

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FOR

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Outdoor Recreation and Legacy Partnership Program

Posted Date: February 16, 2023

Proposal Due Date: 11:59 PM, April 14, 2023

I. Introduction

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is pleased to announce this funding opportunity through the Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program. This initiative can provide up to 50% matching for eligible projects (minimum award - \$300,000, maximum award - \$10,000,000) that target the improvement of recreational opportunities within underserved communities.

Background & Purpose:

Created in 2014 by the National Park Service (NPS), the ORLP Program is a nationally competitive grant program wherein states (in partnership with municipalities and federally recognized Indian tribes) can submit proposals for land acquisitions or improvements that will provide or significantly improve recreational opportunities in economically disadvantaged communities. This initiative is consistent with the purposes and requirements of the LWCF Act and the [LWCF Manual](#).

In Perpetuity Requirement:

As a condition of this grant funding, the NPS 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. Before seeking a LWCF grant, project sponsors should carefully consider their ability and willingness to comply with this provision of the law.

II. Project Eligibility

A. APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY

In accordance with the LWCF Act, only the State's lead agency for the program (in this instance, DEEP), may apply to the Federal Government for ORLP grants. DEEP is seeking proposals from eligible subrecipients (AKA project sponsors). Those include the following:

- state agencies
- local units of government (cities, towns, counties, and park districts)
- federally recognized Indian Tribes.

Eligible subrecipients must be an incorporated city or town of at least 30,000 people. County or special purpose district projects must serve a city or town of 30,000 or more.

Any applications submitted directly to the Federal Government by entities other than the State Lead Agency for LWCF will not be considered. Individuals, nonprofit organizations, and other private entities are not eligible as applicants or sub-recipients.

B. PROJECT ELIGIBILITY

The ORLP Program is designed to provide recreational opportunities to economically disadvantaged communities. Therefore, there are a number of criteria that project proposals must meet in order to be considered eligible for these awards. Projects must:

- Meet recreation goals as identified in Connecticut's State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan ([SCORP](#)). Projects must align with at least one priority within SCORP.
- Be located within or abutting an incorporated city (or town) having a population of 30,000 or more, and
- Serve the specific needs of a community(ies) that is (are) severely lacking in walkable, publicly accessible, outdoor recreation ("park deserts"), and that has a poverty rate of at least 20% or that is at least 10 percentage points higher than that of the project city, county, and state rates. Use [Census Reporter](#) to determine the poverty rate. (Type in the address, then click on the census tract to see the poverty rate).
 - A community is considered a "park desert" if:
 - There are no existing parks within a .5-mile radius of the community(ies) to be served by the park (not the radius of the proposed park); or
 - One or two small parks within a .5-mile radius of the community(ies) that is/are otherwise unable to provide a variety of recreational opportunities; or
 - One or two existing parks (potentially of adequate size), including the park that is being addressed in this project, that is/are so obsolete or underdeveloped that a major redevelopment or rehabilitation is necessary to be able to significantly increase the number of people or user groups who could be served in a way that would be equivalent to a new park; or
 - Existing parks that are inaccessible to the target community due to physical barriers such as transportation infrastructure, rivers, etc.

III. Award Information

Estimated Total Funding for this award round is \$192,000,000. Awards will range based on the project, with a minimum award of \$300,000, and a maximum of \$10,000,000. It is expected that this funding round will select 30 projects from the nationwide pool of applications. LWCF ORLP awards are given as grants to the State Lead Agency, then the State Lead Agency grants a sub-award to the city or town which sponsored the project.

IV. Selection Criteria and Submission Information

A. APPLICATION SUBMISSION TIMELINE/INFORMATION

The State will make an initial determination to decide which applications to submit to the NPS for consideration in the national competition. As such:

The State submission deadline is earlier than the Federal ORLP submission deadline.

This allows for the State's LWCF review board to conduct the initial review of proposals for completeness and eligibility requirements; evaluating and prioritizing proposals according to the criteria used for the competition. This review is intended to provide constructive feedback to applicants and allow time for applications to be improved prior to submission to the NPS, increasing their chances of being selected for funding.

PLEASE NOTE: DEEP will review projects on a rolling basis for completeness and eligibility. The earlier DEEP receives an application, the sooner DEEP can start the required reviews under the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act to determine project eligibility. Final selection of projects for submission to the Federal opportunity will occur after DEEP's submission deadline.

