



Land and Water Conservation Fund



Grant Program in Alaska

Information for Applicants



Prepared by

STATE OF ALASKA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
DIVISION OF PARKS AND OUTDOOR RECREATION

GRANTS AND ADMINISTRATION



The LWCF grant program is comprised of federal funds from the National Park Service. Regulations of the U.S. Department of the Interior strictly prohibit unlawful discrimination in federally assisted programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, age or handicap. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against in any program, activity or facility operated by a recipient of federal assistance should contact:

Director, Office of Equal Opportunity
U.S. Department of the Interior
National Park Service
1849 C Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

State of Alaska
Department of Natural Resources
Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation

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FORWARD

This informational booklet provides an overview of the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant program. For further information, please contact:

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Find an LWCF Preliminary Grant Application, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), Rating Forms, Budget Forms and Examples, Maps and more online at <http://dnr.alaska.gov/parks/grants/lwcf.htm>

SECTION I - INTRODUCTION TO LWCF

Overview: The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is a federal grant program administered by the National Park Service (NPS) through the State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR), Grants and Administration Section. LWCF can provide up to 50% matching funds (less State indirect costs) for the acquisition or development of outdoor recreation facilities.

Legislative Authority: Authority for the program is vested in the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act of 1965 passed by Congress under Public Law 88-578. The Act created a grants-in-aid fund to assist in preserving, developing and assuring access to quality outdoor recreation resources, and to strengthen the health and vitality of both current and future denizens of the United States.

Reimbursable and Matching: This is a reimbursable grant program. A grantee/sponsor will not receive a cash grant at the time of project approval. The grantee will incur project costs and be reimbursed up to 50% of the eligible expenses (less State indirect costs) upon submission of acceptable financial and narrative documents. A grantee may submit interim billings for reimbursement as often as quarterly.

A grantee's share of project costs (match) may come from sources such as local appropriations or bonds, in-kind use of equipment, materials, labor and administration, or donations of labor, land or materials. The value of land owned by the project sponsor is not eligible to be used as part of the sponsor's match.

State Indirect Costs: In addition to direct costs incurred by the grantee, the State may add an indirect fee to the total project budget. This fee covers costs associated with initiating the project, monitoring development or acquisition, and providing on-site inspections per NPS requirements, in perpetuity. Indirect costs are collected by the State from the federal share, prior to reimbursing the grantee. The fee may fluctuate through the period of the grant, but generally will not exceed 10% of any billing.

SECTION II - ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Eligible Applicants: State, regional, or local governments with the legal authority to provide park and recreation services on public lands are eligible to apply for LWCF assistance.

If an applicant has an active LWCF grant, billings must be current, the project on schedule, and any audit problems resolved to be eligible to apply for a new grant. Entities which have previously received an LWCF grant may apply for a new grant if there are no outstanding compliance problems or if the grantee is actively working to resolve any compliance problems.

Grant Requests: Only one application per local entity (i.e., city or borough) will be accepted per funding cycle. Local applicants may request LWCF grant assistance of \$25,000 through \$125,000. Since this is a 50-50 matching grant, total project costs would be at least double the grant request. For example, if the Fairbanks North Star Borough requested \$125,000 for an LWCF grant, they would need to document at least \$250,000 in eligible expenses.

Phasing Projects: Applicants are encouraged to phase larger development projects. Even if an application is only one phase of a multi-phased project, the project must result in a usable

recreation facility. For example, suppose a sponsor wants a park, which when complete, would include a parking area, restroom, ball field and picnic area. The sponsor may develop the parking area and ball field in the first phase, and then develop the restroom and the picnic area in the second phase. This is acceptable because the first phase would result in a usable recreation facility. If, however, the sponsor wanted the first phase to be the parking area and restroom facilities, this type of phasing would not be eligible because there will be no usable recreation outcome from this combination of facilities.

Land Ownership: The applicant/sponsor must own the land on which the development is to take place. Land that is leased is not eligible for development assistance.

