



## Neighborhood Matching Fund Process and Program Improvements 2009

### 1. Implemented in 2009

- ✓ Held customer service training for NMF staff and set performance expectations for excellent customer service, incorporated into staff workplans and performance evaluations.
- ✓ Simplified the Small and Simple Projects Application materials and requirements as follows:
  - Questions clarified and streamlined, application form reduced from 10 to 5 pages
  - Eliminated applicant requirement to submit 6 copies of application packet
  - Eliminated requirement to submit original application packet to department
  - Encouraged application submission by email, fax, mail, or drop off to DON
- ✓ Streamlined internal processes for contract and invoice review and approval
  - Reduced the number of staff/steps to approve contracts and amendments, reducing time for execution
  - Reduced the number of staff to review and approve invoices
  - Require updated project timelines for all contract extensions longer than 60 days, reducing the future number of extension requests.
- ✓ Included review criteria form in application (had already been included in the NMF guidelines) for increased transparency and emphasis on the aspects of a successful application.
- ✓ Provide monthly technical assistance workshops and reduce the number of one-on-one technical assistance.
  - orientation on contracting and invoicing process for new NMF recipients
  - monthly workshops on application process, fundraising and community building
- ✓ Launched an NMF list serve to encourage knowledge sharing among past NMF recipients.
  - Streamlines information sharing with past, current and prospective recipients through single coordinated effort;
  - Encourages all interested community members to be engaged in NMF Program; including project leads, volunteers, community partners, CNC, Citywide Review Team, District Council members;
  - Encourages community-based mentoring and capacity-building
  - Reduces the need for individual staff to send information to their respective past and current project contacts as well as other community contacts (which may at times overlap); and
  - Increases ability to contact and share information with widespread audience; currently staff communicate primarily with 1-3 people per project.
  - Allows staff to focus attention on groups new to engaging in community-building and partnering with the City (typically underserved populations).
  - Reduced the number of award ceremonies in 2009 from 5 to 2



## **2. 2009-2010 Changes On-Going and Underway**

### **Program Changes**

1. Reduce the number of SAS award application cycles from four to two in 2010.
2. Reduce the number of NMF award ceremonies from five to one annual recognition event, starting 2010.
3. Redesign and ensure consistency in SAS application, review criteria and review process.
4. Redesign and ensure consistency in contract, invoice forms, match documentation and project reporting.
5. Implement a customer feedback survey at the end of each completed project.
6. Simplify match documentation requirements in application and/or project implementation phase.
7. Increase the value of volunteer time to \$20/hour from \$15/hour per Independent Sector research that states the 2008 average volunteer time value as \$20.25/hour.
8. Create and implement a project feasibility or eligibility filter:
  - Ensures applicants submit successful and complete applications
  - Decreases time invested in reviewing incomplete or ineligible applications
9. Shift of NMF financial data entry and processing to the department's accounting unit
10. Incorporate funding conditions in the contract, thus reducing time lag between funding award and contract execution. No funds will be disbursed until the conditions are met.
11. Combine the Outreach Fund (\$750 awards) with Small Sparks (\$250 awards) into one fund and keep Small Sparks name.
12. Expand and increase flexibility of Small Sparks funding parameters in 2010 to include the following:
  - Fund small groups/organizations (currently, able to fund individuals).
  - Increase awards up to \$1,000 for any community-building project (currently only funds membership expansion and leadership development).
13. Restructure NMF staffing support for Small Sparks
  - Increase current oversight by District Coordinators and where applicable, P-Patch staff

