

NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION GRANT

GUIDELINES & APPLICATION BOOKLET

MANDATORY/MATCHING



NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION
2450 W. 33RD STREET, 2ND FLOOR
ORLANDO, FL 32839

(407) 836-4200 | NeighborhoodGrants@ocfl.net

ORANGE COUNTY GOVERNMENT NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION GRANT

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NEIGHBORHOOD BEAUTIFICATION GRANT

Program Description

Thank you for your interest and for taking the first step in improving your community through the Orange County Neighborhood Beautification Grant. The purpose and mission of our grant program is to provide direct funding to support and assist neighborhoods and organizations in improving the physical and social quality of their community. The grant program is designed to promote partnerships between citizens in the County, while also working to beautify those neighborhoods.

This is a matching grant program. Mandatory dues collecting neighborhood organizations and homeowner associations are eligible to apply for grant funding up to \$15,000. If awarded, the neighborhood association will be responsible for 50% of the project cost, with the remaining 50% (up to \$15,000) covered by the grant fund.

Grant Rules

Grants are accepted on a fiscal year basis, beginning September, and concluding in April of each fiscal year. All Projects must be located along a major thoroughfare or on neighborhood owned common areas and must serve a public purpose. Each organization must demonstrate the need for the project and document the physical despair or decline of the area.

This is a competitive grant program; only a limited number of grants will be awarded per fiscal year, on a first come first served basis. Organizations may only be awarded one grant during a fiscal year and cannot be awarded funding for the following fiscal year.

Gated and condominium communities may apply for grant funds for entranceway improvements along a major thoroughfare. Projects must serve the public and therefore cannot be placed behind community gates. Apartment complexes are not eligible for grant funds.

Orange County Government reserves the right to apply greater scrutiny, and, in some cases limit or disallow awards, to organizations submitting applications from the same geographic area and operating under the same master association/covenant in order to ensure funds are distributed fairly and equitably. Orange County Government has the discretion to deny any project for funding, even if all program guidelines and requirements are satisfied in the application.

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Grant Criteria

Funding is available to organized, mandatory dues collecting neighborhood and homeowner associations. Each neighborhood or homeowners' organization must be registered with the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division to be considered for grant funding and must have democratically elected officers and not illegally discriminate based on sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or sexual orientation.

The program only permits for one entranceway improvement or an interior common area improvement project per grant request, therefore a community cannot complete an entranceway improvement and an interior common area improvement in the same grant request. The future maintenance of the improvements is the sole responsibility of the neighborhood and failure to maintain project areas could result in denial of future grant funding.

The total project funding request may not exceed \$15,000. Funding requests above this range will not be considered. Each organization must have its Board of Directors or Executive Board vote on and approve the grant application and community match contribution before submission. Notarized minutes reflecting the vote and availability of funds must be attached to the application.

When your application is completed, please e-mail your application to NeighborhoodGrants@ocfl.net or submit the original application along with any attachments to the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division, 2450 W. 33rd Street, 2nd Floor, Orlando, FL 32839.

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Project Overview

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Wall pressure washing and painting
- Entranceway sign installation, repair, and replacement
- Reader boards
- Major structural wall repairs
- Minor cosmetic repairs such as minor caulking, and stucco to walls
- Landscaping/hardscaping installation*
- Entrance feature not classified as a perimeter wall
- Ground lighting installation and repair
- Minor repairs to existing irrigation systems
- Playground installation or repairs
- Gazebo installation or repairs
- Common or recreational area improvements
- Projects not listed above will be considered upon review and consultation with staff

NON-ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Not located on a major thoroughfare or common area
- Improvement to private property
- Speed bumps/traffic calming devices
- Construction of new perimeter walls
- Improvement to County owned facilities, including parks and community service centers
- Expansion or rehabilitation facilities
- Staff for programs or organization
- Improvements within gated communities or apartment complexes
- Reimbursement of past expenditures
- Equipment purchases (office, lawn, gardening, etc.)
- Construction or repair of sea walls, boat ramps, docks, or community pools
- Community newsletter
- New irrigation systems or major reconstruction of an existing system
- Streetlights

*** Landscaping/Hardscaping work may not exceed \$5,000 per project. The grant will only consider Florida friendly plants for communities with an existing functional irrigation system. Communities with no irrigation system are only permitted to complete hardscaping projects.**

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The Application and Supporting Documents

The grant application consists of the following sections:

Applicant Contact Information

- This section will ask for all the contact information for the applicant. Applicant must live in the community and cannot be a part of the management company.

