

**Strong & Sustainable Neighborhood Grant Program**

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| **Origin & Purpose**The Strong & Sustainable Neighborhoods Grant Program assists associations and neighborhood groups with physical/ non-physical and community building projects. This program is a matching grant program, creating a partnership between the neighborhoods and the city to accomplish common goals.  **Goals*** Strengthen & improve neighborhood associations.
* Improve the appearance of city neighborhoods.
* Strengthen the relationship between the HOA and the city government.
* Stimulate inter-neighborhood cooperation.
* Encourage new communities to develop their own neighborhood associations.
* Stimulate interaction between all College Station HOAs/Neighborhood associations.
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**Who can apply?**

Neighborhood and Homeowners associations that are registered with the City’s Neighborhood Partnership Program (NPP) will be given priority status in selection. Neighborhoods that are not a part the NPP are eligible for funds for non-physical and community building projects but not for physical projects including Gateway Grants.

**What are considered Non- Physical Projects?**

These are projects that are intended to strengthen the quality of life and/or integrity of a neighborhood. Some examples are one-time events such as a festival, a celebration, application for a zoning overlay, a training session, or a workshop.

**What are considered Physical Projects?**

These are projects that are intended to enhance the physical aspects of a neighborhood. Some examples are beautification projects, landscaping, neighborhood clean ups or a tangible building project such as a gateway or entry-way improvement.

**What are considered Community Building Projects?**

These projects are intended to bring the community together to work on a project. Some examples are a neighborhood clean-up, a drive to increase resident membership or participation in an association, developing a neighborhood newsletter for distribution, community gardens or a neighborhood forum.

**What activities or groups are ineligible for funding?**

-Political Campaigning

-Alcohol purchases

-Association business expenses or trips

-Individuals or individual businesses

-Religious organizations

-Projects that are deemed maintenance projects

-Ongoing services or requests for operating budget expenses

-Projects that conflicts with existing city policies or ordinances

**Recent changes to the grant program eligible projects**

**Customized Street Signs**

Previously, neighborhoods could apply for grant funds to include decorative sign toppers highlighting the neighborhood’s name to the top of street signs. Also, grant funds were often used for large signage projects at the entrance of the neighborhoods. *The street sign toppers are no longer an eligible project,* but gateway or entrance signage is still available. The sign toppers have instead been replaced by customized street signs, where neighborhoods can the add a design element that represents their neighborhood as well as choosing a different color for the street signs. Neighborhoods can work with the local sign companies of their choice to design their signs. The city will approve the final design and color selection prior to ordering the signage.

**Application Granting Process**

**How does it work?**

The program is a fifty percent (50%) matching funds program that assists neighborhood/homeowners’ associations to obtain funds for projects that will benefit the neighborhood and its residents. The association or neighborhood will pay for the project up front and be reimbursed for 50% of their costs. The neighborhood grant is a competitive grant process, meaning there is criteria used to evaluate the grant applications and determine which ones have presented the best application packet and demonstrated the need and ability to complete the project. This also means that not all applicants will be selected to receive funding.

**Recent changes to matching funds requirements**

**Grant Matching and Reimbursement changes for small and low to moderate income neighborhoods**

Smaller neighborhoods and those in low to moderate incomes areas often have challenges participating in the neighborhood grant process. To address these challenges, some modifications were made to the neighborhood grant program for smaller neighborhoods and those in low to moderate income areas.

Neighborhoods with 40 or fewer homes and those located in low to moderate income neighborhoods (designated by the Census) can now have a number of options to fund their projects. Those options include volunteer labor, cash and in-kind donations, fundraising events, partnerships with local businesses, donated goods, and services to make up their portion of the match.

The grant program operates as a matching grant program, where neighborhoods pay for the project upfront and are reimbursed at 50% of the project cost upon completion of the project. With the new changes for smaller and low to moderate income neighborhoods will now have a lower match at 40% instead of 50% and can use a variety of options to reach their funding match.

**Non-Physical**

The maximum amount available for Non-Physical is $500.00. Volunteer hours and in-kind donations may be allowed as matching funds in the manner and to the extent provided for by the City.

**Physical**

The maximum amount available for Physical Projects is $7500.00. Volunteer hours and in-kind donations up to twenty-five percent (25%) of the value of the neighborhood’s share may be allowed in the manner and to the extent provided for by the City.

**Community-Building**

The maximum amount available for Community Building Projects is $500.00. Volunteer hours and in-kind donations may be allowed as matching funds in the manner and to the extent provided for by the City.

**Grants will be evaluated on the following criteria:**

* Registered with the City’s Neighborhood Partnership Program (20 points) (Note: this is required for all applications for Physical Projects)
* Neighborhood Participation & Involvement (20 Points)
* Community Benefit (20 Points)
* Matching donations and volunteer hours contributed towards the event (20 Points)
* Project consistency with established Program goals (20 Points)

**Application Review**

A committee of city staff members from various departments will review the applications and recommend approval or denial of the projects.

**Required Documentation**

* Completed application including a budget, a detailed project description, and at least 2-3 bids from prospective vendors. Incomplete applications will not be considered.

**Grant Application Deadline**

**The application deadline is June 24, 2024**. The applications will be delivered the City Manager’s Office in City Hall at 1101 Texas Avenue, College Station, TX 77842 by **5:00 PM** on the deadline date. **Electronic submissions are also accepted by sending them to**

**Notification of Awards**

Applicants will be notified of award status within six weeks of the submittal date for applications.

**Contract for Funds**

Once an award for grant funds has been made, a contract or funding agreement will be issued to the association or group, detailing the use of funds, timelines to complete projects, and other important information. ***Until a funding agreement or contract is signed by all parties, the City has no responsibility to reimburse the organization for any expenses or funds incurred or spent before the agreement is signed. The grant funds cannot be used to cover past events or expenses.***

**Timeframe to use funds**

All funds must be spent within one year of the funds were awarded. Projects not completed within the one-year time frame will not be awarded funds.

**Reimbursement Process**

Once the project is complete and has been paid for by the neighborhood or association, paid invoices or receipts for all expenditures must be submitted to the city for reimbursement. It will take between 4 to 6 weeks to receive reimbursement. Prior to being reimbursed the City of College Station New Vendor Packet must be completed which includes an IRS W9 form. All neighborhoods applying for grants **must have a bank account and Tax ID number**. These items are required to receive funds from the city. Neighborhoods can choose to have a check mailed to them or have the funds deposited directly into their bank account.

\*The New Vendor Packet will be included in the application packet.

**Questions about project eligibility or guidelines**

If there are questions about your project’s eligibility or questions about the application or guidelines, please contact Barbara Moore, University and Community Relations Manager at 764-6327 or at bmoore@cstx.gov.