

Applicant's To-Do List

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program

This to-do list is designed to help the applicant prepare and submit a grant proposal for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program.

The purpose of this program is to provide new or significantly improved recreation opportunities in urban, disadvantaged communities consistent with the purposes and requirements of the LWCF Act and manual. Projects must be in an incorporated city or town or unincorporated area having thirty thousand people or more as designated by the 2020 census. Projects also must be in a community (census tract) that is determined to be disadvantaged per the Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool. Nature-based projects, where nature is a major element of, or strongly supports, the proposed recreational activity, will earn five bonus points.

An applicant may request \$300,000 to \$15 million.

The applicant must submit the information required through [PRISM Online](#), the Recreation and Conservation Office (RCO) online project data system. The steps below will guide the applicant through the application process.

NOTE: All forms and manuals referenced here may be viewed on the [grant program page](#).

Step 1: Applicant Establishes Eligibility

Eligible Applicants

- Cities and towns
- Counties
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Park and recreation districts
- State agencies
- Other special purpose districts, such as port and public utility districts, if legally authorized to acquire and develop public open space, habitat, or recreation facilities

First-time Applicant

A first-time applicant to RCO must submit a legal opinion to establish eligibility.

Eligible Project Location

Projects must be in the following:

- **An incorporated city or town or unincorporated area** with a **population of thirty thousand or more** in the 2020 census ([U.S. Census Bureau QuickFacts: United States](#))
AND
- **A community (census tract) that is determined to be disadvantaged** per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (includes tract of project site and communities served)

Planning Eligibility

Each applicant must have a current adopted comprehensive recreation plan on file with RCO. See *Manual 2: Planning Policies and Guidelines* and [RCO planning requirements](#) web page for a list of organizations with current plans on file. If not on file, the applicant must submit a current plan by March 1, 2024.

Program Competition Priorities

- As green and blue spaces, and tree cover help to cool the air, reduce pollution, and have positive effects on mental and physical health, nature-based park projects will earn a five-point bonus. Nature-based projects are those where nature is a major element of, or strongly supports, the proposed recreational activity.
- Additional benefits beyond the above may help a project stand apart from other projects but they cannot be used as a replacement for the stated priority. Additional benefits may include, but are not limited to, projects that expand public-private partnerships to leverage matching share resources (e.g., money or donated lands, supplies, or services), provide economic benefits to the local community (e.g., short- or long-term jobs or stimulation to local business near the park), use sustainable design or materials, include site features that consider the needs of all demographics, or involve the redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property.

Eligible Project Elements

Applicants may submit acquisition or development projects. Grants are available for a wide range of outdoor recreation uses and the facilities needed to support the use and enjoyment of these areas. These include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Community parks and campgrounds
- Sports fields and courts
- Picnic areas
- Tracks for walking or biking
- Water-based recreation facilities such as for swimming or boating
- Support amenities such as restrooms, swimming pool bathhouses, parking etc.

Ineligible Project Elements, Costs, and Program Limitations

- Administrative or indirect costs
- Indoor recreation and other buildings, such as nature centers or education centers
- Parks and sites that received a LWCF grant that are open or closed within the past seven years, even if the scope of the project is different
- Parks and sites that received two Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership grants or additional Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership funds to cover cost increases of a previous program grant project

Step 2: Applicant Reviews Materials

Review the appropriate Recreation and Conservation Funding Board manuals for this grant program:

- *Manual 15: Land and Water Conservation Fund*
 - The basic rules about eligible project types, elements, and costs apply. Note that the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program has some differences outlined in Step 1 above which includes program goals, deadlines, grant limits, evaluation process (written), and project location requirements.
- *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*
- *Manual 4: Development Projects*

Step 3: Applicant Submits an Application by February 7, 2024

PRISM Online Application

PRISM will open in December. To start an application, go to [PRISM Online](#) and select + *New Application*. Follow the prompts to fill out the application. On-screen instructions, tool tips, and links are available throughout the Application Wizard.