Project Request

- Select all projects you would like to complete with this request.
- Note: Communities can only request to do an entranceway improvement project or a common area improvement project, both cannot be selected within the same grant request.

Project Budget

- List the total cost of the project, including community and County match.

Grant Team Roster

- Must have at least a five to seven member grant team to help plan and implement your project
- Team members will be required to sign and indicate their role on the team.
- Only team members who live in the community are able to join
- Only one team member per household is able to join
- Management companies may not be listed as a member of the roster, however they may be listed as alternate contact

Conflict of Interest Statement

- It is prohibited for any persons to receive financial benefit from this grant. Grants are subject to audit by the Comptroller's Office and any evidence of violation, misrepresentation, or conflict of interest in the terms will result in loss of grant and/or repayment of funds to Orange County.

Application Attachments

- Notarized minutes
 - Submit notarized minutes reflecting the Board's vote on the approval and availability of funds
- Obtain three matching vendor quotes
 - Be sure that all quotes are identical in work and products
 - All quotes must include the costs of all materials, labor, surveys, site plans, engineering, impact fees and permits for project permits
 - Grant projects prohibit vendors from taking a down payment
 - Orange County requires that vendors show proof of General Liability, Auto and Worker's Compensation insurance
- Two to five color photos showing the physical location of project site
- Separate document answering the project information questions.

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The Application Process & Timeline

The following is a rough timeline of the grant process:

1. Submit your application to the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division **Email:** NeighborhoodGrants@ocfl.net
Mail: 2450 W. 33rd Street, 2nd Floor, Orlando, FL 32839
 - Please do not submit applications in binders.
2. A grant coordinator reviews the grant to ensure the project meets all guidelines and that no information or documents are missing.
 - Incomplete or insufficient applications will be returned to the applicant.
3. If project has met all guidelines, it is reviewed by the Neighborhood Grants Advisory Board (NGAB).
 - The NGAB is a seven-member panel of citizens, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners (BCC), who oversee grants from selection of winners to the completion of projects. The NGAB meets quarterly to conduct its duties and site visits, and reviews applications.
4. If approved by the NGAB, grants are then reviewed by the BCC for final approval.
5. Once the grant has been approved by the BCC, a grants coordinator will schedule a grant orientation with the applicant to discuss next steps and have the applicant sign a letter of agreement, which states all the responsibilities of the grant winner.
6. Once the agreement is signed, the grants coordinator will submit documentation to get the project purchase order approved.
 - **Note:** The vendor cannot begin the project or pull permits until the County has approved a Purchase Order.
7. Once the purchase order has been approved, the grants coordinator will notify the applicant and vendor so the project can begin.
8. Until the project is complete, the applicant will be required to provide bi-weekly progress reports to the grants coordinator on the 15th and 30th of each month to ensure the project is completed in a timely manner.
9. Once the project is completed and the vendor has fulfilled the contract, the applicant will submit photos of the finished project along with their final progress report to their grants coordinator.

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Frequently Asked Questions

1. How many times can a community receive a grant?

Communities can only receive one grant every other fiscal year. Back-to-back grant requests are prohibited.

2. How do I register my community with the Neighborhood Services Division?

Call the Neighborhood Services Division at (407) 836-4200 to register your organization or to change outdated information. Organizations may also register online at [Neighborhood Organization Directory Registration Form \(ocfl.net\)](#).

3. Do I need a special permit to place items on County property?

If the project site is not owned by the organization, then permission to make improvements must be secured from Orange County Government through a Right-of-Way use agreement and/or permit. Please speak with your grants coordinator for more information.

