

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FY 2023



NEIGHBORHOOD
MATCHING
GRANTS



APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES - FY2023

Greetings neighbors!

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Neighborhoods Matching Grant Program! The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. This program is administered in partnership through the City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods and the City of Houston Council Member's Offices. It is designed to build solid relationships among neighbors, cultivate the spirit of volunteerism, and to develop projects that build a sustainable and stronger community.



Our goal is simple. We want to improve the quality of life for Houston communities and partner with active residents to:

- Improve neighborhood organization and pride.
- Improve community appearance and beautification.
- Enlist and increase community participation.

This packet includes pertinent guidelines, the application and frequently asked questions. We are excited to help you enhance your communities, because everyone deserves a beautiful place to live!

In S.U.P.E.R. service,

TaKasha L. Francis

TaKasha L. Francis, Director
Department of Neighborhoods

“Department of Neighborhoods is S.U.P.E.R.!”

Service * Unified* Professional* Excellence* Responsive

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MATCHING GRANT 2023 TIMELINE

2022
Jan



Create a list of potential Matching Grant Projects within your community.

2022
Feb



Create a list of potential Matching Grant Projects within your community.

2022
Mar



Do preliminary research on the cost and output for each Project.

2022
Apr



Discuss among the community which projects your organization would like to support.

2022
May



Vote among the organization which project the community would like to execute.

2022
Jun



Communicate with your District councilmember your proposed project. Complete Required Matching Grant Training.

2022
Jul



Communicate with your District councilmember your proposed project. Complete Required Matching Grant Training.

2022
Aug



Matching Grant Applications go live. Request Approval for proposed Project from designated District Councilmember.

2022
Sep



Complete Matching Grant application for Deadline submission of Nov. 4th.

2022
Oct



Complete Matching Grant application for Deadline submission of Nov. 4th.

2022
Nov



Complete Matching Grant application for Deadline submission of Nov. 4th.

2022
Dec



Await application approval for 2023 Matching Grant.

Matching Grant Program Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions

Program Guidelines

Department of Neighborhood Matching Grant Program

The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. The program is designed to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism to help neighborhood-based organizations learn the art of planning and community building through neighborhood projects.

How it works

The grant money represents a partnership between the City (through your Council Member's office) and an organization. The City will reimburse up to 50% (not to exceed \$5,000) of a project's total budget. The minimum project amount is \$1,000. The minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the eligible organization in order to receive reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement.

Eligible participants

Eligible organizations must meet the following criteria:

- A neighborhood-based organization and/or civic club incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) non-profit organization through the State of Texas.
- If the applying neighborhood-based organization is not 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4), they must secure a 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) organization to partner with them for this project.
- Represent a specific geographic area located within the Houston city limits.
- Identify how the organization will fund and support the project in the future.

Political organizations and individuals are not eligible

Eligible projects

The program helps pay for physical improvements or projects that are accessible and beneficial to the community. The program will **not** pay for ongoing operation or maintenance such as upkeep of landscaping or a community garden. Funds received **through** this program may not be used to lobby or participate in political campaigns and/or elections. Completed projects or completed parts of a project are not eligible for reimbursement.

Proposed projects must meet the following requirements:

- Improve a neighborhood through a physical improvement.

- Involve neighborhood residents, have long-standing benefits.
- Accessible to the public.
- Letter of permission from property owners and/or government agencies of the proposed site at the time of submittal. The property owner may be a government agency, the owner of private property, or an association if the property is a common area.
- Proof of ownership of proposed site (Ex: Copy of Deed, HCAD record, etc.)
- Photo of proposed site.
- Three letters of support for your project (Ex: Neighborhood or area organizations, businesses, elected officials, schools, super neighborhood council, etc.)
- If the proposed projects require approval and/or permitting from a City of Houston department, pre-approval from the appropriate city department is required. (Ex: Pre-approvals must be issued by, Parks & Recreation Department for the Adopt-An-Esplanade Program, Public Works & Engineering Department for Subdivision Markers, etc.) The application is ineligible without the pre-approval from the appropriate city department (s).
- Examples of approved projects include, but are not limited to, street sign toppers, entryway signage, entryway columns, esplanade landscaping and irrigation, park benches, electrical signage, walkways with pavers, murals, etc.

