



## NEIGHBORHOOD VITALITY MATCHING GRANT Guidelines

### AT A GLANCE

**For Whom:** Neighborhood Associations (Voluntary or Mandatory)

**For What:** Neighborhood beautification/enhancement projects on public property.

**For...Why?:** To build community as you beautify your neighborhood. Projects, challenges, successes—these bring neighbors together, weaving the social fabric necessary to create and sustain self-sufficient, thriving neighborhoods.

Application deadlines are March 23 and September 23. Carefully review the guidelines below and contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality (ONV) to get started!

### DESCRIPTION

The City Council allocated Neighborhood Vitality Matching Grant (NVMG) funds for Garland neighborhood groups to improve the physical features of their neighborhoods. Projects must provide a public benefit which promotes stronger, safer, and healthier communities. These guidelines present the eligibility requirements, funding match contribution, overview of the application process, and other rules governing the grant.

**The Office of Neighborhood Vitality (ONV) is available to offer assistance through every step of the process. Contact the ONV by phone at 972-205-2445 or at [neighborhoods@garlandtx.gov](mailto:neighborhoods@garlandtx.gov).**

### NEIGHBORHOOD ELIGIBILITY

As the NVMG is an investment by the City of Garland, only applications from homeowner and neighborhood associations (voluntary and mandatory) that have been registered for at least one year will be considered. Newly-formed associations that have participated in neighborhood capacity activities through the ONV are eligible to apply within six months. **Not organized or registered? Contact the ONV to learn how to get started.**

Individual residents, nonprofits or businesses are not eligible to receive funding. Associations, as the primary applicant, may collaborate with other associations, businesses, and nonprofits. City staff and departments can also partner with associations as co-applicants.

Age of the neighborhood and number of residential units impacted are factors in determining which projects to award matching funds, but all associations are encouraged to apply, or to work with staff to prepare for application.

## PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

Physical improvements or additions to the neighborhood, located within city limits on public property or the public right-of-way, that provide a wide public benefit are eligible through the NVMG. Generally, projects cannot involve private property; however, residents are encouraged to work with ONV staff to assist with solutions that may involve private property. Other factors that affect project eligibility include:

### **Maintenance projects**

Funds that would typically appear in the operating budget of a neighborhood association or individual homeowner's operating budget are not eligible for NVMG funding. This includes grounds keeping, common area and equipment upkeep, and the tools and equipment required for maintaining neighborhood features. Project must not require ongoing maintenance from the City of Garland.

### **Landscaping**

Live plant materials, also known as "softscape," or costs associated with the installation, removal, modification, or restoration of vegetation, are not eligible. Applicants are encouraged to consider the installation and maintenance of softscape and to include them in their projects where feasible, but the costs associated with live plant materials are not eligible for reimbursement. Hardscape costs are eligible.

### **Inadequate public benefit or neighborhood support**

Applications that benefit only a small portion of the residents of a neighborhood or do not demonstrate widespread support among the neighborhood's residents are not eligible for NVMG funding. Mandatory association applications must be signed by a duly designated officer of the association capable of representing the interests of the association.

### **Conflicts with City of Garland**

Proposals must comply with applicable City of Garland codes and policies, and applicable federal, state, and local laws. Projects cannot create a public safety hazard or conflict with existing or approved municipal projects.

Not intended to be exhaustive, the following provides examples of project eligibility:

<b>Eligible</b>	<b>Not Eligible</b>
Sign Toppers	Sidewalk Construction/Repairs
Entry Features (new construction)	Costs associated with vegetation , or "softscape"
Common Area or Recreational Improvements (new construction)	Repairs or Maintenance of Existing Structures or Facilities
Picnic tables, benches or pavilions	Speed Humps
Neighborhood Park Improvements	Lighting Upgrades, Irrigation Upgrades
Safety Lighting (new installation)	Projects Incurring Costs Before Grant is Approved
Neighborhood Art Installation	Security Cameras

## APPLICATION PROCESS

### Application Deadlines

NVMG applications are accepted twice per year. To be considered for award, applications must be submitted by March 23 and September 23, respectively. Application packets are available from the City of Garland website, [GarlandTx.gov](http://GarlandTx.gov), or can be obtained through the ONV.