RFP Official Announcement: February 16, 2023

Projects must be submitted to CT DEEP no later than: 11:59 PM, April 14, 2023

Final Submission Deadline to NPS: 11:59 PM Wednesday, May 31, 2023.

For Questions and to Submit Applications: Email Cameron Clegg at Cameron.clegg@ct.gov

B. SELECTION CRITERIA

The ORLP competition prioritizes the selection of projects that:

- Provide new recreational opportunities, particularly those that will increase access to nature's benefits, such as green spaces, shady areas (via tree cover), and natural landscapes that help cool the air and reduce urban heat island effects, reduce pollution and have positive effects on mental and physical health;
- Empowered and engaged members of the target community in the project development and design of the plans for the park;
- Create or expand public-private partnerships that leverage matching share resources (e.g., money or donations of land, supplies, or services, etc.)
- Benefit from a high degree of coordination among the public, multiple levels of government, and the private sector; and
- Advance goals of, or meet, priority recreation needs identified in numerous local, regional, state plans or initiatives.

Before grading proposals, the NPS will conduct an initial screening of each proposal to assess its completeness and eligibility.

Proposals deemed ineligible or incomplete will NOT be assessed.

The NPS has published the scoring criteria for ORLP projects in the updated [Notice of Funding](#) on pages 20-26. Criteria are weighted on a 10 or 20 point scale and graded according to the rubric on page 24. The total point value of the criteria is 100 points. A minimum of 4 reviewers will independently review each proposal, with all final scores compiled and averaged to create a final score. All proposals will be compiled into a ranked list. Generally, proposals will be recommended in the ranked order.

C. ANTICIPATED ANNOUNCEMENT

The NPS is targeting **January 1, 2024** for an announcement of selection results.

V. Application Requirements

FEDERALLY REQUIRED PROPOSAL ELEMENTS:

Applications for this grant program require a number of forms and supporting documents, listed below. Further detailed instructions for each element are listed in the Updated Notice

of Funding. PLEASE NOTE: Supporting document page limits are **absolute**, with no exceptions.
Information beyond the page limit for specific elements will NOT be reviewed

1. [Standard Form SF424](#), Application for Federal Assistance – Complete boxes 14, 15, 16, 17, 18
2. [Standard Form 424C](#), Budget Information for Construction Programs
3. [Standard Form SF424D](#), Assurances for Construction Programs
4. [Standard Form 429B](#), Real Property Status Report, Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish (for acquisition or acquisition & development projects only)
5. [Standard Form - Project Abstract Summary](#)
6. [Project Narrative \(max 10 pages\)](#)
7. [Budget Narrative \(max 5 pages\)](#), including tables – must include information detailed under “Budget Narrative” in this section. Budget items should be \$25,000 or less for breakdown
8. [Project Timeline \(max 1 page\)](#) to complete the tasks/activities under the proposal.
9. [Photos](#) provide context such as current site conditions, the surrounding environment, etc.
10. [Recreation Area Map](#) showing the location of the project and identifying all existing recreation resources (if any) within a .5-mile vicinity of the economically disadvantaged community(ies) that will be served by the project.
11. [Map \(or Aerial Photo\) Delineating Project Area and Proposed Boundary](#) - must clearly indicate area to be acquired and/or developed, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the perpetual protection provisions of the LWCF Act ([54 U.S.C. 200305\(f\)\(3\)](#)), all known outstanding rights and interests in the area held by others, total acres withing the boundary(ies), and a north arrow.
12. [Plan or Sketch of the Site Features](#) identifying location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc.
13. [Letters of Support Documenting Secured Contributions of Matching Share](#) clearly stating the amount and type of contribution, or Co-Sponsor/Ownership Agreements if project sponsor is not title holder.
14. [General Letters of Support](#) (**must** be submitted with the Grants.gov application to be considered. **Letters of support from Congress must be addressed to the Project Sponsor** and included with the application to Grants.gov).
15. [Letter of Intent to Sell, Purchase, or Donate Property](#) (acquisition projects only).
16. [Application and Revision Form](#) (A&R) Complete highlighted sections if applicable to your project
17. [Description and Notification Form](#) (DNF - LWCF form available from the state)
18. [Copy of an Approved Waiver of Retroactivity](#) (submitted by state, if applicable)
19. [Conflict of Interest Disclosure](#) (described within Notice of Funding)
20. [Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement](#) (described within Notice of Funding)
21. [Copy of the Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement](#) (if applicable)