrations such as July 4th parade, National Night Out festival, outdoor health/recreation (walking, biking, running) events, and emergency preparedness training and fairs.
4. **Environmental Projects** -- such as stormwater detention, bank stabilization, and creek clean-up relating to larger public systems (projects must protect and enhance the greater public systems and facilities).
5. **Public Safety:** National Night Out event activities, Neighborhood Watch Resources, Youth Crime Prevention projects or programs, disaster planning or emergency preparedness fairs, Graffiti removal on common property or structures, Family safety training and activities.

Eligible projects must meet the following eligibility criteria:

- Provide a public, neighborhood benefit
- Be completed in twelve (12) months or less

- Occur within the boundaries of the neighborhood on public property or on common property owned by a neighborhood organization and must comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws. Projects that occur on personal property are not eligible for funding.
- Be endorsed by the neighborhood organization. Must be documented by an officer of the organization
- Projects in the public right-of-way must submit an encroachment agreement along with supporting documents

Note: This category list is not exhaustive. No expenditure of funds under this program shall be made for any purpose other than a public purpose for which municipalities in North Carolina are authorized.

IV. LIMITATIONS ON USE OF GRANT FUNDS

Grant funds are public dollars that must be prudently expended. Although not exhaustive, the following is a list of disallowed uses of Matching Grant funding:

- Expenses incurred prior to the grant award date
- Support ongoing, regularly occurring programs, services, events or activities
- Pay for an organization’s operating expenses
- Annual plants, flowers or shrubbery
- Salaries or stipends
- Grant funds cannot be used to replace the organization’s current operating budget or supplement city services.
- Food except for neighborhood food banks and pantries or related activities intended to provide critical food assistance to economically disadvantaged individuals and families
- Maintenance or repair projects that are the regular responsibility of the Homeowners, Property Owners, or Neighborhood Associations

V. MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Neighborhood organizations must provide proof of 100% match (\$1.00 in matching funds for each \$1.00 requested in funding). The match must be directly related to the project. Match resources may include the following:

| Component | Definition | Limit |
|---|---|--|
| Cash | Cash contributions or donations, proceeds from neighborhood fundraisers, etc. | No limit |
| Volunteer labor | Volunteer labor from neighborhood residents, valued at \$15 per hour. | Not to exceed 50% of the matching amount |
| In-kind donations of goods and services | Products, goods or professional services donated. Must include documentation from the vendor or company substantiating the value of the donation. | No Limit |

VI. THE APPLICATIONS & REVIEW PROCESS

NMG Applications are accepted by the City of Concord once per year or as budgeted funds are available. All eligible neighborhood organizations will receive notice of the submission deadlines and review scheduled. An applicant may apply for more than one project. However, each project must be able to stand-alone. Applications are due to the Community Outreach Coordinator in the City Manager’s Office located in City Hall by 5pm on the proposal due date. Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

The NMG program is competitive. Each application will be evaluated on the basis of how well the project demonstrates the program’s main purpose of improving neighborhoods by addressing a specific need or concern. A review committee comprised of representatives from various City departments will review each application and score them based on the evaluation criteria (see table 2.). The committee will make a funding recommendation to the City Manager. The City Manager will make a final recommendation to City Council, who has the final authority to approve or deny a grant request.

Table 2 Evaluation Criteria

| CRITERIA | POINTS | EXPLANATION |
|---------------------------------|---------------|---|
| Supports Program Mission | 25 | Proposed activities are an effective response to a recognized issue or concern. The activities described in the project proposal are designed to address one of the five category areas. |
| Benefit to Neighborhood | 35 | Project provides a public benefit to the neighborhood and directly involves the neighborhood residents in all phases. |
| Neighbor Involvement | 10 | A broad base of participation from neighborhood organization residents exist. |
| Budget/Match | 15 | Budget is reasonable projection of expenses and accurately depicts neighborhood match. |
| Project Readiness | 10 | Project is well-planned, cost-effective and ready for implementation; shows a clear and reasonable vision for sustaining the project and resulting improvements. Candidate is aware and/or has submitted for required permits when applicable to their project. |
| Community Partnerships | 5 | Efforts were made to include community partners – evidence can include donations of in-kind services or professional services. |
| | 100 | Total Possible Points |

VII. DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

Because grant funds are public dollars, the City must meet certain audit requirements for funds that it expends. The City Finance Department handles all grant accounts. Grant funds will be disbursed using City Purchase Orders, reimbursement directly to approved vendors, or reimbursement directly to the applicant. Reimbursement to the applicant will only be made when supported by original third party receipts up to the approved grant amount. If for any reason there are changes to the scope of the project, the grantees must formally submit a Change of Scope Request for review to the Community Outreach Coordinator. Charges incurred before a Change of Scope approval will not be covered by the grant.

The neighborhood must submit a request for reimbursement to the Community Outreach Coordinator. To include the following:

1. Letter requesting reimbursement; signed by the president of the neighborhood association
2. Copy of paid invoices or receipts for proof of purchase
3. Copy of cancelled check
4. Images of completed project (when applicable)