

*Below are questions and answers from the* [*2025 Neighborhood Matching Fund*](https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/community-grants/neighborhood-matching-fund) *Virtual Workshop Sessions. This document will be updated after each session. Questions are anonymized and slightly edited for clarity. If you have any questions about Small Sparks or Community Partnerships Grants, please send an email to* [*NMFund@seattle.gov*](mailto:NMFund@seattle.gov) *or call us at (206) 233-0093*

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# How to Apply

**Are all grants using Fluxx now, and no longer WebGrants?**

Yes. Both Small Sparks and Community Partnerships Fund applications are in Fluxx. This is the first year that both Small Sparks and Community Partnerships Fund will be on Fluxx. We recommend starting your application early so that you can get to know the system and reach out to your project manager with any questions or issues you may have. In order to apply, you will need to create a profile and be linked to your organization or community group. If you have not applied to Small Sparks or another City of Seattle grant before check with your project manager or email [NMFund@seattle.gov](mailto:NMFund@seattle.gov) to see if your organization or group is already in the system.

**Can I access the application forms outside of the FLUXX system?**

All applications must be submitted through the FLUXX grant system. First step is to register in FLUXX. You can access resources such as the guidelines and other materials that will help you with your applications on our website: <https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/community-grants/neighborhood-matching-fund/how-to-apply>

**How long does it take to complete an application.**

Everyone has 2 months to complete and submit the application.

**Can I submit my application in Spanish or another language besides English?**

We currently do not accept applications in Spanish or any other language, though we are committed to provide in-language support free of charge. Please reach out to NMFund@seattle.gov to learn more about how you can receive support.

**What are the NMF deadlines?**

Small Sparks is a rolling deadline through October 31, 2025. Community Partnership Fund deadlines are March 10, 2025, and September 8, 2025.

**What is the fastest turnaround time for project application to approval?**

The Small Sparks fund and Community Partnership fund have two different timelines.

* For Small Sparks, the application is a rolling deadline so you will be notified within 6 weeks of submitting your application. With contracting taking place within 4 weeks of notification.
* For Community Partnership fund, you will be notified within 8 weeks of the application deadlines which are March 10, 2025, and September 8, 2025. With contracting taking place within 6 weeks of notification.

**How can I access the application worksheet?**

Application materials and resources, including the application worksheet can be found on our website here: <https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/community-grants/neighborhood-matching-fund/how-to-apply>

# Staff Support and Technical Support

**How do we select a project manager?**

If you RSVPd to an info session a project manager will be assigned and will reach out to you following the info session you attended.

**Where can we access a recording of the NMF info session?**

This recording is available on our website [Neighborhood Matching Fund - Neighborhoods | seattle.gov](https://www.seattle.gov/neighborhoods/community-grants/neighborhood-matching-fund)

**Do we have to have a NMF project manager?**

An NMF Project Manager will work with you to support your application and administration of funding requirements if awarded. The NMF Project Manager does not direct your project. In many cases applicants may have a “project manager” as par of their personnel/professional services to oversee the implementation of their project.

# Fiscal Sponsorship

**Is a fiscal sponsor assigned to us once we are approved for the fund?**

No, if awarded funding you are responsible for finding your own Fiscal Sponsor. An organization can act as their own Fiscal Sponsor if they meet the requirements and can carry out the required responsibilities. You should find a Fiscal Sponsor for which your project furthers their mission. For example, there are some Fiscal Sponsors that serve arts and cultural groups, or those that support activities associated with parks and open spaces. If you have difficulty finding a Fiscal Sponsor, your project manager may be able to provide some guidance.

**Who can serve as a fiscal sponsor?**

You do not need a fiscal sponsor to apply, but if funded you will be required to identify a fiscal sponsor as part of contracting, so we recommend doing some research ahead of time. In most cases, your fiscal sponsor should have non-profit status and carry out the required responsibilities. You can find more information about Fiscal Sponsors [here](https://www.seattle.gov/documents/Departments/Neighborhoods/NMF/NMF%20Fiscal%20Sponsor%20Handout.pdf).

**Do nonprofit organizations also require fiscal sponsors?**

Non-profits 501 C(3) can act as their own fiscal sponsor.

## Budget (Including Match and Funding)

**What is the award amount for Community Partnership Fund (CPF) projects?**

The award amount for CPF projects is between $5,001 and $50,000

**What is the Volunteer Rate for Community Match?**

Volunteers can be credited $35/hr towards match requirement.

