

***“Love Where You Live”***

**City of Lakeland**

**Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant Program 2025/26**

The program for neighborhood associations to help them promote stronger and healthier neighborhoods.

## GRANT REVIEW COMMITTEE

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**GUIDELINES**

# PURPOSE

The Neighborhood Partnership Matching Grant (NPMG) Program is the continuous effort of the City of Lakeland to improve, strengthen and enhance neighborhoods. The program, created in 2000 and approved by the City Commission,

is designed to:

* Encourage citizen involvement to enhance their neighborhood
* Facilitate neighborhood self-improvement projects
* Strengthen the partnership and communication between the City of Lakeland and its neighborhoods
* Promote stronger and healthier neighborhoods

# ELIGIBILITY

All formally registered neighborhood associations recognized by the City of Lakeland’s Neighborhood Outreach Office for at least six months are eligible to apply for the grant. The association must actively participate with the Neighborhood Association Coalition (NAC) as evidenced by meeting attendance.

Individuals, single businesses, city-wide organizations, social services, fraternal or religious groups, universities, political groups, and public agencies are not eligible for this program. Associations that fail to successfully complete the projects funded in a preceding year are also not eligible. However, eligible neighborhood associations are encouraged to form partnerships with non-eligible entities to plan and implement projects. The neighborhood associations must be the lead applicant, have the primary role in the partnership, and be accountable for the results.

# FUNDING

All Neighborhood Associations may *initially* apply for a partnership grant of up to $2,500. In addition, neighborhood associations that have demonstrated the ability to facilitate a grant independent of City Staff by successful implementation and outcome of the projects from preceding grant year may apply for up to $5,000.

If the neighborhood association receives cash sponsorship, the association must be responsible to receive and structure the expenses of the cash. The city is not responsible for collecting or handling it.

# ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

* Neighborhood geographical boundaries must be within city limits of City of Lakeland.
* The project must provide a clear public benefit and emphasize the **neighborhood.**
* Must be an active member of the Neighborhood Association Coalition.

## Must have at least one strong partner for their grant project.

* **Must submit a complete NPMG application before the deadline.**
* The grant application must be endorsed by the Neighborhood Association.
* Must be able to complete the project without the assistance of the City of Lakeland.

## If the neighborhood associations are awarded the NPMG, they must consider the following:

* Must obtain general liability insurance for any projects held within City properties as required by Risk Management.
* Must have special event insurance for events being organized within city property managed by the Department of Parks and Cultural Arts.
* **Must complete all listed projects prior to September 30, 2026.**
* Must report all other external sources of funds and their use for the proposed project(s).
* Execute a contract with the City prior to submitting any invoices.
* Invoices must be in by no later than 2:00 pm every Tuesday to receive the check.

## Must have at least three team members in the Association to handle the grant project.

**PROJECT CATEGORIES**

The Neighborhood Partnership Grant Matching Project must foster community partnerships and neighborhood empowerment through training, mentoring, community services, education/ awareness, and initiatives. The grant projects are physical improvement or beautification programs, projects that increase the effectiveness and improve neighborhood operations, projects that reduce crime, youth program expenses, and resource conservation projects. **For this application cycle, we are encouraging applicants to focus on a single strong project that may include but are not limited to:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Neighborhood Improvement/ Beautification** | |
| * Landscaping and Beautification | * Community Gardens |
| * Street Adoption and Clean-Ups | * Identification Signs |
| * Small Playground Equipment | * Benches, Picnic tables, Trails |
| * Streetlights Installation | * Park Enhancement |
| * Curb Appeal Improvement | * Bike stations, racks, etc. |
|  | |
| **Organizational Development/ Training** |  |
| * Leadership Programs | * Board Training and Development |
| * Communication Strategies | * Meeting Signs; Neighborhood Association banners, tablecloths |
|  | |
| **Crime and Public Safety** | |
| * Neighborhood Watch Signs | * Fire Safety Programs |
| * Crime Prevention Program | * First Aid Certifications * Safety kits (hurricane, health/wellness) |
|  | |
| **Youth/Adult Partnership Programs/Sponsorship** | |
| * After- School Academic Initiatives | * Little Free Libraries |
| * Mentoring/Tutoring * Tickets for Museum visits | * Youth Program Sponsorships/School Supplies * Elder care supplies |
|  | |
| **Cultural Enrichment / Special Events** | |
| * Music/Art Festival/Insurance * Community Movie Night | * 5K Walk/Run/Stroll/Bike |
| * Historic Home Tours /Neighborhood History Program/signage | * Civic Pride/Resident Outreach (for ex. homeowners, renters, elders, veterans) |
|  | |
| **Resource Conservation Projects** | |
| * Recycling Campaigns | * Bike Racks |
| * Waste Reduction Initiatives | * Lake Cleanup Initiatives |
| * Waste Receptacles | * Energy Reduction Initiatives |

