

Community Living Network - Mini-Grant Program Program Overview and Guidelines

Community Living Network's Mini-Grant Program provides grants, up to \$500.00, for community residents to conduct resident lead activities building community capacity and support for persons with disabilities. Communities will become stronger by building on the assets already present in their neighborhood/community. The program also provides training and support to help ensure the success of the resident led efforts and build the leadership capacity of neighborhood residents to accomplish successful activities in the future. This answers an important question: "What can we do with what we already have to help persons with disabilities stay in their own community."

Purpose:

Community Living Network's Mini-Grant is a neighborhood/community based program which builds upon the understanding that the engagement of residents is key to creating healthier, safer and stronger communities.

The program has two key components:

1. Mini-Grants of up to \$500.00 for neighborhood residents to work together on community projects. (See page 3)
2. The provision of training, education and support for the community projects' participants to help build their leadership potential. (See page 7)

Goals:

- Bring people together and build neighborhood connections
- Benefit the neighborhood through increased resident engagement and action
- Support resident driven creative solutions
- Increase resident pride in themselves, their neighbors and their community
- Build community's capacity to support persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhood/community

Value Statements

Community Living Network believes that communities are built upon the assets of individuals, groups, and organizations. Based on this belief, Community Living Network upholds the following values:

People's abilities

People have the experience, skills, and knowledge to make their community more livable.

Associations

Associations composed of volunteer residents magnify and mobilize the gifts of individuals.

Grassroots change

Action at a grassroots, community level is critical in bringing about positive community change and build community's capacity to support persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhood/community.

Partnerships

We encourage efforts that bridge across gender, racial, cultural, generational and economic boundaries. We also promote collaborations between individuals, groups, organizations and institutions.

Mini-Grants – Process

Overview:

Community Living Network's Mini-Grant Program provides grants, up to \$500.00, to community residents to conduct resident lead activities to improve the quality of life and build community's capacity to support persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhood/community.

The grants are available to groups of three or more neighborhood/community residents working together to improve their community and the lives of the residents by using the gifts and assets of the neighborhood residents and the neighborhood. To promote community collaboration, a project team requires three or more non-family members as a part of the group. Families are encouraged to participate but there needs to be three or more non-family members on the team.

Eligibility Requirements:

The eligibility requirements:

- A completed application must be submitted and approved **(See attachment A)**
- Applications must include a minimum of 3 non-family members signing the grant application and agreeing to work together to complete the proposed project within 6 months.
- Eligible activities should involve other neighbors in the implementation of the activities.
- Funds can only be used to purchase supplies, materials or tools for the project. Funds cannot be used to pay individuals to accomplish the project.
- Funds will be paid out only by direct payments to vendors.
- Successful applicants must submit their Donated Services Time Sheet used for planning and implementing their project. **(See attachment B)**

Who Can Apply?

Residents living in Gregg, Harrison, Marion, Panola or Upshur County can apply. Nonprofit or For-profit organizations are not eligible to directly apply. The application must be signed by a minimum of three persons forming a project team.

Types of Eligible Projects:

Health Improvement projects to engage residents to work together to improve their health

Beautification/Landscaping to improve the appearance/safety of the neighborhood

Workshops open to persons with disabilities and the community to learn new skills to improve their quality of life

Festivals/Events to increase local engagement and community pride

Community Gardens and other food related projects

Other project that engage a significant number of neighborhood residents and focus on using their gifts to improve the quality of life and build community's capacity to support persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhood/community

How will projects be selected?

Applications will be accepted monthly and reviewed by the Planning Advisory Committee.

Here are the criteria that will be used to select applications for funding.

1. Resident Involvement

- Will other neighborhood/community residents be involved in the implementation of the project?
- Will other neighborhood/community residents benefit from the project?
- Will persons with disabilities and their families be involved?