Once the project is completed, the eligible organization will pay for the project in full, and submit **original** receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts to the appropriate DON Council liaison within 5 business days of the project completion. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

The DON Finance Office will process the reimbursement to the vendor within 30 business days of receipt in the approved grant amount from the Council member with DON funds. Checks will only be made payable to the organization listed on the Purchase Order, which must be the sponsoring 501 (c) (3) organization. Once the Purchase Order is complete, no changes can be made. Please verify that all information on the Purchase Order is correct (ex. Name, Address, etc.); checks will be mailed to the Name and Address listed on the Purchase Order only.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we apply? How can I get a copy of the application?

To obtain an application you access it one of three ways: (1) contact your council member's office. (2) log on to the Department of Neighborhoods Office of Neighborhood Engagement webpage located at <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/one/html> (3) log on to the Department of Neighborhoods webpage located at <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/matching-grant-program.html>.

What is the next step?

All eligible participants **MUST** view the informational training workshop video located on the ONE webpage at <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/one.html>. The video will explain the

matching grants process and provide helpful hints regarding qualifying projects and completing your application. This step is mandatory to move on in the process.

When can we apply?

Application packages will be accepted yearly beginning **August 1st** through your council member's office and due the **first Friday in November**. No application packets will be accepted prior to July 1st.

When is the deadline to submit an application?

The deadline to submit an application packet this year is **Friday, November 4, 2022**.

What expenses are covered for reimbursement?

- Project management costs: Not to exceed 10 percent of the total award amount.
- Professional Services: Permits (construction, special events, etc.)
- Professional consultants: (landscape architect, graphic designer)
- Services: (translation, interpretation, printing, advertising, etc.)

Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement.

When can the project start? When must the project be completed?

The funded part of a project can be started only **AFTER** a Purchase Order with the City of Houston has been issued to your organization. The project must be completed by the last business day of May. This year the deadline is **Wednesday, May 31, 2023**.

What is a purchase order and why do I need it?

A Purchase Order is a contract between the vendor and the City of Houston. This document allows the vendor to proceed with services and receive payment or reimbursement in full for services rendered.

How do we obtain a purchase order?

You must submit a Supplier Registration Form and an IRS W-9 form to the City of Houston Strategic Procurement Division by visiting https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/Bid_RegForm.aspx. If you have problems registering, please contact Sergio Escobedo at (832) 393-8711 (Phone), (832) 393-8758 (Fax), and/or email: sergio.escobedo@houstontx.gov. For further assistance you may contact the Supplier Assistance Desk at (832) 393-8800.

How will the project be selected?

The Council Member's office will review and select all proposals for submission.

We've participated in the Neighborhood Matching Grant program before and already have a vendor number, do we need to reapply?

No, but please confirm that your vendor number is still active if it's been more than one year since you applied for one. Please contact Sergio Escobedo, City of Houston Strategic Procurement Division. His contact information is (832) 393-8711 (Phone), (832) 393-8758 (Fax), and/or email: sergio.escobedo@houstontx.gov.

What do we do if we are unable to raise enough funds for the entire project cost?

The organization should scale down to the project to fit a budget they can meet (**\$1,000 minimum project cost**).

Who is an organization's legal signatory to a contract (Purchase Order)?

The sponsoring 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) organization is the legal signatory to the contract.

Can the project period be extended beyond the deadline?

No. The project must be completed by the last business day of May.

NOTE: The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for a matching grant reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. **Failure to comply will result in non-reimbursement for project cost.**

Can an organization count its association dues towards its fund-raising requirement?

Yes. Any funds that the association has are eligible towards the match.

If a selected project fails after an award is made, what happens?

In the unlikely event of project failure, the organization will not receive a matching grant on expenses incurred.

Are projects less than \$1,000 eligible?

No, the minimum project amount is \$1,000. The minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000.

My organization has a 501 (c) (4) classification, can we still apply?

Yes, 501 (c) (4) organizations are now eligible for this program, excluding political action committees (PAC). You will be required to sign a statement on the application stating that your organization is not a PAC and that grant monies will be used for a project that will benefit the community.

Will donations of equipment be counted as part of the match?

No. In-kind donations (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be used to match the City's funds.

Can I apply for funding for a project that's already underway?

Yes, however, completed parts of the project are not eligible for a matching grant. Only new additions to the project are eligible for a matching grant.

