Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Guidelines

PURPOSE

The City of Garland promotes and supports community efforts that contribute to vital neighborhoods. The City Council has allocated funds through the Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Program to stimulate and enhance opportunities for residents to address neighborhood concerns and special needs. As we approach build out, we recognize the need to creatively plan and partner with residents to ensure that Garland as a whole continues to be a place where families and businesses want to invest their time and money.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The grant program is designed to provide assistance to specific neighborhood projects that provide a public benefit thereby promoting a stronger, safer, and healthier community. The City will enter into agreements with organized, active, registered homeowner and neighborhood associations or groups that organize for the specific purpose of completing a neighborhood improvement project (See terms of Neighborhood Vitality Agreement.) within the City of Garland. These agreements will pertain to, but are not limited to the following types of physical improvement projects:

- Entry features (new construction and renovations)
- Landscape design and improvements
- Neighborhood enhancement features such as sidewalk and lighting improvements
- Neighborhood recognition signage
- Screening Walls (new construction and renovations)

  - Individual persons or businesses are not eligible to receive funding.
  - Religious organizations and businesses may not apply as the primary applicant, but may partner with organized associations or groups to successfully accomplish a project that will provide an area benefit.
  - Two or more associations or groups may collaborate to plan and implement a neighborhood improvement project.
  - City staff may also partner with a neighborhood group or groups to plan and implement projects in accordance with the Strategy for Vital Neighborhoods.
  - **Funds may not be used for maintenance type projects.**
  - **Program funds may not be used to replace an association's operating budget.**
  - **Projects must not require on-going maintenance from the City of Garland.**
  - **Projects must not conflict with city policies or codes.**
  - **Expenditures incurred or project commitments made prior to the grant program are not eligible for funding.**

TERMS OF NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY AGREEMENT

Grantee must be an established entity. Association by-laws and registration should be provided along with the application packet. If the entity is registered with the Office of Neighborhood Vitality, confirm that the registration form is current and that a copy of the association's by-laws are on file.

A neighborhood group may organize for the sole purpose of completing a neighborhood improvement project. A notarized document outlining the group name, purpose, and project contacts must be provided with the application. City staff is available to assist in the planning and establishment of new associations or groups.

Grants will not exceed $100,000. Each association or group will be expected to provide a match based on the size and scope of the project, neighborhood size, and operating budget. The association match may include cash contributions, materials, or sweat equity where applicable at the rate of $12.00 per hour with the exception of professional services, which will be rated at the fair market value for the type of service provided.

Funding Priorities and Restrictions. Projects will be ranked according to the municipal benefit. Each project will be evaluated on the basis of how well it addresses the City of Garland's goals for safe, vital neighborhoods. The association or group must actively seek the involvement of area residents in the planning and implementation of the project. When there are more projects requested than funding will allow, the following criteria will be used to determine funding priorities:

- Projects that serve to revitalize older or declining neighborhoods will receive higher priority than newer neighborhoods.
- Projects that impact major thoroughfares will receive a higher priority than those that impact interior streets.
- Projects that further neighborhood goals and complement other public improvements will be chosen for their increased community benefit.

Applicants are eligible to receive up to $100,000 within a five-year time-frame. The completion date of the applicant's first project will serve as the benchmark for the five-year timeframe.

An association may not apply for additional funding if a previous grant project has not been completed.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Deadlines

Applications for projects are accepted twice a year from neighborhood-based associations or groups and must be submitted on the approved application form provided by the Office of Neighborhood Vitality. Applications may be obtained from the City of Garland website, http://www.garlandtx.gov or by calling 972-205-3864. Completed applications should be mailed to:

City of Garland
Office of Neighborhood Vitality
PO Box 469002
Garland, TX 75046-9002
Attention: Felisa Conner

Funding is available each fiscal year beginning October 1, 2004. Applications will be accepted twice a year, September 1st and March 1st. Should either of these dates fall on a holiday, Saturday or Sunday, the following business day will apply.

Funding Proposal

The association or group will submit an approved application form with a complete description of the project and subsequent maintenance. The application will be used as a guide for drafting the formal agreement and must include the following information:

Contact Names and Association Description
The description shall list names and telephone numbers of officers of the association or group who have the authority to enter into the agreement. Included in this portion of the work plan will be the date of incorporation or registration with the Office of Neighborhood Vitality. If the group is organized for the sole purpose of completing this project, a notarized letter of intent is required (See terms of Neighborhood Vitality Agreement).

