

City of Alexandria, Virginia

MEMORANDUM

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6-25-02

DATE: JUNE 19, 2002
TO: THE HONORABLE MAYOR AND MEMBERS OF CITY COUNCIL
FROM: PHILIP SUNDERLAND, CITY MANAGER ^{PS}
SUBJECT: ESTABLISHMENT OF A NEIGHBORHOOD PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

ISSUE: Establishment of a new Neighborhood Partnership Grant Program.

RECOMMENDATION: That City Council receive this report.

BACKGROUND: The FY 2002 and FY 2003 operating budgets as approved by City Council include numerous initiatives designed to improve the quality of life of Alexandria residents, including \$50,000 in annual funding to initiate a Neighborhood Partnership Grant (NPG) Program. This program will encourage residents to play a greater role in determining how to enhance the quality of life in their neighborhoods. Grants are planned to be limited to \$5,000 to maximize neighborhood and resident participation, and residents are required to develop and implement their projects.

This NPG program was developed by looking at what other cities across the United States and in the Washington D.C. area have undertaken in the neighborhood grant arena, and then combining some of the best practices with how the City has successfully handled competitive grant awards processes (such as the Community Partnership Fund and the Children's Fund). The program is being presented to City Council in order to inform Council of the plans for the program, as well as to receive input from Council about the program.

DISCUSSION: In early July, the City plans to issue a Request for Grant Proposals for the NPG program, and grant applications will be available for neighborhood groups to request funds for small projects. The program will be open to any organized neighborhood or community group within the City of Alexandria. The City will provide grants for small neighborhood improvement projects, including small capital improvement, beautification and community building projects. The program is described in detail in Attachment 1.

The grant submission, review and approval process is proposed to take place as follows:

Monday, July 8	Request for Grant Proposals will be issued and grant applications will be available.
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- Friday, September 20 Deadline to submit project proposal form for review by City staff to determine compliance with program guidelines, City Master Plan and other City regulations. Staff will discuss any concerns with applicants by October 1.
- Friday, October 18 Deadline to submit completed grant application for evaluation by a joint City staff-citizen committee
- Monday, November 18 Notification of successful grant applicants

Staff in the Office of Management and Budget will serve as the primary point of contact for applicants. The Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Transportation and Environmental Services, Planning and Zoning and the Offices of Management and Budget and the City Manager will each have an identified staff person who will field department-specific questions regarding grant applications and proposed projects. This group of departmental staff will also review the project proposal form to determine if the application meets the requirements of the program. Staff will review proposals for compatibility with existing City plans, and will identify concerns with materials, costs and project feasibility. Some proposals may be eliminated during this review process if the project does not comply with the program specifications or current City regulations. It is staff's intention to work with applicants and to provide feedback to enable the greatest number of applicants to participate in the complete grant application process.

Following the pre-application review, applicants will submit a completed grant application which will be evaluated by a joint City staff-citizen committee (appointed by the City Manager) based on the following criteria:

- Neighborhood benefit
- Project feasibility
- Community support/involvement
- Matching resources
- Innovation of proposal

Successful applicants will have one year to complete their projects, and projects will be monitored by the City through the year to ensure that they are completed as proposed and within the deadline. It will be the responsibility of the applicant to maintain a completed tangible project. The City will not provide any ongoing financial support. Applicants of projects that are not selected will be given an opportunity to understand why their application was not selected and will be advised of other opportunities that may be available to them or how they can improve their chances in future years.

Staff will provide a report in the form of a docket item to City Council in December to announce the selected projects and to provide a status report on this new program.

FISCAL IMPACT: The FY 2002 and FY 2003 operating budgets include \$50,000 per year to fund this program. It is anticipated that another round of grant funding will take place near the

end of FY 2003. Awards will be limited to a maximum of \$5,000 and applicants will be required to identify matching resources, including cash and in-kind contributions. Project fund management will be the responsibility of the applicant. In most situations, the City will reimburse an applicant for expenses incurred during the course of the project, although in some circumstances the City may advance funds to successful applicants.