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP): Per LWCF program requirements, all projects approved for funding must meet an outdoor recreation priority as identified in the current Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation develops this plan every five years with public participation. Check the LWCF component of the most current SCORP to see if your proposal reflects a stated priority. Occasionally the need for a certain type of facility exists in a community, but, because this same type of facility is not a statewide need, it is not identified as a priority in the SCORP. Unfortunately, because the project is not identified in the SCORP as a priority, it cannot be considered for LWCF funding.

Local Plan: Applicants must have a local planning document that identifies the proposed outdoor recreation project as a community need. Provide documentation on the short or long-range outdoor recreation needs of the community and show how this specific proposal rates within that plan. Public input into the plan and community support for the proposal must be documented. Need and support may be documented by submitting copies of completed outdoor recreation preference surveys, minutes of public meetings detailing attendees and their comments, etc.

Eligible Project Types: Below are examples of projects eligible for assistance under the LWCF program. This is not an exclusive listing.

Eligible Development Projects:

- master planning for a specific recreation area (in conjunction with development of equal or greater cost at same site)
- outdoor sports and play fields
- picnic facilities
- camping facilities
- tot lots
- neighborhood parks
- boating facilities
- fishing facilities (if for sport fish access, must have previously applied for and been turned down by Dingell-Johnson program)
- hunting facilities
- winter sports facilities
- community gardens
- rehabilitation of existing outdoor recreation facilities (provided deterioration is not due to lack of maintenance or repair)
- landscaping
- support facilities: restrooms, parking areas, fences, roads within the park area, utilities, etc., when included in a project with outdoor recreation development
- covered or sheltered facilities are eligible only under limited circumstances – contact LWCF grants administrator prior to completing an application

Ineligible Development Projects:

- running tracks and athletic fields used primarily for interscholastic sports
- tourist facilities primarily for economic development rather than outdoor recreation
- fairgrounds, livestock and produce exhibits
- professional sports facilities
- facilities that contribute primarily to indoor recreation use
- roads constructed outside the boundaries of the recreation area
- projects that conflict with private enterprise

Eligible Acquisition Projects:

- land for outdoor recreation activities
- waterfront property or the acquisition of water bodies themselves
- land for creating water-based public outdoor recreation opportunities
- areas that provide special recreation opportunities such as flood plains or wetlands
- land for natural areas and preserves, and outstanding scenic areas

Ineligible Acquisition Projects:

- historic sites or structures
- museums or archaeological excavation sites
- land to help meet a public school's minimum site size requirement
- areas to be used primarily for semi-professional or professional arts and athletics
- areas to be used solely for game refuges or fish production purposes
- land to be used mainly for the construction of indoor recreation facilities
- sites containing luxury lodges, motels, and similar elaborate facilities
- caretaker or park ranger residences

Eligible Reimbursements: Only project expenditures (or donations) occurring after a project is approved by NPS and prior to the expiration date of the grant are eligible for reimbursement.

The following types of expenditures are normally eligible for reimbursement:

- site planning and engineering, including construction supervision
- demolition
- construction costs
- fixed equipment such as play apparatus, backstops, basketball standards, etc.
- permanent and temporary project signs
- acquisition costs (not to include the cost of appraisals or title insurance)

SECTION III - GRANTEE COMMITMENTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Retention and Use: Property acquired or developed with LWCF funding assistance **must be retained and used solely for outdoor recreation, in perpetuity**. A covenant must be attached to the title of any LWCF-assisted site, reserving use of the site strictly for outdoor recreation prior to reimbursement under this grant. Any property acquired or developed with LWCF monies may not be wholly or partly converted to anything other than public outdoor recreation uses without the prior approval of the Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior and the Director of Alaska Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation. Such approval will be given only when other property and facilities of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness, quality, and location is substituted.

Financial and Legal Responsibility: Grantees are required to keep accurate records of project expenditures and be accountable for all funds and assets. It is the responsibility of the grantee to submit accurate and timely financial billings and to retain documentation relative to those billings.