**INELIGIBLE PROJECT EXPENSES**

The following are ineligible for the partnership grant funding:

* + Personal Property Enhancements and Personal Events
  + Food and beverages
  + Alcoholic beverages
  + Capital Equipment or Power tools (i.e. computers, copiers, scanners, etc.)
  + Previously NPMG funded unsuccessful and incomplete projects
  + Giveaways/ freebies (exceptions are made at discretion of Neighborhood Outreach)
  + Salaries (except for speaker honorariums and vendor invoices)
  + Political campaigning
  + Event specific shirts
  + Inflatables (i.e. bounce houses, etc.) with exception of movie screens
  + **During the scoring process, projects that have been repeated for the previous three grant cycles (2022, 2023, 2024) will be weighted lower than projects that are new/significantly modified to promote continuous resident engagement.**
  + Postage/mailing supplies exceeding 10% of total grant award

**Additionally, all individual project expenses will be subject to approval by the Neighborhood Outreach Office.**

# GRANT MATCH REQUIREMENT

* A **minimum** 25% match of the requested amount must be met through the following methods, **and volunteer hours are required of all neighborhood associations:** volunteer hours’ contribution after signing the contract (**Volunteer labor is** **required** and will be valued at $15/hr.), In-kind donation of materials, services, labor, etc., or cash contributions. Volunteer hours and donations above this threshold are welcomed.
* Examples: 25% of $5,000 matching grant would require $1,250 in-kind/cash donations or 125 volunteer hours. 25% of a $2,500 matching grant would require $625 in-kind-cash donations or 62.5 volunteer hours.
* The minimum 25% match requirement can be satisfied with only a volunteer hours’ contribution if a neighborhood association isn’t able to secure donations or funds.
* **Submit the completed Volunteer Pledge Worksheet, Budget Worksheet, the Contribution Worksheet, & letters of in-kind/cash donations (if applicable) with the application. Proof of completed volunteer hours must be submitted with the end of year Completion Report (by October 23, 2026).**
* Neighborhood associations are highly encouraged to forge community partnerships with businesses, organizations, and/or individuals to secure in-kind donations and cash donations.
* **Please Note:** City facilities/offices/departments/officials (ex. mayor, police chief, Neighborhood Outreach, Code Enforcement, etc.) **CANNOT** be listed as community partners on the application.

# APPLICATION DEADLINE

**All applications must be submitted by April 24, 2025 at 11:59 PM. Applicants must submit their application through Neighborly-NO EXCEPTIONS**. City staff can assist the applicants to complete the grant application, if needed. The office can be contacted at:

## Neighborhood Outreach Office Community & Economic Development City of Lakeland

**228 South Massachusetts Avenue, Lakeland, Florida 33801**

**Applications are completed in the Neighborly application portal:** [**https://lakelandgov.net/departments/community-economic-development/neighborhoods/grantsprograms/**](https://lakelandgov.net/departments/community-economic-development/neighborhoods/grantsprograms/)

**PROJECT SELECTION AND NOTIFICATION**

Applications submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by the Neighborhood Outreach Senior Planner for completion. Completed applications will be assigned to and scored by the Partnership Grant Administration Review Team which is made up of city staff from multiple departments. Applications will be ranked based on the evaluation criteria. **The grant recipients will receive an award letter and are asked to sign the agreement. All other applicants will also be notified of the decision and invited to apply during Round Two of the 2025-2026 application window following attendance at a mandatory Grant Writing Workshop/Training (dates TBA).**

# PROJECT MONITORING

The selected projects will be monitored by the Neighborhood Outreach staff throughout the project completion period. **Neighborhood Associations are advised to produce their Completion Report(s) immediately after a project is completed to save themselves time and meet the Completion Report deadline more easily.**

# PROJECT COMPLETION

**All projects are to be completed by September 30, 2026.** The City of Lakeland encourages all the neighborhood associations to maximize the utilization of the grant fund and to be spent by September 30, 2026. **A Completion Report is due on or before October 23rd of each grant cycle and is required to apply during the next application cycle.**

