

DEPARTMENT OF NEIGHBORHOODS MATCHING GRANT PROGRAM FY 2026



APPLICATION AND GUIDELINES - FY2026



Greetings neighbors,

Thank you for your interest in the Department of Neighborhoods Matching Grant Program! The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from \$500.00 to \$5,000.00 dollars. This program is administered in partnership through the City of Houston Department of Neighborhoods. It is designed to build solid relationships among neighbors, cultivate the spirit of volunteerism, and to develop projects that build a sustainable and stronger community.

Our goal is simple. We want to improve the quality of life for Houston communities and partner with active residents to:

- Improve neighborhood organization and pride.
- Improve community appearance and beautification.
- Enlist and increase community participation.

This packet includes pertinent guidelines, the application, and frequently asked questions. We are excited to help you enhance your communities, because everyone deserves a beautiful place to live!

In S.U.P.E.R. service,

Herbert C. Sims, Jr. Director
Department of Neighborhoods

“Department of Neighborhoods is S.U.P.E.R.!”

Service * Unified* Professional* Excellence* Responsive

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MATCHING GRANT 2025-2026 TIMELINE

2025
Jul

Complete grant training and Intent to Apply form. Request approval for project from the Department of Neighborhoods.

2025
Aug

Complete grant training and Intent Apply form. Request approval for project from the Department of Neighborhoods. Due August 31.

2025
Sep

Complete grant application and obtain supporting documents. Obtain department(s) approval, if necessary.

2025
Oct

Complete grant application and obtain supporting documents. Obtain department(s) approval, if necessary.

2025
Nov

Submit complete grant application by Saturday, November 1, 11:59 p.m. to the Matching Grant Coordinator.

2025
Dec

Application under review.

2026
Jan

Notification of application status. If approved, COH Approval Letter issued from Department of Neighborhoods

2026
Feb

Approved projects underway.

2026
Mar

Approved projects underway.

2026
Apr

Approved projects underway

2026
May

Approved projects should be near completion and all supporting documents should be submitted for reimbursement by Sunday, May 31, 11:59 p.m.

2026
Jun

Reimbursements processed and issued

Matching Grant Program Guidelines and Frequently Asked Questions

Program Guidelines

Department of Neighborhood Matching Grant Program

The Neighborhood Matching Grant Program helps neighborhoods fund various beautification and improvement projects by providing a dollar-for-dollar matching grant reimbursement ranging from \$500 to \$5,000. The program is designed to cultivate the spirit of volunteerism to help neighborhood-based organizations learn the art of planning and community building through neighborhood projects.

How it works

The grant money represents a partnership between the City and an organization. The City will reimburse up to 50% (not to exceed \$5,000) of a project's total budget. The minimum project amount is \$1,000. The minimum matching grant award amount is \$500, and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the eligible organization in order to receive reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement.

Eligible participants

Eligible organizations must meet the following criteria:

- A neighborhood-based organization and/or civic club incorporated as a 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) non-profit organization through the State of Texas.
- If the applying neighborhood-based organization is not 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4), they must secure a 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) organization to partner with them for this project.
- Represent a specific geographic area located within the Houston city limits.
- Identify how the organization will fund and support the project in the future.

Political organizations and individuals are not eligible

Eligible projects

The program helps pay for physical improvements or projects that are accessible and beneficial to the community. The program will **not** pay for reoccurring operation or maintenance such as regularly scheduled mowing, mechanical or IT maintenance. Funds received **through** this program may not be used to lobby or participate in political campaigns and/or elections. Completed projects or completed parts of a project are not eligible for reimbursement.

Proposed projects must meet the following requirements:

- Improve a neighborhood through a physical improvement.

- Involve neighborhood residents, have long-standing benefits.
- Accessible to the public.
- Letter of permission from property owners and/or government agencies of the proposed site at the time of submittal. The property owner may be a government agency, the owner of private property, or an association if the property is a common area.
- Proof of ownership of proposed site (Ex: Copy of Deed, HCAD record, etc.)
- Photo of proposed site.
- Three letters of support for your project (Ex: Neighborhood or area organizations, businesses, elected officials, schools, super neighborhood council, etc.)
- If the proposed projects require approval and/or permitting from a City of Houston department, pre-approval from the appropriate city department is required. (Ex: Pre-approvals must be issued by, Parks & Recreation Department for the Adopt-An-Esplanade Program, Public Works & Engineering Department for Subdivision Markers, etc.) The application is ineligible without the pre-approval from the appropriate city department (s).
- Examples of approved projects include, but are not limited to, street sign toppers, entryway signage, entryway columns, esplanade landscaping and irrigation, park benches, electrical signage, walkways with pavers, murals, etc.

