



Neighborhood Services Department • 102 N Neil St • Champaign IL 61820 • (217) 403-7070 • fax (217) 403-7090 • www.ci.champaign.il.us

Neighborhood Small Grant Program Manual

Approved by Council Bill NO. 2006-059
Code Amendment to Chapter 20.5

REVISED PROGRAM OVERVIEW - 2015

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I. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

A. Background and History

- In December 1995, the City Council approved a pilot program known as the Neighborhood Improvement Program (NIP). The purpose of the program was to encourage citizens to take an active role in organizing their neighborhoods and to prioritize neighborhood needs. The University of Illinois partnered with the City and neighborhood residents to assist with neighborhood-based planning.
- Two Neighborhood Wellness planning areas were selected to participate in the pilot program: Planning Area 2 (Douglass Park) and Planning Area 8 (Garden Hills). Grants of \$100,000 were provided to each neighborhood to implement neighborhood plans.
- Staff presented evaluation results of the NIP implementation efforts to City Council in January of 1999. Both neighborhoods implemented successful programs; however, the amount of funds expended on a single project did not exceed \$5,000 or 25% of the total amount allocated to each plan. Additionally, the amount of time needed to coordinate and implement the program was underestimated.
- Staff recommended changes to the program as part of the evaluation, including a reduction in the grant amount, removal of the area restriction for participation, and adding a neighborhood participation requirement. These changes eliminated the NIP and created the Neighborhood Small Grant Program in October of 1999 [CB 99-283].
- City Council approved amendments to the program in September 2000 [CB 2000-0228]. Amendments allowed newly registered neighborhoods to apply without a waiting period; established an open, continuous application process; added neighborhood-based events as an eligible activity to enhance resident communication; enabled groups to apply for multiple grants in a single year not exceeding \$5,000; and eliminated a financial match requirement for grants below \$500.
- City Council approved amendments to the program in March 2006 [CB 2006-059]. Amendments allowed funding for initial organizing efforts of Homeowner and Lake Owner associations; an expanded definition of “public property” to include privately owned common areas and detention basins; and raised the required financial-match threshold from \$500 to \$1,000.

B. Neighborhood Wellness Vision and Goals

The Neighborhood Small Grant Program supports implementation of the Civic Involvement vision and goals of the City’s Neighborhood Wellness Plan, highlighted below:

Vision

- Neighborhood residents are active in issues that impact their neighborhood.
- Residents work together to solve problems and improve their neighborhoods.
- Neighborhood organizations participate in local decision-making, allowing the City to target services to meet the unique needs of each neighborhood.

Goals

- Engage citizens in the operation of local government.
- Provide neighborhoods with the tools to maintain and improve the health of their neighborhoods.

C. Program Objectives

- Encourage residents to organize their neighborhoods citywide and take an active role in implementing activities to address their needs.
- Provide funds for small-scale neighborhood improvements identified by neighborhood residents.
- Facilitate prioritization of neighborhood needs to ensure the best use of City resources through small neighborhood-based projects.
- Promote maximum participation of organized neighborhoods with a user-friendly and streamlined application process.

II. ELIGIBILITY

A. Applicants

Neighborhood organizations registered with the City of Champaign are eligible to apply for Neighborhood Small grants. Residents, businesses or community-based organizations residing within the boundaries of a registered neighborhood organization can initiate applications with the endorsement of the applicable registered neighborhood organization. Registered neighborhood organizations may classify as one of the following:

- Neighborhood Watch Group
- Neighborhood Group
- Neighborhood Association
- Homeowner Association
- Lake Owner Association
- Non-residential Association (Neighborhood-based)

B. Activities

All activities must result in a **public benefit** that enhances the character and/or well-being of a neighborhood. As a general rule, the benefit of an eligible activity must be available to an entire neighborhood. Improvements to common areas of Homeowner or Lake Owner associations are considered a public benefit. Activities that require ongoing maintenance support from the City are not eligible. Following is a list of categories within which eligible activities may occur. Questions about eligible activities should be directed to the City's Neighborhood Coordinator.

- Physical Improvements
- Equipment

- Neighborhood Social Events
- Organizing Assistance
- Neighborhood Outreach/Communication

C. Project Scope

Applicants must provide a realistic project description, including a budget and schedule. Projects taking longer than 30 days from the date of approval require a step-by-step action plan for implementing the project. All projects must be accomplished within 12 months. Large projects can be broken into phases.