PRISM Attachments

There is an *Attachments* screen in the PRISM Online application. Attach the following documents before submitting an application. Include the applicant's name, project name, and RCO grant number on each attachment. Maps must include a north arrow, scale bar, and labels for any major highways, roads, cities, water bodies, etc. If the project includes acquisition and development, attach the documents required for both project types.

- Federal form: Assurances for Construction Programs** (SF 424D). Use form available on the [grant program page](#).
- Authorizing Resolution/Application Authorization** (due by the technical completion deadline) shows the application is supported by the elected council or commission, board, or executives of the applicant's organization. The applicant must adopt the text verbatim even if using a different format.
- Budget Narrative (maximum five pages, including tables)**. Use the form available on the [grant program page](#).
- Control and Tenure Documentation** (development projects only). Include property ownership information, such as a deed, and all applicable leases, easements, and use agreements. See *Manual 4: Development Projects* for additional details about control and tenure.
- Landowner Acknowledgement Form** (acquisition projects only). The applicant must demonstrate that the landowner is aware of the interest in purchasing the property. There are several options to meet this requirement: see "Application Requirements" in section 3 of *Manual 3: Acquisition Projects*.
- Map: Boundary Map-Proposed** must clearly indicate the park area proposed for acquisition or development, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the protection provisions of the LWCF Act (54 USC 200305(f)(3)), all known outstanding rights and interests in the area held by others, total acres within the boundaries, and a north arrow. For detailed map requirements, see "Boundary Map" under the "Protection of Federal Investments and Ongoing Stewardship" heading in section 2 of manual 15. See also the "In Perpetuity Requirement" section at the end of this document.

- ❑ **Map: Parcel Map** (acquisition projects only) shows the parcels to be acquired in the scope of work as well as adjacent land ownership. Show the parcels in relation to local roads, landmarks, etc.
- ❑ **Map: Population Proximity.** Depict on a map (1) the project boundary and (2) the incorporated city or town or unincorporated area having a population of thirty thousand per the 2020 census), and identify census tract numbers of the project site and communities served (all tracts must be located in a census tract that is determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#)).
- ❑ **Map: Regional Location.** A neighborhood/community map showing the location of the project and any existing recreation resources in the vicinity of the project site. At a minimum, the applicant must show the location of the project and identify all existing recreation resources (if any) within a one-mile vicinity of the project site.
- ❑ **Milestones** (one-page limit). Use the milestone worksheet specific to the project type (acquisition and/or development) that is available on RCO's ["Post Award Information" web page](#). The start date should be no earlier than February 1, 2026.
- ❑ **Photograph.** Every application requires at least one project photograph in .jpg format. The photograph should be of the project site and should best characterize the project. A current ground shot or aerial view would be appropriate.
- ❑ **Project Narrative** (ten-page limit, twelve-point font). The project narrative consists of a project data page, project overview, and responses to the evaluation criteria. The criteria and a form are available on the [grant program page](#).
- ❑ **Project Support–Letters of Match Commitment.** Letters documenting secured contributions of matching share clearly stating the amount and type of contribution, if applicable.
- ❑ **Project Support–General Letters of Support (optional).** Letters and other documented expressions of project support or concern submitted with the application will be made available for advisory committee and federal merit panel (evaluator) review. Please combine all letters into one PDF and attach to the application in PRISM.
- ❑ **Project Visuals and Images.** Use the Project Images Form on the [grant program page](#). Photographs provide context such as current site conditions, the surrounding environment, etc. Use the *Projects Visuals* attachment type when uploading to PRISM.
- ❑ [RCO Fiscal Data Collection Sheet](#)
- ❑ **Site Plan: Conceptual Site Plan** (acquisition projects only) provides a visual diagram of the intended future use and development of the property. Identify the location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc.

- ❑ **Site Plan: Development Site Plan** (development projects only) shows the proposed improvements at the project site. Identify the location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc. Development site plans should show site boundaries, major site features, and proposed project elements. Existing and future elements should be distinguished from those in the current project. Master, schematic design, design development, and construction document level plans are suitable for development site plans.

