



Maryland's Community Parks and Playgrounds Program

FY 2028 GRANT PROPOSAL GUIDE

Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Land Acquisition and Planning
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Visit our website for more information and up-to-date news:
<http://dnr.maryland.gov/land/Pages/ProgramOpenSpace/cpp.aspx>

For general questions or project submissions, please send email to: laplocalgrants.dnr@maryland.gov

Community Parks and Playgrounds (CPP) Program Grants Proposal Guide

A. Program Description and Requirements

1. Purpose

The Community Parks and Playgrounds Program provides grant funding assistance to restore existing park and green space systems and create new park and green space systems in the municipal corporations of the state and Baltimore City.

2. Source of Funds

The source of funds for this program is primarily State General Obligation Bonds, which may be authorized on an annual basis.

3. Administration of the Funds

The Maryland Department of Natural Resources (DNR) administers the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program per Natural Resources Article § 5-9C-02. DNR staff prepares and distributes application materials to municipalities and Baltimore City, conducts grant writing workshops, if necessary, and provides background information and analysis on applications.

4. General Requirements

The Community Parks and Playgrounds Program provides funding to **incorporated municipalities and Baltimore City**. Grants may be for up to 100% of the project cost and are selected on a competitive basis. Projects must be publicly accessible. Nonprofit organizations are encouraged to partner with applicants in project sponsorship and implementation.

5. Types of Projects Funded

Activities eligible for funding include, but are not limited to:

- 1) development of new parks;
- 2) rehabilitation of existing parks;
- 3) expansion or improvement of existing parks;
- 4) purchase and installation of playground equipment;
- 5) development of environmentally oriented parks and recreation projects;
- 6) development of new trails or extension of existing trails;
- 7) creation of access points to water recreation resources; or
- 8) acquisition of land to create new parks.

Notes:

- The Department of Natural Resources works to provide opportunities for Marylanders, especially our children, to experience nature. The Department has developed a web site <http://dnr.maryland.gov/pgc/Pages/NPS/index.aspx> that provides information about Nature Play Spaces. Nature Play Spaces are one of the many types of public recreation projects eligible for consideration for Community Parks and Playgrounds grant funding.
- While land acquisition costs may be considered for project funding, the highest priority will be placed on capital costs associated with park development and improvement. Please contact your Program Administrator first if you are considering an acquisition project.

6. Specific Project Eligibility Requirements

- 1) Projects must comply with all applicable Local, State, and Federal statutes and regulations.
- 2) Projects shall be open for public use at all reasonable hours and times of the year, according to the type of area and facility.
- 3) Projects shall be open to entry and use by all persons, regardless of race, color, religion, sex, age, handicap, marital status, sexual orientation, gender, or ancestry or national origin, and shall be operated in compliance with Title VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, P.L. 88-354 (1964) and its amendments, the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990, P.L. 101-336 and its amendments, and Section 20-601 et. seq. (Discrimination in Employment) of the State Government Article of the Annotated Code of Maryland (2014 Repl. Vol. and 2016 Supp.)

- 4) Projects are within the applicant's jurisdiction and the applicant holds the rights to develop on the property.
- 5) Applicant demonstrates the capacity to plan, implement and maintain the project (sufficient and qualified staff or contractor, effective administrative procedures and systems, evidence of past success, etc.)
- 6) Applicant is ready to begin design/construction immediately after Board of Public Works approval and complete the project in a timely manner.
- 7) Project is consistent with National Playground Safety Standards and the Americans with Disabilities Act (<https://www.ada.gov/>.)
- 8) Inclusive playground projects should consult with The Maryland Department of Disabilities and the Maryland Developmental Disabilities Council's *Framework and Toolkit for Inclusive Playgrounds in Maryland* for guidance: https://www.md-council.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/MDDC_InclusivePlaygroundsInMaryland.pdf
- 9) Projects including playground surfacing materials cannot have more than 90 parts per million (ppm) of lead, or a component product, material, or substance to which PFAs (per- and polyfluoroalkyl) chemicals are added (Environment Article § 6–16A–03).
- 10) Applicant ensures that project site addresses any stormwater drainage issues and discharge requirements.
- 11) Sustainability and energy efficiency are always key elements as projects are considered for Community Parks and Playgrounds grant funding. Please ensure that any proposed lighting is energy efficient and reduces light spill-over to the maximum extent possible.
- 12) Development projects cannot have been funded with Program Open Space (POS) Local or Community Parks and Playgrounds (CPP) grants within the last 20 years or a Local Parks and Playgrounds Infrastructure (LPPi) grant within the last 15 years. If you are unsure of the project's eligibility, please contact your Program Administrator.
- 13) Development projects must have a **minimum twenty (20) year life span**. Projects must be properly maintained to be in a safe and usable state for access by all members of the public. If the grantee fails to do so, the grantee, at no expense to the State, will replace the project with a project of equal or greater public recreational/ open space and monetary value approved by the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program. A Community Parks and Playground funding acknowledgement sign must be installed prior to the completion of the project to be eligible for final reimbursement.
- 14) Land acquired under a state grant from the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program must be maintained in perpetuity. Conversion of use of land will require replacement with land of equal or greater recreational use, acreage, and equal or greater monetary value approved by the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program.
- 15) Acquisition costs must be supported by two independent appraisals from certified general real estate appraisers with qualifications consistent with industry standards and all applicable Local, State, and Federal statutes and regulations. Narrative reports must meet Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).