*NOTE: Until the project receives the approval from the Neighborhood Outreach Office, Community & Economic Development Department, the Department and City are not responsible for, nor will it pay for any expenses or costs incurred by the applicant for the project.*

# EVALUATION CRITERIA



# 70 points needed

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| CRITERION | WEIGHT | Explanation |
| **SUPPORTS PROGRAM MISSION**  **B.6** Brief Description details**: up to 3 pts**  Eligible project(s): **up to 3 pts** | 6 | Project Brief description contains enough details to demonstrate that project is designed to fund eligible neighborhood improvement projects. (**See eligible projects Pgs. 3-4)** |
| **COST SHARING ABILITY**  Completed Contribution Sheet (listed as in-kind or cash; services explained in detail): **up to** **8 pts**  Letters of Intent/emails: **up to 7pts** | 15 | Letters of intent/emails for in-kind donations such as supplies, equipment, space or professional services which describe their donations and state the market value. |
| **BENEFIT TO NEIGHBORHOOD**  **B.9** Project Benefit details: **up to 3 pts**  Meeting Minutes w/ project(s) discussion & decision attached: **up to 5 pts**  Evidence of DIRECT benefit to NA residents: **up to 15 pts** | 23 | Project(s) provides a public benefit to the neighborhood and directly involves the neighborhood residents in all phases. The project or activity takes place within the boundaries of the neighborhood, except when donated space is located outside the neighborhood. |
| **PARTICIPATION AND COLLABORATION**  Completed Volunteer Sheet w/ min. of five volunteers listed: **up to 10 pts**  Min. of one grant partner: **up to 5pts**  Grant partner participation: **up to 5pts** | 20 | Multiple volunteers have been recruited to carry out the project(s). Project involves broad-based neighborhood participation. At least one (1) grant partner has been identified and is active in this project **(not city personnel or city facilities).** |
| **PROJECT DESIGN**  Completed Budget Sheet: **up to 10 pts**  Well-planned, can be implemented NOW: **up to 10 pts**  **\*Please note: Greater weight will be given to projects that have not been repeated for 3 consecutive FY’s (‘22,’23, & ‘24).**  **Brand new/significantly modified: up to 10 pts** | 30 | Well-planned, cost-effective, and ready for implementation; shows a clear and reasonable vision for sustaining the project and resulting improvements. Budget is a reasonable projection of expenses and revenue. Proposed activities are an innovative response to a recognized problem. |
| **NAC COMPLIANCE**  **\*Completed by Neighborhood Outreach for each applicant**  **Maximum possible points listed.**  **Total possible points for rubric: 110** | **6**  **10** | \*Applicants have attended at least 3 out of 4 neighborhood association coalition (NAC) for previous FY quarterly meetings. \***If applicable:** Applicant submitted proper Completion Report for their last completed grant cycle on time. |

**Effective 2024-2025 and going forward:**

To apply for the NPMG, board members of eligible neighborhood associations or their representatives **must** attend the Grant Technical Assistance Training meeting.

If you are denied and wish to apply in Round Two, attendance at a Grant Writing Workshop or second Grant Technical Assistance Training is mandatory.

Due dates will be followed so please plan accordingly.

Once project invoices are solicited and received by the grant recipient, they **must** be submitted to the Neighborhood Outreach office within a reasonable timeframe so that our staff can evaluate them for payment eligibility and submit draw requests to Neighborly more quickly. Neighborhood Outreach considers a reasonable timeframe as 30 days or less.

**Effective September 2025:** **All invoices must be submitted by September 20th** and NA’s are strongly encouraged not to wait until the last minute to submit their invoices. Remember, your NA is one of several grant recipients and we greatly appreciate your respect and consideration of our workload at the end of the FY.

Requests for printed materials **must** be submitted **at least 10 business days ahead of your deadline date**, or we may not be able to accommodate the request, unless there’s been prior arrangements made.

It is important for neighborhood association members to consider that our department staff members have busy schedules each week and last-minute requests for flyers, booklets (especially those that require more people, departments, and time to fulfill), materials, and requests to send Constant Contact emails/regular emails, and EZ Texts are inconsiderate of the staff’s time.

We are here to serve and support your efforts to improve the quality of life for the residents in your neighborhood, and we thank you for your steadfast commitment because we couldn’t do this without you.

**For future grant cycles**, the selection committee will give favorable consideration to those Neighborhood Associations with a solid track record of meeting these requirements/requests.