



BEST Neighborhoods Designation

**APPLICATION PACKET
2019-2020**

Submission Deadline
Tuesday, October 1, 2019
4:30 PM

Program Overview

The [BEST Neighborhoods Designation Program](#) was developed in 2016 to recognize neighborhoods that have gone above and beyond to create a community that is Beautiful, Engaged, Safe, and Thriving – BEST! Through this program, the city acknowledges residents working collaboratively to create the strong neighborhoods that make Plano a desirable place to live, work, and play.

BEST Neighborhoods will be recognized at three levels: Silver, Gold, and Platinum. All awardees will receive mention of designation status on [plano.gov](#), a file image of designation status for neighborhood websites, newsletters, lawn signs, etc., and bragging rights! Platinum level awardees will additionally receive two neighborhood entrance signs, a custom online Story Map, and social media promotion.

Application Details

The application consists of twenty qualification questions, four narrative questions, and a presentation. A complete application will include responses to all questions and supplemental documentation when requested. All submitted responses and supplemental materials should include events, initiatives, and strategies that occurred prior to September 1, 2019. Any events, initiatives, or strategies that are held or completed after September 1, 2019 will not be counted towards your score during this application cycle. Applications and supplemental materials must be submitted electronically to BEST@plano.gov by the deadline. Hand-written applications will no longer be accepted, however, if you are unable to submit electronically, please contact the BEST Neighborhoods division for alternative options. Applications must be submitted by either a board member or resident of the neighborhood.

Supplemental documentation supports written descriptions. Supplemental materials may include photos, newsletters, emails, screenshots, and/or other materials that best support information provided in this application. Presentations will be an additional form of supporting evidence by which neighborhoods can further elaborate on written descriptions and supplemental materials. Questions answered in the affirmative without the written description and/or supplemental documentation will not count towards your total score. Please be sure that all supplemental documents are labeled clearly with the corresponding question number and submitted with the completed application.

Open house hours to further discuss and review your BEST Neighborhoods Designation application will be held during the last week of August during specified office hours for a 30 minute time period. Open hours will be made available on [plano.gov](#) and scheduled times can be set-up by emailing BEST@plano.gov or call 972-208-8150.

Presentations

The presentation section of the application process provides an opportunity for neighborhoods to expand on their application responses. Presentations will be held two weeks after applications have been submitted. A BEST Neighborhoods division team member will coordinate with your designated neighborhood representative to schedule a mutually convenient time to conduct the presentation. At least one neighborhood representative should be in attendance to present. The presentation should reflect the application including the following sections: Neighborhood Description, Beautiful, Engaged, Safe, Thriving, and Narratives.

Presentation topics and questions will include but not limited to:

Neighborhood Description

- How old is the neighborhood and association
- Neighborhood structure (boards, committees, etc.)
- Mandatory or voluntary association

Neighborhood Services Department, 7501 Independence Pkwy., Bldg. A, Plano, TX 75025, Ph. 972.208.8150

- Number of homes
- Dues

Beautiful

- What makes your neighborhood beautiful?

Engaged

- How do you keep your neighbors engaged?

Safe

- How are you keeping your neighborhood safe?

Thriving

- Describe specific efforts that you are doing to sustain and improve your neighborhood.

Conclusion Questions

- Describe one of your programs and how it may be replicated in another neighborhood.
- Why are you a BEST Neighborhood?

Neighborhood groups should focus their presentation around these topics and questions. Presentation should last no more than 15 to 20 minutes. A 10 to 15 minutes question and answer period will follow the presentation to address any follow-up if needed.

Application Scoring

The qualification section consists of twenty questions separated into the following categories: Beautiful, Engaged, Safe, and Thriving. Each of these questions is worth *up to* 5 points, for a possible score of 100. Additionally, there are four narrative questions worth *up to* 2 points per question for a possible total of eight points. Awarded neighborhoods are recognized at three levels:

- Silver Level: 65-74 points
- Gold Level: 75-84 points
- Platinum Level: 85+ points

All applications are scored by a committee made up of BEST Neighborhood Division team members, City of Plano staff, and community partners.