B. Proposal Review and Selection

Awards will be competitive in nature. DNR staff will review complete applications. Projects will be evaluated based on: consistency with Community Parks and Playgrounds Program's purpose, eligibility requirements and criteria, the applicant's responses, as well as the status of any previously awarded grants. DNR staff will make recommendations for grant selections. Once reviewed by DNR, recommended projects will be forwarded to the Department of Budget and Management for possible inclusion in the Governor's Budget proposal. Once the budget is approved by the Legislature and the fiscal year begins, the selected projects will be submitted for State Clearinghouse review and to the Board of Public Works for final approval.

Although the Community Parks and Playgrounds selection criteria and funding will be used for these projects, the applicant's management and maintenance responsibilities will be the same as those associated with projects receiving Program Open Space (POS) Local funding.

C. Notification of Award

DNR will send a letter of award to the applicant for each approved project. Approved grant recipients may be required to submit a revised itemized budget if one is requested. Award funds may only be used for the project as submitted and approved by DNR and the Board of Public Works (BPW).

D. Monitoring, Evaluation, and Award Disbursement

DNR staff will monitor local progress in accordance with stated timelines, performance criteria and goals set forth in each approved project and the standards and policies of the Community Parks and Playgrounds Program. Community Parks and Playground projects are to be administered in accordance with the Program Open Space (POS) Local Grants Manual.

Community Parks and Playgrounds is a *reimbursable* grant program. DNR will reimburse the applicant for the approved project costs when proper documentation is provided with the reimbursement request for completed project elements. Reimbursement for actual project costs of any element will at no time exceed the Board of Public Works approved funding amount. DNR will not reimburse the applicant for costs not associated with the BPW approved project. Advanced payments toward allowable costs may be considered after BPW approval on a case by case basis. Any funds remaining or not used to execute the awarded project must be returned to the Community Parks and Playgrounds program.

E. Project Proposal and Submission Process

1. *Complete* a **Community Parks and Playgrounds Program Application and Project Agreement** for each project.
2. *Sign and date* the **Declaration of Adherence to Award Conditions/Requirements and Local Government Authorization**.
3. *Assemble* all accompanying documents.
4. *Contact* your Program Administrator in advance to review project eligibility and, if needed, to review the required attachments.
5. **Applications with all accompanying documents are due to DNR on Wednesday, August 19, 2026 by 3:00 p.m. and must be emailed to: laplocalgrants.dnr@maryland.gov.**

Please be advised that incomplete or late applications may not be considered for funding.

F. Grant Workshops

DNR staff will be available virtually via Google Meet on the following dates and times to review the grant requirements and answer any questions.

Tuesday, June 23, 2026 at 11:00 am

Thursday, July 23, 2026 at 4:00 pm

Google Meet joining info

Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/kzq-ghkt-mai>

Or dial: (US) +1 530-424-9668 PIN: 264 464 690#

G. Anticipated Program Timeline

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| May/June 2026 | Proposal requests announced. |
| August 19, 2026 | Applications due by 3:00 p.m. |
| May/June 2027 | Awards Announced and Notifications Emailed
(subject to budget allocation and approval) |

<http://dnr.maryland.gov>

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