Neighborhood Development Services
City of Charlottesville

Neighborhood Grant Program
Grant Guidelines
For the grant cycle opening: FY'18
Pre-application deadline – all applications September 8, 2017
Final Application deadline: October 13, 2017

What is the Neighborhood Grant Program?

The purpose of the Neighborhood Grant Program is to encourage City residents to collaboratively identify and actively participate in making improvements in their neighborhoods. Community involvement and building relationships are key components of the program and are encouraged by suggesting that the project budget include a match amount equal to, or greater than, the grant request; coordination with and support of your neighborhood association; and documentation of neighbor support. Demonstrating responsible stewardship of our community assets while balancing our community's social and environmental values are additional components of any project proposal submitted.

Who is eligible to apply?

Proposals will only be accepted from groups of people living, working, or owning property within the neighborhood boundary in which the project is located. A neighborhood group may be an existing group whose membership is from a commonly recognized geographic area (e.g. neighborhood association, business association, or school site PTA) or a group formed to work together on a specific project. PTA organizations may be funded through contract with the parent school.

An applicant group must certify in its application that it is a not-for-profit group. A non-profit organization is an organization that is registered as a non-profit with the State of Virginia or has IRS 501 C (3) Tax-exempt status. Any statement found to be false prior to, during, or after commencement of a contract created pursuant to this program will be grounds for immediate cancellation of the contract and returned to the City of Charlottesville of all monies granted.

Previous award recipients and current projects receiving grant funding are not eligible for additional program funding until outstanding projects are complete and closed out. All outstanding projects must be completed at the time of the final application deadline to be considered.

What types of projects may be considered?

Projects types include, but are not limited to:
- Physical improvement projects that involve recreation or public safety facilities, natural resources features, landscape islands, public art and spaces, neighborhood signage, or community gardens. Projects that improve universal accessibility are also encouraged.
- Public school partnership projects that benefit school children and the immediate neighborhood.
- Neighborhood-based events and celebrations and related promotional materials.

- Capacity building initiatives that serve to create, diversify, or increase participation in a neighborhood-based organization or promote an understanding of issues important to neighborhood residents, including neighborhood association website(s).
- Youth development programs: tutorial, mentoring, leadership development.

Grant funds cannot be used to:
- Pay for an organization's operating expenses that are not directly related to the awarded project;
- Purchase land or buildings;
- Pay for expenditures of financial commitments made before the organization is under contract with the City of Charlottesville.
- Pay for political activities or personal expenses.

Are there limitations or special requirements to know about?

All applicants must submit a pre-application to the manager of the Neighborhood Grant Program before submitting an application (434-970-3182).

Applications that fail to meet all established deadlines will not be accepted.

All applications are required to go through a "pre-review" prior to submitting a final application (*see pg. 4, What is Pre-review?*).

Grants to groups other than a PTO **must** be endorsed by your neighborhood association. The following parameters have been established to clarify the involvement of neighborhood associations in the neighborhood grant application process:
- Grant applications will not be considered unless they have the endorsement of their neighborhood association. It is up to individual neighborhood associations to decide if the endorsement happens by a Board action or is considered at a general membership meeting.
- The endorsement must be documented by an officer of the association.
- The endorsement is a "go/no go" decision. The association will not rank multiple applications or recommend one application over another in their neighborhoods.
- While it is not the role of the association to dictate the particulars of a grant proposal, applicants may request additional assistance from the association in writing the grant, educating residents about the proposal, documenting and gathering pledges of support, serving as fiscal agent, etc.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to keep the association apprised of any significant changes to the proposal as it moves through the review process. A re-endorsement may be requested if a proposal has changed significantly as a result of the pre-review feedback.
- In areas without an active neighborhood association, applicants must work with Neighborhood Development Services staff to hold a public meeting to gauge resident support for their proposal.

Projects may involve private property but must provide a clear public benefit. Private property eligible for a grant includes common areas or cul-de-sac centers owned by a homeowners' association. It does NOT include property owned by an individual. Documentation must be provided that confirms property

owner support of the proposal and their agreement and methodology to permanently maintain public access to the site.

How are projects selected?

Proposed projects will be scored and ranked on how they meet the following criteria:
- **Tangible Neighborhood Benefits (30 points)**
  - The project produces an observable, physical improvement to the neighborhood or a measurable change in the sense of local community or identity.
  - The project provides a continuing benefit into the future.
  - The project reflects a special or unique need of the neighborhood in which it is proposed or as identified in existing neighborhood-based plans or neighborhood surveys.