Once the project is completed, the eligible organization will pay for the project in full and submit **original** receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts to the appropriate DON Council liaison within 5 business days of the project completion. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

The DON Finance Office will process the reimbursement to the vendor within 30 business days of receipt in the approved grant amount from the Council member with DON funds. Reimbursement will only be made payable to the organization listed as the registered vendor. Please verify that all information about the registered vendor is correct (ex. Bank Routing, Name, Address, etc.); checks will be mailed to the Name and Address listed by the registered vendor and ACH direct deposits will be deposited into account listed by registered vendor.

Frequently Asked Questions

How do we apply?

First the applicant must watch the training session and complete an Intent to Apply that must be submitted to the Department of Neighborhoods via don.matchinggrants@houstontx.gov by August 31 regardless on what day it falls on. (Intent to Apply will **not** be accepted after due date)

Where can I obtain the Intent to Apply?

The Intent to Apply will be available by July 15th and can be obtained via the Department of Neighborhoods website at <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/matching-grant-program.html>

When is the Intent to Apply due?

The deadline to submit the Intent to Apply is **Sunday, August 31, 2025, by 11:59 p.m.**

How can I get a copy of the application?

The Application can be obtained via the Department of Neighborhoods website at <https://www.houstontx.gov/neighborhoods/matching-grant-program.html>

When can we apply?

Application packages will be accepted yearly beginning **September 1st**, and due on **Saturday, November 1, 2025, by 11:59p.m.** No application packets will be accepted if the intent to apply has not been signed by the Department of Neighborhoods Director or designee due on August 31st.

When is the deadline to submit an application?

The deadline to submit an application packet this year is **Saturday, November 1, 2025, by 11:59 p.m.**

What expenses are covered for reimbursement?

- Project management costs: Not to exceed 10 percent of the total award amount.
- Professional Services: Permits (construction, special events, etc.)
- Professional consultants: (landscape architect, graphic designer)
- Services: (translation, interpretation, printing, advertising, etc.)

Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement.

When can the project start? When must the project be completed?

The funded part of a project can be started only **AFTER** applicant receives **OFFICIAL LETTER of APPROVAL** from the City of Houston. The project must be completed by the last business day of May. This year the deadline is **May 31, 2026.**

How do we obtain a vendor number?

You must register as a supplier and submit an IRS W-9 form by visiting

<https://www.houstontx.gov/bizwithhou/SupplierPortal.html>

If you have problems registering, please contact HoustonPurchasing@houstontx.gov via email. For further assistance you may contact the Supplier Assistance Desk at (832) 393-8800.

How will the project be selected?

Matching Grant project will be subjected to Department of Neighborhoods, Legal Department, and Mayor's Office **approval** in accordance with City administrative and procurement policy.

We've participated in the Neighborhood Matching Grant program before and already have a vendor number; do we need to reapply?

No, but please confirm that your vendor number is still active by contacting the Matching Grant Program Coordinator via email at roman.aguilar@houstontx.gov

What do we do if we are unable to raise enough funds for the entire project cost?

The organization should scale down to the project to fit a budget they can meet (**\$1,000 minimum project cost**).

Who is an organization's legal signatory to a contract?

The sponsoring 501 (c) (3) or 501 (c) (4) organization is the legal signatory to the contract.

Can the project period be extended beyond the deadline?

No. The project must be completed by the last business day of May.

NOTE: The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for a matching grant reimbursement. Original receipts/invoices and cancelled checks/credit card receipts must be submitted after project completion in order to receive your matching grant reimbursement on expenses incurred. **Failure to comply will result in non-reimbursement for project cost.**

Can an organization count its association dues towards its fund-raising requirement?

Yes. Any funds that the association has are eligible towards the match.

If a selected project fails after an award is made, what happens?

In the unlikely event of project failure, the organization will not receive a matching grant on expenses incurred.

Are projects less than \$1,000 eligible?

No, the minimum project amount is \$1,000. The minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000.

My organization has a 501 (c) (4) classification, can we still apply?

Yes, 501 (c) (4) organizations are now eligible for this program, excluding political action committees (PAC). You will be required to sign a statement on the application stating that your organization is not a PAC and that grant monies will be used for a project that will benefit the community.

