



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, Jan. 30, 2024

Media contact: jayette.bolinski@illinois.gov

Gov. Pritzker, IDNR announce \$54.9 million in grants for 111 local park and recreation projects throughout Illinois

SPRINGFIELD – Nearly \$55 million in state grants are being awarded for 111 local park projects throughout Illinois to help communities acquire land and develop recreational opportunities, Gov. JB Pritzker announced today.

For the second year in a row, the governor ensured funding was set aside for economically distressed communities, resulting in 32 underserved locations receiving \$18.7 million in grants from the [Open Space Land Acquisition and Development](#), or OSLAD, program. This is the 37th year for the program, which is administered by the Illinois Department of Natural Resources.

“Since day one as Governor, it’s been my mission to support the health and well-being of Illinoisans,” **said Governor JB Pritzker**. “With funding from the OSLAD program, municipalities across Illinois will have the opportunity to expand and improve local neighborhood parks through sport and recreational space, plants, playgrounds, and more. All across Illinois, we’re enhancing our state’s natural beauty and creating safer, healthier, and happier communities.”

Established by the Illinois General Assembly in 1986, OSLAD is a cost-sharing program between state and local governments that helps communities fund land acquisition and development for parks and outdoor recreation projects. It’s become one of the most popular grant programs in Illinois. Since it was established, OSLAD has awarded nearly \$585 million for park projects throughout Illinois (including the awards announced today).

“I appreciate Governor Pritzker’s continued efforts to ensure funding for the OSLAD program, which is a vital tool for communities to build safe, engaging, and accessible outdoor spaces for their residents,” **said IDNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie**. “An investment in the outdoors is an investment in the health and well-being of the people of Illinois. We know that 83% of Illinoisans consider access to outdoor recreational opportunities important for them and their families. And studies show time and again that that getting outside leads to better overall health.”

Among the OSLAD park projects included in this round of funding is renovation of Crispus Attucks Park in Carbondale, an economically distressed community. The Carbondale Park District plans to replace the park’s current playground equipment, which has fallen into disrepair. Updates will include the addition of disabled-accessible flooring, swings and playground equipment, as there is no other accessible park in the area that is suitable for children as young as 3 up to teenagers.

Additionally, plans call for installing a zip line and a climbing structure, neither of which are community park features found in southern Illinois. The park district expects the renovation will bring excitement and enjoyment to the neighborhood, as well as a sense of community pride.

“The Carbondale Park District is thrilled to learn that we have been chosen for an OSLAD grant for Attucks Park. This park holds a significant place in the history of Carbondale and for the people it honors,” **said Trey Anderson, executive director of the Carbondale Park District.** “This project is much needed and will help the surrounding community by offering an upgraded play area for enhanced outdoor activity and community inclusion. Thank you to the State of Illinois and IDNR for investing in our neighborhoods with safe and accessible playgrounds.”

Also receiving OSLAD funding is Harristown, a Macon County village of about 1,300 residents, one-third of whom are youth under the age of 19, yet there is no public park or playground for children and families to enjoy.

With the help of a \$150,000 OSLAD grant, the village board of trustees plans to build a park and playground that will have a pavilion, sitting areas, walking path, a disabled-accessible playground, a half basketball court, and pickleball courts. The village intends to utilize general funds and donations to match the OSLAD grant.

“The Village of Harristown is extremely happy to be receiving an OSLAD grant from the Illinois Department of Natural Resources. A community park has long been a hope for our residents, as this will be the only public park for our village,” **Harristown Mayor Evelyn Deverell said.** “We have an unwavering commitment to building a park that will meet the needs of our community and its residents. Our citizens and board of trustees will all work together to use these funds in a way that serves Harristown.”

“OSLAD is one of the state’s most significant grant programs. For more than 30 years, it has raised the quality of life in communities throughout Illinois,” **said Peter Murphy, president and CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts.** “We commend Governor Pritzker and the General Assembly for their strong support and continued investment in local park and recreation projects that create opportunities for Illinois youth.”

Some of the other projects awarded OSLAD grants include:

- **City of Toulon** – Renovation of the city park, including adding a splash pad; resurfacing the half basketball court and adding an adjustable hoop for use by multiple age groups; updating the full-size basketball court into a multi-use court for basketball, tennis and pickleball; installation of a sign language panel and disabled-accessible playground equipment; and the addition of exercise equipment for all ages.
- **Alsip Park District** – Development of the 22.65-acre Freedom Park, featuring the first set of outdoor pickleball courts in the park district and a single-track mountain bike course, a nine-hole disc golf course, a monarch waystation, replacement of the 20-year-old playground, and extension of walking paths to connect to the regional Cal-Sag Trail.
- **Sycamore Park District** – Development of a new 2.7-acre community park that establishes diverse recreation amenities and resilient native plantings in the heart of a residential community. Recreational amenities will include a picnic shelter with disabled-accessible picnic table seating and green roof, fitness challenge course, a new playground, a half basketball court, game area, and the new Native Savannah Trail. Habitat and conservation elements will include a new native prairie savannah at North Grove Park’s east edge, native shade trees, educational signage, and more.
- **Village of Ford Heights** – Development of an outdoor community recreation area, including expanded playground facilities, three basketball courts, a concession stand, a football/multi-use field with space for spectators, walking path, and lighting to ensure safety.
- **City of Mound City** – Improvements to the existing city park, including disabled accessible walking path and connecting sidewalks, a disabled accessible parking area, a new playground structure and ground cover pad, replacement of the basketball court, and additional benches.

