



Neighborhood Vitality and Beautification Matching Grant Program Overview/Guidelines

FY 2018-2019

All Applications are now submitted [online](#) ONLY. Please allow adequate time to complete application.

Purpose

The Neighborhood Vitality and Beautification Grant program provides matching grant funds to support Plano neighborhood groups in building strong relationships around a community-driven initiative. The grant provides an incentive to encourage neighborhood groups to develop initiatives that will improve physical neighborhood enhancements at completion. The financial assistance is in the form of a 1:1 match, with neighborhood groups providing 50% of the project budget. All projects must:

- support neighborhood goals
- be highly visible from the public realm
- have a community benefit
- enlist community participation
- result in an enhancement of the neighborhood appearance
- be within the City of Plano limits

Two matching grant options are available:

1. A Small Scale Initiative grant, valued between \$500 - \$2,000
2. A Large Scale Initiative grant, valued between \$2,001 - \$10,000

Neighbors Connect Workshop

Residents interested in applying for the Beautification Grant Program should take the opportunity to watch our third [Neighbors Connect Workshop session](#), held at the Environmental Education Center on Tuesday, December 5th. Our Environmental Education Coordinator discussed potential sustainability aspects to help applicants develop a successful proposal. In addition, one of our Property Standards Specialist Supervisors provided cautionary items to consider in order to minimize code compliance issues into the future. ***** **All applicants submitting landscape improvement projects must view the Workshop session.**

Neighborhood Group Eligibility

Small Scale Initiative Grants are available to neighborhood associations, homeowner associations and crime watch groups who satisfactorily identify the project objectives and meet the application requirements. Eligibility criteria for neighborhood groups is listed below.

Large Scale Initiative Grants are available to 501(c) or 528 not-for-profit organizations, or to neighborhood groups partnering with an eligible non-profit to serve as the fiscal agent for the project and meet the eligibility criteria listed below. Applicants must also satisfactorily identify the project objectives and meet the application requirements.

Eligibility Criteria for Neighborhood Groups:

- Must register with the BEST Neighborhoods Division at <http://plano.gov/FormCenter/Neighborhood-Services-28/Neighborhood-Leadership-Directory-Regist-191>.
- Disbursement of funds requires the organization to have a bank account, as checks are not distributed to individuals. All neighborhood groups must provide a copy of the latest bank statement.

- Must be active, open/inclusive and represent the neighborhood in which the project will be completed.
- All Neighborhood groups applying must provide their
 - annual budget;
 - Officer Contact List or Board of Directors Contact List
 - one of the following forms of documentation to verify the organization is active:
 - ▣ Meeting minutes (last 2 meetings)
 - ▣ Newsletters (last 2 editions)
 - one of the following forms of documentation to verify the organization is organized:
 - ▣ Articles of Incorporation
 - ▣ Bylaws
- 501(c) or 528 organizations must provide their:
 - latest tax return;

Project Eligibility

- Projects must meet the program objectives, including criteria such as:
 - support neighborhood goals
 - have a community benefit
 - community involvement
 - public improvements enhancement
 - visibility of improvements
- Projects must have a match of 50% of the total budget from the neighborhood group.
- Projects should be considerate of neighborhood diversity and adhere to ADA requirements, when applicable.
- Projects must adhere to existing City ordinances and not interfere with any current or planned Community Investment Program projects of the City.
- Applicants must consider future maintenance on completed projects, and provide a maintenance plan if applicable.
- Projects must be located within the city limits of Plano.

Project Examples

Typical projects will physically improve the neighborhoods. Examples include:

- Redesigned neighborhood entryway landscapes, with native vegetation or Smartscape plants
- New neighborhood entryway signs
- Existing gateway sign and screening wall enhancements
- Repair/replacement of screening walls
- Greenbelt improvements
- Lighting enhancements in public spaces
- Street Sign toppers
- Drip irrigation system in shared use/community areas
- Park development/ improvement
- Community Gardens, not on public property

Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects are ineligible for grant funding through this program:

- Applications without at least a 50% match of total project budget
- Applications promoting special interests
- Projects not providing a public benefit
- Applications requesting funding for salaries or operating expenses
- Applications for events, social/cultural education programs or public art
- Projects that conflict with existing city ordinances, or current/planned Community Investment Program
- Projects that may result in a public safety hazard

Project Details

The submitted online application should include as many details as possible to help support your grant request. Complete online applications will include the need for the proposed improvement, support from the neighborhood and project feasibility. Photographs, project location and drawings supporting the proposal should be attached to the application to better convey the project idea.