Also note that except for a few protected items, such as cultural resources data or confidential appraisal documents, as soon as the application is started, it and most attachments will be available for review by RCO staff, evaluators, and the public.

Step 4: Technical Review Period– February 12-26, 2024

The state’s LWCF advisory committee, RCO, and the National Park Service review the application for eligibility, completeness, and clarity. RCO will return the application with feedback, questions, or suggested changes.

Step 5: Re-Submit Application by Technical Completion Deadline–March 27, 2024

- ❑ Address issues raised during technical review and make modifications, if needed.
- ❑ Attach an [Authorizing Resolution/Application Authorization](#) that shows the application is supported by the political, board, or executives of the applicant’s organization. The applicant must adopt the text verbatim even if using a different format.
- ❑ Provide a [Certification of Applicant Match](#) to show what amounts and sources of match the applicant has in hand for the project. Attach this document to the application. RCO may ask the applicant to recertify applicant match before an agreement is issued.
- ❑ Complete all revisions and resubmit the application in PRISM Online by the technical completion deadline or the application will be deemed ineligible.

Step 6: Final State Review and Submit to National Park Service–April 2024

RCO will review the final application to ensure that it meets program goals and objectives. RCO’s director will approve the proposals to be sent to the National Park Service for national competition.

Step 6: National Evaluation and Ranking–Spring-Fall 2024

Once the National Park Service regional office accepts an application, it is sent to federal project reviewers. Projects will be ranked according to the reviewers’ scores and a list provided to the director of the National Park Service, who makes the final funding decision.

Step 7: Applicants Submit Pre-Agreement Materials–Winter 2024-2025

If the project is selected by the National Park Service, the applicant will be invited to submit additional materials that create a full application.

An applicant must comply with all applicable federal laws, regulations, and policies. An applicant must provide evidence of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act, the Endangered Species Act, the National Historic Preservation Act, and other federal laws as part of the approval process.

- Application and Revision Form
- Copy of issued U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permit, if required for the project
- Any other forms or documents as required by RCO or the National Park Service for the project

Step 8: National Park Service Awards Grants and RCO Issues Agreements–Fall 2025

The Recreation and Conservation Funding Board approves the grant awards, contingent on congressional approval of funding for the program. The earliest start date is expected to be after February 1, 2026.

RCO works with the grant applicant to execute a grant agreement before work begins.

The applicant reviews the following:

- [Manual 7: Long-Term Obligations](#)
- [Manual 8: Reimbursements](#)

Review the Successful Applicant Webinar materials.

The period of performance for LWCF grants is typically two to three years.

In Perpetuity Requirement

The LWCF Act requires that any park or other outdoor recreation area benefitting from assistance from the LWCF, whether for acquisition or development purposes, and regardless of the amount or extent of assistance, not be converted to any use other than public outdoor recreation (see 54 U.S.C. 200305(f)(3)).

Therefore, as a condition of the grant, the National Park Service requires that language be recorded against the deed of the assisted park/recreation property advising that the property was acquired and/or developed with federal funds from the LWCF and that the property must

be preserved for outdoor recreation uses in perpetuity and cannot be converted to any use other than public outdoor recreation use without the written approval of the Secretary of the Interior. This approval is contingent upon the project sponsor replacing the area to be converted with a *new* recreation area involving land of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility, and the conversion and its replacement found consistent with the state's statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan.

The perpetuity requirement is applied to the assisted park or other recreation area *as a whole*. Exceptions for boundaries that would apply to a lesser unit of a park will be considered only if the unit is a stand-alone recreation area (i.e., its borders do not include other areas of the park) and is self-sustaining (i.e., it does not rely on nor serve adjoining park area for access, utilities, support facilities, etc.). The State and the National Park Service must agree to any boundary that does not comprise the whole park, and the National Park Service may eliminate from consideration proposals that are not consistent with this policy.