Will donations of equipment be counted as part of the match?

No. In-kind donations (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be used to match the City's funds.

Can I apply for funding for a project that's already underway?

Yes, however, completed parts of the project are not eligible for a matching grant. Only new additions to the project are eligible for a matching grant.

Can a single organization apply for more than one project?

No

Can a project qualify if only a part of it has a definite physical product?

Yes. Only apply for funding for the part of the project that will display physical results.

Is a project aimed at providing playground equipment eligible?

Yes, if the equipment is accessible to the entire neighborhood. The organization will need to obtain a letter of approval from the Parks and Recreation Department to ensure that the equipment meets Parks and Recreation Department standards. See the department's website for more information. <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/greenspace.html> for information on how your group or business can participate in this program, contact Marilu DeLaFuente, Greenspace Adoption Coordinator at (832) 395-7029 or via email at marilu.delafuente@houstontx.gov

What types of materials are allowed in project construction?

The materials used must meet City of Houston and have adequate permits (if required) from the pertinent department. Projects must take place on property that is in compliance with ALL applicable city codes. Documentation is required from the appropriate department.

What can we do if land ownership is unclear for a site?

The city requires that permission is provided for use of private or public land. This information is required for eligibility.

Where can I get information on esplanade projects?

The Parks and Recreation Department, through their *Adopt-An-Esplanade* program, can provide information on esplanade projects. A letter of approval is required from the department. See the department's website for more information and visit- <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/greenspace.html> For information on how your group or business can participate in this program, contact Marilu De La Fuente, Greenspace Adoption Coordinator at (832) 395-7029 or via email at marilu.delafuente@houstontx.gov

The link to the brochure for this program is:

<http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/pdfs/adoptanesplanade.pdf>

Where can I get information on subdivision markers?

The Houston Public Works Department reviews applications for subdivision markers. See the department's website for more information and visit-
<https://edocs.publicworks.houstontx.gov/engineering-and-construction/subdivision-marker-registration-form.html>

Who do we contact for more information?

Title	DON Grant Coordinator	Contact
Program Coordinator	Roman Aguilar	Phone: (832) 393-1043 E-mail: Roman.Aguilar@houstontx.gov

The Matching Grant Process

Phase I-Application Process

- Eligible organizations are encouraged to work within their group to determine the best project that fits their community needs and financial commitment.
- Once the organization has decided the best project that works for them, they **MUST** watch the training session and complete an Intent to Apply.
- Once the Intent to Apply is submitted, the organization then must shift to completing its application with all applicable signatures, city department approvals, and required documentation. The DON Program Coordinator will assist applicants identifying and contacting the appropriate city departments for approval.
- If the request involves using grant funds to pay for ***subdivision markers***, Houston Public Works (HPW) must approve the installation of subdivision markers in the City's right of way, via the application. In this instance, the grant funds may be used for the reimbursement of costs for installing subdivision markers by the eligible organization.
- If the project is aimed at providing ***playground equipment***, it is an eligible project if the equipment is accessible to the entire neighborhood. The organization will need to obtain approval from the Parks and Recreation Department, via the application, to ensure that the equipment meets Parks and Recreation Department standards. See the department's website for more information. <http://www.houstontx.gov/parks/adoptedparks.html>
- Once the application packet is complete with all required signatures and documentation, it is submitted to the DON Program Coordinator to check the package and ensure it is correct and complete. The DON Program Coordinator must sign and approve the package once ensuring all requirements are met. Thereafter completed package is sent to the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods for approval. Once approved by the Director of the Department of Neighborhoods, the application is forwarded to the Legal Department and the Mayor's office for approval.
- Once approved by the Legal Department and the Mayor's office, the DON Program Coordinator will notify the eligible organization and will submit required documentation to DON Finance to begin the procurement process. **The organization MUST NOT begin work on their project prior to the applicant receiving an OFFICIAL LETTER of APPROVAL from the City of Houston.**

