



NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Please read the Program guidelines carefully before applying.

**** GRANT CHANGES – Effective Fiscal Year 21/22 Cycle (July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022) ****

Application Period: December 1ST, 2020 thru February 5TH, 2021 at 5:00 PM

Grant Training: attendance for scheduled grant information sessions to help prepare neighborhoods for increased efficiency and effectiveness with their Matching Grants. All Grant Trainings will be as scheduled:

- Workshop – December 10th, 2020
6:00 pm – 7:00 pm (via Zoom)
- Tuesday Phone Training Sessions (open availability) – January 5th, 12th, 19th, 26th 2021
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
- Thursday Phone Training Sessions (open availability) – January 7th, 14th, 21st, 28th 2021
5:30 pm – 7:30 pm

Introduction

The Neighborhood Improvement Program awards grants to neighborhood-based organizations for projects that will make their neighborhoods better places to live, work and play. These projects may physically improve neighborhoods or help neighborhood organizations become stronger and more efficient. Public safety, education, and recreational initiatives may also receive grant funding. All projects must comply with applicable Federal, State, County, and, where applicable Municipal codes.

Funding

The funding amount to be awarded by the Neighborhood Improvement Program will be up to \$1,500.00 per neighborhood association. Keep in mind that your organization will compete for the grant with other organizations, and funding is not guaranteed by simply submitting a completed application. You must match funds awarded with contributions of cash, volunteer time, or in-kind donations of professional services that are at least equal to the total amount of funds requested.

This grant is distributed in the form of an upfront payment to the grant recipient or through a reimbursement. Allow thirty (30) days from the completion and submittal of the check request form to receive payment. All payments will be provided after the grant recipient signs the Grantee Agreement with staff. The grantee must provide staff with proof (original or copies of receipts and pictures) that the funds were spent according to the Grantee Agreement and proof of the match (cash, professional services, or volunteer hours) by the specified deadline.

An Employer Identification Number (EIN) is required to receive grant funding. You may still submit a grant application if you do not have an EIN; however, you will need an EIN in order to receive grant funds. You may apply for an EIN for free through the IRS. (Internal Revenue Service)

<https://www.irs.gov/charities-non-profits/obtaining-an-employer-identification-number-for-an-exempt-organization>

How to Apply

Neighborhood Matching Grant applications are available:

- **Request by Phone** | 803-576-2194
- **Website:** <http://www.richlandcountysc.gov>
- **Email** | NIP@richlandcountysc.gov

Requirements for a completed application packet include:

- One copy of the application
 - Each project clearly defined
 - Official vendor quote/estimate for **every** proposed project expense (*on vendor letterhead*)
 - Online quotes accepted with vendor name
 - Completed "Project Budget Sheet"
- Most Recent Bank Statement of Neighborhood/Community Association
- By-Laws of Neighborhood/Community Association
- In-kind Donation Letter (if applicable)
- Completed IRS W-9 Form (latest)

Applications evaluated on: **Must be submitted by 5pm on February 5, 2021**

- Project eligibility
- Project community impact
- Project summary
- Project budget

Do I have to attend a training session?

Answer: No. Attendance at scheduled grant information sessions is recommended, but not required, to aid you in the application process for the Neighborhood Matching Grant.

Can I get additional information or help including filling out my application?

Answer: Yes. Contact the Neighborhood Improvement Program (803) 576-2194 for more information or call in during one of the recommended training sessions.

Who Can Apply?

Any neighborhood-based organization – HOA (homeowner association), POA (property owner association), or neighborhood association located in Richland County – which is open to anyone that lives in the neighborhood (renters or owners) regardless of race, creed, color, religion, sex, age, national origin, or physical and mental disability and that actively seeks membership from everyone in the neighborhood.

The group must have:

- Officers (required at minimum of a President, Secretary and Treasurer)
- By-Laws
- Regular Meetings
- Active Bank Account
- IRS W-9 Form
- Located in Richland County (Incorporated or Unincorporated)

Ineligible groups include: Individuals; umbrella organizations; single businesses; county-wide organizations; social service, fraternal, and religious organizations, universities, foundations, political groups, and public agencies.

Keep in mind, however, partnerships are encouraged. Ineligible organizations may participate by forming partnerships with a qualified neighborhood organization. For example: two local businesses can partner with a neighborhood to host a community festival. The neighborhood must be the lead applicant.

Grant Award Notifications

How will I know if we were approved?