ATTACHMENT:

Attachment 1. City of Alexandria Neighborhood Partnership Grant Program Request for Grant Proposal document

STAFF:

Kendel Taylor, Budget Analyst, Office of Management and Budget
Richard Baier, Director, Transportation and Environmental Services
Gene Swearingen, Director, Office of Management and Budget



**City of Alexandria Neighborhood Partnership
Grant Program**



**Request for
Proposals**

Neighborhood Partnership Grants

\$50,000 total funds available

**Pre-review deadline is 4 p.m., Friday, September 20, 2002
Final applications are due at 4 p.m., Friday, October 18, 2002**

**APPLICATIONS SUBMITTED AFTER 4 P.M.
WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED OR ACCEPTED**

Submit applications to:
Kendel Taylor, Office of Management and Budget
301 King Street, Suite 3600, Alexandria, VA 22314
or fax to (703) 706-3991

**For more information call (703) 838-4806, ext. 382 or e-mail
kendel.taylor@ci.alexandria.va.us**

Purpose

In FY 2002 City Council approved funding to establish a Neighborhood Partnership Grant Program to improve the residential neighborhoods of the City by encouraging citizen participation and responsibility in the planning, implementation and maintenance of neighborhood improvement projects.

What kind of grants?

The City of Alexandria is offering matching grants of up to \$5,000 for neighborhood physical improvements and community-building events or activities that benefit Alexandria residents. Proposals must be for capital projects or one-time events or activities, not on-going services, and applicants will be required to maintain a physical project once it is completed. Examples are identified, but proposals are not to be limited to these projects. Traffic calming initiatives, such as speed tables, are not eligible for grant funding. Proposed projects will be identified and judged against similar projects according to the following categories:

- Tangible capital improvement projects - playground equipment, street lighting, bus shelter

- Tangible beautification projects - trees and flowers, community gardens
- Community building projects - neighborhood clean up, workshops or newsletters

Who can apply?

This grant program is open to any neighborhood or community group that represents, or is organized to, further the interests of individuals who reside in the City of Alexandria. Organizations formed specifically for grant application purposes are ineligible to apply.

What is the match?

City funds must be matched by at least the same amount of cash donations, donated materials and supplies, or volunteer labor. The applicant's match may not include resources from other City programs or departments. Documentation of the match must be submitted with the application. Volunteer labor will be valued at \$10 per hour. The value of professional services counted toward the match shall be based on the reasonable market value of the service. Time devoted to planning the project, preparing the application and fund raising cannot be considered part of the match. Staff assistance from the City of Alexandria cannot be considered as a match.

What City staff assistance is available?

Contact Kendel Taylor for information or assistance. She can be reached at (703) 838-4806 or e-mail kendel.taylor@ci.alexandria.va.us.

How does one apply?

A pre-application review is required. Please submit the attached project proposal form (Attachment 1) to the Office of Management and Budget by September 20, 2002. The purpose of submitting this form is to enable City staff to review a very brief summary of the proposed project and then to provide guidance to applicants as to the eligibility of the project for this program or any concerns staff may have. The project proposal will include the name of the applicant, a brief description of the proposed project, the estimated project cost, proposed match (and source of funds, if applicable), the number of households impacted by the proposed project, and a description of how the project will benefit or improve your neighborhood.

City staff from the Office of Management and Budget, the Departments of Recreation, Parks and Cultural Activities, Planning and Zoning, Transportation and Environmental Services, and the City Manager's Office will review proposals for compatibility with existing City plans (e.g., for compliance with the Master Plan and zoning requirements). Staff will also identify any concerns with materials, costs and project feasibility. Some proposals may be eliminated during this review process if the project does not comply with the program specifications or current City regulations. It is staff's intention to work with applicants and to provide feedback to enable the greatest number of applicants to participate in the complete grant application process.

Following the pre-application review, applicants will submit a completed grant application form (Attachment 2) which will be evaluated by a joint City staff-citizen committee based on the criteria described below.

What is the time line?

The time line for this year's program is as follows:

- Monday, July 8, 2002 - Applications available
- Friday, September 20, 2002 - Pre-review deadline: submit project proposals to the Office of Management and Budget by 4:00 p.m.
- Friday, October 18, 2002 - Application Deadline: submit completed grant applications to the Office of Management and Budget by 4:00 p.m.
- Monday, November 18, 2002 - Applicants notified about which projects were selected.

How will projects be selected?

The proposed projects will be rated between 1 and 100 points based on the following criteria. The criteria listed below outline the basic components the committee will evaluate.

