

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT

GUIDELINES & APPLICATION BOOKLET



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

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

**ORANGE COUNTY NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES DIVISION
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES GRANT**

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Program Description

Thank you for your interest and for taking the first step in improving your community through the Orange County Sustainable Communities Grant. The intent of the Sustainable Communities Grant program is to provide funding for neighborhood organizations to implement small projects to reduce pollution and their carbon footprint. Eligible projects can address issues such as lighting, water use, community gardens, electricity generation and pollution reduction. Events designed to help teach community members about energy efficiency and pollution reduction are encouraged and eligible for funding.

Orange County offers this grant to all its communities. Neighborhood organizations and homeowner associations are eligible to apply for grant funding up to \$5,000.

Program Guidelines and Requirements

Grants are accepted on a fiscal-year basis from October 1 through May 30. All projects must be located on neighborhood-owned common areas, serve a public purpose, and provide a demonstrated need.

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 be awarded grants over two consecutive fiscal years but cannot apply for funding for a third 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 strives to distribute funds fairly and equitably. For this reason, 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. Orange County Government has the discretion to deny any project for funding, even if all program guidelines and requirements are satisfied in the application.

Funding is available to voluntary neighborhoods and homeowners associations. Each neighborhood or homeowners association must be registered with the Orange County Neighborhood Services Division to be considered for grant funding and may not legally discriminate based on sex, race, ethnicity, age, religion, or sexual orientation.

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The program permits projects that fulfill the County's goal of creating a sustainable community by reducing electricity and water consumption; restoring ponds and lakes; providing for community garden construction and planting; and hosting educational events with giveaways. Neighborhood organizations are also encouraged to present projects tailored to their specific community.

The total project funding request may not exceed \$5,000. Funding requests above this range will not be considered. If the community has a mandatory Homeowner's Association, the organization must have its Board of Directors or Executive Board vote on and approve the grant application and community match before submission. Notarized minutes reflecting the vote and availability of matching funds (if required) must be attached to the application.

When your application is complete, please e-mail 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.

Project Eligibility

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Replacing light fixtures at the front entrances of communities, including changing existing fixtures to LED, solar lighting, or upgrades to reduce electricity consumption.
- Installing and upgrading irrigation, such as drip lines, rain barrels and other projects that reduce water consumption.
- Restoring ponds and lakes.
- Providing for the construction and planting of community gardens, such as fencing, soil, lumber, and labor.
- Giveaways at events such as educational materials, solar powered flashlights, water heater blankets, caulking, lightbulbs, etc.
- Projects not listed above will be considered upon review and consultation with staff.

INELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Improvement to private property.
- Improvement to County-owned facilities, including parks and community service centers.
- Expansion or rehabilitation facilities.
- Staff for programs or organizations.
- Improvements within gated communities or apartment complexes.
- Reimbursement of past expenditures.
- Salaries or payments to neighborhood organization leaders.
- Those that can be funded through a Neighborhood Beautification Grant, such as beautification projects, newsletters, and neighborhood signage.
- Items to host an event such as tables, chairs, speakers, food, entertainment, etc.
- Construction or repair of sea walls, boat ramps, docks, or community pools.
- Streetlights.

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Application Instructions and Supporting Documents

Applicant Contact Information

- This section will ask for all the contact information for the applicant.

Project Request

- Select all projects you would like to complete with this request.

Project Budget

- List the total cost of the project, including community match (if required).

Grant Team Roster

- Must have at least a five-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 an alternate contact.

Conflict of Interest Statement

- Orange County prohibits any person 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.

Project Information

- Provide answers to a list of questions that describe the project and the organization's capacity to complete the project.

Supporting Documents (Please attach to the application)

- Notarized minutes.
 - Submit notarized minutes reflecting the Board's vote on the approval of grant application, and approval and availability of matching funds (if required).
- Three matching vendor quotes.
 - Be sure 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.
- An aerial map printout of the project site.
- Separate document answering the project information questions.

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Application 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 application 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 once per month to conduct its duties, reviews applications and conducts site visits.
4. Grants approved by the NGAB are then reviewed by the BCC for final approval.
5. After BCC approval, 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 recipient.
6. Once the agreement is signed, the grants coordinator will confirm whether vendor is insurance compliant and agrees to Orange County's payment process.
 - **Note:** The vendor cannot begin the project or pull permits until receipt of Notice to Proceed (NTP).
7. Thereafter, the grants coordinator will notify the applicant and vendor that the project can begin (NTP).
8. Until project completion, the applicant shall provide bi-weekly progress reports to the grants coordinator on the 15th and 30th of each month to ensure the project is being completed in a timely manner.
 - Note: All projects must be completed within the same fiscal year it began.
9. Once the project is completed and the vendor has fulfilled the contract, the applicant submits 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 change outdated information. Communities 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 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 types of construction require a permit?**

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. 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...)

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 Division of Building Safety. Subdivision wall repair may require a submittal through Plans Coordination. Please contact the Division of Building Safety for more information on the 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 may contact:

Division of Building Safety:	407-836-5550
Utilities Department:	407-836-7207
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 Plan 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
- The proposed project is an eligible project
- Read and comply with all grant guidelines
- All application sections are complete
- Attached three (3) matching vendor quotes that include 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 grant application, and approval and availability of matching funds (if required)
- Attached two to five color photos of project site