



Neighborhood Matching Grants

“Helping You to Make It Happen”

Program Overview, Process & Timeline

Overview

The Neighborhood Matching Grants Program awards funds up to \$25,000 to eligible organizations to make neighborhoods better places to live, work, play and shop. The Fund was created in 1993 to promote the City of Charlotte’s neighborhood focus by achieving four primary goals:

- Help neighborhoods determine priorities and make improvements in their communities in an efficient, cost-effective manner
- Build the capacity of neighborhood and business associations to improve the quality of life through participation in and management of neighborhood-based projects
- Promote civic involvement and leverage resources to revitalize and reinvest in challenged and transitioning neighborhoods
- Encourage partnerships among local government agencies, resident and business associations and other community groups to create projects and products that improve neighborhoods

The City of Charlotte’s Neighborhood & Business Services Department, Neighborhood Resource Office administers the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program. Offices are located at Old City Hall, 600 East Trade Street, Charlotte, North Carolina 28202. Call 704-336-2175 for additional information, or visit nbs.charlottenc.gov.

Like most grant programs, the Neighborhood Matching Grants Program provides funding only to specific kinds of organizations. Because Neighborhood & Business Services seeks to improve neighborhoods by building the capacity of *neighborhood organizations*, this program is designed to support that purpose. Recognizing that there are many groups that can and do contribute to improving the quality of life in neighborhoods, ineligible organizations are encouraged to partner with those that meet the eligibility criteria. The eligible organization must be the lead entity in project planning and implementation. The two categories of applicant eligibility are ***Neighborhood Based Organizations*** and ***Business Associations***.

Neighborhood Associations are organizations comprised of the residents in a specifically defined area recognized as a neighborhood. Membership includes all homeowners and renters within the defined geographical boundaries. The association typically has elected officers, by laws or other governing documents, meets regularly, establishes and collects membership dues, and sponsors community projects such as neighborhood clean ups and general beautification, neighborhood festivals, and other community-wide events. Most neighborhood associations address broad based issues of the neighborhood, and strive to improve conditions in the neighborhood as a whole.





A neighborhood association is eligible to apply for a Neighborhood Matching Grant when all of the following apply to the organization:

- Is established and has been active at least six months (**organizations active for less than six months are eligible to apply for Organizational Development Grants at a \$2 for \$1 match rate**)
- Is created and managed by residents within the neighborhood;
- Is open for membership to everyone in the neighborhood;
- 75% of association members live in the neighborhood. (Call regarding an exception.);
- Has duly elected board officers and established by-laws or governing documents;
- Holds regular meetings and maintains records and board minutes; and
- Expands and/or promotes existing neighborhood goals and objectives.

Community Development Corporations (CDCs) are non-profit entities formed by residents, small business owners, and other local stakeholders to revitalize a low or moderate income community. Characterized by their community based leadership and a focus on housing and economic development, CDCs typically produce affordable housing and create jobs for community residents. Such entities are eligible to apply when all of the following apply:

- CDC is neighborhood-based, with at least 1/3 neighborhood representation on the board;
- Is established and has been active at least 6 months;
- Has duly elected board officers, established by laws, and articles of incorporation;
- Holds regular meetings and maintains records and board minutes;
- The grant request expands and/or promotes existing neighborhood goals and objectives;
- A signed letter of agreement or other documentation shows a collaborative partnership with the neighborhood association; and
- Resources are used exclusively for projects and products specified in the partnership agreement.

Other Neighborhood Based Groups, for example (but not limited to) book clubs, gardening clubs, sports leagues, and civic clubs are eligible for Neighborhood Matching Grants when all of the following apply:

- Has established and has been active at least 6 months;
- 80% of the group members live in the neighborhood
- Holds regular meetings and maintains records of these meetings
- The proposed project promotes the greater good of the neighborhood
- A signed letter of agreement or other documentation shows a collaborative partnership with or support from the neighborhood association

A business association is an organized group of businesses/business owners within a specific geography such as a neighborhood or business corridor that collaborates with other area stakeholders to address economic development concerns. A neighborhood based business association with a mission of contributing to improving the quality of life in and around targeted neighborhoods is eligible to apply when all of the following apply:

- Is organized and has been active at least six months;