D. Neighborhood Support

The leader of the neighborhood organization shall be listed on the application and must sign the grant agreement supporting the request. Applicants must also provide documented evidence of an attempt to obtain input on the project from all members of the organization. This can be done with a neighborhood meeting or an alternate means determined by the applicant. Meeting agendas, minutes, sign-in sheets or signatures gathered through outreach to individual members are all acceptable forms of documentation.

III. FUNDING

A. Funding Source

The Neighborhood Small Grant Program is currently funded from a portion of the City's Urban Renewal Fund. Urban Renewal funding derives from three-fourths (.75) of a percent of the City's tax on utilities, electric, gas and water. It is a designated fund source for community improvement activities managed by the Neighborhood Services Department.

B. Grant Limits

- The maximum grant allowable per request for an eligible project is \$2,500.
- The cumulative grant limit within a calendar year is \$5,000.

C. Grant Match

- Any request exceeding \$1,000 requires a dollar for dollar (1:1) match. **Example:** a \$1,500 grant request would require a \$500 match. In this example, the total cost of the project would be at least \$2,000 or more.
- Eligible match sources:
 - Private funding
 - In-kind donations

D. Sweat Equity

Applicants must contribute volunteer hours up to 25% of the grant request. Volunteer labor must be directly related to the project. If the project does not allow for volunteer labor, then the sweat equity requirement can be met with volunteer labor unrelated to the project.

IV. APPLICATION PROCEDURES

A. Preliminary Planning

1. Project ideas should be discussed with the City's Neighborhood Coordinator in advance of submitting an application.
 - Is your neighborhood registered?
 - Is your project feasible?
 - Does your project benefit the entire neighborhood?
 - Is funding currently available for your project?
2. Project leaders should identify a method for obtaining neighborhood input and support for the proposed project.
 - Does the Neighborhood Leader support the project?
 - Do a majority of the organization members support the project?

B. Prepare and Submit an Application

1. Complete an application with the required information and attachments at least three weeks prior to beginning the activity for which grant funds are being requested.
2. Submit applications to the Neighborhood Services Department online at www.ci.champaign.il.us/nsd or by mail or in person at 102 North Neil Street, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

C. Application Review and Approval

1. Applications are accepted on a first-come, first-serve basis until all funding within a fiscal year (July 1st – June 30th) has been obligated.
2. Within five business days of receiving a complete application, the Neighborhood Coordinator reviews the application for compliance with grant requirements.
3. If all requirements are met, the Neighborhood Services Director reviews and approves the application and a draft grant agreement within two business days.
4. Upon approval, the Neighborhood Coordinator schedules an appointment with the grant recipient to sign the grant agreement and finalize any details concerning project implementation.
5. Newly organized neighborhoods of less than three months and neighborhoods applying for grants exceeding \$1,000, must present their requests to the Neighborhood Services Advisory Board (NASB) at one of its monthly meetings for review and feedback before final approval.

V. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

A. Disbursement of Funds

There are two ways purchases can be made with grant funds:

1. Approved City Vendor
2. Group Member

Purchasing through a City vendor requires no out of pocket cost for grant recipients. Purchases from approved vendors can be billed directly to the City of Champaign. If a purchase is made from a non-approved City vendor, reimbursement requires the grant recipient to retain the original receipt for the purchase and to request reimbursement within **30 days** after the event.

To receive reimbursements, the following items must be presented to the Neighborhood Services Coordination Division:

1. Close-out Report/Reimbursement Request Form, including social security number and mailing address of the individual to be reimbursed
2. Original receipts or invoices for all items purchased (must show proof of payments). All items requested for reimbursement shall be compliant with the approved project scope
3. Close-out Report, consisting of a 1-2 paragraph summary of the event along with any pictures or other documentation (newspaper article, flyers, etc.) In your report, please be sure to note any unique experiences, observations or challenges with your project/event. Additionally, an account of the actual volunteer hours committed is required.

When all receipts and social security information have been submitted for payment with the close-out report, a request for reimbursement will be made according to the City vendor payment cycle after approving all expenditures for reimbursement. Reimbursements normally take two to three weeks after the pay request has been submitted.