So, if you need to demonstrate 50% match, and volunteer hours are valued at $35/hr., you would we need about 72 volunteer hours (~$2500) for a $5,000 small sparks application

**When should we start counting volunteer hours toward our community match?**

You can begin to document volunteer time at the time of submitting the application.

**Can you count more than just volunteers as part of your match?**

Yes. The minimum match requirement is ½ to 1 and can be a mix of match that can include cash, donated materials or services or volunteerism.

**Will NMF reimburse for projects that have already started?**

No, you can only receive reimbursement for costs incurred after the project is under contract.

**If awarded when would the funding be released (before during or after the project)?**

It is a reimbursement-based program. Expenses reimbursements are available throughout the contract period of your project with proper documentation and timely progress reports. When a cost is incurred then you will need to submit for reimbursement. You will receive reimbursement in 7-10 business days once a complete reimbursement request is submitted. If you have questions about proper documentation, if awarded, your project manager can work with you to answer any questions you may have.

**If awarded how are funds disbursed?**

NMF is a reimbursement program. However, the City does not reimburse your vendors directly. When costs are incurred, the City reimburses the Fiscal Sponsor for your project directly after a payment request and all required documentation is submitted. If a group cannot serve as its own Fiscal Sponsor, they can work with another organization who can provide financial oversight to be their Fiscal Sponsor.

**What is the rate for professional services that can be counted towards match?**

Professional Services can be counted towards match up to $100/hr.

**If our organization wants to host a community event, would any staff hours planning/doing event apply towards match?**

If your staff are working on a project. The cost of their time could be considered an expense. If you plan to use NMF funds to pay your staff, you will need to track what tasks they will be completing and submit timesheet records for reimbursement. If you plan to pay your staff from your own organization's funds, then that would be considered part of your cash match.

**When paying for professional services, do you accept the invoice, or do you need us to pay them before we ask for reimbursement?**

The City will not pay your vendors directly. You will need to pay your vendors and then submit your payment request through your Fiscal Sponsor along with related documentation for reimbursement.

**Can you use private grant funds as a matching fund?**

Yes, private grant funds would be considered cash match. You will need to provide documentation of award letter, bank statement.

**Could we use other City of Seattle funds as matching funds?**

No, you cannot use other City of Seattle funds as match against other City of Seattle grants including NMF.

**Can Federal funds be considered cash match?**

Yes, Federal Funds as well as State and County funds can be used as part of your match although you must provide documentation confirming those funds.

**For a traffic improvement project, which in most cases only the City can perform the physical labor and provide the supplies for, is our only option for match cash?  Or maybe do you have examples of what volunteer labor has looked like in the past for traffic projects?**

Sometimes SDOT allows a contractor to perform street improvement on city streets. But it will require SDOT permission. All match can apply such as volunteerism, Cash, and/or donated materials or services. For many NMF projects, typically, final event is held to celebrate the project. That activity can count towards match. Additionally, if Volunteers are used to help wit site preparation, then that can count toward volunteer match as well.

**Is the Project Manager role on project capped at 10% of the Budget?**

Yes. No more than 10% of your budget can go towards the cost of project management.

**If Project Management services is part of the match for your project, are they considered Professional Services donation?**

If the donated service is provided by a professional project manager we recommend including as part of your professional services donation. If not, it should be considered volunteer time.

**Can activities such as application prep hours or contributions prior to the submission of the application count toward match?**

Match can count from the date of the application deadline for Community Partnerships Fund or the date of submission for Small Sparks. Therefore, volunteer time contributed to the application or project prior to the deadline or submission may not be counted as part of your match.

**How are donated supplies valued?**

It depends on what would be donated. We recommend using the fair market value. You can find comparable retail price of supplies online or ask for the value of the item from the donating entity.

**Can we stipend the leadership team to honor their time?**

Yes, the leadership team can be stipend, but if stipend they cannot volunteer. You can be compensated with NMF funds or volunteer but not both. volunteered. You as an applicant will need to determine what is best for the project.

# Questions about Projects

**Will I need permission from the landlord for property improvements like flooring?**

You will need property owner permission for any improvement projects or events. Property improvement projects have specific requirements and especially for improvements to private property. Because of strict requirements for public benefit, NMF does not typically fund improvement projects to private property. If your project does include property improvements, we strongly encourage you to discuss those with your project manager to ensure eligibility.

**Must you have permission from the City for improvements to parks that they govern before the application is approved?**

Yes, you will need property owner permission. In this case you would need to work with Seattle Parks and Recreation to receive approval prior to applying. A project manager can help you connect with the relevant City department.