- Has duly elected officers, holds regular meetings, and maintains records and minutes;
- Demonstrates that 75% of association members operate businesses within the targeted neighborhood or business corridor;
- Project addresses economic development needs of the targeted neighborhood or business corridor and clearly benefits the area;
- Has a signed letter of agreement or other documentation that shows a collaborative partnership with any affected neighborhood association(s); and
- Uses resources exclusively for projects and products as specified in the partnership agreement

Ineligible Organizations

Groups that are not eligible to apply include schools and universities, city-wide organizations, home-school programs, healthcare facilities, foundations, individuals or individual business owners, fraternal organizations, religious institutions and organizations, political groups, governmental agencies, and non-profit organizations that are not resident-based. Organizations that discriminate on the basis of race, nationality, ethnicity, religion, creed, or disability are also ineligible.

Eligible Geography

The eligible geography for Neighborhood Matching Grants is defined by data from the City of Charlotte's Neighborhood Quality of Life Study that collects and reports data by neighborhood statistical areas (NSA). Neighborhoods within NSAs with median household income not greater than \$57,489 are eligible. The neighborhood must also be located inside the city limits of Charlotte. The attached map (Appendix A) indicates the Neighborhood Matching Grants eligible geography. Entities that meet the organizational eligibility requirements described in the preceding pages may check their eligibility by clicking [here](#).

Eligible Projects

Requests for funds should be based on costs associated with implementation of a single project as opposed to support for operational expenses such as salaries, rent, utility bills, HOA/property management responsibilities and on-going services or maintenance costs. Eligible projects are those that:

- Provide a public, neighborhood benefit;
- Involve neighborhood residents in project identification, planning, and implementation;
- Do not simply entail the purchase of equipment or supplies (with no on-going project activity); and
- Do not duplicate or support an existing project or program.

Applicants may request funding for one project at a time. Once funded, NMG will not pay for the same project or items in subsequent requests. Projects may receive grant funding for a maximum of 12 months.





Project Categories & Examples

Neighborhood Improvement: Physical improvements to public areas such as landscaping and beautification, community gardens, neighborhood entrance signs, small playgrounds, street light installation, and neighborhood clean ups. Improvements to personal property are not eligible.

Organizational Development: Projects that increase effectiveness and improve operations of existing neighborhood organizations or business associations. Projects may include leadership or board training and development, membership recruitment campaigns and outreach tools such as newsletters, meeting signs, brochures and directories. (Neighborhood training is also available through the City's Community University Program at no cost.) **Organizational Development Grants are available to newly formed neighborhood, homeowner, and business associations at \$2 for \$1 match rate.**

Crime and Public Safety: Projects to reduce crime and increase feelings of safety in the neighborhood. Projects may include Neighborhood Watch signs, citizens' patrols, National Night Out activities, crime prevention and fire safety programs.

Recreational, Educational, and Cultural Initiatives: Includes after school and tutorial programs, programs for senior citizens, music or art enrichment, and some outdoor or recreational activities.

Natural Preservation and Energy Conservation: Projects that help neighborhoods curb energy consumption and protect natural environments. This project category assists neighborhoods in creating and maintaining a street tree canopy by allowing tree planting in the setback area of front yards on private lots and planting along creeks and streams to create a buffer for water quality.

Neighborhood School Outreach: This project category encourages partnerships between neighborhoods and the schools within them. Sample projects are reading buddy or lunch buddy programs, belt drives, and teacher appreciation events.

Ineligible purchases include food*, beverages, entertainment, salaries and other operating expenses. Annual plants are also ineligible; perennial plants are recommended. Applicants should plan to pay for these items and count those costs as part of their match. Neighborhood festivals and organized trips are limited to one per neighborhood, at a maximum grant award of \$3,000.

*Food items maybe an eligible purchase when they are a part of an educational project pertaining to health and nutrition. Please call for exceptions.





Process & Timeline

The Neighborhood Matching Grants Fund has a two-tiered approval process. Review, approval and notification generally takes 45-60 days.