Answer: A staff member from the Neighborhood Improvement Program will contact everyone that submitted an application to inform them of their status (by email/mail-out) - typically done by July 15, 2021.

If we are approved for the grant, when can we start spending grant funds?

Answer: Funds will be received after the Check Request and Grant Agreement forms have been signed by the neighborhood and received by staff, which will be after July 1, 2021.

Why do we have to wait until July 1st to start spending the money?

Answer: Richland County's fiscal year starts July 1st, 2021, which is the new budget year for funds.

How are grant funds issued?

Answer: The grant funds are issued as upfront payment (per County Council's directive on December 6, 2011) or as a reimbursement. Applicants submit the signed "Grantee Agreement" form and the "Check Request" form to start the funding process. The funding request will be processed by staff after the Grantee Agreement and Check Request forms have been signed by the neighborhood and received by staff. Allow thirty (30) days to receive payment. Applicants will be notified when their check is available and will be provided instructions on how to pick up their check.

What happens after we get the grant funds?

Answer: Grantees must spend the funds exactly as outlined on the signed Grant Agreement. Neighborhood organizations must provide NIP staff with proof (i.e. original or copies of receipts and pictures) that the grant funds were used as specified. **The neighborhood organization must also show the match (cash, in-kind/professional services, or volunteer hours). Neighborhoods that do not provide the required**



documentation will not be eligible for future grants until the required documentation is provided to Neighborhood Improvement Program Staff.

When is the last day for me to finish projects and submit project documentation?

Answer: The final date to submit completed project documentation and check reimbursement will be June 30th, 2022. Check requests and project agreements must be submitted at least 30 days business days prior to the project date for upfront funds.

What Type of Projects Are Eligible?

To be eligible, projects must:

- ✓ Provide a public benefit to the neighborhood and its residents (*including renters*)
- ✓ Involve neighborhood people directly in all phases
- ✓ Be achievable by the end of the fiscal year (**June 30, 2022**)

All projects must comply with applicable Federal, State, County, and, where applicable, City codes. The three project categories and examples of possible projects are:

Neighborhood Organization Development

- Neighborhood monument sign
- Membership drive event
- Neighborhood guide/directory
- Legal assistance with covenants
- Communication tools (meeting notice signs, newsletter, flyers, website, etc.)
- Clean-up Effort

Education/Recreation Initiatives

- Park (basketball goal, benches, walking/bike trails, etc.)
- After school program (i.e. tutoring, cultural arts, etc.)
- Career training and development
- School supply drive
- Festivals
- Little Free Library
- Playground construction or repair

Crime Prevention and Public Safety

- National Night Out or another public safety event
- Crime-watch program and materials (i.e. 'No Solicitation' signs, etc.)
- Infrastructure (street lights, crosswalks, etc.)
- Self-defense class
- Traffic calming methods (i.e. 'Children at Play' signs, etc.)



Project Resources

To enhance your projects, invite and/or partner with local non-profit or government agencies where appropriate to provide enrichment for neighborhood residents at grant events.

Some examples to invite to enhance your community events include:

- United Way
- Richland Library
- Voter Registration
- Healthy food organizations
- Palmetto Pride
- Personal budgeting organizations
- Job placement
- Home rehab & repair

What types of projects are not eligible?

- Flower/tree plantings in common areas
- Operating budget expenses
- Purchasing computers or software materials
- Printing on personal computers
- Home repairs for personal/individual property
- Payment to a non-licensed business
- Consulting/workshop fees
- Mailboxes
- Personal computer equipment (ink, toner, paper)
- Monthly maintenance expenses
- Salaries/honorariums
- Gift cards/personal gifts
- Equipment for businesses/schools/government departments
- Mileage and/or vehicle rental

The Match

Your organization must match the funds you request from the Neighborhood Improvement Program. The value of your neighborhood contribution must be equal to or greater than the total dollars you are requesting in your application. You must match funds awarded with contributions of volunteer time, cash, or in-kind donations of professional services that are at least equal to the total amount of funds requested.

Neighborhoods may come up with the matching contributions in a variety of ways:

- Volunteer hours: Each volunteer hour is equivalent to \$10 in match (100 volunteer hours=\$1,000 match)
- Cash from neighborhood funds
- Professional services/In-kind donations

Return Application to:

Planning Services Division
Neighborhood Improvement Program
P.O. Box 192
2020 Hampton Street, 1st Floor
Columbia, SC 29202

NIP Phone: (803) 576-2194

NIP Email: NIP@richlandcountysc.gov