Can a project qualify if only a part of it has a definite physical product?

Yes. Only apply for funding for the part of the project that will display physical results.

Is a project aimed at providing playground equipment eligible?

Yes, if the equipment is accessible to the entire neighborhood. The organization will need to obtain a letter of approval from the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that the equipment meets Parks and Recreation Department standards. See the department's website for more information. <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/greenspace.html> for information on how your group or business can participate in this program, contact Marilu DeLaFuente, Greenspace Adoption Coordinator at (832) 395-7029 or via email at marilu.delafuente@houstontx.gov.

What types of materials are allowed in project construction?

The materials used must meet City of Houston and have adequate permits (if required) from the pertinent department. Projects must take place on property that is in compliance with ALL applicable city codes. Documentation is required from the appropriate department.

What can we do if land ownership is unclear for a site?

The city requires that permission is provided for use of private or public land. This information is required for eligibility.

Where can I get information on esplanade projects?

The Parks and Recreation Department, through their *Adopt-An-Esplanade* program, can provide information on esplanade projects. A letter of approval is required from the department. See the department's website for more information and visit- <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/greenspace.html> For information on how your group or business can participate in this program, contact Marilu De La Fuente, Greenspace Adoption Coordinator at (832) 395-7029 or via email at marilu.delafuente@houstontx.gov.

The link to the brochure for this program is:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/pdfs/adoptanesplanade.pdf>

Where can I get information on subdivision markers?

The Public Works & Engineering Department reviews applications for subdivision markers. See the department's website for more information and visit-
<https://edocs.publicworks.houstontx.gov/engineering-and-construction/subdivision-marker-registration-form.html>

Who do we contact for more information?

The Council Member's office of the applying organization and/or the corresponding liaison for that District:

Title	DON Grant Coordinator	Contact
Division Manager	Mr. Paul D. Green	Phone: (832) 393-1061 E-mail: Paul.Green@houstontx.gov

The Matching Grant Process

Phase I-Application Process

- Eligible organizations are encouraged to work within their group to determine the best project that fits their community needs and financial commitment.
- Once the organization has decided the best project that works for them, they **MUST** notify their District Councilmember for approval of their project.
- Once approved by the organizations designated District Councilmember office, the organization then must shift to completing its application with all applicable signatures, city department approvals, and required documentation. The DON Council liaison (DCL) for that district will assist council district office in identifying and contacting the appropriate city departments for approval.
- If the request involves using the CDSF funds to pay for **subdivision markers**, the Public Works and Engineering Department (PWE) has to approve the installation of subdivision markers in the City's right of way, via the application. In this instance, Council District Service Funds may be used for the reimbursement of costs for installing subdivision markers by the eligible organization.
- If the project is aimed at providing **playground equipment**, it is an eligible project if the equipment is accessible to the entire neighborhood. The organization will need to obtain approval from the Parks and Recreation Department, via the application, to ensure that the equipment meets Parks and Recreation Department standards. See the department's website for more information. <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/adoptedparks.html>
- Once the application packet is complete with all required signatures and documentation, it is submitted to the DON Council liaison to check the package and ensure it is correct and complete. The DON Council liaison must sign and approve the package once ensuring all requirements are

met. Thereafter completed package is sent to the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods for approval. Once approved by the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods, the application is forwarded to Vernita Jones, Administrative Office of City Council (AOCC) to forward to Deidre Penny in the Legal Department and the Mayor's office for approval.

- Once approved by the Legal Department and the Mayor's office, Vernita Jones will forward the approved application back to the Councilmember's office and the eligible organization may begin the procurement process to begin the project. **The organization MUST NOT begin work on their project prior to receipt of a purchase order.**

