Novi Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program Guide

2027 Award Cycle





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City Manager's Office
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Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program

Purpose

The Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program was established by City Council to provide funding assistance to City of Novi's Homeowner Associations to support their efforts to enhance their neighborhoods through high-quality, sustainable neighborhood entranceway beautification projects. These projects are intended to enhance subdivision entrances through significant and permanent physical improvements, such as adding or modifying entrance signs, constructing flower beds, planting trees and shrubs, upgrading lighting, and making other entryway-related improvements. Since its inception the Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program has supported over 50 projects, dispersing over $180,000 in grant funds.

Application, Selection, and Reimbursement Process

1. Grant Applications will be accepted once per calendar year.

2. Completed Grant Applications, including all required information and any supplemental materials for the 2027 Program Cycle, must be submitted electronically to EntrywayGrant@cityofnovi.org by **Monday, February 1, 2027**. Applications may also be submitted manually to the City Manager's office.

3. The City Manager's office may request additional information or clarification. It is recommended that applications be submitted as early as possible to allow time for revisions to be submitted. Applications will be reviewed to verify the grant application is complete and accurate and complies with the requirements set forth in this document.

4. Recommendation for approval of qualifying projects will be provided by the City of Novi Beautification Commission using a points-based project grading system included in this Program Guide.

5. Final grant awards are approved by the Novi City Council. Priority will be given to projects that are expected to have the greatest positive effect for the City of Novi.

6. All grant applicants will be notified regarding City Council's final decision after decisions are announced.

7. The amount awarded will be reimbursed upon successful completion of the project, verification of conformance with all standards of the program, and proof that all necessary permits were obtained.

8. The City of Novi will disburse the awarded amount directly to the applicant (not the contractor) upon proof of payment of the applicant's cost and proof of completion of the entire project. **The request for reimbursement and proof of project completion must be made by October 29, 2027.**

Directions and Required Application Materials

1. Review Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Program Guide, Application, and all attachments. Reach out to the City Manager's Office at (248) 347-0445 or EntrywayGrant@cityofnovi.org should you have any questions.

2. Complete the Grant Application, ensuring you have all required information and any supplemental materials (detailed below and on application form).

3. Submit your completed application and supplemental materials to EntrywayGrant@cityofnovi.org by **5:00 p.m. on Monday, February 1, 2027**. You should receive an email back from City staff confirming the receival of the application.

4. Should City staff reach out to you regarding any concerns or outstanding requirements for your application be sure to respond in a timely manner to avoid disqualification.

5. City staff will notify you of City Council's final decision regarding the approved grant awards, but you can check the status by observing the Beautification Commission and City Council agendas or contacting staff directly.

The following information will be required as an attachment along with the application:

- The association/property owner's current budget in order to demonstrate its ability to pay for the entire project before reimbursement and to maintain the project in the future. An income statement and balance sheet for the previous two years, the current year, and the budget for the upcoming year should be provided. **Please remove any account numbers from bank statements before submitting the application.**

- Documentation reflecting the association/property owner's current and previous spending on landscape and landscape maintenance.

- Well-defined, scaled plans of the proposed project with a complete plant list and specifications of any lighting.

- Map with project location identified

- Written permission/approval from the necessary entity if there is an impact on property owners or other non-city agencies (if applicable)

- Formal documentation of any in-kind donations (such as donated professional services or materials but excluding volunteer labor) being used to assist in the fund matching from the donating entity on company letterhead confirming their specific donation for the project.

2027 Important Dates

- **September 2026 – February 1, 2027** | Completed applications are accepted;
- **February 2027** | City Staff reviews applications;
- **March 2027** | Beautification Commission meets to review applications;
- **April 2027** | Recommendations by Beautification Commission are made to City Council; City Council awards grants;
- **October 29, 2027** | Project completion date; the entire project must be completed, or reimbursement/grant award will be forfeited.

Project Policies and Qualification Criteria

1. Grant applications will be accepted once per calendar year. A recommendation for the approval of qualifying projects will be provided by the Beautification Committee for final grant approval by the Novi City Council. All grant applicants will be notified regarding City Council's final decision immediately after decisions are announced.