Phase I – Initial Review

After receiving the applications, Neighborhood Services staff will:

- Verify organization and project eligibility
- Review applications for clarity and completeness and follow up with applicants
- Present applications to formal Review Teams

Phase II -- Formal Review and Selection

- Review Teams evaluate applications based on selection criteria below; determine approval or denial
- Staff notify applicants of results
- Approved grantees attend orientation and sign contracts
- Organizations begin project activity (only after contract is signed)

Applications for grants of \$10,000 or less are reviewed and approved by a seven-member Inter-Departmental Review Team representing various city departments. For grant amounts greater than \$10,000 and up to the maximum of \$25,000, applications are reviewed and approved by the Citywide Review Team. This team is comprised of eleven citizens appointed by City Council: *five* neighborhood association representatives, *two* business association representatives, *two* non-profit sector representatives, *one* Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools employee and *one* City employee.

Scoring Criteria

Criteria	Possible Points
Size and quality of match <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Value of the match exceeds the minimum required (up to 5 points) ▪ Proposed match is well documented and ready to expend (5) 	10
Participation and Collaboration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Project shows evidence of broad-based neighborhood participation (10) ▪ Project is a collaboration of several organizations and/or diverse groups (10) 	20
Project Impact/Need <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Provides substantial, lasting benefit to a low income or challenged neighborhood (10) ▪ Addresses a need identified in a city assessment, plan, or valid document (20) 	30
Project Design <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Well-planned, cost-effective, and ready for implementation; shows a clear and reasonable vision for sustaining the project and resulting improvements (25) ▪ Budget is a reasonable projection of expenses and revenue (10) ▪ Proposed activities are an innovative response to a recognized problem (5) 	40
Total Possible Points	100





Contracts

Within 15-30 days of approval, successful applicants enter into a contract with the City of Charlotte, thus activating the approved project. Completion of IRS form W-9 is required at the contract signing, providing the organization's taxpayer identification number so the city can encumber the grant funds. Approval is withdrawn if specified contingencies are not met and the contract is not signed within the designated time frame (up to 6 months). Contractual agreements reflect project goals, budget, and match commitments that are contained in the approved application. Fraud, misuse of funds, failure to produce the agreed upon match, or non-compliance on other agreements constitutes default on the contract. Appropriate penalties apply, including loss of eligibility for a period of two years. A grant may be rescinded at the request of the grantee, however reimbursement of expended funds may be required.

Disbursement of Funds

Funds are available after the contract is signed and registered with the City Clerk. Organizations submit original invoices and receipts for expenditures to the Neighborhood Matching Grants office for processing. Checks are made payable to both the grantee and the designated vendor (unless for reimbursement). **Please allow 10 (ten) business days for invoice processing.** Grantees are urged to use competent, reliable vendors with valid credentials to avoid potential problems and delays. The City contracts solely with the recipient neighborhood organization or business association. Therefore, any discrepancies that may result from the hiring of contractors, consultants or private vendors must be resolved by the grantee.

How to Apply

- Step 1) Educate yourself about the program. This can be done three ways:
 - a. Attend a Pre-Application workshop prior to the grant application deadline. The schedule for Pre-Application workshops can be found at nbs.charlottenc.gov or by calling 704-353-1130
 - b. Beginning July 2011, organizations can complete the Neighborhood Matching Grants Pre-Application Workshop online. It can easily be found by accessing the Neighborhood & Business Services homepage at nbs.charlottenc.gov
 - c. Call 704-353-1130 or email the Neighborhood Matching Grant Office at NMGrants@charlottenc.gov to request a customized Neighborhood Matching Grants Project Planning Session
- Step 2) Have your organizations representative register on the Neighborhood Matching Grants Online Application System. By clicking on "Online Application" on the Neighborhood Matching Grants webpage. They will be redirected to the online application site, and should click "Create New Account"
- Step 3) Fill out the online application. The application questions as well as tips for completing the application are included at the end of this document





Step 4) Save the application as you go through it. Do not submit until you are ready. You may save and log back in later to complete.