VI. APPENDIX OF FORMS

- Neighborhood Small Grant Application
- Neighborhood Small Grant Pledge Of Volunteer Hours Form
- Neighborhood Small Grant Agreement Form
- Neighborhood Small Grant Procedures For Approved Requests
- Neighborhood Small Grant Close-Out Report/ Reimbursement Request



OFFICE USE ONLY REQUESTED AMOUNT: \$ _____ MATCHING VOLUNTEER HOURS: _____ AMOUNT HOURS: \$ _____ GRANT REQUIREMENTS MET: _____ GRANT REVIEWED BY: _____

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NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GRANT APPLICATION (UP TO \$2,500 PER REQUEST; UP TO \$5,000 PER YEAR)

1. **GROUP/ASSOCIATION REGISTRATION** – Is your group registered with the City of Champaign’s Neighborhood Services Department?

YES – If YES, proceed with this application

NO – If NO, Contact Neighborhood Services for a registration form and return it with this completed application

2. **NAME OF THE GROUP/ASSOCIATION** – _____

3. **PROJECT CONTACT** – The Project contact is responsible for signing the completed application. Please provide the name of the group member who will be the contact for the project if it is funded:

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ (Daytime) _____ (Evening)

4. **NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER (if different from Project Contact)** – _____

Phone: _____ (Daytime) _____ (Evening)

5. **PROJECT DESCRIPTION** – Describe the project, including the following information:

Name of Project: _____

Purpose or opportunity addressed by the project: _____

Anticipated outcome of project: _____

Has project been proposed to the entire group/association? If so, list date of meeting: _____

Describe how the project was selected and how group/association members were involved in selecting the project, and the level of support for the project? _____

Explain how individual volunteers will be involved in implementing the project.

6. PROJECT SCHEDULE – List the anticipated starting and ending dates for your project.

START DATE: ___/___/___ END DATE: ___/___/___

Note: Grant requests should be submitted at least 3 weeks prior to event date. In addition, if grant activities will not be completed within 30 days after the date the project is approved, please attach a project schedule that includes key Action Steps and dates for completion of each step on a separate sheet.

7. PROJECT BUDGET – For each category below, list what goods or services your group plans to purchase for the project.

	Description	Vendor(s) Name, Store Contact, Phone Number & Address	Amount
	<i>Materials/Supplies</i>		\$
	<i>Equipment Rental</i>		\$
	<i>Services</i>		\$
	<i>Other</i>		\$
TOTAL PROJECT COST (A)			\$

8. NEIGHBORHOOD CONTRIBUTION – Please list any donated materials, services, or cash contributions that the neighborhood will contribute toward the project costs listed above.

Type	Description	Amount
<i>Monetary</i>		\$
<i>In-Kind Donations</i>		\$
<i>Volunteer Labor</i>		\$
TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD CONTRIBUTION (B)		\$

TOTAL REQUESTED FROM THE CITY OF CHAMPAIGN	TOTAL (A) + TOTAL (B)	\$
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9. Volunteer Hours (___ hrs X current volunteer hourly rate \$ ___) \$ _____

Note: Volunteer hours should add up to at least 25% of the total project cost. Contact Neighborhood Services to find out the current volunteer hourly rate, then complete volunteer commitment form to validate the hours indicated here and attach to the application

10. ATTACHMENTS – Please make sure to attached the following documents:

- Signed Summary of Volunteer Hours
- Copies of Store Estimates for Purchases from Vendors, Contract Services, etc. (if applicable)
- Evidence of Neighborhood Involvement and Support

SIGNATURE OF PROJECT CONTACT

DATE

SIGNATURE OF NEIGHBORHOOD LEADER

DATE



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NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GRANT PLEDGE OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

This form should be completed by those volunteering their time for the project listed on page 1 and submitted with the Neighborhood Small Grant Application.

The total hours pledged for each activity should equal 25% of the grant amount being requested from the City. The value of volunteer hours in the State of Illinois is subject to change. Please contact Neighborhood Services for the current volunteer hourly rate.

NOTE: Review of the grant application will not begin until all application documentation is received in the City of Champaign Neighborhood Services Department.

VOLUNTEER NAME	VOLUNTEER ADDRESS	TOTAL HOURS PLEDGED	TOTAL PLEDGE VALUE <small>(hrs pledged X volunteer hourly rate of \$ ___/hr)</small>	VOLUNTEER SIGNATURE
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
GRAND TOTAL			\$	



CITY OF CHAMPAIGN NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GRANT AGREEMENT

Section 1. Amount of the Grant. The City is agreeing herein to provide funds, not to exceed \$ _____ to assist the Grantee with the completion of the Project.