Phase II-Procurement Process for Reimbursement

- **If the eligible organization does not need assistance choosing vendors**, the vendors must **first** have a City vendor number in order to establish a profile for future payment. You must register as a supplier and submit an IRS W-9 form by visiting <https://www.houstontx.gov/bizwithhou/SupplierPortal.html>
- If you have problems registering, please contact HoustonPurchasing@houstontx.gov via email. For further assistance you may contact the Supplier Assistance Desk at (832) 393-8800.
- Once your organization has received a vendor number, submit the completed application which includes a Scope of Work and associated cost to the DON Program Coordinator, who will then submit to the DON Finance Office for processing. After issuance, the OFFICIAL APPROVAL LETTER will be forwarded to the eligible organization. Once the OFFICIAL APPROVAL LETTER is received, the work on the project may begin. Once the project is completed, the eligible organization will pay for the project in full and submit **original** receipts/invoices, cancelled checks/credit card and bank statements to the DON Program Coordinator within 5 business days of the project completion. Cash transactions or in-kind services (food, materials, volunteers or equipment) cannot be submitted for reimbursement. The project must be completed by the project deadline and must be paid in full by the organization in order to be eligible for reimbursement. **NO EXCEPTIONS!** The DON Finance Office will process the reimbursement to the vendor within 30 business days of receipt in the approved grant amount with DON funds. Reimbursement will only be made payable to the organization listed as the registered vendor. Please verify that all information about the registered vendor is correct (ex. Bank Routing, Name, Address, etc.); checks will be mailed to the Name and Address listed by the registered vendor and ACH direct deposits will be deposited into account listed by registered vendor.

**City of Houston
Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
2025/2026 Intent to Apply
(NOT APPLICATION)**

Please print or type. Please answer each question briefly. You may use one additional 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to complete your answers. Be sure to number the question/answer on the extra sheet. If the question does not apply to your project, put NA (Not Applicable).

INTENT TO APPLY DEADLINE: 11:59 p.m., August 31, 2025.

Part I - General Information

Required Documents Needed:

- 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas**
- Operating budget for 501 (c) (3) and/or (4) the last 12 months.**
- Department of Neighborhoods Director or designee approval of funds as indicated by signature below.**

1. Neighborhood Association: _____

2. Contact person name/title: _____

3. Address: _____ Zip: _____

4. Phone (Day): _____ (Evening): _____

5. E-mail Address: _____

6. What Council District is your project located in? _____

7. Is your organization a part of a super neighborhood council? **Yes** **No**

If yes, please indicate the name and number of the council.

8. Title of Project: _____

9. City Match Requested (Not to exceed \$5,000) \$ _____

10. Have you ever received funding from the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program?

Yes **No**

If yes, what was the matching grant year/amount awarded? If more than once, please list.

Year _____ Amount \$ _____

11. *Please give a brief project description:*

Certification by Department of Neighborhoods Director or designee:

By signing this application, I declare that I have approved the use of my council district service funds towards this proposed project. I also understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I understand that I may reimburse up to 50% of a project's total budget and that the minimum project amount is \$1,000. I also understand the minimum matching grant award amount is \$500 and the maximum matching amount is \$5,000. I hereby approve \$ _____ of these funds towards the requested project.

DON Director or designee: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Certification by Organization:

By signing this application, I/we certify that the information contained in this application is true and correct to the best of my/our knowledge. I/we certify that the applying organization supports this project and have approved it as a body. I/we also understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program and to invite the City to any promotional activities associated with our project.

President/Board Chair Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Project Manager Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

**City of Houston
Neighborhood Matching Grant Program
2025/2026 Application
(TO COMPLETE AN INTENT TO APPLY MUST HAVE BEEN SUBMITTED)**

Please print or type. Please answer each question briefly. You may use one additional 8 1/2" x 11" sheet to complete your answers. Be sure to number the question/answer on the extra sheet. If the question does not apply to your project, put NA (Not Applicable).

APPLICATION PACKET DEADLINE: 11:59 p.m., November 1, 2025.

Qualifying Information for Organizations

Qualifying organization must be a Neighborhood Association/Civic Club with a 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas to qualify for this grant.

Does your organization fit these criteria? **Yes** **No**

If yes, please provide a copy of your organization's State Certificate of Incorporation and IRS Department of Treasury tax exempt status. If no, please have your partnering 501 (c)(3) or 501(c) (4) organization complete and attach the following: A copy of your organization's State Certificate of Incorporation and IRS Department of Treasury tax exempt status, or that of your partnering organization, if applicable. Please also attach the operating budget for the last 12 months.

1. Partnering Organization: _____

Contact person name/title: _____

Address: _____

Phone (Day): _____ (Evening): _____

E-mail Address: _____

2. Please list the current officer(s), name(s) and title(s). Also list committees and chairpersons.

3. Organization's annual operating budget: \$ _____ Year: _____

4. Organization's Federal Identification No. _____

Select One: We are a **501 (c) (3)** **501 (c) (4)**

Certification by a 501(c) (4) Organization:

By signing this application, I declare that our organization is not a political action committee. I/we certify that the applying organization supports this project and have approved it as a body. All grant monies will be used for a project that will benefit the community.

