



NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT MATCHING GRANT INFORMATION GUIDE

The purpose of the Neighborhood Project Matching Grant is to empower citizens to improve the overall quality of life in their neighborhoods through citizen and government partnerships. The grant matches City and neighborhood resources to complete neighborhood-proposed projects that foster self-help, self-management, and neighborhood pride, as well as enhance and beautify the neighborhood.

Funds are awarded on the basis of merit with a maximum of \$10,000 per project. This is a reimbursement grant. Funding will not be released until the project is completed and proper financial documentation is submitted to the City of Denton Neighborhood Planning Program (CDNPP).

WHO MAY APPLY

Neighborhood associations, homeowner associations, tenant associations, and neighborhood groups may apply. All projects are required to have a Citizen Project Coordinator as the liaison between the City and the neighborhood during project development and implementation.

Matching fund awards are not made to single individuals or businesses, universities, hospitals, institutions, foundations, or political, fraternal, or religious organizations. Additionally, government and public agencies, social services, district councils, citywide groups, City departments, and requests to support the ongoing operating budgets of organizations are not eligible; however, eligible applicants are encouraged to form partnerships with these ineligible groups to plan and implement projects. The eligible applicant must retain the primary role in the partnership.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Eligible neighborhood groups or associations may apply upon the following contingencies:

- Project appropriateness
- Funding availability
- The ability of the applicant to match the award at 100 percent through financial contributions, in-kind donations, or volunteer hours

Qualifying projects must take place within the City of Denton, provide a communal benefit as determined by the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board, and fall within one or more of the categories listed below as a qualifying project.

QUALIFYING PROJECTS

1. **Physical improvements** to neighborhood entryways, perimeter areas, street borders and medians, parks, playgrounds, tot lots, and other neighborhood amenity areas. Such improvements may include landscaping, tree plantings, signage, equipment, decorative structures, and similar

beautification or enhancement projects. Physical improvement projects must be performed in a public right-of-way or on public property. Projects on property owned by a neighborhood or homeowners association will be considered on a case-by-case basis if it shows to provide a communal benefit to the neighborhood.

2. **Public safety programs or initiatives** such as safety training, crime or fire prevention programs, traffic deterrent, or calming projects or studies.
3. **Cultural, educational, and recreational programs** including literacy programs, leadership training, computer labs, after-school enrichment programs, cultural arts programs, and summer camps.
4. **Neighborhood master plan or comparable studies** that focus on enhancing the neighborhood. These may not contain plans currently being developed by the City.

PROJECT CRITERIA

If applicable, qualifying projects must meet the following criteria:

- Provide long-term, public benefit to the neighborhood
- Be located on publicly accessed property (right-of-way, neighborhood common area, etc.)
- Have demonstrated neighborhood support
- Be compatible with adjacent properties
- Directly involve neighborhood residents in all phases
- Have goals that may be typically accomplished within 12 months or less
- Must demonstrate appropriate long-term maintenance
- Be within the City's legal authority and comply with existing City of Denton policies and codes

PROJECT EVALUATION

The Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board is comprised of representatives from the following departments: Parks and Recreation, Engineering, Planning, Police, Community Improvement Services (Code Enforcement), Economic Development, and Community Development. The Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board reviews, evaluates (in accordance to the evaluation sheet), and selects successful applications for final approval by the City Manager. The Advisory Board will evaluate each application based on the following criteria:

- Project Description and Statement of Qualifications - the precise description of the project, including needs, benefits to the neighborhood, and sound budget.
- Implementation Tasks and Schedule - a clear demonstration of how the project will be accomplished
- Volunteers, Participation, and Donations Registered with the CDNPP - demonstrated participation of residents in the project and documented match in forms of letters, in-kind services, or donations.

Neighborhood Project Matching Grant funds are limited. Awards are based on a project's rating, and the most highly rated projects will be awarded first. Projects must take place within the boundaries of the neighborhood; however, exceptions may be made for donated space outside the neighborhood when sufficient space within the neighborhood is not available. Improvement projects that are targeted under the City of Denton Capital Improvement Plan will not be funded under this grant program.

CRITERIA FOR FUNDING APPROVAL

To be considered for funding approval, eligible neighborhood groups with qualifying projects must:

- Successfully complete the grant application process
- Provide original signatures for all volunteer pledged hours
- Provide evidence that the project qualifies for this funding program
- Provide evidence that the requested grant and project was favored by a majority vote of neighborhood association members or a neighborhood group that has received support from 60 percent of the households or businesses to sign a petition for the project
- Assume the lead role and responsibility for the project (Partnerships with non-eligible individuals or groups such as businesses, religious, fraternal or community organizations, educational institutions, political groups and non-eligible neighborhoods may be permitted.)
- Provide advance notice of all other funding sources, both public and private, for the same project
- Contribute to and ensure resident involvement in all phases of the project by making a significant neighborhood donation in dollars, goods, or in-kind services such as volunteer hours (At least one quarter of the neighborhood match must come from volunteer efforts. For example, 25 percent of a \$2,500 matching grant is \$625; and at the approved rate of \$18 per hour, 35 volunteer hours would be required.)

