

# CITY OF AUBURN

## Neighborhood Challenge Grant Program

*Do you and your neighbors have ideas to improve your neighborhood,  
to beautify or create a safer environment*

*but just don't have the funds or know how to move forward?*

*The City of Auburn has created a program to help improve your neighborhood by offering grants to neighborhood  
groups and organizations.*

*Innovative ideas and unique designs are welcomed!*

### **Funds available for this grant**

Grants of \$1,000 up to \$10,000

Applicants are strongly encouraged to provide cash matches or donated services and materials  
but they are not required

**All Grants are subject to the availability of funds at the time of award.**

**Grant Workshop Presentations will be offered at your neighborhood meeting or at Auburn Hall  
Please call us at the number below for a schedule of presentation dates**

**\*IMPORTANT NOTE: Please BE SURE your application is complete.**

**Submit your completed application to:**

**[zlenhert@auburnmaine.gov](mailto:zlenhert@auburnmaine.gov)**

or

**Zachary Lenhert**

**City of Auburn**

**60 Court Street**

**Auburn, ME 04210**

**Questions? Call Zachary at 207-333-6601 ext. 1336**

## General Information

### **Types of Projects Accepted**

Each application must consist of a single project with a clearly defined goal, one that has a direct benefit to the neighborhood and its residents.

### **Examples of Improvements Considered “Eligible” and “Not Eligible”**

Eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- Improvements to government owned property and/or rights of way (such as park equipment, street lighting, sidewalk repair/construction, roadway enhancements and neighborhood entrance improvements and/or identification signs).
- Total replacement and/or rehabilitation of some existing physical improvements might be deemed eligible (this would be based on the individual circumstances and available funding and will be judged on a case-by-case basis). Applicants are encouraged to reach out to appropriate city departments for assistance.

Ineligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- Routine maintenance or repair of existing physical improvements in a neighborhood (including, but not limited to: streets, fences, irrigation systems, storm water retention facilities, and entrance signs).
- Funding for ongoing programs or administrative expenses.
- Funding of printed brochures, guides, marketing and promotional materials.

### **The Grant Process and How it Works**

The Neighborhood Challenge Program makes funds available to groups and organizations (for eligible projects) to improve public property.

- a. An organization obtains an application packet from the City of Auburn website at [www.auburnmaine.gov](http://www.auburnmaine.gov), completes and emails or delivers the completed application to [zlenhert@auburnmaine.gov](mailto:zlenhert@auburnmaine.gov). Applications may also be mailed to Yvette Bouttenot, City of Auburn, Department of Economic and Community Development, 60 Court Street, Auburn, ME 04210;
- b. Applicants are encouraged to contact the city for assistance in preparing this application;
- c. Applications are reviewed and scored by the Review Committee.  
(NOTE: The applicant should be prepared to make a presentation on their project proposal Review Committee after submission);
- d. If approved, a grant agreement will be awarded to the applicant. The applicant will be required to provide a check for any “matching” cash funds to the City of Auburn. The agreement will then be finalized and a copy returned to the applicant (along with the reporting forms needed to complete the project);
- e. The Neighborhood Services Coordinator will oversee projects to ensure compliance with all federal, state and local laws and ordinances;
- f. The City will issue vendor payments as the project progresses or at completion but only after inspections have been completed.

**IMPORTANT: Grantees must submit before & after digital photographs documenting the progress of their project.**

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## Grant Requirements and Criteria

### Project Criteria

Each project will be scored based on the following criteria:

- a. The application must be for a “single project” and will include drawings or photographs;
- b. A budget that is well documented, reasonable, and cost effective. Three (3) quotes must be provided for each item to be purchased or component of the project;
- c. A well-planned project, clearly understood, and ready to be executed;
- d. The project can be completed within the term of the grant agreement;
- e. The amount of matching funds in the form of cash, donated labor from professional contractors, volunteer labor by neighborhood and/or in-kind donations; and
- f. The Association must prove it is able/prepared and committed to address any ongoing maintenance created by the project.

Since funds for projects are limited, awards will be based on a project's competitive status.

Extra consideration will be given to:

- a. Level of neighborhood participation and benefit
- b. Projects located in the Union Street area will score higher followed by the New Auburn area and finally the Downtown area.
- c. Bonus points may be assigned for a project that is innovative or unique.

### The Match Specifics

For this grant, a match is not required however projects that include a match may score higher. The total of all forms of match that equals or exceeds 50% of the project cost requested from the City will score the highest points in the match category. The match may be accomplished with a combination of any one or more of the following: cash, donated materials or services, or volunteer labor. The match must be secured, and ready to be expended.

Volunteer Labor: (a) Credit for “Volunteer labor” will be valued at \$20 per hour. (b) If a professional (such as an electrician or a carpenter) donates “volunteer labor”, you may calculate the value of this labor by using the hourly rate normally paid for this service. (Remember- your volunteer hours will not be accepted by vendors as payment for goods or services. The combined total of your grant and cash match must cover your project’s cash costs).

In-kind donations: Credit for donated professional services, materials or supplies will be at their “reasonable and customary” rates. Professionals who donate their services as part of the match cannot also receive compensation from the award money. This is intended to ensure that persons hired to provide services or skilled labor are selected on the basis of their qualifications, experience or fees, not on their willingness or ability to donate services.

Cash Match: Must be deposited with the City before the project may begin.

**Examples:**

The cash cost of the project may be covered by a variety of combinations including the following:

The applicant submits a project with total cost of \$7,000. The applicant may provide 100 hours (valued at \$2,000) of volunteer labor to the project. The city will provide cash grant in the amount of \$5,000.

-or-

The applicant submits a project with total cost of \$6,000. The total cash needed for the applicant's proposed project is \$6,000. The City may award a cash grant of \$5,000 and the applicant could "match" that award with \$1,000 private cash match.

-or-

The total cash needed for the applicant's proposed project is \$5,000. 100% funded by the City Grant. No match required.

**PLEASE NOTE: Your vendors and contractors will require actual cash. Your association must be sure all cash costs to be incurred for the project are covered (even if you do not have a cash match).**

- a. The amount and type of match must be appropriate to the needs of the project.
- b. The proposed match must be spent during the implementation/construction of the project. (Costs incurred prior to an award or after the contract has ended will not be eligible as a match).
- c. On-going maintenance (or volunteer hour match) following the contract period will not be eligible.
- d. Match must be not only pledged, but also secured. *Secured* means that the donor has specifically valued and described the contribution, and has signed a "Letter of Intent" to confirm the commitment.
- e. Be sure to include fees for any required permits.
- f. Activities that are NOT eligible as a "match" include:
  - Time spent preparing the Matching Grant Application
  - Time spent fund raising
  - Assistance from City staff or funds from other City departments
- g. Applicant will be responsible for keeping track of all volunteer hours donated for your project.
- h. A neighborhood organization, in carrying out a project, must make a good faith effort to ensure they are in compliance with the American Disabilities Act. This Act extends the same civil rights protection to persons with disabilities which have already been granted on the basis of race, color, religion, sex and national origin.

## **Vendor Payment Process**

1. The vendor submits an original invoice to the group representative for review and/or approval.
2. The group representative submits the original vendor invoices to the Economic and Community Development Department;
3. The invoice is reviewed and an inspection is scheduled:
4. Person(s) performing the work should be present during the inspection:
5. If approved, a check will be issued directly to each vendor within 14 days of receipt of invoice.

NOTE: Applicants may not contract with City of Auburn employees as vendors on the funded projects.\*