2. To qualify, projects must be located at the entrance of to a neighborhood, clearly visible from the public right-of-way. Eligible projects may be either new construction or installation of physical improvements or a rehabilitation of existing improvements. Examples include entryway signage, updated landscape beds, benches, and streetscape amenities. **Work involving routine maintenance, installation or removal of annual plants, or other recurring tasks is not eligible.**

3. Neighborhoods are eligible for a 50% match up to a maximum of $5,000, at the City's sole discretion.

4. Grant project funding requires at least an equal (1:1) match from the Homeowner's Association and may not exceed 50% of the total cost of the project or a maximum amount of $5,000. If the funding from the City and the portion provided for by the receiving organization is not sufficient to complete the project, then the receiving organization is responsible for raising the difference. **The intent of this grant is not to completely fund projects, but to assist with as many projects as possible throughout the community**.

5. Grants are made with the understanding that the City is in no way obligated to provide further financial or management assistance to ensure that a project is completed. Property is and will continue to be maintained by the Homeowner's Association into the future.

6. The City of Novi will disburse the awarded amount directly to the applicant (not the contractor) upon proof of payment of the applicant's cost and proof of completion of the entire project. The request for reimbursement and proof of project completion must be made according to the Program Year timeline requirements.

7. Projects must comply with City of Novi Codes, Ordinances and Regulations, Novi Residential Entryway Signage requirements, as well as State and local laws.

8. All appropriate permits must be obtained after grant approval. The City has the right to decline project reimbursement after project approval if the appropriate permits are not obtained to ensure project completion by October 31, 2026.

9. Project work must not begin, and permits shall not be obtained until grant approval from City Council.

10. If there is an impact on property owners or other non-city agencies (e.g., road commission) written permission and approval of the project from the appropriate entity must be obtained and provided.

11. A neighborhood or Homeowner's Association is limited to no more than one award every two years, or once within three grant cycles. Grant awardees are ineligible for another grant in the following two grant cycles in order for the City to provide assistance to as many interested neighborhoods as possible. *Example: If an organization/homeowner association is awarded in 2023, it is eligible to reapply in 2026.*

12. If in-kind donations (such as donated professional services or materials but excluding volunteer labor) will be used to assist in the fund matching, the association/property owner must submit formal documentation from the donating entity on company letterhead confirming their specific donation for the project.

13. Priority will be given to projects that are expected to have the greatest positive effect for the City of Novi.

14. Projects are encouraged to be environmentally sensitive and be of a sustainable nature.

15. The project may not include the use of invasive species. Please refer to the City's prohibited species list in section 9c of the City's Landscape Design Manual. A list of commonly used invasive species is included in this Program Guide.

16. *New 2027 Requirement: Any project including new plantings requires that a minimum of 50% of the species used are native to Michigan/ North Midwest America/Great Lakes Region. See suggested native plant resources included in this Program Guide.

Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Application

Due Date: Monday, February 1, 2027

2027 Important Dates

- **September 2026 – February 1, 2027** | Completed applications are accepted;
- **February 2027** | City Staff reviews applications;
- **March 2027** | Beautification Commission meets to review applications;
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I. Applicant Information

Association's Name:

Age of the subdivision:

First-time Applicant: Yes ☐ No ☐

If No, date of last application submitted:

Association's Mailing Address:

Project Leader:

Position within HOA/organization:

Telephone: E-Mail:

II. Project Information

If more space is required more than is given, answers to the questions below can be provided on a separate document.

a. Provide a clear description of the project's plan and design. Include the location, existing conditions, specific need, and public benefit. **Attach project planning documents such as landscaping drawings, plans, maps, and/or photos of project area.**

b. Give the proposed project area's location. Please provide a written description of location, along with an attached map with location identified. If needed, City maps can be found on the City of Novi website's Map Gallery.

c. Explain how the project meets the review criteria listed in the "**Grant Selection Criteria & Evaluation Process"** section.

d. Describe how the project has taken into consideration any elements that would positively and/or negatively affect the surrounding environment. If there is an impact on property owners or other non-City agencies (e.g. Road Commission for Oakland County), please explain here, and attach written permission / approval from the necessary entity.

e. Provide a detailed list of all proposed plants intended to be used in the project. Include the plant's common name and Latin name. Please refer to the attached list and the City's prohibited species list in section 9c of the City's Landscape Design Manual.

New 2027 Requirement: *Any project including new plantings requires that a minimum of 50% of the species used are native to Michigan/ North Midwest America/Great Lakes Region. See attached suggested resources.*

III. Funding Information

a. Estimated total project costs:

b. Who provided this cost estimate?