Phase II-Procurement Process for Reimbursement

- **If the eligible organization does not need assistance choosing vendors**, the vendors must **first** have a City vendor number in order to establish a purchase order for future payment. You must submit a Supplier Registration Form and an IRS W-9 form to the City of Houston Strategic Procurement Division by visiting https://purchasing.houstontx.gov/Bid_RegForm.aspx. If you have problems registering, please contact Sergio Escobedo at (832) 393-8711 (Phone), (832) 393-8758 (Fax), and/or email: sergio.escobedo@houstontx.gov. For further assistance you may contact the Supplier Assistance Desk at (832) 393-8800. Once your organization has received a vendor number you must then submit the completed application which includes a Scope of Work and associated cost to the DON Council liaison (DCL), who will then submit to the DON Finance Office for purchase order processing. The purchase order process will take from 5 – 7 business days after receipt for request. After issuance, the purchase order will be forwarded to the eligible organization, via the DON Finance Office. Once the purchase order is received, the work on the project may begin. Once the project is completed, the eligible organization will pay for the project in full, and submit **original** receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts to the appropriate DON Council liaison within 5 business days of the project completion. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** The DON Finance Office will process the reimbursement to the vendor within 30 business days of receipt in the approved grant amount from the Council member with DON funds. Checks will only be made payable to the organization listed on the Purchase Order, which must be the sponsoring 501 (c) (3) organization. Once the Purchase Order is complete, no changes can be made. Please verify that all information on the Purchase

Order is correct (ex. Name, Address, etc.); checks will be mailed to the Name and Address listed on the Purchase Order only.

- **If the eligible organization needs assistance choosing vendors for the work needed**, the council office will contact the DON council liaison to solicit bids for the work needed through the DON Finance Office. Once the vendors have been selected, a city vendor number will be assigned in order to establish a purchase order for future payment. The purchase order process will take from 5 – 7 business days after receipt for request. After issuance, the purchase order will be forwarded to the eligible organization, via the DON Finance Office. Once the purchase order is received, the work on the project may begin. Once the work is completed, the eligible organization will pay for the project in full and submit original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts to the appropriate DON Council liaison within 5 business days of the project completion. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement. NO EXCEPTIONS! The DON Finance Office will process the reimbursement to the vendor within 30 business days of receipt in the approved grant amount from the Council member with DON funds. Checks will only be made payable to the organization listed on the Purchase Order, which must be the sponsoring 501 (c) (3) organization. Once the Purchase Order is complete, no changes can be made. Please verify that all information on the Purchase Order is correct (ex. Name, Address, etc.); checks will be mailed to the Name and Address listed on the Purchase Order only.

**City of Houston
Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
2022/2023 Application**

Please print or type. Please answer each question briefly. You may use one additional 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to complete your answers. Be sure to number the question/answer on the extra sheet. If the question does not apply to your project, put NA (Not Applicable).

APPLICATION PACKET DEADLINE: 5:00 p.m., Friday, November 4, 2022.

Part I - General Information

Required Documents Needed:

- 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas**
- Operating budget for 501 (c) (3) and/or (4) the last 12 months.**
- Council member approval of funds as indicated by signature below.**

1. Neighborhood Association: _____

2. Contact person name/title: _____

3. Address: _____ Zip: _____

4. Phone (Day): _____ (Evening): _____

5. E-mail Address: _____

6. What Council District is your project located in? _____

7. Is your organization a part of a super neighborhood council? **Yes** **No**

If yes, please indicate the name and number of the council.

8. Title of Project: _____

9. City Match Requested (Not to exceed \$5,000) \$ _____

10. Have you ever received funding from the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program?

Yes No

If yes, what was the matching grant year/amount awarded? If more than once, please list.

Year _____ Amount \$ _____

11. *Please give a brief project description:*

Certification by City Council Member:

By signing this application, I declare that I have approved the use of my council district service funds towards this proposed project. I also understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I understand that I may reimburse up to 50% of a project's total budget and that the minimum project amount is \$1,000. I also understand the minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000. I hereby approve \$ _____ of these funds towards the requested project.

Council Member Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification by Organization:

By signing this application, I/we certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge. I/we certify that the applying organization supports this project and have approved it as a body. I/we also understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program and to invite the City to any promotional activities associated with our project.

President/Board Chair Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: Email: _____

Project Manager Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: Email: _____

Qualifying Information for Organizations

Qualifying organization must be a Neighborhood Association/Civic Club with a 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas to qualify for this grant.

Does your organization fit these criteria? **Yes** **No**

If yes, please provide a copy of your organization’s State Certificate of Incorporation and IRS Department of Treasury tax exempt status. If no, please have your partnering 501 (c)(3) or 501(c) (4) organization complete and attach the following: A copy of your organization’s State Certificate of Incorporation and IRS Department of Treasury tax exempt status, or that of your partnering organization, if applicable. Please also attach the operating budget for the last 12 months.