Mentorship

All awarded neighborhoods are encouraged to participate in mentorship opportunities to share their BEST experiences with other Plano neighborhoods. This may include presenting at select BEST Neighborhoods division events, guiding other neighborhoods through particular issues or initiatives, and sharing knowledge in relation to neighborhood-based programming. In addition, all awardees are encouraged to participate in the mentorship program within the Plano Neighborhood Directory. As a supplement to the Neighborhood Resources Map, the directory provides additional means of communicating to neighborhoods across Plano and effectively connects neighborhoods to participating subject-based mentors.

Annual Reporting (*Platinum Awardees*)

For neighborhoods to maintain their five year Platinum status, an annual report consisting of yearly accomplishments and upcoming initiatives should be submitted in October. A report template will be provided by your assigned Neighborhood Planner.

Section One: Applicant Information

A. Neighborhood Group Information

Group/Organization Name: _____

Group/Organization Type: Mandatory Homeowners' Association Crime Watch Group
 Voluntary Homeowners' Association Neighborhood Association

Annual Dues per Household/Member: _____ Percentage of Paying Members: _____

Representative Name: _____ Position: _____

Address: _____ City/State/Zip: _____

Email: _____ Phone: _____

Preferred Method of Contact: Text Email Call

Alternate Contact Name: _____ Alternate Email: _____

Group/Organization is registered in the City of Plano's [Neighborhood Registration Database](#) and all contact information is up to date. (Updates can be made with the [Neighborhood Services Department](#))

YES NO

List names and positions of your primary leaders (i.e. board members, area coordinator, block captains)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____

Neighborhood Information

Name of Neighborhood: _____

Neighborhood Boundaries (map attachment optional): _____

Council District ([check map](#)): _____

Estimated Number of Households: _____

Section Two: Qualification Questions

A. Beautiful – possible 25pts

1. Neighborhood has current maintenance efforts (contracted or volunteer-based) to maintain community spaces. Examples may include entrances, common areas, creeks, etc.

YES NO

If yes, please describe efforts. *Limit 350 characters.*

2. Neighborhood has completed or been awarded a [Neighborhood Vitality & Beautification Grant](#) through the City of Plano within the last 24 months.

YES NO

If yes, please describe projects. *Limit 350 characters.*

3. Neighborhood has a program to recognize neighborhood beautification efforts by residents. Examples may include "Best Yard of the Month," "Best Christmas Lights," etc.*

*Supplements Required

YES NO

If yes, please describe program. *Limit 350 characters.*

4. Neighborhood has well-maintained entrance signs, monuments, [sign toppers](#), or other types of signage that indicate a clear sense of neighborhood identity.*

YES NO

If yes, please describe signage or monuments. *Limit 350 characters.*

*Supplements required

5. Neighborhood has hosted at least one community presentation related to physical home maintenance or improvements, such as [Great Update Rebate](#), [Home Rehabilitation Program](#), Property Standards Division, or other home maintenance/improvement related presentations.

YES NO

Event date:	Event location:	Topic:

B. Engaged – possible 25pts

6. Neighborhood actively uses social media and other means of communication to engage neighbors.*

YES NO *Supplements required for each means of communication

Choose all that apply (1 point each; maximum 5 points):

<input type="checkbox"/> Door to Door	<input type="checkbox"/> Newsletters (provide example)
<input type="checkbox"/> Emails (provide example)	<input type="checkbox"/> NextDoor : _____ <small>(Screen shot of NextDoor communications)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> Facebook: _____ <small>(provide URL)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Twitter: _____ <small>(provide twitter handle)</small>
<input type="checkbox"/> Website: _____ <small>(provide URL)</small>	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

7. Neighborhood hosted at least 4 unique neighborhood events in the last 12 months.

YES NO

Choose all that apply (1 point each; maximum 5 points):

