

CITY OF GREENBELT

POLICY AND INFORMATION GUIDE FOR RECOGNITION GROUPS

Updated: December 2023

For assistance:
contact the Recreation Department's Administrative Coordinator
at 301-397-2200 or cpracht@greenbeltmd.gov

LEVELS OF SUPPORT

The City of Greenbelt welcomes the initiative and creativity of citizens who organize to enhance the range of cultural, athletic, recreational, civic, service and social opportunities available to Greenbelt residents. In support of these efforts, the City offers three levels of support:

- BASIC RECOGNITION GROUP CERTIFICATION** entails the following privileges:
 - limited free use of Recreation Department facilities in accordance with facility guidelines for cultural, athletic, recreational, civic, service and social activities that are open to the general public. Requests for use of City facilities will be handled at the staff level. *Note: free use is not available for religious or partisan political activities, or for income-generating activities other than authorized fundraisers at City events.*
 - inclusion in listings of contacts in City online and print publications as space allows
- PROJECT GRANT:** Eligible community organizations may apply for up to \$5,000 in City matching funds to help meet expenses associated with discrete, time-limited programs spanning less than 12 months. Examples include: festivals, tournaments, artist's residencies and specific community service initiatives. Project grant recipients receive all the privileges of basic Recognition Group certification and they have standing to apply for a project grant or operating grant in the following fiscal year if needed.
- OPERATING GRANT:** Eligible Recognition Groups may apply for City matching funds to help meet both programming and operational expenses. These may include: salaries and wages; contractual services; facility rent and utilities; fundraising expenses; marketing costs; supplies and equipment. Operating grant recipients receive all the privileges of basic Recognition Group certification and they have standing to apply for a project grant or operating grant in the following fiscal year if needed. An organization may apply for up to 50% of its operating budget (no cap).

APPLICATION PROCESS

Applications are available on the City's website: www.greenbeltmd.gov. All completed applications will be reviewed by staff. Organizations will be contacted for any corrections or clarifications as needed.

BASIC RECOGNITION GROUP CERTIFICATION

Organizations may submit an initial application at any time. All first-time applications will be reviewed by the Greenbelt Arts Advisory Board, Greenbelt Park and Recreation Advisory Board or the Community Relations Advisory Board as appropriate. New applicants are required to send a representative to meet with the Advisory Board which is reviewing their application. First time applications will be approved or denied by the Greenbelt City Council.

Groups must re-apply annually for renewal of their Recognition Group certification (usually in February), regardless of the timing of the organization's original filing. Applications will be reviewed by Recreation Department staff. Advisory boards may review your application at their option. If there are no concerns, your application can be approved by Recreation staff. If there are concerns, your application will be forwarded to the City Manager for further review.

PROJECT AND OPERATING GRANTS

Eligible organizations will have one opportunity each year to apply for grant funding, usually with a February deadline. All applications will be reviewed by staff to ensure completeness and eligibility. Advisory boards may review the applications at their option. All applications will be reviewed by a Grant Review Panel which will make funding recommendations to City Council. The Panel may request to meet with a representative of the applicant organization. Final decisions regarding funding will be made by the City Council in June for the period of July 1 through June 30 (the City's fiscal year).

