

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods

Libraries, Education & Neighborhoods Committee Presentation

February 13, 2025

Presented by:

Sam Read, DON Deputy Director

Daniel Sims, Community Partnerships Director



Seattle
Neighborhoods



The Neighborhood Matching Fund (NMF) was established in 1988 and provides community groups with matching funds to support community-driven projects.

Overview

Over the years, we've funded over 5,000 projects across the city of Seattle. Every funding award is matched by volunteer labor, donated materials, donated professional services, and cash.



Why It Works

- Supports ideas initiated and championed by community.
- Strengthens community engagement and relationships.
- Supports and encourages volunteerism.
- Leverages community contributions and develops partnerships.
- Enhances the city's vibrancy and values.



Application Timelines & Available Funds

NMF consists of two funds totaling over \$2 million annually:

Small Sparks Fund (grants up to \$5,000)

- Ongoing through 10/31

Community Partnership Fund (grants up to \$50,000)

- March 10th and September 8th



What We Fund

NMF funds a variety of unique and creative community projects that meet these requirements:

- Involve community members in creating and completing the project.
- Create community improvements.
- Be free and open to all members of the public.
- Demonstrate community match.
- Occur within Seattle city limits.

What We Do Not Fund

Ineligible Project Ideas:

- Projects not free and open to the public.
- Duplication of an existing private or public program.
- Ongoing and/or existing programs or services support.
- Replacement of funding lost from other sources.
- Pay for an organization's ongoing operating expenses.
- Projects that do not have property owner permission for proposed improvements.
- Social services.



Who We Fund

Neighborhood groups, community organizations, informal groups, and business groups who want to do a project to build stronger community connections are encouraged to apply.

All applicant groups must be open and inclusive, actively engage diverse community members, and be significantly composed of people who live and/or work in Seattle.

Who We Do Not Fund

Ineligible Groups:

- Individual persons
- For-profit businesses
- Religious organizations
- Major institutions: government agencies, universities, hospitals
- Political groups
- Organizations outside the city of Seattle
- Groups that currently have an active NMF project
- Groups that have failed to successfully carry out an awarded NMF project within the last two years



Community Match

Core to the Neighborhood Matching Fund is the community match, which requires awardees to match their award with contributions from the community.

- A significant portion of the match should come from the community impacted by the project.
- Total match must equal at least half of the funding request (1/2 match: 1 funding request).

Match Categories



Cash: Cash contributions from individuals, businesses, organizations, or grant programs other than the City of Seattle.

Donated Professional Services: Professionals may donate project relevant services at their customary rate, up to a maximum of \$100/hour.

Donated Supplies and Materials: All donated materials and supplies are valued at their retail prices or standard rental fee.

Volunteer Time: Individuals can contribute their time to a project in a variety of ways. Volunteer time is valued at \$35/hour.



Requirements for Awarded Projects

All awarded projects must meet program requirements in the following areas:

- Accessibility
- Fiscal Sponsorship
- Contingency
- Insurance
- Hiring Processes

Requirements for Awarded Projects

Accessibility: All design and capital projects on City of Seattle property are required by federal law to provide readily accessible facilities per the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Fiscal Sponsor: Awarded projects are required to have a fiscal sponsor, an organization that agrees to act as the trustee of the project's funds and assumes financial responsibilities related to the successful completion of the project. 501(c)3 organizations may serve as their own fiscal sponsor.

Requirements for Awarded Projects

Contingency: All physical improvement project budgets must include 15% cash contingency funds.

Insurance: Awarded projects are required to provide Commercial General Liability insurance for the project duration to limit the liability of the organization and the City.

Hiring Processes: The City requires that grantees give opportunity to a broad set of businesses to bid on the work their project generates. In particular, the City encourages opening that opportunity to women and minority-owned businesses.

How We Get the Word Out

- DON's email subscription list of 14,000 individuals and community groups.
- Pitches to local media.
- Community storytelling efforts on DON's FrontPorch blog and social media networks.
- City partners including other departments, City Councilmembers, and Mayor's Office.
- DON's network of Community Engagement Coordinators and other program partners.
- Word of mouth through DON's vast network of community-based organizations.
- Targeted advertising via social media.