	List event date:	List event name:
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Block Party		
<input type="checkbox"/> National Night Out		
<input type="checkbox"/> International Night		
<input type="checkbox"/> Holiday Events		
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Clean-Up		
<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____		

8. Neighborhood has a formal committee or process for welcoming new residents to the neighborhood.*

YES NO

*Supplements required

If yes, please describe welcome efforts and provide welcome materials or photo of welcome materials. *Limit 350 characters.*

9. Neighborhood representatives attended the following events in the last 12 months.

YES NO

If yes, choose all that apply (1 point each; maximum 5 points):

<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Leadership Council Breakfast	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors Connect Roundtables
<input type="checkbox"/> HOA Legal Clinic	<input type="checkbox"/> Neighbors Connect Workshops
<input type="checkbox"/> Neighborhood Summit	

10. Neighborhood encourages residents to connect with City of Plano outlets at least twice a year per outlet utilizing social media and other means of communication.*

YES NO *Supplements required

If yes, choose all that apply (1 point each; maximum 5 points):

<input type="checkbox"/> Plano City Newsletters	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Plano Facebook
<input type="checkbox"/> Plano CityCall	<input type="checkbox"/> City of Plano Twitter
<input type="checkbox"/> FixIt Plano App	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

c. Safe – possible 25pts

11. Neighborhood has a registered and active [Crime Watch](#) group with City of Plano Police Department.

YES NO

If yes, please describe group and activities within the last 12 months.

12. Neighborhood promotes safety and crime prevention strategies with residents. Examples: sharing [Safety-Minute videos](#) or [Plano Police Department recommended Publications & Forms](#).*

YES NO *Supplements required

13. Neighborhood organized at least one community presentation by either Plano [Fire-Rescue](#), [Plano Police](#), [Emergency Management](#), or [9-1-1](#) Departments in the last 12 months.

If yes, please list details below.

YES NO

Event date:	Event location:	Topic:

14. Neighborhood encourages residents to connect with City of Plano safety-related programs at least twice a year per program utilizing social media and other means of communication. *

YES NO

*Supplements required for each program selected. If yes, choose all that apply (1 point each; maximum 5 points):

<input type="checkbox"/> CARE Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Community Camera Program
<input type="checkbox"/> Teddy Bear Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Youth Police Academy
<input type="checkbox"/> Operation ID Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Law Enforcement Explorers Post
<input type="checkbox"/> Take Me Home Program	<input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____

15. Neighborhood organization has sent at least 2 board members, committee members, and/or block captains to safety-related training through Plano’s [Community Emergency Resource Team \(CERT\)](#), [Citizens Assisting Plano Police \(CAPP\)](#), [Citizens Parking Patrol](#), [Citizens Fire Academy](#), or [Citizen Police Academy](#).

YES NO

If yes, please list participant and program information:

Participant Name	Program Name	Year Completed

D. Thriving – possible 25 pts

16. Neighborhood encourages residents to promote environmentally sustainable practices at least twice a year by utilizing social media and other means of communication. Examples may include: sustainable planting and maintenance choices, including drought tolerant plantings and maintenance, water conservation practices, recycling, etc.*

YES NO

*Supplements required

If yes, please describe methods of promotion. *Limit 350 characters.*

17. Neighborhood organization has applied [sustainable planting](#) and maintenance choices in public spaces in the community.*

YES NO

*Supplements required

If yes, please list plant types and maintenance choices. *Limit 350 characters.*

18. Neighborhood organized at least one presentation by the [Sustainability and Environmental Education Division](#) in the last 18 months.

YES NO

If yes, please list details below.