ELIGIBILITY AND OTHER REQUIREMENTS

ALL RECOGNITION GROUPS

1. **Mission.** The primary purpose of the organization should be to provide or underwrite ongoing cultural, athletic, recreational, civic, service and social opportunities which are open to the general public.
2. **Political organizations are not eligible** for Recognition Group designation. These organizations are defined as groups having an affiliation with a political party, and/or having a primary mission of influencing legislation or public policy at the local, county, state or federal level. Approved Recognition Groups are not prohibited from engaging in public policy advocacy, as long as such advocacy is non-partisan and it is not their primary purpose or activity, at the discretion of the City Manager and Council.
3. **Religious organizations are not eligible** for Recognition Group designation. These organizations are defined as groups having an affiliation with a religious organization or tradition and/or a mission which includes proselytizing activities, religious education, or worship practices.
4. **Non-profit status.** Recognition Group certification is available to not-for-profit organizations only.
5. **Benefit to the community.** The organization's activities should reflect significant participation by, and benefit to, Greenbelt residents.
6. **Liability insurance.** The City may require an organization to secure liability insurance for programming activities which the group intends to provide at City facilities. Insurance binders must be submitted to the Recreation Department business office before any such activities take place.
7. **Complementary services.** In order to be eligible for City recognition and support, an organization's proposed activities must be compatible with City of Greenbelt facilities, programs, services and financial interests.
8. **Non-Discrimination.** In applying for City support, Recognition Groups will affirm their commitment to providing a respectful, safe and fair environment for all leaders, personnel (paid or volunteer), participants, and spectators. Discrimination or abuse on the basis of race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, ancestry, religion, national origin, age*, marital or parental status or disability may result in the reduction or termination of City support at the discretion of the Greenbelt City Council. Recognition Groups are encouraged to identify and address any barriers to participation by diverse residents in their sponsored activities and governance. **Age ranges are permissible in program design.*
9. **City staff participation.** Classified City of Greenbelt employees are not permitted to hold appointed or elected leadership positions (as an officer, Board member, etc.) which are responsible for policy making, development, oversight and/or fiscal management of a City Recognition Group. This policy does not preclude classified employees from membership in Recognition Groups or participation in their sponsored activities in a non-leadership capacity.
10. **Background checks.** To help ensure the safety of young program participants, all staff, contractors, and/or volunteers whom the Recognition Group intends to entrust directly with the care and control of minors must complete a criminal background check. These individuals will undergo a criminal background check at the City's expense based on their social security numbers. Background checks are valid for only one year and must be resubmitted accordingly. It is the responsibility of each Recognition Group to ensure full compliance with this requirement, throughout the year. If your organization currently conducts background checks mandated by a parent organization, your organization's leader will be required to sign an affidavit affirming that all volunteers have completed

a background check, provided the background checks meet or exceed the standards of the City's policy. For assistance with the background check policy, please contact the Acting Assistant Director for Recreation Facilities at aphelan@greenbeltmd.gov or 240-542-2194. The City is facilitating this screening process in keeping with the "Operation TLC-Making Communities Safe" program of the National Recreation and Parks Association.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS - PROJECT GRANTS

- 1. Financial review.** Prior to awarding a grant, the City of Greenbelt may at its option require an organization to provide a report from a certified public accountant reflecting the findings of a review of the organization's financial records. Any such review is to be conducted at the expense of the applicant organization.
- 2. Checking account.** Any organization awarded a project grant will be required to maintain a checking account in the organization's name at a financial institution of their choice.
- 3. Matching funds.** For every dollar awarded by the City of Greenbelt, a project grant recipient must contribute at least one dollar from other sources toward meeting their project expenses. Funds raised from any other source count toward this match, as long as they are spent in the fiscal year for which the grant is awarded. Examples include: dues; registration fees; donations; sales of memberships, tickets or goods; and other grant income. Funds spent from the organization's savings can be counted toward the match. Loans, planned giving commitments and income channeled into investments or endowment funds would not count toward the match.

First-time project grant recipients only: for every dollar awarded by the City of Greenbelt, the organization must contribute \$.50 (rather than \$1.00) from other sources toward meeting their project expenses.

A **match certification statement** will be required at the end of the fiscal year from all organizations which receive grants. If an organization is found to have fallen short of their required match, the amount of revenue that they contributed from other sources will be the maximum funding they are eligible to receive from the City in the following fiscal year. For example: if a group received \$5,000 from the City in FY 2024 but they only spend \$4,000 from other sources this year, \$4,000 is the maximum funding they could receive from the City in FY2025, even if a higher award is approved provisionally through the budget process.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS - OPERATING GRANTS

- 1. Previous recipient of City funding.** In order to apply for an operating grant, an organization must hold current Recognition Group certification AND they must have received a project or operating grant from the City in at least one of the three fiscal years preceding the period of support. *For FY 2025 operating grants: groups must have been functioning as a Recognition Group in FY 2024, AND they must have received Recognition Group funding in FY 2022, FY 2023, and/or FY 2024.*
- 2. 501(c)3 non-profit status.** Operating grant applicants must hold 501(c)3 status, have applied for such status from the IRS, or have a fiscal sponsor that is a separate organization with 501(c)3 status through which the organization is able to raise funds.
- 3. Financial review.** Prior to awarding a grant, the City of Greenbelt may at its option require an organization to provide a report from a certified public accountant reflecting the findings of a review of the organization's financial records. Any such review is to be conducted at the expense of the applicant organization.
- 4. Checking account.** Any organization awarded a project grant will be required to maintain a checking account in the organization's name at a financial institution of their choice.
- 5. Matching funds.** For every dollar awarded by the City of Greenbelt, an operating grant recipient

