Applying for a Neighbourhood Matching Fund Grant

Great neighbourhoods start with you.
The Neighbourhood Matching Fund (NMF) is designed to make resident-led projects possible. The City wants to support residents to help make community-building come to life in their own neighbourhood.

This resource will help you understand the grant from start to finish. Check out our website at waterloo.ca/nmf for this year’s dates, budget forms, and information sessions.
There are an endless number of possibilities that could be your next neighbourhood project! For those of you looking for inspiration, some of the following might spark your interest:

- Neighbourhood street party
- Community art mural
- Crosswalk painting
- Neighbourhood Olympics
- New neighbour welcome bags
- Family fun run
- Bike rodeo
- Healthy living workshops
- Sports in the park
- Birdhouse building workshop
- Park improvements
- Community message board
- Little library
- Outdoor movie night
- Community gardens

**GREAT IDEAS ARE EVERYWHERE!**

Ask all your neighbours to contribute their thoughts on creating the next project.

All projects should be run by and for City of Waterloo residents and be completed within 12 months of receiving funding. Funding is for one-time events or capital costs, not for ongoing events or operational costs. The following sections will also give you details on pieces you should think about to make your idea possible such as volunteers, location, budget, and more.

**CAPITAL COSTS** are funds used for one-time expenses related to structures, equipment or other long-term assets such as a community message board or swing set.

**OPERATIONAL COSTS** are funds for regular, ongoing operating costs, which may include, but are not limited to insurance, existing programs, ongoing events, or administration.
WHO CAN APPLY?
Any two or more neighbours with a great idea. This includes:

- Residents who live in a neighbourhood who are interested in working together on a project
- Groups of neighbours
- Formal neighbourhood associations and homes associations
- Groups of temporary residents (e.g. post-secondary students) living in the same neighbourhood
- Religious organizations if they can demonstrate support from the surrounding neighbourhood and the initiative is not religious in nature

MATCH YOUR MONEY
The “match” part of the grant comes from the community’s contribution to the project. For every $1 of funding your group requests, you must contribute at least $1 to the project. Combinations of any of the following are common ways to match your grant funding:

- Volunteer labour
- Donated professional services such as entertainment, trades work, or graphic design
- Donated materials such as food, prizes, supplies
- Free or discounted use of a venue
- Cash

All volunteer labour is valued at the living wage in Waterloo Region. Professional services are valued at the reasonable and customary value of the service. Donated goods are valued at retail price; the price you would see it for sale at in the store.

At least 25% of the applicant’s match must come from the applicant group itself. Volunteer labour of the organizers and neighbours contributing to the project adds up fast, so be sure to include this!

Please note, funds from other City of Waterloo or United Way Waterloo Region Communities grants cannot be counted as part of the match (e.g. community cash grants, foundational operating grants, newcomer partnership grants, strong neighbourhoods strategy resident action grants).
CONTACT NMF STAFF

Let us know what your idea is and we can help you think about steps that may be needed. We encourage you to connect with staff prior to submitting your grant application so we can help you be successful in receiving funding. Staff members can assist with any permits, permissions, or questions that may need to be answered to make your idea possible. Examples could be an application for a road closure at a street party or a permit to book an event at a local park.

INVOLVE YOUR NEIGHBOURHOOD

You are leading a great idea in your community, so let people know! Make sure to involve neighbours in the project during all stages. Residents can help brainstorm ideas, assist with grant writing, contribute to stages of planning, and of course volunteer and participate in the final celebration of the idea. Share the news with neighbours, schools, neighbourhood associations, and other community groups in the area to let them know.

Your project should be open to anyone interested in the neighbourhood. Your neighbourhood could include formal association boundaries, a city block, a certain street, an apartment building, a condo, or all houses surrounding a local park. Be clear when you are planning and promoting the project to let people know how you are defining your neighbourhood! Areas with memberships are eligible to apply (such as condos or homes associations) but the event should be open to everyone in the boundaries, whether they pay fees or not.

Volunteers will be important in making your project possible so make sure you have some committed residents to support the size of the project- big or small.

WHERE WILL YOUR IDEA TAKE PLACE

Projects can occur within any area open to residents in the neighbourhood. Any capital projects (fixed materials such as equipment, message boards, gardens, etc.) not on public land will need an agreement to show that access will remain free and open to the public after the project is complete.

REMEMBER THAT COMMUNITY SPACES COME IN ALL SHAPES AND SIZES.

- City owned land such as parks, green space or recreation facilities
- The common area in a condo building
- Open spaces made available at a local business
- Green space of an apartment building
- Public pools or splash pads
DEVELOP A BUDGET

The next step is creating a budget including your costs and matched contributions. Depending on your idea, the types of costs may vary greatly from project to project. A neighbourhood event may have a number of small costs, such as food, decorations, craft supplies, etc. whereas a park project may have one big cost, such as a new community message board.

Food costs should equal no more than 50% of the total grant funding requested. Be sure to budget and plan for inclusive food choices such as dietary, allergy, and cultural needs.

We strongly encourage you to use the NMF sample budget form when submitting your grant. To receive a copy of the form, please visit waterloo.ca/nmf for details.

BEFORE YOU APPLY

There are a few more things to remember before you submit your application:

• Make sure the event occurs in the City of Waterloo.
• Talk about ways to make your event inclusive for everyone. This could include considerations such as: cultural celebrations, food choices, physical accessibility, language, cost, and more.
• No group is eligible for more than one Neighbourhood Matching Fund grant per funding round. If you have more than one great idea, save it for next time!
• Start small. You can always plan bigger and better things as you gain community support and experience. Having enough people power and resources is an important part of the process.
• Some projects may require liability insurance or special steps to provide a safe community environment. Talking to staff about your project will help determine what may be necessary.
• Groups with outstanding NMF grants will not be eligible for further funding until any previous project reports and financial summaries are submitted.

SUBMITTING YOUR APPLICATION

Late applications will not be considered, so be sure to submit your application before the deadline.

A volunteer grants committee will review the applications and make funding decisions with the help of city staff. If the committee has questions, they may contact you for more information regarding your application. All applicants will hear about funding decisions approximately 4-6 weeks after the submission deadline.
**Yay! A successful application!**

**HOORAY! YOUR APPLICATION WAS SUCCESSFUL!**

Your approval package will include details on the amount of funding, requirements for permits and approval, information to recognize receiving grant funds, and any other criteria or considerations related to the grant funding. Be sure to keep all your receipts in the handy envelope and track all your volunteer hours, donations, and spending.

You will also receive contact information for a City of Waterloo staff member who will be your liaison throughout the project. This will be your contact for any processes or approvals needed. If there are any changes in your project, you will need to contact your staff liaison as soon as you know about these. This might include changes in budget (perhaps you received unexpected food donations and now want to use the food budget to add a bouncy castle to your event) or changes in the project itself (perhaps your spring event needs to move to summer due to construction on your road).

Good luck putting your idea into action. Your staff liaison is here to help when needed. Don’t forget to take pictures throughout the process!

**WRAPPING UP YOUR PROJECT**

Once you have successfully completed your project, a project report and financial summary should be submitted within one month. The report asks a few short questions about how the project went. The financial summary is a chance for you to show your final expenses and match in comparison to your original project budget. Make sure to keep your receipts to submit.

We hope that during your project you were able to share some photos and stories on social media. Be sure to share one or two of your favourite photos with us!

**CONTACT US**

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waterloo.ca/nmf
Talk to us about your project today!

waterloo.ca/NMF

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