2. Benefit to the Neighborhood/Community

- Will the project benefit the neighborhood/community as a whole?
- Does the project address an important neighborhood/community issue?
- Does the project address an important issue for individuals with disabilities and their families?

3. Feasibility

- Is the project stated in clear terms?
- Does the applicant appear to have a clear understanding of what it will take to successfully implement the project?
- Is the requested funding and list of purchases realistic for the project?
- Does the proposed timeline appear doable to complete the project?

Guidelines for Drawing on Grant Funds

To ensure accountability for the funds expended by the grantees and at the same time provide flexibility for the neighborhood/community grantees to access their grant funds the following process will be used.

Invoice Method

- a. The grantee can shop for the items they need and have the vendor (store) create an invoice for the full amount; note Community Healthcore is a tax exempt entity and a tax exempt form will be provided with the check.
- b. The grantee will then submit the vendor's invoice(s) to request the purchase to the Outreach Coordinator for the Community Living Network. Donated Services Time Sheets will also need to be submitted at this time with each new purchase.
- c. The Community Living Network will then review and submit the invoice to Community Healthcore, the fiscal agent of the grant, requesting a check. The grantee can then take the check to the vendor to purchase the needed items. Checks will be issued by Community Healthcore.
- d. The grantee will then be required to send the receipt for the purchase to Community Living Network Outreach Coordinator. The grantee will not be able to make any additional draws until Community Living Network receives the receipt and the Donated Services Time Sheet.
- e. Important:
 - i. No changes are allowed from the invoice and actual purchase. If there needs to be a change, a new invoice will need to be submitted and a new check cut.
 - ii. There is no reimbursement allowed. Please do not use your own funds as they cannot be reimbursed.
 - iii. Projects can draw on the funds a total of four times or until their funds are exhausted whichever comes first.

Letter to Vendors Introducing the Community Living Network Mini-Grants Program

COMMUNITY LIVING NETWORK

501 Pine Tree Road
Longview, Texas 75604

To Whom It May Concern:

Beginning October 1, 2014, the Community Living Network is sponsoring a Mini-Grants Program. The Mini-Grants Program helps support neighborhood/community residents working together (a project team) to improve the quality of life and build the community's capacity to support persons with disabilities to remain in their neighborhood/community. As part of this program project teams can receive up to \$500.00 to implement their approved project.

The funds received by the neighborhood/community residents are used to purchase supplies or tools from local vendors. To access their approved funds the project team must submit an invoice from your store for the items they need for their project. Please assist them by providing an invoice of those items they have selected.

Once the invoice for materials is received and approved, a check will be cut by Community Healthcore to pay for these items. Community Healthcore is the fiscal agent for the Community Living Network and all checks for purchases will be from Community Healthcore. Community Healthcore is also a unit of local government and is tax free; a tax exempt letter will be provided with each check. Therefore, we are asking your cooperation in providing these invoices to participants in the Mini-Grant Program.

Thank you for your cooperation.
Sincerely,

Patti Brady
Outreach Coordinator
903.295.5922



FINANCIAL SUPPORT FOR EAST TEXAS COMMUNITY LIVING NETWORK IS PROVIDED BY THE TEXAS COUNCIL FOR DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES, WITH FEDERAL FUNDS* MADE AVAILABLE BY THE UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES, ADMINISTRATION ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES.
*\$138,046 DD FUNDS: \$41,264 NON-FEDERAL RESOURCES



Proposed Model for the Training, Education and Support of the Mini-Grant Participants

To build the leadership capacity of the participants in the Mini-Grant Program, the following training, education and support opportunities are provided. The Mini-Grants program is not just about successfully completing individual projects. The real value of the program for its participants and their community is the identification and building up of potential neighborhood/community leaders. Consequently, the training curriculum for the resident leadership training provides the fundamentals of leadership to help the participants create long-lasting change in their neighborhood/community.

1. **Mini-Grants Technical Assistance Workshops** – For potential and successful grantees.