must contribute one dollar from other sources toward their program and operating expenses. Funds raised from any other source count toward this match, as long as they are spent on program and operating expenses in the fiscal year for which the grant is awarded. Examples include: dues; registration fees; donations; sales of memberships, tickets or goods; and other grant income. Funds spent from the organization's savings can be counted toward the match. Loans, planned giving commitments and income channeled into investments or endowment funds would not count toward the match.

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DISBURSEMENT PROCEDURES

PROJECT GRANTS

1. Organizations awarded a project grant will be issued a check in the amount of 50% of their award, up to a maximum of \$2,500, in July of 2024. The organization will submit qualifying receipts for expenses in the amount of the initial disbursement before any additional funds will be released. Receipts may be submitted at any time at the Recreation Department business office located at the Greenbelt Youth Center.
2. After all qualifying receipts matching the initial disbursement have been received, the balance of the recipient's grant will be disbursed in a second check. The organization will submit receipts for qualifying expenses in the amount of the second disbursement **no later than June 3**.
3. Receipts should be accompanied by a note indicating the purpose of the expenditure. City funds can only be used for the purposes stated in the organization's application and approved by Council.
4. Disbursements will be issued exclusively in the form of checks made payable to the organization itself.
5. **Any allocated funds not used by the organization by the conclusion of the fiscal year on June 30 will revert to the City and not carry over into the next fiscal year. Any disbursed funds which the organization is unable to use for the approved purposes must be repaid to the City of Greenbelt by June 30.**

OPERATING GRANTS

1. Organizations awarded an operating grant will be eligible to submit qualifying receipts for reimbursement. Receipts may be submitted at any time at the Recreation Department business office located at the Greenbelt Youth Center. **For the fiscal year ending June 30, all receipts must be submitted by June 3.**
2. Receipts should be accompanied by a note indicating the purpose of the expenditure. City funds can only be used for the purposes stated in the organization's application and approved by Council.
3. Disbursements will be issued exclusively in the form of checks made payable to the organization itself.
4. **Any allocated funds not used by the organization by the conclusion of the fiscal year on June 30 will revert to the City and not carry over into the next fiscal year.**

FUNDING RESTRICTIONS FOR PROJECT AND OPERATING GRANTS

1. **City funds may not be used to purchase alcohol.** Alcohol may not be served at any City of Greenbelt facility without prior permission from City Council.
2. **City funds may not be used for equipment purchases over \$1,000** without the permission of the Recreation Department Director. Permission is required even in instances where a purchase was specifically noted in the group's funding request. The City reserves the right to purchase a requested item directly and make it available to the group for use as an alternative to reimbursing the group for purchase of that item. In the event that permission is granted for an outside purchase, the City will retain the right to borrow any equipment purchased with City funds at times of mutual convenience. In the event that an organization no longer needs a piece of equipment that was purchased with City funds, the organization will contact the Greenbelt Recreation Department and offer to donate the equipment to the City before making any other arrangements.
3. **City funds may not be re-granted** to any other organization or party. City money may be paid to individuals and organizations only for goods purchased or services provided.
4. **City funds may not be used to compensate any board member for their board service.** The City recognizes that some board members may also serve the organization in a staff or contractor role. City funds may NOT be used to compensate personnel if they hold an executive office on the board (Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary, Treasurer, for example.) However, City funds MAY be used to compensate personnel who hold a non-executive position on the board (Artistic Director, committee chair, at-large member, etc.)
5. **City funds may not be used for any partisan political activities or religious activities, and free room use will not be available for these purposes.** *Partisan political activities* are defined as any activities intended to promote or benefit a single political party or to promote declared party-affiliated candidates for public office. *Religious activities* are defined as worship practices, religious education, and proselytizing activities.

Greenbelt Community Pledge

“The strength of Greenbelt is diverse people living together in a spirit of cooperation. We celebrate people of many cultures, faiths, and races living together. By sharing together all are enriched. We pledge to foster a community which is respectful, safe, and fair for all people.”