4. If my project includes the removal of trees, do I need to consult with an arborist?

Neighborhood projects involving removal/replacement of mature trees must consult Orange County's Arborist-Tree Protection Office. Please speak with your grants coordinator for more information.

5. What do I do if I am interested in serving on the grants advisory board?

If you are interested in serving on the Neighborhood Grants Advisory Board, please contact the Orange County Agenda Development Office, at (407)-836-5426 for more information on how to apply.

6. How do I know if the vendors I have chosen meet Orange County insurance guidelines?

All vendors must be licensed and able to work in Orange County and must meet all of the County's insurance guidelines; your grant coordinator can review the insurance documents and inform you if the vendor does not meet the guidelines. Call the Orange County Division of Building Safety to verify if your contractor is licensed at (407) 836-5522 or visit <http://www.ocfl.net/PermitsLicenses.aspx>.

7. What type of construction do I need a permit for?

A permit is required to enlarge, alter, repair, move, demolish, or change the occupancy of a building or structure. A permit is also required to augment, convert, or replace electrical, gas lines, mechanical fixtures, or plumbing. In addition, a permit is needed to build a neighborhood entrance sign or for common area improvements such as playgrounds, park gazebos, pavilions, etc. Contractors must be licensed and registered in Orange County. A site plan drawing by an architect or engineer is required when pulling a permit.

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Frequently Asked Questions (continued...)

New subdivision entrance signs will require multiple permits and possibly an electrical permit if illuminated or if outlets are installed.

- Masonry signs require a building permit and a sign permit.
- Sign lettering requires a sign permit.
- A standing sign requires a sign permit.

Signs must adhere to Subdivision Regulations, the Sign Ordinance, and homeowner association covenant and restrictions, if any.

A licensed contractor is required to pull a sign permit and a building permit. The contractor must also submit signed and sealed drawings from an architect or engineer.

To obtain a permit, a licensed contractor must first visit the Zoning Division to initiate the permitting process and then obtain the necessary permits from the Building Department. Subdivision wall repair may require a submittal through Plans Coordination. Please contact the Division of Building Safety for more information on permitting process.

To install lighting a licensed contractor must obtain the permit. The contractor must also submit signed and sealed drawings from an architect or engineer. Irrigation improvements require two permits, one from the Division of Building Safety and one from the Utilities Department. A signed and sealed permit is required if pipes are more than two inches in diameter.

For further information, you can contact:

Contact Building Safety, (407) 836-5550

Contact Utilities Department, (407) 836-7207

Orange County Zoning Division, (407) 836-5525

8. How much will the permit cost?

The Orange County Division of Building Safety publishes a fee schedule annually. Fees are established as either fixed or are based on the estimated total cost of the project, depending on the type of permit. A copy of the fee schedule may be obtained from the Division of Building Safety at <https://www.ocfl.net/PermitsLicenses/Permits.aspx>.

9. Do my plans have to be signed and sealed?

Most plans must be signed and sealed by a licensed architect or an engineer. Contact Building Safety Plans Coordination at (407) 836-5760 for information on exceptions.

If you have any further questions, please contact the Neighborhood Services Division at (407) 836-4200, or visit us at 2450 W. 33rd Street, 2nd Floor, Orlando, FL 32839.

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Application Checklist

Please complete the following checklist before submitting your application. Applications that are incomplete will be returned to the applicant.

- ☐ Organization is registered with Neighborhood Services Division
- ☐ Is the proposed project an eligible project?
- ☐ Read and comply with all the grant guidelines
- ☐ All application sections are complete
- ☐ Attached three matching vendor quotes that includes permit costs and fees
- ☐ Application includes five to seven grant team members with original signatures
- ☐ Signed Conflict of Interest Statement
- ☐ Attached answers to the four open ended project questions
- ☐ Attached copy of notarized minutes indicating the board's approval of the funds and the availability of the funds
- ☐ Attached two to five color photos of project site