1. Partnering Organization: _____
Contact person name/title: _____
Address: _____
Phone (Day): _____ (Evening): _____
E-mail Address: _____

2. Please list the current officer(s), name(s) and title(s). Also list committees and chairpersons.

3. Organization’s annual operating budget: \$ _____ Year: _____

4. Organization’s Federal Identification No. _____

Select One: We are a **501 (c) (3)** **501 (c) (4)**

Certification by a 501(c) (4) Organization:

By signing this application, I declare that our organization is not a political action committee. I/we certify that the applying organization supports this project and have approved it as a body. All grant monies will be used for a project that will benefit the community.

President/Board Chair Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Part II- Qualifying Information for Projects

Required Documents needed:

- Signed letter of permission from owner of the proposed site
- Proof of ownership of proposed site (Ex: Copy of Deed, HCAD record, etc.)
- Photo of proposed site

**The property owner may be a government agency, the owner of private property, or an association if the property is a common area. Property and project must be accessible to all residents of Houston for eligibility. **

1. Title of Project: _____

2. Briefly describe your project:

3. What is the physical address of your project?

4. The property is owned by:

5. Do you have permission of the property owner to make the proposed improvements?

Yes No

6. Does your project require upkeep/maintenance beyond the grant period? If so, how will you maintain the project (funding, volunteers, etc.)? Please be specific.

Part III- Project Information

Required Items needed:

- 3 signed letters of support for your project**

(Ex: Neighborhood or area organizations, businesses, elected officials, schools, super neighborhood council, etc.)

- ALL required City of Houston approval(s)**

Note- The application is ineligible without the pre-approval from the appropriate city department(s)

(Ex: Pre-approvals must be issued by, Parks & Recreation Department for the Adopt-An-Esplanade Program, Public Works & Engineering Department for Subdivision Markers, etc.)

- Scope of Work/Quote**

(Note: This should include the total dollar amount as well as proposed services rendered or goods to be provided from the actual vendor completing the services or supplying the goods.)

1. With your project in mind, describe the current condition of project site? How will your proposed project improve it? Please be specific.

2. Describe your project after completion. What is your end goal or visible result?

3. How will the proposed project contribute to improving the quality of life of the neighborhood?

4. List the ways in which you involved the rest of the neighborhood in **selecting** and **planning** this project? How did you get their input (Ex: Meetings, door-to-door surveys or flyers, etc.)?

5. Describe how the residents and organization members will be involved in achieving this project. Include fundraising efforts, implementation of the project, maintenance of the project, and celebrating the completion of the project. Please be specific.

6. Has your organization obtained permission or pre-approval from the appropriate City Department(s) to conduct the proposed project? **Yes** **No**

Department Approvals

Certification by City of Houston Department (s):

By signing this application, I/we certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the department listed in this signature. I/we understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I/we certify that the applying organization has met the requirements for my department for this project and the project is approved. **Please indicate if you are signing by permission of the authorized person.**

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

7. Project Timeline -Provide a timeline for each phase of your project (i.e. install irrigation, purchase plants, planting, etc. on the following page. Please attach a separate document if necessary.)

Project Activity Description	Estimated Completion Date

Part IV-REQUIRED CITY APPROVALS

Certification by City of Houston Department (s):

By signing this application, I/we certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the department listed in this signature. I/we understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I/we certify that the applying organization has met the requirements for my department for this project and the project is approved. **Please indicate if you are signing by permission of the authorized person.**

Date: _____

 DON Grant Coordinator
Department of Neighborhoods

Department of Neighborhoods
 TaKasha L. Francis
 Director

Legal Department *(Signature above)*

(Printed Name)

(Position)

Office of Mayor Sylvester Turner *(Signature above)*

(Printed Name)

(Position)

DON NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT PROCESS CHECKLISTS

Application packet checklist:

- Completed the Required Training for Matching Grant Program
- Council member approval of projects and funds
- Reviewed and completed ALL questions and answers
- 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas
- 12-month Operating budget for 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) organization
- Signed letter of permission from owner of the proposed site
- Proof of ownership of proposed site
- Photo of proposed site
- 3 signed letters of support for your project
- ALL required City of Houston approval(s)
- Scope of Work/Quote

Procurement checklist:

- Approved application packet
- Photo of completed project
- City vendor number
- Proof of services and payment (Original receipts/completed invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts)