



SMALL GRANTS 2020 Cycle

Grant Purpose

Through the Great Opportunities (GO)

Neighborhoods Initiative, the Houston office of the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) invests to create strong and vibrant communities with engaged residents and organizations.

Small grants support activities that bring stakeholders together to address issues like housing, health, environment, education, economic development, family financial stability and resident leadership and civic engagement.

Strong applications will support:

- projects that grow or strengthen networks of community members
- community organizing
- projects that advance quality of life
- implementation of strategies that connect to neighborhood plans

Grant Amount & Target Geography

Houston LISC invites community leaders and organizations to submit proposals. Grants are **reimbursable** and require a 2:1 match. Awards are available for **\$500-\$5,000** to groups and organizations. If funds are needed immediately for the project, arrangements can be made to award half of the funds upon execution of the grant (by signing and returning the grant letter) and the balance of the grant funds after the final report and supporting files have been submitted to LISC. Funding is prioritized to the thirteen (13) communities within LISC’s GO Neighborhoods network. *Neighborhoods outside of the GO Neighborhoods geography are eligible to apply, and will be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

Grant Guidelines

Match

Groups must pledge a 2:1 match for the grant (ex: if a request is made for \$2,500, then a \$5,000 match must be shown). The match can be in cash OR in-kind. In-kind match may include:

- Volunteer hours to put the activity together, valued at \$25.10 per volunteer hour. This includes any volunteer time spent planning, designing, organizing, promoting, facilitating, and evaluating the project.
- Paid staff coordinating the activity.
- Skilled volunteers donating their time (such as a photographer, graphic designer, musician, or other professional using their skill) valued at their usual billing rates.
- Donations of food, meeting space, supplies, etc.

Covered	Not Covered
Promotional materials	Hard goods such as computers & SmartBoards, TVs, cameras, DVD players, etc. – <i>Waived for COVID-19 response related applications</i>
Food for volunteers & participants (within reason)	Software– <i>Waived for COVID-19 response related applications</i>
Rented event venues (up to \$300)**	Staff time (count toward in-kind donation)
Materials for community projects	Sign toppers
Paint, trash bags, gloves, water	One Time events without further engagement
Rental equipment such as a bounce house or movie screen	Events that are for a small group of residents (want to see at least 100 ppl if possible)
Transportation costs (buses, not private vehicles)	Structural improvements/upgrades for buildings
Inclusive projects (regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, socio-economics, or religious affiliation)	Projects already funded with LISC \$
	Projects that have already taken place
	Small business/private enterprise start-ups or expansions
	Projects requiring religious obligations or participation

** Groups should seek to have meeting/event space donated or pay nominal fees of \$300 or less.

- Proposals from groups or organizations applying for funding for a project that was previously sponsored by LISC need to specify how funding will build off the success of the previous grant award and how the group plans to support the project going forward. Projects that have been funded twice with LISC Small Grant dollars will be ineligible for further funding from this program.

LISC will make award decisions based on the following criteria:

- Potential for project to have an impact on important issues in the neighborhood
- Community support and connection to other neighborhood efforts
- Plans to keep the participants engaged after the project is completed

Please keep in mind that LISC cannot make grant payments to an individual. Grant payments must go to the organization or business listed on the application or to an organization that serves as the fiscal sponsor for the grant.

Major activities for your project must be complete by November 15, 2020. If awarded, LISC will provide a template for the final report to be submitted no later than December 15th, 2020.

Process To Apply

1. **Plan:** A group of residents, neighborhood leaders or an organization gets together to brainstorm a community building initiative that aims to address a specific community need, i.e. engagement, health, crime, education, etc.
2. **Present:** The group takes their idea to neighborhood committees such as a neighborhood civic club, Super Neighborhood committees, or a coalition of people working together to improve their community. The group makes presentations to committees and requests letters of support for their idea and proposal. A sample Letter of Support is attached. Committees are encouraged to approve as many requests as possible, as long as they believe in the community engagement effort. If you need help identifying a committee in your neighborhood, please call: Senchel Matthews at 713-334-5700 or Patricia Carr at 713-597-6844.
3. **Write:** The group completes the proposal (attached) which includes: **1)** response to proposal questions, **2)** a project budget and **3)** Letters of Support (template attached).

Application Deadline & Submission Checklist

Applicants may apply for more than one grant per cycle, for multiple project ideas. LISC does not reserve a certain level of funding per neighborhood and expects to award approximately 15 small grants in the 2020 cycle.

Proposals should be submitted via email to Houston LISC GO Neighborhoods Assistant: Patricia Carr – pcarr@lisc.org.

Alternatively, applications can be mailed to:

Houston LISC
1111 North Loop West, Suite 740
Houston, TX 77008

Checklist:

- Grant application including list of 7 questions and project budget (attached)
- Letters of Support (template attached)

Grant Applications Deadline: April 15, 2020

Notice of Awards: April 30, 2020

Report Deadline: December 15, 2020

Please note: Although applicants are encouraged to turn in materials prior to the April 15 deadline, decisions will not be made or announced before April 30th.

Once Your Grant is Approved

If your proposal is approved, Houston LISC will discuss with you how we will provide the reimbursable funding. LISC will provide you with a grant letter to sign and return. Be prepared to provide a W9 and a tax-exempt letter (if applicable) for your organization.

- A. **Start** the project!
- B. **Communicate! Alert** LISC whenever your project hosts a major activity, meeting, workshop or event. If you would like a LISC representative present at an event, please make your request to LISC with at least 15 days' notice.
- C. Please include the LISC and GO Neighborhoods logos on flyers, email, and other promotional materials as a visual reminder of the partnership.
- D. **Communicate!** Keep LISC updated regarding any specific delays or challenges your group may encounter.
- E. Keep track of **sign in sheets**, save **receipts**, and take lots of **photographs and/or videos**. Before and after pictures are strongly encouraged, where applicable, and may be featured on LISC's social media and/or website.

Please take time to curate the photos you send with the final report & send **the best 4-6 photos** that represent the work that was accomplished. Email the photos or send a link to only those photos/receipts to avoid LISC staff sifting through hundreds of photos & documents to find the necessary information.

- F. Complete all major activities funded by this grant **by November 15, 2020**. At the end of the grant term, you will provide a final report detailing the impact and success stories of your project. Your **final report is due no later than December 15, 2020**.

LISC Background

Houston LISC's Great Opportunities (GO) Neighborhoods supports resident-led neighborhood revitalization in specific Houston communities.

For a detailed description of the neighborhoods and programs go to www.go-neighborhoods.org.

For more information, please contact: Houston LISC GO Neighborhoods Assistant, **Patricia Carr at 713-597-6844**. Requests may be submitted at any time but must be received **by April 15, 2020**

Organizational Background

Today's Date:		Group/Organization: Your group's name here – grants cannot go to individuals	
Telephone: Don't forget this	Mailing Address: Include the entire address, including zip code		Website:
Executive Director (if applicable):		Contact name & Title (if different):	
Contact Phone: 800-555-1212		Contact Email: yourname@emailserver.org	
Year incorporated (if applicable):		501c3 Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Neighborhood: Very important Tenth Ward		Project Name: Give your project a meaningful or catchy name Tenth Ward Safe: Community Mural & Education	
Amount of grant request: Don't forget this! (\$500-\$5000)			

Project Description – Please respond to the following questions with 2-3 sentences or bullet points.

- Describe the project or activity and its purpose in 200 words or less.
WHAT are you planning to do? Explain as if the talking to a person on the street about the project. Example: We are hosting a series of workshops to help residents learn how to grow nutritious food in the community garden then in November, we're having a block party/ pot luck dinner for everyone. Master gardeners and nutrition experts will teach workshops.
- What issue(s) does this project address?
WHY are you doing this? (Maybe a little bit of background &/or data to add context)
- Please provide the **number** of community members you expect will help to **plan and organize** this project. **Looking for a # - It's ok to estimate!**
- Broader Community: Please list groups, organizations, businesses, and governmental entities that are **partners** with you in this effort? Do you already have their support?
WHO? – Looking for names –please list them here
- Please provide the **number** of people do you expect to **participate** (if relevant). **How many** (number) will be **new** participants? **Looking for a # - best guess**
- Provide a brief **timeline listing dates & activities or meetings**. When will you start? When will you finish? How many times will you meet? **Looking for DATES** (even if they are estimates)
- Describe the expected results/impact on the neighborhood and/or participants.
What do you think will happen because of this project?
Who will benefit?
- What might be the next steps **after** this project is complete?
What future projects or initiatives will be started or continued due to this project? Will this project be a springboard to bigger and better things? – If so, explain here.

2020 SMALL GRANT PROPOSAL BUDGET - EXAMPLE

Project Name: Should be the same as on page 1 of proposal	Grant Amount Requested: Should be the same as on page 1 of proposal
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Budget: Please use this template to provide a proposal budget.

The budget has two parts:

Part I - GRANT EXPENSES:

List all the expenses for your activity or project below.

Remember: Grants are \$500-\$5000& cannot include staff time.

Staff time should be included as in-kind donations.

Expenses you
want covered
by the Small
Grant go here:

Expenses you
will cover
using other
funds go here:

Project Expense - Description	Total Cost	Grant Amount	Other Funds
Estimates go here			
Ex: 400 paintbrushes @ \$5 each	2000.00	2000.00	
Specialty paint – 20 qts @ \$20/qt	400.00	400.00	
Paint sealant – 5 gal @ \$50/gal	250.00	100.00	150.00
Total Project Expenses	2650.00	2500.00	150.00

Cannot exceed \$5000

Maybe your organization got a cash donation for this or you already have those supplies

Part II - MATCH CALCULATION:

Your budget needs to show a **2:1 match**. So, for example, if you are requesting \$2,500, your budget needs to show at least \$5,000 in match. Please use this template to list your match.

Remember to include volunteer time, and any in-kind donation of goods, services, or professional/staff time. To calculate volunteer match, estimate the number of people and the number of hours volunteers will spend working on the activity or project. List under Volunteer Match. Each volunteer hour is valued at \$25.10. If a professional donates their time, use the actual value of that time (e.g. a photographer generally charges \$200 per hour but agreed to give 3 hours to your project, so you would list \$600 under In-Kind Donation).

Number of Volunteers	Hours	Value \$25.10	Hours X Value = Volunteer Match
list different event dates on sep lines			
Planning – 8 people for 5 meetings @ 2 hrs ea	80	25.10	2008.00
Party set up & clean up – 20 ppl for 4 hours	80	25.10	2008.00
3 Parking lot attendants for 4 hours	12	25.10	301.20
In-Kind Donation – Description	Units	Value	Units X Value = In-Kind Match
Professional Artist – project design/direction	15 hrs	\$100/hour	1500.00
Cash donation for paint sealant			150.00
Total Match			5967.20

This number needs to be **at least 2 X the amount** requested above

SAMPLE RECOMMENDATION LETTER FROM NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATION/COMMITTEE

Please make sure your letter is from a neighborhood group or organization such as a SuperNeighborhood organization, a civic group, resident group, Complete Community Neighborhood Action Committee, or the governing body of a church in the neighborhood where the project will take place. Ideally, these will be grassroots organizations with resident members and/or leaders of the area where the project is happening. **Letters should NOT come from City Council members, businesses in the area, individuals, or schools that will directly benefit from the project.**

{Letterhead of Neighborhood Organization/Committee if available}

Date:

Dear Houston LISC,

{Name of Group or Organization} made a presentation before our organization on {DATE} about their proposal for the Houston LISC Small Grant. At this meeting we had _____ people present including a quorum of the leadership of our organization that typically makes these types of recommendations. Our leadership has agreed to support this proposal.

Our organization has been around since {date} for the purpose of {insert}. We may be able to provide support to this activity in the following manner: {describe}.

Thank you for considering this proposal. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact {name} at {phone and/or email}.

Sincerely,

{Leader of the neighborhood organization/committee}

Checklist for Small Grant Submission

Application

- Did you complete the grant application, answering ALL questions?
- Did you proofread the application and/or ask someone else to read the application to make sure the answers are clear?
- Does your project bring residents and stakeholders together to solve a problem or issue identified in the community?
- Do you have permission from any venues or properties being used to host the project, meeting, or event there?

Budget

- Please make sure the budget for your project does not include payment for staff time
- Is your budget reasonable? (Does not include venue rentals more than \$350 or meals more than \$14 per person) – Please check your math.
- Did you include donations of meeting space, tools, services, volunteers, food, and any other goods or services in the in-kind area of the budget? – Make sure to assign an estimated value to each donation.

Letters of Support

- Do you have 2 or more letters of support to submit with the grant application?
- Are the letters of support from grassroots groups or organizations that include residents from the area where the project will take place?



2020 LISC SMALL GRANT PROPOSAL

Today's Date:	Group or Organization:	
Telephone:	Mailing Address:	Website:
Executive Director (if applicable):	Contact Name & Title (if different):	
Contact Phone:	Contact Email:	
Year incorporated (if applicable):	501c3 Status: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <i>Please provide a copy of the IRS letter</i> <input type="checkbox"/> No	
Neighborhood:	Project Name:	
Amount of Grant Request: (between \$500-\$5000)		

Project Description – Please respond to the following questions with **2-3 sentences or bullet points**.

1. Describe the project or activity and its purpose in 200 words or less.
2. What issue(s) does it address?
3. Please provide the **number** of community members you expect will help to **plan and organize** this project.
4. Broader Community: Please list the groups, organizations, businesses, and governmental entities that are **partners** with you in this effort. Do you already have their support?
5. Please provide the **number** of people do you expect to **participate** (if relevant). **How many** (number) will be **new** participants?
6. Provide a brief **timeline listing dates & activities or meetings**. When will you start? When will you finish? How many times will you meet?
7. Describe the expected results/impact on the neighborhood and/or participants.
8. What might be the next steps after this project is complete?

GRANT PROPOSAL BUDGET

Project Name:	Grant Amount Requested:
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Budget: Please use this template to provide a proposal budget.
The budget has two parts:

Part I - GRANT EXPENSES:

List all the expenses for your activity or project below.

Remember: Grants are \$500-\$5000 & cannot include staff time.

Staff time should be included as in-kind donations.

Expenses you want covered by the Small Grant go here:

Expenses you will cover using other funds go here:

Project Expense - Description	Total Cost	Grant Amount	Other Funds
Total Project Expenses	\$	\$	\$

Part II - MATCH CALCULATION:

Your budget needs to show a 2:1 match. So, for example, if you are requesting \$2,500, your budget needs to show at least \$5,000 in match. Please use this template to list your match.

Remember to include volunteer time, and any in-kind donation of goods, services, or professional/staff time. To calculate volunteer match, estimate the number of people and the number of hours volunteers will spend working on the activity or project. List under Volunteer Match. Each volunteer hour is valued at **\$25.10**. If a professional donates their time, use the actual value of that time (e.g. a photographer generally charges \$200 per hour but agreed to give 3 hours to your project, so you would list \$600 under In-Kind Donation).

Number of Volunteers	Hours	Value	Hours X Value = Volunteer Match
		25.10	
In-Kind Donation – Description	Units	Value	Units X Value = In-Kind Match
Total Match			\$