Event date:	Event location:	Topic:
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

19. Neighborhood group has a community wide program that supports neighbors in need. Examples may include: seniors mentoring school-aged children, companionship for seniors, a moms support group, assisting neighbors with minor home repairs, clean ups, or volunteering as a group for [Plano CARES or Love Where You Live \(LWYL\)](#).*

*Supplements required

YES NO

If yes, please describe group(s). *Limit 350 characters.*

20. Neighborhood organization has sent at least 2 board members, committee members, and/or block captains to additional leadership training through the [Plano Citizens Academy](#), [Chamber of Commerce’s Leadership Plano](#) program, or the [Live Green In Plano Champion program \(LGIP\)](#).

YES NO

If yes, please list participant information:

Participant Name	Program Name	Year Completed

Section Three: Narrative Responses – possible 8 pts

21. Plano is becoming an increasingly diverse community (e.g. age, race, ethnicity, language, etc.). Please describe **specific** efforts used by your group to build an inclusive sense of community in your neighborhood for multiple diverse groups. Please also include information on how your neighborhood is engaging renters. *Limit 5-10 sentences.*

22. How is your neighborhood increasing overall participation in your community initiatives? Please describe in detail. *Limit 5-10 sentences.*

23. Describe an obstacle in your neighborhood and how your group overcame it? *Limit 5-10 sentences.*

24. What plans does your organization have to maintain or advance your neighborhood as a BEST Neighborhood? *Limit 5-10 sentences.*

Would you and your organization be interested in an information sharing and/or mentor relationship with other neighborhoods in Plano?

YES NO UNSURE

Section Four: Applicant Certification

In signing and submitting this application, I certify that the information in the application is complete and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I also certify that the board and members of the organization I represent are fully aware of the application submission as well as the content I have provided, and that the application has been submitted by a resident of the neighborhood.

*Signature (Applicant): _____

Print Name: _____

Date: _____

**If your computer does not allow electronic signatures, please print, sign, and submit this page with completed application.*

STOP!

Review the following check list before submitting completed application:

- Yes! Our organization is registered with the City of Plano Neighborhood Services Department and our contact information is accurate.
- Section One: Applicant Information Complete
- Section Two: BEST Qualification Questions Complete
- Section Three: Narrative Questions Complete
- Section Four: Applicant Certification Complete
- Required Supplemental Documentation Attached – *Supplemental materials may include photos, newsletters, and/or other materials that best support information provided in this application. Please ensure that documents are labeled clearly and submitted with the completed application.*
- Any Additional Supplements Attached – *optional*

Frequently Asked Questions

Who can apply?

Registered neighborhood groups (homeowner associations, neighborhood associations, and crime watch groups).

What is supplemental material?

Supplemental documentation supports written descriptions. Supplemental materials may include photos, newsletters, emails, screenshots, and/or other materials that best support information provided in this application. Presentations will be an additional form of supporting evidence by which neighborhoods can further elaborate on written descriptions and supplemental materials. Please be sure that all supplemental documents are labeled clearly with the corresponding question number and submitted with the completed application.

How long is the Designation valid for?

All awarded levels are valid for five years.

Can our Silver or Gold neighborhood reapply to increase our designation level?

Yes; Silver or Gold designated neighborhoods may reapply every two years. However, during the five-year award period, new awards will only be granted when a neighborhood has met the scoring criteria and requirements to move up an award level.

Do we need to reapply every year if we are already a Platinum neighborhood?

No; Platinum designation is good for five years. Platinum neighborhoods may reapply after the Platinum designation expires in 5 years. During the five year period, Platinum Neighborhoods will be asked to provide yearly updates and engage in neighborhood mentorship opportunities.

How do we submit our application?

Please email completed applications to best@plano.gov. Supplements should be submitted electronically with the application, however, for alternative methods, please contact the BEST Neighborhoods Division.

When is the application deadline?

Applicants must submit a completed application at or before 4:30 PM on Tuesday, October 1, 2019.

When will awardees be announced?

Awardees will be announced on or before November 5, 2019.

What is a Story Map?

A [Story Map](#) combines maps with narrative text, images, and multimedia content to help creatively tell your story. Neighborhood Services creates a custom Story Map to highlight our Platinum neighborhood and all of their wonderful efforts that makes Plano great!