



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, 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 an incentive to raise funds, build partnerships, and cultivate volunteer and community support to complete projects that improve the neighborhood physically or address a need through the active involvement of the neighborhood residents. Community building is core to the project's 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 four categories are eligible for funding:

1. **Physical Improvement Projects:** landscaping or beautification of a subdivision entrance, planting trees, adding playground or recreation equipment, community pollinator gardens, street light installation, and
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. **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 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. Support 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 THE 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 schedule. 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 by 5 p.m. on the proposal deadline via email or in person at the City Manager’s Office located in City Hall(35 Cabarrus Ave West). Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.

The NMG program is competitive. Each application will be evaluated fairly based on 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.). **Projects who do not score a minimum total score of 65 will not be recommended for funding.** The committee will make a funding recommendation to the City Manager. The City Manager will make a final recommendation to City Council, which 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 four 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 exists.
Budget/Match	15	Budget is a reasonable projection of expenses and accurately depicts neighborhood match. Includes two quotes from different vendors. Estimates should be comparable to fair market value
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. Appropriate partnerships include in-kind donations in form of goods or services and using vendors and/or companies within Cabarrus County.
Litter Abatement	5	Neighborhoods that have participated in at least 1 of the city's Litter Sweep or Adopt-A-Street programs in the last 12 months will receive 5 additional points to their application.
	105	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. Only funds that are used will be allocated, funds not used for the proposed project will not be reimbursed. 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 or signed Grant Agreement 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 canceled check

4. Images of the completed project (when applicable)