



Planning A Neighborhood Vitality Project

WHAT IS THE NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM?

In May 2004, Garland voters approved Proposition Six, which included \$5 million for neighborhood improvement projects within the City of Garland with **\$1,000,000** allotted annually. The program is administered through the Office of Neighborhood Vitality. Applications are accepted in September and April and evaluated for eligibility as received. Only one application per association or group per fiscal year will be considered. **The maximum individual award will be \$100,000 per association.**

The purpose of this grant program is to encourage community efforts in the maintenance and improvement of our neighborhoods. Funds may be used for physical and aesthetic improvements (See program guidelines for more details.). Upon approval of an application, the Office of Neighborhood Vitality will contact the association or group to discuss the funding approval, project details, and sign the funding agreement.

PROGRAM SUMMARY:

- Neighborhood-based groups develop project ideas and contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality.
- Groups submit an application along with supporting documents and consult with the Office of Neighborhood Vitality for technical assistance.
- Groups whose projects satisfy basic threshold criteria submit a Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Application to request funding – up to \$100,000.
- Applications are reviewed and applicants are contacted to arrange a meeting with the Technical Review Committee.
- Applications are forwarded to the City Council for final approval.

WHO CAN APPLY?

Neighborhood and homeowner associations or groups that organize for the specific purpose of completing a neighborhood improvement project are eligible to apply for funding (See terms of Neighborhood Vitality Agreement in program guidelines.). A specific area that the applicant represents must be identified and evidence of active local resident involvement and concurrence will be required. Businesses, non-profit organizations, and faith-based organizations may only apply as part of a joint effort with an association or neighborhood group. Awards will not be made to Individual persons or individual businesses, or applicants who have failed to conduct honest business good faith obligation with regard to projects previously funded with Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Program funds.



PLANNING A NEIGHBORHOOD PROJECT

Planning a Neighborhood Vitality Project involves answering the following questions:

- What are the needs in our neighborhood?
- What would make a visible impact in our neighborhood?
- What resources are available to accomplish this project?
- Does the project require any maintenance?



WHAT TYPES OF PROJECTS ARE ELIGIBLE:

Proposed projects must fit one of the following types:

- Entry features (new construction and renovations)
- Landscape design and improvements
- Neighborhood enhancement features
- Neighborhood recognition signage
- Removal of unsightly structures that negatively impact the neighborhood
- Safety features

WHAT KINDS OF PROJECTS AND BUDGET ITEMS WILL NOT BE FUNDED ?

- Projects are not eligible for funding if they conflict with existing city policy.
- Project budget items not eligible for funding include:
 - o Ongoing services, operations, or maintenance,
 - o Food, beverage, lodging, or travel expenses, or
 - o Expenditures or financial commitments made before a project is formally approved.

HOW WILL PROJECTS BE SELECTED?

Eligible projects that are legal and technically feasible (within proposed budgets), and which demonstrate neighborhood support, may be selected, as funds are available. If projects are not selected for funding, applicants will have an opportunity, if necessary, to modify requests and reapply in the next funding cycle.

All applications will be scored according to criteria described below. In the event that the total amount requested in any award period exceeds available funding, projects will be selected based on funding priorities.

ARE MATCHING FUNDS REQUIRED?

While a cash match is not required for all funding levels, a strong commitment of neighborhood support is required. If applications exceed available funding, matching contributions are among the criteria by which projects will be compared and scored.



WHAT IS THE PROJECT SELECTION CRITERIA?

All Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Program applications are rated using the following criteria. As you plan your project and write your application, keep the criteria in mind and be sure the application addresses each of them.

NEIGHBORHOOD MATURITY (20 POINTS)

- The neighborhood is more than 30 years old.
- The condition and age of the neighborhood demonstrates a need for intervention.
- The neighborhood is more than 10 years old and has organized to prevent decline.

COMMUNITY BENEFIT (20 POINTS)

- The project proposes a clear and concise approach to a neighborhood issue; it provides a measurable benefit to the neighborhood and the City of Garland.
- Project activities “build community,” i.e. create stronger bonds neighbors and greater connections to the community.

PROJECT FEASIBILITY (20 POINTS)

- The proposed project is cost effective, well planned, documented, and ready for implementation.
- The budget reliably represents the project’s expense and (if applicable) revenues. No ongoing maintenance or commitment required by the city.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARTICIPATION (20 POINTS)

- To the extent possible, the project includes opportunities to involve neighbors in shaping and carrying out the project.
- If no direct neighborhood participation in the project is possible (e.g. if the project requires only dangerous or highly technical work), applicants will be awarded 10 points in this category.
- The project promotes interaction of diverse parts of the community (e.g. renters/Owners, business/residents, people of different generations, people of different abilities, and people of different cultural backgrounds).

MATCHING CONTRIBUTION (10 POINTS)

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



Matching contribution must be fully documented and is necessary to be eligible for funding.

- The applicant group has secured cash contribution for the project.
- The applicant group has secured volunteer labor, donated goods, and /or donated goods, and/or donated professional services for the project.

For the purpose of this program, volunteer labor is valued at \$10 per hour. Donated goods and professional services are valued at the market rate for like goods and services in Garland and surrounding communities.

What is the application process?

Step 1	Potential applicants contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality to obtain an application or visit the city's website www.ci.garland.tx.us
Step 2	Applicants consult with the Office of Neighborhood Vitality to review timelines and application requirements.
Step 3	Applicant submits completed Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant Application to the Office of Neighborhood Vitality before the posted deadline.
Step 4	Technical Review Committee reviews applications and meets with applicants to discuss proposals.
Step 5	Office of Neighborhood Vitality presents applications to the City Council
Step 6	The City Council reviews and approves projects.
Step 7	Applicants are notified of the City Council's decision. Project agreements are signed accordingly.
Step 8	Staff monitors progress of project. Project is evaluated upon completion.

Note: Proposals should not be submitted with staples, in binders, or with dividers.