Step 5) Technical assistance and computer access are available through Neighborhood & Business Services. Please call 704-336-2175 or email NMGrants@charlottenc.gov

Step 6) Submit the application by 5:00pm on the application due date (February 15th, April 15th, June 15th, September 15th). Applications are time stamped and will not be accepted if submitted after the deadline

Step 7) Await further communication from the Neighborhood Resources Office

Grant Application Detail

Part I: Organizational Information

- ❖ Question #1: Project Name (100 characters allowed) – Give your project a relevant name
- ❖ Question #2: Project Description (2,000 characters allowed) – Give a brief 1-3 sentence description of the project, you will have opportunity to fully describe the project further into the application
- ❖ Question #3: Pre-Application Workshop – Indicate if your organization participated in a Pre-Application Workshop Session. If yes, please indicate the date in Question #4
- ❖ Question #5: Organization Type – Please choose an organization type from one of the listed eligible organization structures. For definitions on organization types, please see pages 2-3 of this document
- ❖ Question #6: Neighborhood Boundaries (500 characters allowed) - Enter your neighborhood's physical street boundaries, if you would like, you may also upload a map that is saved to your computer by clicking the "Browse" button
- ❖ Question #7: Membership Requirements (1,000 characters allowed) - Detail your organization's membership requirements including, dues, meeting frequency and average meeting attendance
- ❖ Question #8: Organizational Mission (1,000 characters allowed) – State your organization's official mission
- ❖ Questions #9-#14: Provide three (3) forms of documentation from the following list to verify that your organization is properly organized and active.
 - Bylaws
 - Non-Profit Status
 - Officer Contact List
 - Annual Budget
 - Neighborhood Directory
 - Newsletters (2 editions)
 - Articles of Incorporation
 - Board of Directors Contact List
 - Membership Directory
 - Website

You may type the information into the provided fields or upload documents that are saved to your computer by clicking the "Browse" button that is to the right of the gray areas and choose the desired document from your computer folders. If you have uploaded a file successfully the filename of the uploaded file will be indicated under the Browse button. If you have documents you would like to upload to your application that you do not have available





electronically, you may do so using “Fax to File”. Click on the “Fax to File” link under “Tools” on the top left of the application for directions on how to use the tool.

Part II: Project Details

- ❖ Question #15: Project Category - Choose the eligible project category that best fits your project. For eligible project definitions, please see page 4 of this document
- ❖ Question #16: Project Location – Give the specific address where the project will take place. You may also provide a map of the location, but it is not required
- ❖ Question #17: Project Objective and Purpose (5,000 characters allowed) – Explain why this particular project is important to your neighborhood
- ❖ Question #18: Neighborhood Participation (5,000 characters allowed) - Explain how the neighborhood was involved in choosing and planning this project. You should upload any documents, including meeting minutes, surveys, or petitions document neighborhood support for the project
- ❖ Question #19: Project Description (10,000 characters allowed) - Give a detailed description of the project (detail how it will be carried out—who will do what, when, how). You may also upload any supporting documents (drawings, brochures, flyers, etc.) that illustrate your proposed project.
- ❖ Question #20: Project Evaluation (1,000 characters allowed) - Explain how your organization will evaluate the project’s success
- ❖ Question #21: Sustainability (1,000 characters allowed) – Explain how your organization will sustain your project after grant funding has ended
- ❖ Question #22: Marketing and Promotions (1,500 characters allowed) - Detail your plan for marketing and promoting your project. Include how you will include the City of Charlotte’s Neighborhood Matching Grants Program in this plan

Part III: Application Worksheets

The Neighborhood Matching Grants Fund application worksheets can be found on the Neighborhood Matching Grants webpage Under “Documents Needed” by clicking [here](#). The application worksheets and samples are attached to this document.

Completed application worksheets should be saved to your computer and uploaded to your application by clicking on the “Browse” button or by utilizing the “Fax to File” tool.

Application Reminders

- ❖ You do not have to complete your application all in one sitting. Remember to press the “Save as Draft” button at the top or bottom of the page to prevent you from losing your data.
- ❖ Once you are satisfied with your application, press the “Submit Form” button.
- ❖ The Neighborhood Resources office is available for application technical assistance and to provide computer access, please call 704-353-1130 or email NMGrants@charlottenc.gov for further assistance.
- ❖ To upload a file, click the “Browse” and choose the desired file from documents from the file upload pop-up on your computer. The file size limit for each question is noted next to the “Browse” button and the system will not accept files greater than this limit. DO NOT ENTER





ANY TEXT INTO THE GRAY BOX TO THE LEFT OF THE "BROWSE" BUTTON AS THIS WILL PREVENT YOU FROM SAVING OR SUBMITTING YOUR FORM. If you have uploaded a file and saved your application, the filename of the uploaded file will be indicated under the Browse button. There is no need to upload another document if a filename is noted in this message but you may upload a new file to overwrite your previous selection if you wish.