Neighborhood benefit

30 points

- How will the project improve the health, safety or quality of life of the residents?
- How will the project result in a physical improvement to the neighborhood or a measurable change in the sense of local community or the identity of the neighborhood?
- How many people will be impacted by this project?
- Has the need for the project been previously identified or documented through other City forums?

Project feasibility/organization

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- Does the submission clearly identify the project being proposed, the time line for completion and a project manager, financial manager and/or grant administrator?
- Are long term benefits and outcomes of the project clearly identified and justified?
- Is the project ready to proceed once funds are awarded?
- Is the applicant capable of completing the project and, where applicable, maintaining the completed project over time?
- Is the time line (completion in one year) realistic?
- Are maintenance costs and responsibilities clearly identified and addressed?

Community support/involvement

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Is there broad neighborhood awareness and support for the proposal? (Submissions should include copies of petitions, flyers, newsletters and other forms of materials showing publicity of or support for the neighborhood proposal.)

Was there broad involvement or collaboration in the planning of the proposal by neighborhood residents and groups?

Matching resources

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Are the matching funds and in-kind contributions accurately identified and reasonably committed to?

Are the in-kind contributions costed out at the rates identified (\$10 per volunteer hour)? (Submission should include pledge sheets indicating volunteer time.)

Are donated materials realistically budgeted?

Innovation of proposal

10

Does the proposal demonstrate particular innovation or creativity on the part of the applicant either in its planning and gathering of community support, in its solicitation of matching funds and volunteer hours, or in the project itself.

What happens if my project is selected?

The project leader/grant administrator will sign a contract with the City agreeing to certain stipulations, including:

- Grantee will have a tax identification number and a bank account
- No work, additional funding or maintenance will be provided by the City of Alexandria
- Project will be completed in one year
- Project status is subject to City review
- Grant award will not exceed \$5,000

Projects will be monitored throughout the year to ensure that they are completed by the one year deadline. Project fund management is the responsibility of the applicant. The City will normally provide reimbursement for expenses incurred during the course of the project, although in some circumstances the City may advance funds to the successful applicants. Capability of fund management should be demonstrated in the application, in addition to sources of matching resources.

What happens once my project is completed?

The applicant will be required to maintain the completed project if it is a tangible project. The City will not provide any ongoing financial support.

What happens if my project is not selected?

Applicants not selected will be given an opportunity to understand why their application was not selected, and will be advised of other opportunities that may be available to them or how they can improve their chances in future years.

**City of Alexandria
2002 Neighborhood Grant Program Application**

Please type or print clearly answers to the following questions.

A. Name of Organization _____

B. Grant Administrator (Individual responsible for grant management)

1. Name _____

2. Mailing Address _____

3. City, State and Zip Code _____

4. Phone _____ Fax _____

5. Federal ID # _____

6. Email address _____

7. Signature and title of individual authorized to sign contract with City:

C. Funds

1. Amount of Grant Requested
\$ _____

2. Amount of Match
Cash _____
In-kind _____

3. Total Project Cost
\$ _____

D. Project description

E. Location of Project (for community building events please identify the facility where the event will occur)

- F. Describe the nature and extent of the neighborhood benefit that the project will produce. (include the number of households that will be impacted, and explain how the number has been determined.)
- G. Provide a timeline for completion of the project. (All projects must be completed within 12 months of the announcement of grant awards.)
- H. Attach a project budget with your submission. (The budget should be a detailed, line by line breakdown of projected expenses and revenues and identify a source for each item [contractor's estimates, price quotes, etc].)
- I. Provide evidence of financial support and matching efforts. (City funding can only account for up to 50% of the cost of the project. Volunteer hours are valued at \$10 per hour. Donation of professional services must be budgeted at fair market value.)
- J. Provide evidence that neighborhood input was solicited in the selection of the project. (List dates of meetings and the number of attendees, provide samples of flyers, door to door surveys)
- K. Identify the specific maintenance requirements of your project and explain how these will be fulfilled.
- L. Identify the members of your project team and explain your capability to implement this project.

This form is due in the Office of Management and Budget, 301 King Street, Suite 3600, Alexandria, VA 22314, or fax to (703) 706-3991, by 4:00 p.m. on Friday, October 18, 2002.