Section 2. Documentation of Costs / Disbursement of Funds. Prior to any disbursements by the CITY pursuant to this agreement, GRANTEE shall submit receipts, bills or other documentation to the **Neighborhood Services Department**, to establish that the work, goods or services have been completed or provided by a specified vendor or contractor. The required documentation shall itemize and describe the costs of the work, goods or services in question in sufficient detail so that the **Neighborhood Services Department** is able to determine and document that the work, goods or services are within the permissible scope of the project being funded herein.

The CITY shall make disbursements, either directly to the Grantee for expenses or costs already incurred, or directly to the vendor or contractor providing goods or services for the Project, within 30 days of receipt of the proper documentation as set forth herein.

Section 3. Deadline for Submitting Requests for Disbursements. GRANTEE agrees that any documentation required in the preceding section shall be submitted on or before _____, in order for the CITY to be obligated under the terms of this agreement to disburse funds for the work, services or goods in question.

Section 4. GRANTEE to Supervise Project. GRANTEE shall be responsible for supervising the Project in order to insure that any work performed or costs incurred are within the permissible scope of the Project and the Neighborhood Small Grant Program Manual.

Section 5. Modifications of the Project. GRANTEE shall not modify or revise any elements of the Project in any manner without the prior written consent of the CITY, including but not limited to the following:

- a) the type of activities or purchases to be funded;
- b) the specific amounts of funds or other resources that will be devoted to each of the activities or purchases;
- c) the identities of vendors or contractors who will provide any goods or services for the project.

Section 6. Close-Out Report. GRANTEE shall provide a close-out report to the Neighborhood Services Department within 30 days after completion of the Project on a form provided by the Neighborhood Service Department. Said report shall itemize the expenditures made, and shall certify that the GRANTEE has provided the required matching share of funds and volunteer labor towards completion of the Project.

Section 7. CITY's Request for Records or Documents. GRANTEE shall provide any financial records or other documents to the CITY that are necessary to verify that funds have been disbursed for eligible activities under this agreement, within 10 days of the date of a written request for those records or documents.

Section 8. CITY Not Liable for Project. The parties agree that the City is not herein entering into any contract or agreement with any vendors or contractors for the purchase of any goods or services for the Project. The parties also agree that the City is not in any manner providing any warranties or other assurances about the quality or suitability of any goods or services provided to the GRANTEE for the Project. The parties agree further that GRANTEE shall hold the CITY harmless for any damages to persons or property that may occur during or in any manner arising from the Project.

Section 9. Default. If the CITY determines that any funds have been disbursed for ineligible activities, in violation of the terms of this Agreement, the CITY shall provide written notice of said violation to the GRANTEE. The CITY shall be entitled to terminate this Agreement within five days of said written notice. GRANTEE shall, within 30 days of a written demand made by the CITY, reimburse the CITY for all funds disbursed for said ineligible costs.

The CITY may, at its option, continue further disbursements pursuant to this Agreement after any disbursement for any ineligible activities if the GRANTEE reimburses the CITY for the improper disbursements, or otherwise cures the violation to the CITY's satisfaction.

Section 10. Notices. Required notices, as provided herein, shall be mailed by first class mail, and shall be deemed served on the party in question on the date of mailing. Said notices shall be addressed to the pertinent party at the following address:

<p>CITY OF CHAMPAIGN</p> <p>John H. Ruffin, Neighborhood Services Department 102 N. Neil Street Champaign, IL 61820</p>	<p>GRANTEE</p> <p>[GRANTEE NAME] [GRANTEE ADDRESS]</p>
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IN WITNESS WHEREOF the parties hereto have duly executed this Agreement on the day and year indicated below.

CITY OF CHAMPAIGN

By: _____
Neighborhood Services Director

Date: _____

GRANTEE

By: _____
[SIGNATURE OF GRANTEE]

Date: _____

NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GRANT PROCEDURES FOR APPROVED REQUESTS

Disbursement of Funds

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NEIGHBORHOOD SMALL GRANT CLOSE-OUT REPORT/ REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST

Today's Date: _____

Group Name: _____

Name of Project: _____

Date of Project: _____

Project Contact: _____

Have you attached the following (check all that apply):

- Close-Out Report
- Invoices from Approved Vendors
- Reimbursement Request with Original Receipts Attached (fill out chart below)

Name	Address	Social Security or FEIN #	Amount of Reimbursement Requested	Original Receipts Attached?
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	
			\$	

Signature of Project Contact: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY

DATE RECEIVED: _____ RECEIVED BY: _____

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST APPROVED BY: _____

REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST PROCESSED BY: _____

DATE OF REIMBURSEMENT REQUEST PROCESSED: _____