Please review additional Improvement Guidelines available under the Resource Documents tab on the [online application](#). This document provides additional guidance on specific project types.

Project Selection Criteria

Proposed projects are reviewed and selected based on meeting basic eligibility and the project's score based on weighted criteria (100 possible points). There are three additional criteria that can be met to gain 15 bonus points. To be considered for funding, the project must score a minimum of 60 points.

Criteria	Detail	Max Weight
Community Benefit	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Provides a community benefit by improving health, safety and/or appearance of neighborhood (20pts)Project location is visible from public realm (15pts)	35
Neighborhood Participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Demonstration of neighborhood commitment to long-term and on-going maintenance plan (10pts)Shows evidence of broad, diverse participation and support within neighborhood (10pts)	20
Neighborhood Impact/Need	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improvements are accessible to neighboring residents (15pts)Addresses a need identified in the community and provides a lasting impact/solution (10pts)	25
Feasibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Well-planned, cost effective and ready to implement (10pts)Budget is reasonably set for expenses (10pts)	20
BONUS POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Neighborhood volunteer labor included as part of neighborhood match (5pts)Collaborative effort with nearby church or organization (5pts)Creative or innovative solution to a need in the community (5pts)	15

Funding Cycles

Grant funding cycles will be awarded twice a year in the spring and fall. For spring projects, the deadline for applications is Feb. 1st, due by 5pm, close of business. For fall projects, the deadline for applications is August 1st, due by 5pm, close of business.

Neighborhood groups may submit one grant application per cycle. If proposed project is not awarded during one funding cycle, the neighborhood is encouraged to apply in the following funding cycle. Neighborhood groups are not limited to one award per calendar year.

Application Process

1. Review guidelines for the Neighborhood Vitality and Beautification Grant, and as necessary review additional Improvement Guidelines and attend optional grant workshops.
2. Contact program coordinator to schedule a pre-application meeting to discuss proposed project eligibility and feasibility.
3. Register with the BEST Neighborhoods Division at <http://www.plano.gov/988/Homeowners-Associations-in-Plano>.
4. Complete an application online at <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/2018FallBeautificationGrant>.
 - a. Application should include project description, project impact, proposed schedule, proposed budget and maintenance plan.
 - b. Provide proof of matching funds (50% of total project costs) with bank statement showing cash funds available.
 - c. Provide supporting documents/materials for project details.
 - d. Provide necessary documents to indicate eligibility for neighborhood group.
 - e. For large scale initiatives, provide the latest tax return to indicate eligibility for 501(c) or 528 organization.
5. Projects are reviewed carefully by a multi-departmental team and scored based on weighted criteria (found under project selection criteria section)
6. Applicant is notified within 30 days from application deadline.
7. If awarded, applicant will contact program coordinator to discuss further details, timelines and confirm all agreements are in place.
8. A Notice to Proceed and Reimbursement Form is provided by program coordinator. Applicant can proceed with improvements.
9. Applicant will need to provide Reimbursement Form and W-9 within 30 days of completion for reimbursement. Please allow 10-15 business days to process reimbursements.

Pre-Application Meeting

A one-on-one pre-application meeting **must** be scheduled with city staff. This opportunity allows applicants to get feedback on feasibility of project and understanding of multi-departmental review. Some projects may involve other City departments, such as Parks and Recreation and/or Public Works.

Matching Funds Requirement

Neighborhood groups must provide a 50% match (1:1) of the total project budget. The match provided must be directly related to the project being undertaken. Matching resources may include the following:

- Cash contributions must be documented by submitting a bank statement from the organization showing funds available.
- Donated or discounted materials or services must be documented by providing on the donor's letterhead a commitment of resources with a listed retail value.
- Donated professional services, such as architectural, engineering, construction, etc., must be documented by providing on the donor's letterhead a commitment of resources with a listed retail value.
- Volunteer labor must be documented by submitting a signed commitment letter with the total number of volunteers and hours of labor (total value is calculated using the current city rate).

Volunteer Activities

Eligible volunteer activities only include actual work performed implementing the project. It does not include pre-planning or planning activities. Eligible activities could include cleaning, painting, removing or planting landscaping.

The Project Budget Tables tab of the [online application form](#) will allow for the calculation of the proposed volunteer labor value. Applicants can use this table to describe volunteer activities, the number of volunteers and the total number of hours. A sample of a calculation for volunteer value is provided below. Applicant will use this value as part of the neighborhood match within the second table, Project Line Items & Funding Sources.