- **Neighborhood and Community Involvement (30 points)**
  - The project involves and fosters collaboration between neighbors and other neighborhood groups, community organizations and government agencies.
  - The project demonstrates broad neighborhood support through implementing as many of the following:
    - Write an article about the project for your neighborhood association newsletter, website or for distribution on a listserv.
    - Discuss your project at a neighborhood association meeting and other community forums.
    - For site specific projects, circulate a petition that includes adjacent residents (renters, owners and businesses) and/or post a notice of the proposal onsite with information on how to provide feedback and get involved.
    - Obtains letters of support from neighborhood and/or community organizations.
  - The project contributes to the goal of more evenly distributing grant awards throughout the community.

- **Project Readiness (25 points)**
  - The application is complete and consistent with grant guidelines.
  - The project is clearly defined and feasible.
  - For physical improvements, including landscaping, ongoing and long-term maintenance is adequately addressed.
  - The project budget is based on documented and verifiable costs and specifications.
  - The project will be managed by capable operational and fiscal managers.
  - The proposed project is compatible with plans, policies and practices of local jurisdictions.
  - For projects not confined to City property, permission has been secured for use of the site from the property owner(s).
  - The matching portion of the grant, including the availability of volunteers and donated materials, is well documented and credible.

- **Sustainability Values (15 points)**
  - Project contributes to environmental health or our ability to effectively address climate change.
  - Project will have a positive effect on the local economy and minimizes costs to the community, now and over the long term.

o Project supports responsible stewardship of public resources.
o Project contributes to social equity by meeting basic needs, benefiting vulnerable populations, promoting community safety and cultural awareness, or building community relationships and neighborhood cohesion.

- **Bonus Points (up to 5 additional points)**
  o For every 10% that the match exceeds the grant request, one bonus point will be added.

No more than half of the grant funds available in a cycle will be used to fund neighborhood-based events or celebrations.

What is Pre-Review?

All applications are required to go through a "pre-review" prior to submitting a final application. **Pre-review deadline is Friday, September 8, 2017.** Applicants that fail to meet the pre-review deadline will not have their projects considered for funding. Feedback will be provided by Friday September 22**, 2017** regarding your project's consistency with existing policies, plans, standards and work practices. <u>The response to any staff comments must be included in your final application as an attachment</u>. Applicants must address deficiencies identified by staff in their final applications. Inability to adequately address staff concerns may result in a project not being recommended for funding.

It is strongly recommended that applicants discuss their projects with appropriate City staff before submitting for pre-review to gain an understanding of staff expectations and Division requirements. Please contact the following staff with questions:
- **Traffic Calming:** Amanda Poncy, (434) 970-3720, <u>Poncy@charlottesville.org</u>, or Brennen Duncan, (434) 970-3993, duncanb@chalottesville.org
- **Projects involving streets and intersections:** Brennen Duncan, (434) 970-3993 or duncanb@chalottesville.org
- **Parks:** Brian Daly, 434-970-3260 or <u>dalyb@charlottesville.org</u>

If you are unsure of whom to contact, call Neighborhood Development Services at 434-970-3182.

Key steps in developing a successful project.

Develop a competitive project concept: Focus on an idea that builds community and is consistent with the grant criteria. Model projects bring neighbors together, require collaboration and address a clear need. Review the grant guidelines to see if your project is a good fit.

Discuss your project concept early with appropriate City staff: You must discuss your project with the manager of the Neighborhood Grant Program to apply for funds.

It is also prudent to contact the appropriate City Department that will be involved in the review and/or permitting of your project prior to submitting any materials.

Coordinate with your neighborhood association: A neighborhood association endorsement for your project is required. Some associations meet infrequently and it may take some time to arrange to present your proposal. Applicants are strongly encouraged to initiate contact early in the application process. <u>Contact Teresa Pollak at 970-3101 if you are unsure of whom to contact.</u>

Obtain additional neighborhood support: It is expected that applicants pursue a variety of means to educate residents about their project. Your application must show you have a broad base of support for the project (see Community Involvement in "How are Projects Selected?" On page 3).

Get approval for the site:
If your project involves property that your organizer or applicant group does not own you will need to get written approval from the owner. For private property, the owner(s) of the parcel must approve the project. <u>For projects on school grounds documentation is required from the school principal.</u>

Determine resource needs: What will it cost to complete your project? Be thorough and make sure to include typical costs, such as equipment and supplies, services, volunteers, etc. as well as applicable permit fees and insurance costs.