President/Board Chair Name: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Part II- Qualifying Information for Projects

Required Documents needed:

- Signed letter of permission from owner of the proposed site
- Proof of ownership of proposed site (Ex: Copy of Deed, HCAD record, etc.)
- Photo of proposed site

**The property owner may be a government agency, the owner of private property, or an association if the property is a common area. Property and project must be accessible to all residents of Houston for eligibility. **

1. Title of Project: _____

2. Briefly describe your project:

3. What is the physical address of your project?

4. The property is owned by:

5. Do you have permission of the property owner to make the proposed improvements?

Yes No

6. Does your project require upkeep/maintenance beyond the grant period? If so, how will you maintain the project (funding, volunteers, etc.)? Please be specific.

Part III- Project Information

Required Items needed:

- 3 signed letters of support for your project**

(Ex: Neighborhood or area organizations, businesses, elected officials, schools, super neighborhood council, etc.)

- ALL required City of Houston approval(s)**

Note- The application is ineligible without the pre-approval from the appropriate city department(s)

(Ex: Pre-approvals must be issued by, Parks & Recreation Department for the Adopt-An-Esplanade Program, Public Works & Engineering Department for Subdivision Markers, etc.)

- Scope of Work/Quote**

(Note: This should include the total dollar amount as well as proposed services rendered or goods to be provided from the actual vendor completing the services or supplying the goods.)

1. With your project in mind, describe the current condition of project site? How will your proposed project improve it? Please be specific.

2. Describe your project after completion. What is your end goal or visible result?

3. How will the proposed project contribute to improving the quality of life of the neighborhood?

4. List the ways in which you involved the rest of the neighborhood in **selecting** and **planning** this project? How did you get their input (Ex: Meetings, door-to-door surveys or flyers, etc.)?

5. Describe how the residents and organization members will be involved in achieving this project. Include fundraising efforts, implementation of the project, maintenance of the project, and celebrating the completion of the project. Please be specific.

6. Has your organization obtained permission or pre-approval from the appropriate City Department(s) to conduct the proposed project? **Yes** **No**

Department Approvals

Certification by City of Houston Department (s):

By signing this application, I/we certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the department listed in this signature. I/we understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I/we certify that the applying organization has met the requirements for my department for this project and the project is approved. **Please indicate if you are signing by permission of the authorized person. **

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

Department name- _____

Name: _____ Position: _____

Signature: _____

7. Project Timeline -Provide a timeline for each phase of your project (i.e. install irrigation, purchase plants, planting, etc. on the following page. Please attach a separate document if necessary.)

Project Activity Description	Estimated Completion Date

Part IV-REQUIRED CITY APPROVALS

Certification by City of Houston Department (s):

By signing this application, I/we certify that I am authorized to sign on behalf of the department listed in this signature. I/we understand and agree to the requirements of the Neighborhood Matching Grant Program. I/we certify that the applying organization has met the requirements for my department for this project and the project is approved. **Please indicate if you are signing by permission of the authorized person.**

Date: _____

DON Grant Coordinator
Department of Neighborhoods

Department of Neighborhoods
Herbert C. Sims Jr.
Director

Legal Department *(Signature above)*

(Printed Name)

(Position)

Office of Mayor John Whitmire *(Signature above)*

(Printed Name)

(Position)

DON NEIGHBORHOOD MATCHING GRANT PROCESS CHECKLISTS

Application packet checklist:

- Completed the Required Training for Matching Grant Program
- Submitted a signed Intent to Apply by August 31st.
- Reviewed and completed ALL questions and answers.
- 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) Certificate of Incorporation from the State of Texas
- 12-month Operating budget for 501 (c) (3) or a 501 (c) (4) organization
- Signed letter of permission from owner of the proposed site
- Proof of ownership of proposed site
- Photo of proposed site
- 3 signed letters of support for your project
- ALL required City of Houston approval(s)
- Scope of Work/Quote

Procurement checklist:

- Approved application packet
- Photo of completed project
- City vendor number
- Proof of services and payment (Original receipts/completed invoices/bank statements/cancelled checks/credit card receipts) No cash transactions will be reimbursed