

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK GRANT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is the Neighborhood Park Grant Program?

The Neighborhood Park Grant Program is a capital program (budgeted in the capital projects fund) initiated by the City Council as a means of giving community groups the opportunity to improve and invest in their parks, while giving the city the opportunity to stretch its capital funds. Annually since 1997, the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board has evaluated applications and made recommendations to the council for final approval.

What types of awards have been granted?

Grants have been awarded for a wide variety of projects such as construction of sports fields, irrigation systems, security systems, disc golf course, installation of public art, and much more.

Who can apply for grants?

Individuals, organizations, and agencies may request funds from the Neighborhood Park Grant Program for capital improvement projects in city parks located within the city limit of Longview.

How are projects selected?

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board evaluates the applications for the following criteria and makes recommendations to the Longview City Council for final approval.

When filling out a Neighborhood Park Grant Application, applicants should address each of the below items in detail.

- Need:** Does the community have a need for this project? (Consider whether there are similar or complementary facilities in the area/community)
- Community Impact:** Who will benefit from the project? Provide approximate number, range, and diversity of those likely to be served by or benefit from the project? Do they represent a significant underserved population?
- Access:** What will the availability of the project be to the public during the year?
- Financial Responsibility:** What is the potential life span of the project? What will the maintenance and replacement requirements of the project be, both immediate and long-term?
- Cost Benefit:** Do the benefits outweigh the cost of the project? (Benefits include economic impact and community development, additional opportunities for play in the community, and reduction in youth related social problems.)
- Compliance:** Does the project comply with the City of Longview's historic preservation plan, park and recreation comprehensive plan, and other city policy initiatives?
- Readiness to Proceed:** How soon after the grant is approved can the project begin? (Discuss how quickly the applicant can complete the project by demonstrating availability of the required financial match; permits being secured; and availability of needed labor.)
- Funding:** What are the applicant's potential sources of funding? (Please list all cash and in-kind goods and services) Are they already secured? Does the applicant identify partnership arrangements and what value does the partnership(s) bring to the project?

How do you apply for a grant?

Submit the required application and accompanying support materials ensuring that all aspects of the project rating criteria have been addressed.

How do I know if my project qualifies for Neighborhood Park Grant funds?

Your project qualifies for funds if it meets ALL three of the following criteria:

- Your project is located within one of the City of Longview's Parks (www.mylongview.com/parks) or within a City of Longview designated play area (such as a school playground).
- Your project qualifies as a capital improvement project:
 - The city defines capital improvement projects as those which include new or expanded physical facilities/assets, major renovation or replacement of existing facilities, the acquisition of real property (land), or the purchase of major pieces of equipment.
 - Capital improvement projects involve the expenditure of \$5,000 or more for design, construction, and equipment; have a useful life of one year or more; and are for an item classified as a fixed asset.
- The project must involve active participation by community members.

Not Eligible: *Routine maintenance on existing or proposed new facilities is not an eligible expense under this program.*

How does the matching funds portion work?

Once the project has been approved by City Council for grant funding, the applicant may begin their project. The project must be fully complete prior to submitting for reimbursement. This means that the applicant must take on the total financial responsibility of the project prior to submitting for reimbursement.

Matching grant funds are only available for reimbursement on actual expenditures spent on supplies and services and not on donated items or labor. Applicants may use cash, in-kind donations and services, and volunteer labor hours to account for the total cost of the project. For applicant planning purposes, note that the city's share cannot exceed 50% of the total cost of the project.

Project Expenditure Examples:

- Example A:** Group A has a project that is \$10,000. The City Council approved the project with a \$5,000/50% reimbursement. Group A completes the project and submits all receipts totaling \$10,000 out of pocket expenses. The City reimburses Group A for \$5,000.
- Example B:** Group B has a project that is \$10,000. The City Council approved the project for a \$5,000/50% reimbursement. Group B starts the project and ends up receiving \$7,000 in donated services and supplies and only needs to expend \$3,000 out of pocket for a total cost of \$10,000. Although approved for \$5,000, the city will only reimburse Group A for the \$3,000 in reimbursement. ***Applicants can not financially benefit from Neighborhood Park Grant projects.***
- Example C:** Group C has a project that is \$10,000. The City Council approved the project for a \$5,000/50% reimbursement. Group C starts the project and ends up receiving \$3,500 in donated services and supplies and expends \$6,500 out of pocket for a total cost of \$10,000. The City will reimburse the applicant the \$5,000 with the remaining \$1,500 of out of pocket expenditures being the applicant's responsibility.

