

“Better Together”

Mayor's Challenge Coin Program

To: City Council, City of Manor, Texas

Date: July 12, 2025

Subject: Proposal for the "Better Together" Mayor's Challenge Coin Program

Executive Summary

This proposal outlines a "Better Together" Mayor's Challenge Coin Program designed to foster stronger community bonds, increase civic engagement, and enhance the quality of life for Manor residents. The program encourages residents to complete seven community-focused tasks within one year, emphasizing neighbor interactions, community service, and participation in City initiatives. Successful completion of these tasks will be recognized with a special Mayor's Challenge Coin, signifying their significant contribution to making Manor a more connected and vibrant community. A key aspect of this program is to encourage activities that impact a medium to large number of residents (25-50+) while remaining low-cost or free.

Program Goals

- Strengthen Community Ties: Encourage positive interactions and relationships among neighbors.
- Increase Civic Engagement: Promote active participation in community service and City-sponsored events.
- Enhance Community Pride: Foster a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for Manor's well-being.
- Recognize Community Leaders: Acknowledge and celebrate residents who go above and beyond for their community.
- Promote Inclusivity: Design activities that are accessible and welcoming to all residents.

Program Framework

A. Eligibility:

- a. Open to all residents of the City of Manor.
- b. Applicants must be at least 14 years old (minors must be accompanied by a parent/guardian)

B. Application Process:

- a. Application Form: Residents will complete a simple application form available online and at City Hall, outlining their interest in the program.
- b. Program Handbook: Upon approval, participants will receive a "Better Together" Program Handbook detailing the tasks, guidelines, and reporting procedures.

C. Challenge Coin:

- a. A specially designed "Better Together" Mayor's Challenge Coin will be awarded to residents who successfully complete all seven tasks.

D. Completion Timeline:

- a. All seven tasks must be completed within one year from the date of application approval.

The Seven Challenge Tasks

The program will require participants to complete seven distinct tasks, each designed to promote different aspects of community engagement. Here are potential categories and ideas, with a focus on low-cost/free options impacting a minimum 25-50+ residents each task. Each applicant must complete all seven (7) tasks. You may suggest up to 4 substitute activities for up to four (4) of the seven (7) tasks below.

1: INCREASE NEIGHBOR INTERACTIONS

Goal: Directly facilitate connections among neighbors.

- Organize a Neighborhood Meet-and-Greet/Potluck: Pick a common area (park, cul-de-sac) and invite neighbors to bring a dish to share. Distribute flyers/digital invites to at least 50 homes in their immediate vicinity. Focus on casual mingling and introductions. (Cost: Minimal for flyers, free if digital invites are used.)
- "Welcome Wagon" Initiative: Partner with the City or a local real estate group to identify new residents. Organize a small group of existing neighbors to personally welcome at least 10 new families, providing them with local information, small welcome baskets (donated items), and inviting them to a neighborhood gathering. (Impact: Indirectly impacts 50+ as new residents feel more connected and spread positive word-of-mouth. Cost: Free for volunteering time, minimal if welcome basket items are donated.)
- "Sidewalk Chalk Social": Promote a specific day for neighbors to decorate their sidewalks with positive messages and art. Provide a small amount of shared chalk (if budget allows, or ask neighbors to bring their own). Encourage families to walk around and view each other's art. This creates organic conversations and a sense of shared activity. (Cost: Potentially less than \$50 for bulk sidewalk chalk, or free if participants bring their own.)

TASK 2: HOST OR CO-HOST A BLOCK PARTY

Goal: Create a larger-scale neighborhood gathering.

- Street Closure Application (if applicable and feasible): Work with the City to get a temporary street closure for a block party. Encourage neighbors to bring chairs, food to share, and simple games. Focus on free activities like jump rope, chalk art, or just conversation. (Cost: Potentially free for permit, minimal for invitations/signs.)
- Park Pavilion Party: Reserve a public park pavilion and organize a potluck style gathering. Promote through neighborhood groups, flyers, and word-of-mouth. Encourage residents to bring their own lawn games and activities. (Cost: Free for park reservation, minimal for invites.)
- "Neighborhood Game Night" in a Common Area: Utilize a shared community space (e.g., HOA clubhouse, church hall, or even a large front yard if applicable) for a board game or card game night. Ask residents to bring their favorite games and snacks to share. (Cost: Free, as residents bring their own games/snacks.)

TASK 3: PARTICIPATE IN A COMMUNITY SERVICE EVENT

Goal: Contribute to the beautification or improvement of public spaces.

- Organize a Neighborhood Clean-Up Day: Designate a specific park, greenbelt, or public area. Recruit at least 10-15 volunteers and spend a few hours picking up litter. This benefits everyone who uses the space. (Cost: Free – participants bring their own gloves/bags or City can provide.)
- Community Garden Enhancement: Partner with an existing community garden or propose a small new one. Organize a planting or weeding day, inviting numerous residents to participate. The garden benefits the entire community. (Cost: Potentially free if tools are borrowed/donated and seeds are inexpensive or shared.)
- "Manor Loves Trees" Planting Event: Work with the City Parks Department to organize a tree planting day in a public park or along a specific street. This visibly improves the community for all residents. (Cost: Dependent on tree donations/City budget, but resident's role is volunteer labor, which is free.)

TASK 4: VOLUNTEER AT A CITY-RELATED EVENT

Goal: Directly support City initiatives and services.