How to apply for a Mini-Grant Workshops (offered at the start of each grant round in each neighborhood/community). These workshops will cover the basics of the grant program, and introduction to Asset-Based Community Development and its connection to building support for persons with disabilities, and how to submit a grant.

2. **Neighborhood Leadership Focus:**

- **Assessing your Neighborhood and Community** – The principles of Asset-Based Community Development, Inclusion and Asset-Mapping.
- **Understanding Leadership** – Enhances participants' knowledge of leadership and leadership practices. Provides them opportunity to assess themselves, to begin looking at community strengths and weaknesses, and to suggest community betterment projects or initiatives which address the weakness identified. Managing self-care and avoiding burnout.
- **Effective Communications – Public Speaking** – Personal and organizational communication skills, using the Media. Improving your public speaking skills. Participants will engage in activities, which allow them to practice active listening and clear verbal communications.
- **Understanding Values/ Valuing Community Diversity and Inclusion** – provides insight into personal values, while also exploring values shared by the community-at-large. Through a variety of exercises, participants examine types of differences, consider preconceptions related to their personal leadership and communication styles, identify challenges and benefits, and formulate an action plan for maximizing the resources of cultural diversity.
- **Group Dynamics - Group Problem Solving and Decision – Making/ Managing Conflict - Strategic Planning** – introduces a community problem-solving and decision making process by examining alternatives, decision choices, and making a decision.

Participants review types of conflict and assess their individual approaches to managing conflict.

- **Managing Funding** – Applying for mini-grant funding (Fundraising, Financial Ethics; Project management)
- **Government 101- Navigating the Health and Human Care system**– introduces participants to the role local government plays in the quality of community life. Purposes and types of local government, policy issues and obstacles are discussed. Participants will also gain insights on how to effectively navigate the health and human care system.
- **Building Communities through Partnerships and Collaborations** – provides a foundation for building and sustaining community collaboration. Collaboration is defined, its benefits, barriers, and challenges are identified, and participants are engaged in an activity to identify individuals within their community who should be invited to actively participate in collaborative undertakings.

Note: once the grant program is established, past recipients will be recruited to help provide the training and support to new grantees.

These training opportunities will go a long way to create sustainable change within neighborhoods, not only through capital improvements, but through building the capacity of individual change.

Attachment A

Community Living Network Mini-Grants Application

Neighborhood / Community: _____

Name of Project: _____

Contact Person: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Please answer the following questions as completely as possible. Decisions will be based on the information you provide using the attached criteria. Please feel free to use additional sheets of paper, if needed to tell your story.

1. Where will the project take place?

2. What issue will your project address? Please check one.

Health Improvement projects

Beautification/Landscaping

Workshops

Festivals/Events

Community Gardens

Other project

3. Briefly describe your project.

4. How many residents do you expect will be involved in the project?

5. What tasks will they complete?

6. What is the benefit(s) neighborhood/community residents will receive from your project?

7. When do you want to start the project and when do you think it will be completed?

Start: _____

Finish: _____

8. Total Funding Requested? _____

9. How do you propose to spend the money? *Please attach a list of items and estimated costs with this application.*

Attach any photos, drawings, plans or any other supporting documentation that you think would be helpful.

Signatures:

Primary Contact Person (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Co-Applicant (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Co-Applicant (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Co-Applicant (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Co-Applicant (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Co-Applicant (Print Name): _____

Signature: _____

Address: _____

Phone/Email: _____ / _____

Must have at least 3 members for a project team; all project members need to sign and will need to submit Donated Services Time Sheets.

Attachment B

**Texas Council for Developmental Disabilities
Donated Services Time Sheet**

Donor Name			Month Ended	
Date	Description	Hours Worked	Hourly Rate	Total
			\$22.57	
Totals:				

Donor Certification	Grantee Certification
Services listed above were provided at no charge and were not financed in whole or in part by federal funds.	Values assigned to services listed above are supported by the fair market value of similar services in similar projects.
Signature	Signature