If working with private property you will need to get their permission.

**Are there any examples of successful projects from the past?**

The types of projects that NMF funds are very diverse. Successful projects must demonstrate public benefit, be within Seattle city limits, meet eligibility requirements, and be free and open to the public. There are endless possibilities that include physical improvements, street improvements, parks improvement, street gathering, Educational, etc.

You can find examples of past funded projects from 2024 here: [City of Seattle’s Neighborhood Matching Fund Invests $1,123,111 in 27 Community-led Projects - Front Porch](https://frontporch.seattle.gov/2024/06/21/city-of-seattles-neighborhood-matching-fund-invests-1123111-in-27-community-led-projects/)

**Are religious projects eligible?**

No. Funding of religious organizations, programming, or projects with religious messaging is not allowable through this program. Events may take place at venues owned by religious entities, as long as the event itself is not faith-based.

**If you’re a startup with one person but will be able to hire or bring in youth volunteers to be a part of the project is that possible to still participate?**

One of the criteria of a NMF project is that you must have a leadership team committed to move the project ahead. As a start-up with one person, you will want to identify who will be on the leadership committee that is representative of the needs of the project, prior to submitting your application. If you are not able to secure 7-10 people to be on your project’s leadership committee, we may suggest you wait to apply until the next round.

**Can PM provide recommendations for insurance?**

A project manager can provide guidance, but not specific company or business recommendations.

**Can an event be for a specific age bracket?**

NMF events and projects must be free and open to all the public. Restrictions cannot apply for public participation. However, an event could be aimed at a specific age bracket but cannot be exclusive. If you have any questions about this, we recommend reaching out to your project manager early to discuss.

**Can NMF funds be used to financially support small businesses?**

NMF funding cannot be used for regranting or small business ongoing financial support. If you are looking for funding for “for-profit” businesses, we recommend checking out [Office of Economic Development Grants](https://www.seattle.gov/economic-development/grants-and-funding)

**Does event need to start 2 months from receiving funding?**

For NMF projects, you should be able to start activities associated with the project within 2 months of being funded but your have 1 year to complete if funded through Community Partnerships Fund or 6 months to complete if funded through Small Sparks Fund.

**Do the property improvements have to be in public areas, or it could include a parking lot of a business for instance?**

Everything that is funded through NMF must be free and open. Property improvements to private for-profit business are not eligible. If you are applying as a for-profit business, we recommend checking out grants available through [Office for Economic Development](https://www.seattle.gov/economic-development/grants-and-funding)

# Eligibility

**Can you receive funding multiple times a year?**

You can only receive funding for one project at a time.

**If you applied to another City of Seattle Grant in another department (EX: City on Technology Matching Fund), are you still eligible to apply to NMF?**

Yes, you can still apply to NMF even if you have applied for funding in another city department. However, we encourage you to think about your internal capacity. If these are for two different projects. It’s important to make sure that you have the capacity to manage both projects as well as the reporting requirements for each of the grants. NMF can be labor intensive to manage. Considering your internal capacity is important as to not overextend your group and not be able to complete either one of the projects.

While you can apply to different grants in other City of Seattle departments, it is important to note that City funds cannot be used as match for other City funding.

**What are common reasons for projects or applications to be rejected?**

Some common reasons that projects or applications are rejected include:

* Not meeting the ½ to 1 match requirement or not providing documentation of match the required match.
* Project applicant and/or project are not located within City of Seattle limits.
* The project does not have property own permission by the regulatory department where the project is to take place (EX: Seattle Depart of Transportation, Seattle Parks and Recreation, etc.)
* If the Event was funded through NMF in the previous year.

**How often can I apply for an event?**

A group or organization can only apply and be awarded funding for an event, such as an annual concert or festival, every other year. EX: If you received funding for your event in 2024, you would not be eligible to apply for funding for that same event until 2026.

# Application Review

**Who reviews the applications?**

NMF project managers review applications for eligibility. City Departments review relevant projects for feasibility and related requirements. The Community Review Team reviews applications against program criteria and make recommendations for funding.

**Do the community reviewers get to review their own applications?**

No, community reviewers cannot review and apply at the same time.

# General

**On average how many applications does NMF receive and how many of those are awarded?**

Community Partnership Fund receives between 35-45 applications per round and the award rate is around 70%.

Small Sparks receives about 100 applications a year. Small Sparks is a non-competitive program which means the majority of projects are funded as long as they meet eligibility and program requirements.