(Name, Title, Company)

(Phone Number)

c. Total amount of funds requested:

(50% project costs, up to $5,000 maximum)

d. If the project cost is projected to exceed the 1:1 match from the City (*e.g. if the project cost projection is $12,000, the City's maximum contribution is $5,000, matched by $5,000 from the organization with an additional $2,000 from the organization*), please provide the additional cost:

e. Total amount to be donated through in-kind donations and/or cash assistance:

f. Provide a summary of in-kind donations, such as professional services or donated materials (excluding volunteer labor):

Remember to include formal documentation from the donating entity/company on company letterhead confirming their specific donation for the project.

g. Please include itemized cost/unit estimates:

EXAMPLE:

ITEM	#UNITS	COST/UNIT	TOTAL
Soil	10 cubic yards	$40	$400
Contracted Service	8 hours labor	$50	$400
One-gallon shrubs	14	$10	$140
Total			$940

IV. Attachments, Please include:

- The association/property's current budget, in order to demonstrate its ability to pay for the entire project before reimbursement and to maintain the project in the future *(Please remove all account numbers from any bank statements that are submitted as part of the grant application)*
- Documentation reflecting the association/property's current and previous spending on landscape and landscape maintenance
- Well-defined, scaled plans of the proposed project with complete plant lists and specifications of any lighting
- Map with project location identified
- Formal documentation from the donating entity/company on company letterhead confirming their specific donation for the project (if applicable)
- Written permission/approval from the necessary entity if there is an impact on property owners or other non-city agencies (if applicable)

Applications will not be considered if any necessary documentation is not included.

Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement Matching Grant Checklist

Please consult this checklist prior to submitting the grant application and supporting materials to Community Relations. ***All requirements must be met.*** *Thank you!*

- ☐ Project is a permanent, physical improvement located at the entrance of the neighborhood, and is not on-going or routine maintenance.
- ☐ Your Association did not receive City of Novi Neighborhood Entryway Enhancement grant funding in 2025 or 2026.
- ☐ You included in the grant application a current Association budget demonstrating the ability to fully fund the project prior to receipt of the reimbursement award.
- ☐ If in-kind donations are being used, formal documentation from the donating entity is included.
- ☐ Documentation reflecting the Association's current spending on landscape and landscape maintenance is included.
- ☐ If project consists of entryway signage, project abides by all ***Residential Entranceway Signage Guide*** regulations.
- ☐ Project complies with all City ordinances.
- ☐ Project does not have a direct impact on an adjacent property owner or non-city agency. Or, If project has an impact on an adjacent property owner or non-city agency, written permission or approval of project from the necessary entity is provided.
- ☐ Project does not include use of identified invasive species.
- ☐ A minimum of 50% of the plant species used in project are native to the Michigan/North Midwest America/Great Lakes Region.
- ☐ All project documents are included in application (*see Required Application Materials on Grant Application and Program Description*).
- ☐ Map with project location identified is provided.
- ☐ Project budget, including all itemized cost estimates, is completed on application.
- ☐ Photos of the project area are provided.

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Beautification Commission Project Grading System

Projects are evaluated using a 0-, 1-, and 2-point system.

0 = project does not meet this criterion

1 = project partially meets the criterion

2 = project fully meets the criterion

Standard Criteria		Possible Points
Creates a positive impact on the neighborhood and City		2
Establishes the neighborhood and creates an inviting subdivision entrance		2
Project is a permanent physical improvement, not on-going or routine maintenance		2
Project appears well planned and ready for implementation		2
Grant application is complete and accurate, including well defined plans		2
Subdivision is more than 10 years old		2
Improves safety		2
Reduces environmental impact		2
Improvement from the existing conditions		2
Positive impact along visible areas of the city		2
Proposed project costs appear reasonable		2
At least 50% of proposed new plantings are native specimens		2
Total Points		**24**

Beyond the Standard Criteria the Beautification Commission may identify other bonus criteria to award at their own discretion, for 1- point each.

Potential Bonus Criteria		Possible Bonus Points
Use of sustainable materials		1
Use of locally sourced materials		1
Use of LED lighting and/or solar power for signs/lighting		1
Use of non-invasive groundcover plants instead of mulch		1
Use of xeriscaping - plants that do not require irrigation		1
Project benefits local pollinators		1
Total Bonus Points		**6**

The final project grade will be a cumulative score of the total points from these two rubrics.

Invasive Plant List

The list below contains the invasive plant species which are unsuitable for this project. For a more comprehensive look, please refer to the Michigan Invasive Plant Species List. Please be advised that this is not a comprehensive list, and other plant species are subject to approval by the City.