Grantees are required to comply with the federal Single Audit Act of 1984. Required audits will be performed at the grantee's expense, and all audit exceptions must be satisfactorily resolved.

It is the responsibility of the grantee to comply with all applicable federal, state and local laws, as well as LWCF program requirements in the acquisition and/or development of a LWCF-assisted site.

Inspection, Operation and Maintenance: During development, a project is subject to inspection by the State and/or the National Park Service yearly. After completion, a project must be inspected every five years at a minimum.

Adequate operation and maintenance is the responsibility of the grantee. The facility must be attractive and inviting, clean and open for public use. Supervision must be adequate to meet the type of use. Health and safety problems are to be corrected immediately. Facilities cannot be kept locked and opened only for special occasions. They must be opened at reasonable hours and times of the year, according to the type of area or facility.

LWCF funds are not available for operation and maintenance costs. After completion of the grant, all subsequent costs are to be borne solely by the grantee.

Accessibility: The area or facility must be available for use by all persons regardless of race, color, sex, creed, national origin or place of residence. A facility must be developed and maintained so that it is accessible to persons with disabilities.

All LWCF facilities must be designed & constructed in conformance with 1) the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (P.L. 90-480) and the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (www.access-board.gov/ufas), or 2) the Department of the Interior regulations on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (43 CFR Part 17) and the Minimum Guidelines and Requirements for Accessible Design as issued by the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (ATBCB), 36 CFR Part 1190 (www.access-board.gov/ada-aba).

SECTION IV - ADMINISTRATION

State Responsibility: The Director of the State of Alaska, Division of Parks and Outdoor Recreation (DPOR) is appointed by the Governor to serve as the State Liaison Officer (SLO) for the LWCF program in Alaska. The SLO is responsible for the administration of the program. Potential participants must contact the State on all matters relating to the program.

The DPOR Grants and Administration Section is responsible for the day-to-day administration of the LWCF program. All questions regarding the program should be directed to the grants staff.

Application Process: If an entity is interested in applying during an open competition for an LWCF grant, the first step is to complete the Qualifying Criteria Checklist. If the proposed project satisfies all criteria on the checklist, the entity may complete a preliminary application. A preliminary application is simply that. Projects prioritized high enough to receive funding will be invited to complete a full application which requires much more detailed information.

Preliminary Project Selection: Preliminary Applications will be reviewed first by the Staff Evaluation Committee (SEC) for basic eligibility requirements. The SEC will disseminate eligible applications to the Outdoor Recreation and Trails Advisory Board (ORTAB) for review and scoring. The State Liaison Officer has final approval of the ranking or recommendation.

Full Application: Only projects ranked high enough above the anticipated funding level will be asked to complete the full application package. Fully completed application packages will be forwarded to the National Park Service for final approval and obligation of funds.

Project Activation: Development or acquisition expenses incurred prior to NPS grant approval will not be eligible for reimbursement under the program. Note: Until a project is officially approved by NPS, no title to land can be taken, nor development initiated.

Each grant has a specific period of time in which acquisition and/or development must be completed. This grant period is usually two construction seasons, unless otherwise requested and justified by the grantee.

Post-Completion Responsibilities: The grantee is solely responsible for adequate maintenance and operation of the completed facility. The site must be maintained to satisfy accessibility standards. In addition, **the property acquired or developed with LWCF assistance must be dedicated for public outdoor recreation use by covenant attached to the title of the property, and the property may only be used for outdoor recreation purposes, in perpetuity.**

SLO and NPS Inspection: Inspections are performed by the SLO or NPS staff at their discretion and when deemed necessary. The SLO or NPS staff may notify the project sponsor of any forthcoming inspections and give the sponsor an opportunity to accompany the inspection of any LWCF-assisted grant project.

Records Retention: The sponsor should maintain a copy of all inspection reports in their grant files for future reference.