- ❖ If you have documents that you would like to add to your application that are not saved on your computer, and you do not have a scanner to help you do so; you may use the "Fax to File" tool. Click on the "Fax to File" link under "Tools" at the top left of the application.

How to Use the Tool:

Using the fax tool is incredibly simple:

1. To start, click the "**Request a Fax #**" button below and you will be presented with a toll-free fax number. Once you have a fax number, you will have a 20 minute period to fax needed documents for conversion.
2. Send a separate fax for each document and do not include a cover sheet. All faxed documents will be automatically converted to .pdf format.
3. Click the Finished Faxing button to see your list of files
4. Converted documents will be available to download to your computer. After downloading to your computer, you will then be able to upload the documents at the appropriate time during the online application process



Application Worksheets

The application worksheets are available on the Neighborhood & Business Services website, under documents needed by clicking [here](#). Samples and directions are below.

Neighborhood Matching Grants Budget Sample

Please provide a projected budget for the **entire** project utilizing the format below.

APPLICANT NAME: The Neighborhood Association

Budget Category/Explanation	Amount	code*	Source
CASH EXPENSES			
Fees to Service Providers (list)			
ABC Lawn Service	\$2,500		NMG Request
Brink Mason Company	\$4,000		NMG Request
Johnny Artist	\$4,000		Corporation/Foundation/Other Private Support
Supplies and Materials (list)			
shrubby	\$1,000		NMG Request
solar lighting for sign	\$450	N	Individual Support
flowers	\$250		Corporation/Foundation/Other Private Support
Venue Expenses (list)			
Advertising & Communication costs (list)			
flyers	\$50	N	Applicant Contribution
volunteer thank you letters	\$50	N	Applicant Contribution
Other Expenses (list)			
snacks and drinks for volunteers	\$250	N	Applicant Contribution
TOTAL CASH EXPENSES	\$12,550		

Cash Expenses Directions

Under "Cash Expenses" list all real cash expenses under the appropriate category. Under "Amount", include the exact cost, including sales tax. Under "Source" choose the appropriate funding source from the drop down box for the listed expense. "NMG Request" if you are requesting the funds for the NMG Program. Choose "Applicant Contribution" if your organization will cover the expense. "Corporate/Foundation / Private Support" if another organization will cover the expense. "Individual" if a person is providing cash support. **The total budget will automatically.**



CASH MATCH DETAILS			
	Amount		Source(s)
Applicant Contribution	\$350		The Neighborhood Association Budget
Corporate/Foundation/Other Private Support	\$4,250		Arts & Science Council & Lowes
Individual Support	\$450		Jane Neighbor
Other (list)	\$0		
TOTAL CASH MATCH	\$5,050		
Anything provided to the project (space rental, materials, volunteer time, donated professional services etc.) at no cost to the applicant			
IN-KIND SUPPORT (list)			
	Value		Source(s)
Volunteer Time(Calculated Automatically from your Volunteer Sheet)	\$2,814.75	N	
Ice and water	\$100		Harris Teeter
Shovels	\$45	N	Johnny Neighbor
Meeting Space	\$150		AME Church
TOTAL IN-KIND SUPPORT	\$3,110		
BUDGET SUMMARY			
NMG - Grant Request	\$7,500		<i>Total requested from NMG</i>
Cash Match	\$5,050		<i>Total Cash Match</i>
In-kind support	\$3,110		<i>Total donated services/materials</i>
TOTAL PROJECT BUDGET	\$15,660		<i>Sum of above</i>
MATCH TOTAL	\$8,160		<i>Total match</i>

Cash Match Directions

Cash amounts will automatically fill in and calculate from the cash expenses you previously entered in the above table. Under the "Source(s)" column, list the source of the funds pledged.

In -Kind Support Directions

List all pledged in-kind support. **You do not need to list anything for the "Volunteer Time"**. The value will automatically calculate from your Volunteer Activity Worksheet. List the value and the source. The total will automatically calculate.

Budget Summary Directions

All totals will automatically calculate from the previously entered information.

*Code: for both Cash Expenses and In-Kind Support, please indicate a "N" for resources from the applying neighborhood.