How We Help Community Apply

One of the biggest strengths of our Community Grants programming is our commitment to helping community build capacity and understanding, this includes providing direct and intentional support throughout the entire process.

How We Help Community Apply

NMF Project Managers are always available to:

- Answer questions and provide technical assistance.
- Make individual presentations to community groups.
- Discuss fiscal sponsorship and insurance requirements.
- Review draft applications and provide feedback.
- Help ensure applicants have proper supporting materials.
- Connect applicants with relevant City staff for their project.



NMF Project Managers also host **six virtual workshops** each year for those interested in applying to the fund. Each workshop provides an overview of NMF, the qualities of a strong application, and the review process.



Application Review Process

All applications are reviewed by Neighborhood Matching Fund program staff and Community Review Team.

If needed, applications are also screened by any affected City department.

Applications are rated on a point system for **Building Community Partnerships** (50 points) and **Project Readiness** (50 points).

CRITERIA: Builds Community Partnerships

Community Benefit: Are activities free and open to the public? Does the project address a community concern, issue or interest?

Community Involvement: Does the applicant clearly explain how they will engage community through all stages of the project? Do they describe existing relationships and partnerships, and those that will be formed throughout the project?

Volunteers: Does the applicant explain the different volunteer roles and opportunities for this project and how volunteers will be managed?

CRITERIA: Project Readiness

Project Owner Permission: Do projects involving improvements to property owned by public or private entities have property owner approval at time of application?

Ready to Begin: Is the project ready to begin within 2-3 months from the award notification date?

Leadership Committee: Does the proposed project have a leadership committee comprised of 7–10 people who determine the project goals, make project decisions, and build community support for the project?

CRITERIA: Project Readiness

Personnel and Consultant Position Descriptions: Have applicants provided position descriptions for any position being funded by NMF grant dollars?

Work Plan: Have applicants provided a detailed work plan that lists the 10–15 primary steps needed to complete the project in the required time?

Budget: Have applicants provided a comprehensive project budget that includes BOTH the NMF funds AND the required community match.



Community Review Team

In 2024, the NMF team added a Community Review Team comprised of community members who possess knowledge and interest in community building, neighborhood enhancement, and equity. Their insight informs funding recommendations ensuring that projects align with the program's values and benefit the community.

Each community reviewer receives a \$1,000 stipend for full completion of their responsibilities.

Community Review Team Candidates

Candidates should possess some of the following skills/experience:

- Previous volunteer experience
- Leadership role in community building projects or organizational development
- Previous involvement in a grant project
- Other relevant experience in community building, neighborhood enhancement, and/or equity projects or programs



Community Review Team Applicants

Interested individuals must submit a simple application that describes:

1. Their past role and experience with grant programs.
2. Their community building and/or volunteer experience.
3. Recent examples of how they have engaged or worked with Black, Indigenous, People of Color, immigrants, refugees, people with low incomes, people with all abilities, LGBTQIA+, youth, and/or seniors.
4. Any other relevant experience.



Community Review Team Requirements

Community Review Team members must:

- Be at least 18 years of age or older.
- Live or work within City of Seattle limits.
- Not be affiliated with any project and disclose conflicts of interest.
- Have access to a computer with reliable internet.
- Commit to 40-50 hours of work over the course of 8 weeks.
- Attend approximately 10-12 hours of orientation and meetings.
- Work collaboratively and respectfully and maintain confidentiality.
- Understand the grant expectations and funding priorities.
- Provide written and verbal comments based on NMF scoring criteria.



Get Involved

Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON) is currently accepting applications for the Neighborhood Matching Fund as well as recruiting for the Community Review Team.

If you want to learn more or apply, please visit seattle.gov/neighborhoods or contact program staff at 206-233-0093 or NMFund@seattle.gov.

Thank you!
Any questions?



Seattle
Neighborhoods