### **3. Proposed Process Improvement and Program Changes**

<b>Key Issue</b>	<b>Staff recommendation/reason</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>
<p>1. Community members, through the NMF evaluation and feedback to staff, have requested fund limits keep up with community needs and inflation. Project costs have increased thereby requiring much more fundraising to complete.</p> <p>Allow City-wide projects to apply for LPF vs. just geographically-oriented neighborhood projects to encourage cross-sector community-building and address broad issues i.e. Climate Change and .Race and Social Justice. Currently, only projects within a single neighborhood are eligible. This is a barrier for projects that promote work across neighborhoods.</p>	<p>Increase the LPF funding award amount from \$100,000 to \$150,000 starting in 2010</p> <p>a) for City-Wide projects only</p> <p>b) for all Large Projects</p> <p>This is also supported by Citywide Review Team</p>		
<p>2. Community members, through the NMF evaluation and feedback to staff, have requested SAS fund limits keep up with community needs and inflation</p>	<p>Increase the SAS funding award amount from \$15,000 to \$20,000, starting in 2010.</p>		
<p>Community members' feedback has included the following:</p> <p>4. Small Sparks Fund limit should increase to address inflation</p> <p>5. Outreach Fund is too restricted (outreach only)</p> <p>6. Sometimes groups go through the entire Small and Simple process for an award of only \$1500. There should be a category of funds like Small Sparks up to \$1000 to improve access for projects that need more money than \$250 but are not full Small and Simple projects</p>	<p>Combine the Small Sparks Fund and Outreach Fund into one category and use Small Sparks Fund guidelines for use.</p> <p>Raise the limit of the funding category to \$1000</p>		

## Attachment #1: NMF Fact Sheet

### NMF Program Overview

The NMF program is currently comprised of five categories:

1. Outreach and Small Sparks Funds – one-time awards up to \$750;
2. Tree Fund – trees provided to neighborhood groups to plant along parking strips;
3. Small and Simple Projects Fund – awards up to \$15,000;
4. Large Projects Fund – awards between \$15,000 and \$100,000; and
5. Management and Project Development – technical assistance to neighborhood groups, coordination of the application and award processes, and project management and contract administration.

Over the past 20 years, the NMF has funded over 3,500 projects, totaling over \$42 million of City investment matched with \$65 million in cash, volunteer time and donated materials. In recent years, DON has placed an emphasis in encouraging and supporting new community groups to tap the NMF program. NMF staff had assisted 207 new community groups to apply to the NMF program since 2007. These projects promote neighborhood planning, community organizing, physical improvements, race and social justice, climate protection, youth initiatives and school-community partnerships. A cornerstone of the NMF program is the community match requirement. For each project, the NMF recipients must match the value of the cash award by securing contributions of volunteer labor, donated materials, professional services and/or cash. This match requirement establishes a strong level of community accountability and ownership for funded projects.

### 2009 Budget & Staffing at a Glance

The 2009 NMF Adopted Budget is \$3,829,693 or \$3,717,693 after the mid-year budget reduction.

<b>NMF Budget</b>	<b>2009 Adopted</b>	<b>After Mid-yr Cut</b>
1. Outreach and Small Sparks	14,372	14,372
2. Tree Fund	49,259	49,259
3. Small and Simple Projects	1,342,314	1,342,314
4. Large Projects	1,295,563	1,295,563
5. Management & Project Development	1,128,186	1,016,186
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,829,694</b>	<b>3,717,694</b>

### **2009 NMF Staffing**

<b>Position Titles</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>FTE After Mid-year Cut</b>
Planning & Development Specialist II	Project Managers	4.0
Sr. Planning & Development Specialist	Working Supervisor	0.8
Assistant Finance Analyst	Contract Administrator	0.8
Manager 2 (NMF portion)	Manager for NMF and PPatch	0.3
	<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9</b>

### **Other Positions Supported by NMF**

<b>Position Titles</b>	<b>Functions</b>	<b>FTE After Mid-year Cut</b>
DON Deputy Director	Policy and Program Oversight	0.2
DON Administrative Specialist II	Administrative Support	0.5
DON Administrative Staff Assistant	Administrative Support	0.1
Parks - Planning & Dev Specialist II	Parks Technical Liaison/TA	1.0
SDOT - Assc Transportation Planner	SDOT Technical Liaison/TA	0.5
	<b>Total</b>	<b>2.3</b>