Trees

Norway Maple - Acer *platanoides*

Tree of Heaven - *Ailanthus altissima*

Black Alder - *Alnus glutinosa*

Russian Olive - *Elaeagnus angustifolia*

Black Locust - *Robinia pseudoacacia*

Shrubs

Japanese Barberry – *Berberis thunbergii*

Autumn Olive – *Elaeagnus umbellate*

Burning Bush – *Euonymus alatus*

Glossy Buckthorn - *Frangula alnus/Rhamnus frangula*

Privet- Ligustrum *vulgare*

Amur Honeysuckle – *Lonicera maackii*

Morrow's Honeysuckle – *Lonicera morrowii*

Tartarian Honeysuckle – *Lonicera tatarica*

Bell's Honeysuckle – *Lonicera xbella*

Common Buckthorn – *Rhamnus cathartica*

Black Jetbead – *Rhodotypos scandens*

Multiflora Rose - *Rosa multiflora*

Woody Vines

Oriental Bittersweet – *Celastrus orbiculatus*

Japanese honeysuckle – *Lonicera japonica*

Kudzu - *Pueraria lobata*

Herbaceous Plants

Garlic Mustard – *Alliaria petiolata*

Narrow-leaved Bitter-cress – *Cardamine impatiens*

Spotted Knapweed – *Centaurea stoebe/Centaurea maculosa*

Canada Thistle – *Cirsium arvense*

European Swamp Thistle- *Cirsium palustre*

Black Swallow – wort - *Cynanchum louiseae /Vincetoxicum nigrum*

Pale Swallow-wort - *Cynanchum rossicum /Vincetoxicum rossicum*

Leafy Spurge – *Euphorbia esula*

Baby's Breath – *Gypsophila paniculata*

Giant Hogweed- *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

Dame's Rocket – *Hesperis matronalis*

Lyme-grass – *Leymus arenarius*

Purple Loosestrife – *Lythrum salicaria*

White Sweet Clover – *Melilotus alba*

Yellow Sweet Clover – *Melilotus officinalis*

Japanese Stilt Grass – *Microstegium viminium*

Wild Parsnip – *Pastinaca sativa*

Reed Canarygrass – *Phalaris arundinacea*

Phragmites – *Phragmites australis*

Japanese Knotweed – *Polygonum cuspidatum*

Giant Knotweed – *Polygonum sachalinense*

Mile – a minute Weed – *Polygonum perfoliatum*

Narrow – leaved Cat-tail - *Typha angustifolia*

Aquatic Plants

Flowering Rush – *Butomus umbellatus*

Water-hyacinth – *Eichornia crassipes*

Hydrilla – *Hydrilla verticillata*

European Frog-bit – *Hydrocharis morsus-ranae*

Eurasian Water Milfoil – *Myriophyllum spicatum*

Curly Pondweed - *Potamogeton crispus*

Native Plant Resources





The City of Novi strongly advocates the use of native plant species in garden and landscape design. Native plants benefit our local wildlife and pollinators (bees, birds, bats and more) by providing sustenance and shelter. Native plants also have the practical benefit of being adapted to our local environment, making them resilient and largely self-sufficient once established.

You will want to be sure to select plants native to the Michigan/North Midwest America/Great Lakes Region. If you are hiring a landscaping company for your project they can guide you to selecting native plants best suited to your entryway with an eye for beauty and appropriate arrangement.

Some excellent resources to learn more about native plants include:

- City of Novi Landscape Design Manual Suggested Plant Material List
- Xerces Society Pollinator-Friendly Native Plant Lists (Great Lakes Region)
- Xerces Society Plants for Monarchs (provides excellent visuals)
- Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center Michigan Recommended Native Plants

In addition to including native plants in your neighborhood entryway the Beautification Commission suggests that Homeowners Associations consider these pollinator-aware practices:

- Reduce or avoid chemical pesticide and herbicide applications, especially neonicotinoid insecticides.
- Work to incorporate native plants and pollinator-friendly practices into your HOA bylaws and maintenance policies (including updating old bylaws).
- Remove harmful or invasive plant species from your HOA common areas
- Leave the stems of perennial plants alone over fall and winter, then cut them knee high once spring has warmed up. Plants with pithy stems provide excellent habitat for small, cavity-nesting bees.
- Use hand tools or electric-powered, rather than gas-powered, lawn care equipment to reduce pollution and greenhouse gas emissions.
- When using outdoor lights, use dim, shielded, downward pointing, motion activated lights, with a warm yellow-red color temperature. All of these options reduce light-induced distraction of nighttime insects, birds, and other animals.