Note: Association officers or members who may provide project consulting or planning services are not entitled to receive a salary or payment for project-related services or operating expenses. Requests for salaries or operating expenses will only be considered for contracted, professional service providers.

CRITERIA FOR DISQUALIFICATION OR FUNDING DENIAL

Applicants may be disqualified or denied grant funding for any one of the following reasons:

- A grant application is submitted after the deadline.
- Required original pledged volunteer signatures are not submitted.
- One quarter of the neighborhood match does not come from volunteer efforts.
- A grant application is incomplete or missing supporting documents such as a budget or volunteer hours.
- The matching labor funds and other donations are not equal to or greater than the full amount of the matching grant.
- The mandatory technical grant workshop is not attended.
- The association, group, or partner has no bank account or Federal Tax ID number.
- Funding under this matching grant program was previously provided, but the neighborhood association or group has not successfully completed the funded project.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES AND TRAINING

Step 1: Schedule to attend a grant-training workshop. The City of Denton Neighborhood Planning Program may be contacted for training workshop dates, times, and locations. For your convenience, multiple training workshops will be scheduled. Each session will address how to complete the Neighborhood Project Matching Grant application, how to increase your opportunities to receive funding, and how to implement a project. Additional information will include an explanation of grant requirements and examples of technical needs assistance.

Step 2: Obtain a grant application by contacting the City of Denton Neighborhood Planning Program at (940) 349-8541 or download the application at www.cityofdenton.com/neighborhoodplanning.

Step 3: Complete the application in detail and mail or hand deliver the original plus seven copies to the City of Denton Neighborhood Planning Program at City Hall West, 215 E. McKinney St., Denton, TX 76201; or email a completed application to pz@cityofdenton.com.

SELECTING PROJECTS FOR GRANT FUNDING

The Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board – consisting of representatives from the following Departments/Divisions screen each application and determine if the applicant meets the criteria for funding approval:

- Parks and Recreation;
- Engineering;
- Planning;
- Police;
- Community Improvement Services (Code Enforcement);
- Economic Development; and
- Community Development.

Applications will be reviewed and ranked by using an “Evaluation Criteria Ranking Sheet.” Projects will be ranked by the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board for City Manager’s approval. The number of grants awarded will be based on available funding and the Evaluation Criteria Ranking Sheet.

The City reserves the right to deny any grant request for a project or activity deemed to be inappropriate, offensive, or discriminatory, or for any other reason within the City’s sole discretion.

THE APPEAL PROCESS

In the event a grant proposal is denied by the Board, other than for a lack of funding in which no appeal is authorized, the applicant has 30 days to appeal the Board’s decision, as applicable, to either the City’s Human Services Advisory Committee or the Community Development Advisory Committee.

The Human Services Advisory Committee will review appeals associated with:

1. Public safety programs or initiatives such as safety training, crime or fire prevention programs, traffic deterrent, or calming projects or studies.
2. Cultural, educational, and recreation programs including literacy programs, leadership training, computer labs, after-school enrichment programs, cultural arts programs, and summer camps.
3. Neighborhood master plan or comparable studies that focus on enhancing the neighborhood. These must not contain plans currently being developed by the City.

The Community Development Advisory Committee will review appeals associated with:

1. Physical improvements to neighborhood entryways, perimeter areas, street borders and medians, parks, playgrounds, tot lots, and other neighborhood amenity areas. Such improvements may include landscaping, tree plantings, signage, equipment, decorative structures, and similar beautification or enhancement projects. Physical improvement projects must be performed in a public right-of-way or on public property. Projects on property owned by a neighborhood or homeowners association will be considered on a case by case basis, if it is shown to provide a communal benefit to the neighborhood.

At a public hearing relative to an appeal, each appeals Committee shall render their decision based on if the grant proposal has met the following criteria:

- Provide long-term, public benefit to the neighborhood
- Be located on publicly accessed property (right-of-way, neighborhood common area, etc.)
- Have demonstrated neighborhood support
- Be compatible with adjacent properties
- Involve neighborhood residents directly in all phases
- Have goals which can be accomplished normally in 12 months or less
- Must demonstrate appropriate long-term maintenance
- Be within the City's legal authority and comply with existing City of Denton policies and codes

The decisions of the appeals Committees will be final; however, in no event will the denial of a grant application preclude the applicant from reapplying to subsequent grant cycles.

GRANT PROGRAM CONDITIONS

Once the City awards a grant, the following documents must be signed:

- Neighborhood Project Matching Grant Agreement; and
- City of Denton Release and Waiver of Claims, Hold Harmless and Indemnity Agreement.