Sample Volunteer Value			
Volunteer Activity Description	Date	# of Volunteers	# of Volunteer Hours
Removal of existing landscaping	4/5/2017	20	35
Installing new irrigation	4/6/2017	15	25
Planting new landscaping	4/12/2017	5	20
Total # of Volunteer Hours			80
x city's current rate \$25.15			\$ 2,012

Project Budget

The Project Line Items & Funding Sources table can be found within the Project Budget Tables tab in the [online application form](#). Supporting documentation is required for the neighborhood match. Please list the name of the selected contractor after the line item description. A sample Proposed Project Budget is provided below.

Sample Proposed Project Budget				
Expenses - Line Item Description	Grant Request	Neighborhood Match		Total Expenses
	Reimbursement / Cash	Volunteer Value	Neighborhood Group Cash	
Screening wall repairs – ABC Contractor Services	\$ 4,000		\$ 2,000	\$ 6,000
Landscape material - trees, flowers	\$ 1,000		\$ 1,000	\$ 2,000
Landscape material - soil/mulch	\$ 100		\$ 100	\$ 200
Removing/Installing irrigation and plants		\$ 2,012		\$ 2,012
Total Project Cost	\$ 5,100	\$ 2,012	\$ 3,200	\$ 10,212

Notification of Awards

Applicants will be notified by mail and by phone within 30 days of the application deadline. Applicants selected to receive matched grant funds will be asked to attend a Grant Management meeting to discuss the project plan, reporting requirements and disbursement of funding as well as the agreement in detail.

Project Implementation

Small scale initiatives must be completed within 6 months after the agreement has been signed and processed. Large scale initiatives must be completed within 12 months after the agreement has been signed and processed.

Extensions of deadlines are only granted by the City of Plano under special circumstances that are not the result of actions by the organization. Extension requests must be brought to the attention of the city representative immediately.

Permitting (if applicable)

The applicant is responsible for obtaining all building permits and any other required permits for the work to be completed. The applicant is responsible for conformance with all applicable safety standards and conditions. Work can begin once the grant agreement has been processed and 'Notice to Proceed' letter has been received. The applicant also agrees to maintain the project or improvement once completed.

Landscape and Irrigation Maintenance Agreement (if applicable)

The applicant is responsible for maintaining the improvements after completion. If the proposed improvements are on public right-of-ways, a Landscape and Irrigation Maintenance Agreement will be **required** between the City of Plano's Park Department and the neighborhood group.

Agreement

Each grant recipient and the City of Plano will enter into an agreement outlining the scope of work, funding, and reporting requirements under the grant program. The agreement will be drafted to reflect the recipient's proposed work plan and budget contained in their grant application. The recipient will receive the agreement from the City of Plano, which should be reviewed and signed by an official representative of the organization. The agreement should be returned to the program administrative in order to receive a 'Notice to Proceed' letter and subsequent documents necessary for reimbursement.

Disbursement of Funds

Projects may not start until the grant agreement is processed. The matching grant funds will be released to the neighborhood group on a reimbursement basis. Funds are not awarded in advance. All reimbursement requests must include original receipts/invoices for expenditures for processing. Please allow 10-15 business days for invoice processing. Checks are made payable to the organization or fiscal agent. Your association must have a bank account established. Funds are only to be used to support activities described in the project description. *Significant changes in the project must be approved by the City representative before funds are expended.*

Contracting Services/Bidding

Project items over \$3,000 require at least two bids to be submitted with application. Three bids are encouraged. All bids submitted should match line items for the project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to select competent, reliable vendors with valid credentials to avoid potential problems or delays. The city is contracted solely with the recipient neighborhood group. Therefore, any discrepancies that may result from the hiring of contractors or private vendors must be resolved by the grantee.

Reporting/Outcomes

The City of Plano promotes collaboration within neighborhoods. Therefore, the program is designed to have a two-fold outcome: community-building through the implementation of a successful project and a physical improvement within the community.

Certain reporting requirements are necessary to further help the City monitor this grant program and make revisions, if necessary, to increase effectiveness.

All projects are required to submit a **Final/Reimbursement Report Form no later than 30 days after completion**. This report will include documentation of final/actual expenses and donation information such as total volunteer labor, actual donated material/supplies and in-kind professional services.

Application/Project Timeline



* 12 month time frame for large scale initiatives; 6 month time frame for small scale initiatives

Contact

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