Project Purpose
The project purpose shall include the identification of the benefits to the neighborhood and the City of Garland. This shall include a description of enhancements, what problems the project is to solve, and how it will solve them as well as any other information supporting your application.

Project Plan
Provide a description of the proposed project. Fully disclose all elements of the project. Failure to do so may result in the denial or cancellation of the project.

Project Funding
Include itemized list of projected costs. This shall include how the cost estimate was developed. List the funding requested from the City of Garland, matching funds from the association, and any other in-kind donations. **Project estimates from reputable contractors must be included.**

Maintenance Plan
A maintenance plan will include a description for the on-going maintenance of the project as well as methods of maintenance. Materials, which do not require a high level of maintenance, should be used. Staff will ensure through this aspect of the work plan that the project will not act to change the current level of maintenance performed by the City of Garland in areas for which the City is responsible.

Additional Information
Applicants should provide supporting documents such as:

- Photographs of the proposed project area;
- Plans or maps indicating the project in relation to the neighborhood and surrounding community;
- Signed maintenance agreements and conditions; and
- Letters of intent to provide matching funds, in-kind donations, labor, or materials.

Application Review

Applications will be read and evaluated by a technical review committee consisting of members from various city departments to insure that the minimum criteria are met. Any group that does not meet the funding criteria will be notified. The committee will present funding recommendations to the Garland City Council who will make the final award decisions.

All Neighborhood Vitality applications will be rated using the following criteria. As you plan the project and prepare the application, please be sure the application addresses each area.

Criteria	Scoring Weight	Explanation of Criteria
Neighborhood Status/ Maturity	20	The condition and age of the neighborhood demonstrates a need for intervention.
Community Benefit	20	Project proposes a good approach to a neighborhood problem and helps improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and/or aesthetics of the area.
Project Feasibility	20	The project is cost effective, achievable, realistic, sufficiently funded, no on-going maintenance required from the City of Garland.
Community Involvement	15	Demonstrated participation of residents in planning and application process.
Environmental Impact	10	Implementation or completion of the project will not negatively impact the environment or surrounding area.
Match	10	Match is realistic and appropriate to the project. Letters of intent are provided for in-kind donations or cash.
Other	5	Uniqueness of the project, innovative or groundbreaking.
TOTAL SCORE		

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The applicant will act as the General Contractor for most approved projects. Funds for the project will be disbursed by the city after monitoring and evaluation of the project.

An applicant may not begin to incur costs to be paid by the Neighborhood Vitality Grant before signing a funding agreement with the City of Garland.

Applicant must expend required match as indicated in the proposal prior to the expenditure of City funds.

CANCELLATION OF PROJECTS

Failure to meet the terms of the Funding Agreement may result in the cancellation of the project and a one-year application restriction. **Applicants must begin implementation within 12 months of City Council approval to avoid termination of the project. Requests for time extensions must be submitted to the Office of Neighborhood Vitality in writing.**

MATCH REQUIREMENTS

Match requirements will be based on the association's fiscal strength and the cost of the project. The following is a standard guideline for match.

Project Cost	Match Requirement	Type of Match
$10, 000 or less	10%	May include cash, in-kind donations, labor and/or materials
$10,000.01-25,000	15%	Same as above
$25,000.01-50,000	20%	Same as above
$50,000.01 and above	25%	At least half of the match must be a cash match, the remainder may include in-kind donations, labor, and/or materials

- The type of match must be appropriate to the needs of the proposed project.
- All volunteer labor is valued at $12.00 per hour except in the case of professional services.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT TIPS

1. Choose a project that will generate as much community support as possible and that addresses a known problem or concern. Talk to your neighbors to encourage involvement. This effort will also work to create a sense of community in your neighborhood.
2. If your area is not currently organized, contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality to begin the organization process. Organized associations should call to register with the city.
3. Begin your work plan by listing the activities needed to accomplish the community goal. Some initial research may be necessary to prepare your funding proposal.
4. Determine what resources are needed and develop a preliminary budget.
5. Determine the type and the percentage of match you can provide for completion of the project.
6. Review all application requirements before you begin.
7. Contact the Neighborhood Vitality Manager for technical assistance in completing the application.
8. Create a timeline that includes the application, review, and tentative implementation time. This will also be helpful in your discussions with city staff and keeping your neighbors abreast of the project.
9. Do not assume that the application review committee is familiar with your neighborhood. Document and support your proposed project.
10. A complete application includes all documentation and attachments.
11. Late applications will not be accepted.
12. Please do not bind applications. Do not include tabbed dividers or staples.