After the documents are executed, a check may be prepared and disbursed for the necessary materials or supplies included in the approved application/budget. Funding for volunteer hours, in-kind donations, or project services identified in the budget may not be reimbursed until after such service is rendered and verified by the City. Checks will be made out to associations or project partners with Tax ID only. A W-9 form is required with every application.

Grant funding recipients must submit a monthly project status report that may include pictures, a description of completed portions of the project, and financial records such as invoices, receipts, contracts, and vouchers. A final project report with original documentation must be submitted to the CDNPP no later than thirty (30) days after the completion of the project.

Projects are to be completed within the period specified in the grant award. If no significant progress has been made after six months following the award of the grant funds, the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board will assess the status of the project and determine if it should be continued or terminated. Any project scheduled for completion by the end of the fiscal year (ends Sept. 30) must be completed and approved for reimbursement no later than Sept. 1 of that year. If this deadline is not met, the project may not be continued until a new application is submitted and approved. In addition, if the deadline for reporting and completing the project is not met, the association or group could be denied the opportunity to receive future grant funds under this or other grant programs.

The grant program recipient as a whole is responsible for repairing any public or privately owned fixtures, sidewalks, vegetation, or other features that may be damaged during the course of implementing the project.

Grant recipients must comply with all applicable laws, rules and regulations, as well as obtain all required permits for signs, structures, right-of-way work, etc.

Unless the City agrees to other arrangements in advance, the City will only continue its current level of maintenance in and around the project site after the project is completed. Maintenance of the project area over and above the City's routine maintenance remains the responsibility of the grant recipients. Exceptions will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant

Advisory Board, as well as by the City Manager or his designee. Approval will be rendered on the basis of benefit to the public.

NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT MATCHING GRANT GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Budget estimate – projected expenses for project materials, applicant match, volunteer hours, in-kind donations, cash, etc.

Citizen Project Coordinator – neighborhood resident who is the liaison between the City and the neighborhood.

Deadline – a specified time or date after which completed applications will no longer be considered.

Donations – goods or services with a measurable value given to an association and/or applicant.

Homeowner's Association (HOA) – a mandatory association that is formed when a subdivision is planned and dues are assessed.

In-kind – a value placed on materials, supplies, and/or professional service donations that may be counted toward the grant match. (For example, a donation of landscape material that retails for \$100 would count as a \$100 match).

Maintenance – the applicant's ongoing care of the project and surrounding area, such as weeding, mowing or watering a landscaped median area.

Match – applicant-provided cash, goods, services, and volunteer hours that are equal to the grant request. (Volunteer hours are valued at \$18/hour).

Neighborhood Group – individuals from five or more neighboring businesses and/or households within the city limits of Denton.

Neighborhood Association – a voluntary group of people living in a specific area who came together for the betterment of the neighborhood. (May include HOAs and tenant association).

Tenant Association – renters at an apartment complex.

Public benefit – the positive effects of a project or program upon the community or city-at-large.

Public property – any City-owned land, facility or structure such as recreation centers, parks, or public rights-of-ways.

Right-of-way – any street, avenue, boulevard, highway, sidewalk, alley, or similar place dedicated for vehicular and/or pedestrian use which is controlled by the city, state, or federal government.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. How many times may my association apply for funding?

Associations or groups may apply one time each fiscal year. The City of Denton's fiscal year begins Oct. 1 and ends Sept. 30.

2. How do I access funds allocated to my project?

Upon prior approval of the City Manager and completion of project or implementation of program, neighborhood organizations or project partners that have a Federal Tax ID number may receive a check in the amount of the grant to be deposited into the organization's bank account.

3. What if my application is not approved?

You may request feedback on your application with the Neighborhood Empowerment Grant Advisory Board and are welcome to resubmit your application or you may exercise the appeal process. The CDNPP is available to assist you with your application.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

Below are examples of eligible projects. This is not an all-inclusive list. Applicants are encouraged to submit creative ideas for matching grants.

- Community gardens and landscaping
- Educational program such as lawn care and property maintenance
- Neighborhood signage or identity
- Public art or amenity
- Neighborhood parks and related improvements
- Right-of-way improvements
- Environmental improvements
- Youth programs
- Senior programs
- Programs for persons with disabilities
- Traffic safety
- Community health fair
- Community festivals

(Food cost may not exceed ten percent of the project's total costs.)

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS OR PROJECT EXPENSES

- Motor vehicles of any kind for any purpose
- Payment to individuals or companies to provide services that are available from the City of Denton
- Purchase of real property in the name of the association or any other group, individual, or organization
- Mobile phones, services, associated air time, or similar electronic devices
- Money for individuals, organizations, or groups for their private use or for uses that do not benefit the neighborhood at large (This includes payment for services as rent, telephones, utilities, and internet.)
- Social, political, or fraternal organization memberships
- Field trips or admissions
- Cash prizes
- Yard equipment, chainsaws, weed-eaters, lawnmowers, or similar equipment, unless part of an approved community tool shed (Rental of equipment is permitted.)