Research permit requirements: Applicants are responsible for investigating permit requirements and associated fees. Related costs and time frames should be reflected in the project budget and schedule. Contact Neighborhood Development Services (NDS), 434-970-3182 to clarify the permit needs of your project. NDS is open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday – Friday and located at 610 East Market Street.

Insurance: Depending on the nature of the project, you may be required to obtain liability insurance. If your project will involve the use of a contractor, the City of Charlottesville will require proof of liability insurance from the contractor. <u>The cost of insurance must be reflected in your project budget.</u>

Develop a budget and project schedule. Project budgets should be as comprehensive and accurate as possible.
- Get cost estimates for budget items from more than one reliable source. Purchases over $2500 require four documented quotations (*see Purchasing Requirements, pg. 7*).
- Construction projects <u>must </u>include a 15% cash contingency fund.
- Documentation of professional qualifications must be provided to justify professional rates.
- Projects involving City parks may be required to include a maintenance endowment in their budgets.
- <u>Include permit and insurance costs</u>, if applicable

Projects schedules should be realistic, reflect the schedule constraints of potential service providers or contractors and designed to be completed by **June 30, 2018**.

<u>Determine and document any match</u>. Identify all possible match resources (cash, donated resources, professional services or volunteer time) and make sure to follow the match requirements.

Call with questions or guidance: Alex Ikefuna, Neighborhood Development Services is available to answer questions and offer assistance with the process. He may be reached at 434-970-3182 or ikefuna@chalottesville.org.

What are the match requirements?

Requested grant funds may be matched by cash donations, donated materials and supplies, professional services or volunteer labor. Documentation of the match is one way of indicating broad support for the project.

The following are match requirements:

- The match may not include resources from other City departments.

- Volunteer labor or professional services contributed before the grant is awarded cannot be counted toward the match.

- All volunteer labor is valued at $20.85 per hour based on the national value for volunteer time.

- Donated materials or supplies are valued at their retail price. Loaned equipment may also be included as part of the match and valued at the standard local rental fee.

- Cash donations may be secured with a written pledge signed by the donor, rather than collecting up front. If you have money in the bank to be used for the project, include a bank statement or a letter from the fiscal sponsor to document the funds. All cash donations must be received prior to contract execution and the expenditure of City funds.

- Professional services are valued at the reasonable and customary retail value of the product or service provided. Donors of professional services must provide the value of their contributions with documentation of professional qualifications.

Undocumented portions of the match will not be included in the total project match

Financial Obligations and Procedures

Grant Agreements: Successful applicants will enter into an agreement with the Department of Neighborhood Development Services that sets forth the terms and conditions of the grant. **Grant recipients will not be reimbursed for expenses incurred before an agreement is in place**.

Grant requests must be between $250 and $2,500. The value of the total project may exceed $5,000.

Individual purchases in excess of $2,500 require a written request to a minimum of four vendors that includes specifications of the item or service to be purchased and date of request, and quotations from three vendors. This documentation must be included as an attachment in the final application.

Construction or installation projects are administered in the following way.

- For projects on **non-City property**, after the Applicant has secured all necessary approvals and/or permits, the City will pay directly all invoices and handle all procurement activities. For projects which will require maintenance once completed, adequate assurances of perpetual maintenance shall be included in the proposal and the contract (e.g. a homeowners' association will maintain the project).

- For projects on **City-owned property**, after the Applicant has secured all necessary approvals and/or permits, the City will manage the project, including the handling of procurement, and any cash match must be given to the City for disbursement. For projects which will require maintenance once completed, adequate assurance of perpetual maintenance shall be included in the proposal and the contract.

To avoid perceived conflicts of interests, applicants are discouraged from being both project lead/representative and primary paid consultants on projects.

How do I apply?

Application materials are available online www.charlottesville.org/nds or at the following locations:

- **Attn.: Sharon Patterson**
  Neighborhood Development Services
  610 East Market Street
  Charlottesville, VA 22902

Final applications are due by **4:00 p.m. Friday, October 13, 2017**. Grant awards will be announced as early as **October 30, 2017**, but no later than **November 9, 2017**. Completed materials should be submitted to: Alex Ikefuna, Neighborhood Development Services, 610 East Market Street, Charlottesville, VA 22902.