The NVMG application packets have all the requirements fully explained. All applicants are highly encouraged to contact ONV for assistance during any part of the application process.

Application requirements include:

- Contact names for the applicants, project, and association
- Project purpose, description, and benefits
- Project implementation, funding and maintenance plan
- Supporting documentation (photographs, maps, identified donations, estimates)

### Letter of Intent

The Letter of Intent, also available on the City of Garland website or through the ONV, is a document that assists residents with identifying obstacles or potential issues with their NVMG application. It is encouraged for projects requiring any type of construction, but is required for projects of \$25,000 or more. Letters of Intent are due two months before full NVMG applications, corresponding to July 23 and January 23 to be considered for the fall and spring cycles, respectively.

### Application Review

Applications will be read and evaluated by an internal review board consisting of members from various city departments to ensure that the minimum criteria are met. Any group that does not meet the funding criteria will be notified. Applications approved by the review board will be presented to the City Council for approval.

Eligible NVMG applications will be examined using the following criteria:

Criteria	Explanation of Criteria
<b>Neighborhood Status/ Maturity</b>	The condition and age of the neighborhood demonstrates a need for intervention. The applying association also has the capacity to execute the project and conduct necessary maintenance.
<b>Public Benefit</b>	Project helps improve the quality of life in the neighborhood and/or aesthetics of the area, while also providing widespread public benefit
<b>Project Feasibility</b>	The project is cost effective, achievable, realistic, sufficiently funded, no ongoing maintenance required from the City of Garland.

<b>Community Involvement</b>	Demonstrated and proposed participation by residents in the planning, execution and long-term maintenance of proposed project.
<b>Project Impact</b>	What is the impact this project will have both short term and long term? Does it align with your neighborhood goals? How will implementation or completion of the project impact the environment or surrounding area?
<b>Match</b>	Match is realistic and appropriate to the project. Letters of intent are provided for in-kind donations or cash.

## MATCH REQUIREMENTS & FUNDING RESTRICTIONS

Applicants are eligible to receive up to \$100,000 within a five-year time-frame. The completion date of the applicant’s first project will serve as the benchmark for the five-year timeframe. An association may not apply for additional funding if a previous grant project has not been completed.

Registered voluntary associations can apply for up to \$10,000 for an eligible project without providing a match. Every dollar over \$10,000 requires a 25% match from the applicant.

For registered voluntary associations that lack a bank account or tax-exempt status, the City can provide project management services up to the \$10,000 non-match grant limit. Services provided in this way cannot exceed beyond \$10,000. The City will plan, bid, inspect, and process payment under current City procurement means. A license agreement including a maintenance provision may be required, which authorizes the City to remove any assets or improvements that are not adequately maintained.

Registered mandatory associations can apply for any eligible project based on the match requirement detailed below:

<b>Project Cost</b>	<b>Match Requirement</b>	<b>Type of Match</b>
\$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

Each association will be expected to provide a match based on the size, scope and cost of the project, following the guidelines above. The association match may include cash contributions, materials (specific to the project), or unskilled labor (“sweat equity”) where applicable at the rate of \$12.00 per hour. Professional services will be rated at the fair market value for the type of service provided.

## **Disbursement of Funds**

An applicant may not begin to incur costs to be paid by the NVMG before signing a funding agreement with the City of Garland. The applicant will act as the General Contractor for most approved projects. Funds for the project will be disbursed by the city to the neighborhood association after the completion of the project.

Applicant must expend required match as indicated in the proposal prior to the expenditure of City funds and must formally submit a request in writing to the ONV with all supporting documents.

## **Cancellation of Projects**

Failure to meet the terms of the Funding Agreement may result in the cancellation of the project and a one-year application restriction. Applicants must begin implementation within 12 months of City Council approval to avoid termination of the project. Requests for time extensions must be submitted to the Office of Neighborhood Vitality in writing.

**For further assistance contact the Office of Neighborhood Vitality at [neighborhoods@GarlandTx.gov](mailto:neighborhoods@GarlandTx.gov) or 972-205-2445.**