What are important dates?

- **February 15th:** Deadline for application submittal - the request for project proposals (RFP) are advertised through the newspaper, social media, and city websites.
- **February 25th:** The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board meet to evaluate the proposals and make recommendations to City Council.
- **March 14th:** City Council reviews the proposals and makes final approval.
- **Week of March 18th:** Applicants are notified of City Council Decision.
- **December 31st:** Expected project completion and subsequent "Project Completion Summary Form" submitted.

What happens after I submit my proposal?

All applicants will be invited to make presentations regarding their projects to the board at the February 25th meeting. Applicants will be notified of their presentation time slot, and during that meeting may present their proposal and bring additional information or hand outs and answer questions pertaining to the proposed projects.

My project was approved by City Council, now what?

Once approved, the Parks and Recreation Department will notify applicants by letter to the address provided on the application stating what was approved for funding by City Council. After being notified, applicants may begin their project. You will need both before and after photos of your project, so don't forget to take a few before you start.

Included in the letter is a "Project Completion Summary Form". This form is an overview of all expenses incurred by the project as well as donated goods and services. Applicants will need to complete this form to conclude the project. It is advised that applicants update the form continually throughout the entire process rather than attempt to complete at the end of the project.

The summary form must be accompanied by detailed documentation. Expense line items included on the summary form must have a coinciding itemized receipt or vendor invoice for the expense to be considered a reimbursable item. Additionally, each item or service donated must have a record in the form of an itemized receipt or invoice indicating the actual cost of the good or service and the subsequent discount or \$0.00 donation.

In-kind labor donations must also be accounted for on the "Project Completion Summary Form". In-kind labor is a service provided that accomplishes work that otherwise would be provided by contractors or other paid individuals in order to complete any portion of this project. It also must relate to this specific project only. This differs from Volunteer Labor.

Volunteer labor is also documented on the "Project Completion Summary Form". A detailed report must be included with the summary form that states each date a volunteer worked on the project, the name of said volunteer, the time the volunteer worked, and a signature by the volunteer. Volunteer labor is calculated at \$15 per hour.

Volunteer labor includes any time that was donated to the planning, implementation, construction, and completion of the project. General duties of the applicant that occur on a regular basis or other volunteer work that took place prior to the initiation of the identified project does not qualify as in-kind donations.

My project is finished, how does the reimbursement process work?

Once the project is complete, you will provide the Parks and Recreation Department a fully finalized "Project Completion Summary Form" with the attached detailed documentation to validate each line item. Along with the summary form, before and after photos of the finished project are required. The Parks and Recreation Department will work with applicants to ensure that all paperwork is comprehensive and meets requirements for reimbursement. You do not have to wait until December 30; you may turn in completed paperwork once your project is finished.

Project Completion Summary Forms are turned into:

**City of Longview
Parks and Recreation Department
2920 Douglas Street
Longview, WA 98632**

After the project has been deemed complete it will be submitted for reimbursement. Reimbursement is provided in the form of a check sent to the applicant to the address provided on the original application. Reimbursement can take approximately 30 to 45 days.

What if I unable to finish my project by the December 30 deadline?

The City understands that there can be unforeseen circumstances that may not allow you to complete the project by the December 30 deadline. Applicants may submit a "Letter of Need" to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board for consideration of an extension on the project deadline. The letter must be received prior to the December 30 deadline to be granted.

What if I have other questions, who should I contact?

Please feel free to contact the Parks and Recreation Department by stopping by, calling 360.442.5400, or emailing rec@mylongview.com. We are more than happy to assist you!