

Regional Parks and Trails System Competitive Equity Grant Program 2024 Notice of Funding Availability

Business Item 2023-238

Metropolitan Parks and Open Space Commission

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October 5, 2023



Equity Grant Program Purpose



Provide funding to Regional Park Implementing Agencies for projects to advance equitable use of the Regional Parks and Trails System, with a focus on one or more of the following:

- Race
- Ethnicity
- Income
- Ability
- Age
- National Origin

Equity Grant Program Background



Started with a \$300,000 pilot program in 2019

- Funded 3 capital projects, applications exceeded \$1.5 million

\$2 million dedicated to the second grant round in 2021

- Funded 23 projects- both capital, non-capital/programming projects, and combination projects

Previously funded projects highlight



- \$60,000 to Washington County for a Parks-on-the-Go Outreach vehicle
- \$100,000 for the Saint Paul BIPOC Ambassador Program
- \$40,000 to Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board to provide multicultural and multilingual advertising
- \$162,000 to Scott County for a mental health and nature-based wellness program for disproportionately impacted communities
- \$38,700 to Ramsey County for a cultural liaison for parks
- \$52,500 to Anoka County for an augmented reality trail program to inspire youth

Funding for the 2024 grant round



- \$658,000 in Council bonds is available for capital projects
- \$1,410,000 in parks interest earnings is available for programming/non-capital
 - If funds remain after awarding programming projects, interest earnings may be used for capital projects
 - Programming projects may have small capital components such as recreation equipment
- Agencies may apply for multiple projects but may not receive more than \$200,000 in capital funds and \$200,000 in non-capital funds, for a total of \$400,000
- Agencies may request between \$20,000 and \$200,000 for individual projects

Scoring Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Points
<p>Impact on equitable use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal clearly identifies one or more underserved populations that the project will benefit and why they were chosen The proposal identifies measurable equity outcomes for intended populations 	20
<p>Community partnerships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal demonstrates community involvement throughout the project by both developing new relationships and strengthening existing partnerships The proposal demonstrates how partnerships will continue after the grant period 	20
<p>Community engagement and awareness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal demonstrates how partners and underserved populations will be engaged throughout the project and after the grant period The proposal includes regional parks and trails system awareness building among underserved communities 	20
<p>Capacity building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal will increase the ability of the regional park implementing agencies and their partners to grow their skills in working with underrepresented communities The proposal demonstrates the agency's capacity to leverage the Council's funds through non-state funds, grants, or in-kind contributions and/or the ability to continue the work after the grant period is complete 	20
<p>Programming initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proposal describes the internal process used to identify and develop the project and it describes the agency's outreach/education staff involvement when applicable The proposal clearly demonstrates how new programming efforts will affect underserved populations 	20
<p>Total Possible Points</p>	100

Anticipated timeline for the next grant round



- November 2023: Post Notice of Funding Availability and open application in WebGrants
- December 15, 2023: Applications due, Council staff start review
- February 2024: Technical review team meets and develops funding recommendations
- April 2024: Bring funding recommendations to Council
- May 2024: Grant agreements sent out

Rationale for recommendation

The *2040 Regional Parks Policy Plan*, Finance Chapter 8, Strategy 4 states that equity is a consideration in the Regional Parks System funding and investment. The equity grant program is one key Council strategy for advancing equity in the region.

Recommendation

That the Metropolitan Council authorize the Regional Parks System Competitive Equity Grant Program 2024 Notice of Funding Availability.