- Manor Fest/Holiday Event Volunteer: Sign up to volunteer at a major City-sponsored event (e.g., Manor Fest, Christmas Tree Lighting, Easter Egg Hunt). Roles could include directing traffic, setting up/tearing down, assisting vendors, or helping with children's activities. (Cost: Free for volunteer time.)
- City Council Meeting Attendance/Participation (Educational): While not direct volunteering, attending at least three City Council meetings and providing constructive public comment on a relevant issue demonstrates civic engagement that impacts City decisions and thus residents. (Cost: Free.)
- Support a City-Led Initiative: Volunteer to help promote or execute a specific City initiative, such as a voter registration drive, a public safety campaign, or a new recycling program. This amplifies the City's reach. (Cost: Free for volunteer time.)

TASK 5: SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESSES/ORGANIZATIONS

Goal: Contribute to the economic vitality and social fabric of Manor.

- "Shop Local Saturday" Ambassador: Partner with the Chamber of Commerce or local business association to promote a "Shop Local" day. Distribute flyers, encourage participation, and share information about local businesses online. This can impact a large number of businesses and their patrons. (Cost: Free for volunteer time, minimal for printing flyers if done independently.)
- Non-Profit Fundraising Support: Volunteer to help an existing Manor-based non-profit organization with a fundraising event or awareness campaign. This could involve phone banking, flyer distribution, or event support. The impact of successful fundraising reaches the beneficiaries of the non-profit. (Cost: Free for volunteer time.)
- "Local Business Spotlight" Social Media Campaign: Create a series of social media posts highlighting different City or Manor small businesses each week, encouraging residents to visit them. This increases visibility for many businesses and informs many residents. (Cost: Free.)

TASK 6: PROMOTE PUBLIC SAFETY OR HEALTH & WELLNESS

Goal: Contribute to a safer or healthier community.

- Neighborhood Watch Promotion: Help revive or establish a Neighborhood Watch program in a specific area. Organize an informational meeting with law enforcement and recruit participants. A strong Neighborhood Watch can deter crime and make many residents feel safer. (Cost: Free, or minimal for printing informational materials.)
- "Walk/Bike to School Day" Organizer/Promoter: Work with local schools to promote and organize a "Walk/Bike to School Day." This encourages healthy habits and reduces traffic around schools, benefiting many families. (Cost: Free for volunteer time, minimal for promotional materials.)
- Get Fit/Get Healthy Activity: Work to promote physical indoors or outdoors. Organize a day or multiple days of activities for residents to learn how to increase their physical health conditions AND participate in age and ability appropriate physical activities. (Cost: Free for volunteer time, minimal for promotional materials. May be some costs associated to secure a location without community partners)
- Community Health Fair Support: Volunteer at a local health fair, assisting with setup, registration, or directing attendees. Such fairs often provide free health screenings and information to a large number of residents. (Cost: Free for volunteer time.)

TASK 7: INNOVATION/PERSONALIZED IMPACT

Goal: Allow for creative and unique contributions that align with the spirit of the program.

- Create a "Little Free Library" for an underserved area: Build or acquire a "Little Free Library" and place it in a location accessible to many residents, encouraging literacy and sharing. (Cost: Can be done under \$100 with recycled materials or community donations for wood/paint.)
- Organize a "Skill Share" Workshop: Host a free workshop (e.g., basic home repair, gardening tips, digital literacy) in a public space, inviting community members to learn from each other. (Cost: Free if hosted at a public library or community center, minimal for any shared materials.)
- Start a Hyperlocal Newsletter/Social Media Group: Create a dedicated platform (digital or print) to share positive community news, upcoming events, and resident spotlights, reaching and connecting a large number of residents. (Cost: Free for social media groups, minimal for printing a small newsletter.)

Program Management & Oversight

- City Department Lead: The program would ideally be managed by a designated City department, such as Parks & Recreation, Communications, or the City Manager's Office.
- Reporting: Participants will be required to submit brief reports or documentation (e.g., photos, sign-in sheets, event flyers, brief descriptions of activities, number of residents impacted) for each completed task.
- Verification: The City will establish a simple verification process to confirm task completion.
- Recognition Event: An annual or semi-annual recognition ceremony at a City Council meeting or community event will be held to award the Mayor's Challenge Coins.

Marketing and Promotion

- City Website & Social Media: Dedicated pages and regular posts promoting the program.
- Local Media: Press releases and outreach to local newspapers and community calendars.
- Community Organizations: Partner with HOAs, community centers, and local non-profits to spread the word.
- Direct Mailers: Include information in utility bills or other City mailings.
- Informational Booths: Set up booths at City events to answer questions and sign up participants.

Budget Considerations

The "Better Together" Mayor's Challenge Coin Program is designed to be highly cost-effective, leveraging resident initiative and volunteerism.

- **Primary Cost**: Production of the Mayor's Challenge Coins. (Estimated cost per coin: \$5-\$15 depending on quantity and design complexity).
- **Secondary Costs**:
 - Design and printing of application forms and program handbooks.
 - Marketing materials (flyers, posters – largely digital).
 - Minor administrative overhead for program management.
 - Related resources, tools, equipment, and materials for indoor/outdoor promotion

Many of the proposed activities are free to implement or fall within the \$100 budget per activity as stipulated. The program relies on residents' time and existing community resources.

Conclusion

The "Better Together" Mayor's Challenge Coin Program offers a unique and impactful way to empower Manor residents to actively contribute to their community. By encouraging meaningful interactions, fostering civic responsibility, and recognizing outstanding efforts, this program will undoubtedly lead to a stronger, more connected, and truly "Better Together" Manor. We believe this initiative will be a source of pride for both the City and its residents for years to come.

We respectfully request the City Council's consideration and approval of this proposal, with revisions and not to exceed \$40,000. We are available to discuss this program further and answer any questions you may have.