“Our neighborhood parks are the heart of our community,” **said State Senator Napoleon Harris III** of Harvey, whose district includes Ford Heights. “The investments the OSLAD program is making in the Ford Heights Park District will promote an active and healthy community. It is important that we continue to look for ways to expand and improve our local parks to create spaces we can all use and enjoy.”

“The OSLAD Program has served a tremendous role in connecting underserved communities to the great outdoors, and it’s great to see a major investment throughout the 47th District,” **said State Senator Neil Anderson** of

Andalusia, whose district includes five economically distressed communities that will receive OSLAD grants. “Whether it is modernizing our parks, or revitalizing an empty space, it’s crucial for small communities to have a place to gather and connect in nature.”

“Our parks and recreational facilities add so much to our communities. They are places to get healthy, to learn, to enjoy nature, to find beauty and solace, and to have fun with friends and family,” **said State Rep. Joyce Mason** of Gurnee in Lake County. “Illinois OSLAD grants are an important investment in our neighborhoods, and these funds will mean so much to the residents of Lake County.”

“Investing in our outdoor spaces and local parks is a great opportunity to enrich the lives of many seeking a new modernized all-inclusive space for all,” **said State Senator Dale Fowler** of Harrisburg. “The OSLAD program not only invests in parks and recreation, but it also fosters a healthier, happier community for all.”

FY2024 OSLAD grant awards

Adams County

Quincy Park District – \$600,000

Bond County

City of Greenville – \$600,000*

Calhoun County

Village of Kampsville – \$600,000*

Champaign County

Champaign County Forest Preserve District – \$1,125,000*

Christian County

City of Taylorville – \$140,000

Taylorville Park District – \$600,000

Clinton County

Aviston Park District – \$100,000

City of Carlyle – \$600,000

City of Centralia – \$600,000*

Village of New Baden – \$247,800

Coles County

City of Mattoon – \$599,800*

Cook County

Alsip Park District – \$583,000

Arlington Heights Park District – \$600,000

Bartlett Park District – \$600,000

Chicago Heights Park District – \$600,000*

Chicago Park District – \$700,000

City of Elgin – \$600,000

City of Palos Hills – \$292,100

Community Park District of La Grange Park – \$600,000

Golf Maine Park District – \$500,000

Hoffman Estates Park District – \$600,000
Illinois Medical District Commission – \$600,000
Memorial Park District (Melrose Park) – \$600,000*
Morton Grove Park District – \$352,100
Niles Park District – \$600,000
Northbrook Park District – \$600,000
Northfield Park District – \$405,300
Oak Lawn Park District – \$600,000
Olympia Fields Park District – \$270,600
Park District of LaGrange – \$600,000
Veterans Park District (Franklin Park) – \$371,800
Village of Ford Heights – \$600,000*
Village of Orland Park – \$600,000
Village of Richton Park – \$200,000

DeKalb County

Sycamore Park District – \$348,300

DuPage County

Addison Park District – \$600,000
Bensenville Park District – \$570,100
Bloomington Township Park District – \$150,000
City of Aurora – \$600,000
City of Warrenville – \$600,000
Fox Valley Park District – \$600,000
Lisle Park District – \$600,000
Roselle Park District – \$600,000
St. Charles Park District – \$600,000
Village of Itasca – \$600,000
Village of Villa Park – \$600,000
Village of Willowbrook – \$600,000
Westmont Park District – \$228,300
Winfield Park District – \$600,000
York Center Park District (Lombard) – \$304,200

Edwards County

Village of West Salem – \$44,300

Effingham County

Teutopolis Park District – \$346,500
South Central Illinois Regional Planning and Development Commission – \$118,300

Fayette County

City of Vandalia – \$600,000*

Franklin County

City of Benton – \$43,720

Greene County

Village of Rockbridge – \$600,000*

Grundy County

Village of Minooka – \$600,000

Hancock County

City of Dallas City – \$600,000*

City of Nauvoo – \$600,000*

Henry County

Kewanee Park District – \$600,000*

Jackson County

Carbondale Park District – \$600,000*

Village of Elkhartville – \$574,400*

Jefferson County

City of Nason – \$600,000*

Kane County

Sugar Grove Park District – \$600,000

Village of Elburn – \$446,100

Kankakee County

Kankakee Valley Park District – \$600,000*

Limestone Park District – \$500,000

Village of Bradley – \$600,000

Knox County

City of Abingdon – \$600,000*

City of Galesburg – \$500,000

Lake County

Lake Bluff Park District – \$600,000

Lake Villa Public Library District – \$600,000

Lake Villa Township – \$600,000

Lindenhurst Park District – \$450,000

Mundelein Park and Recreation District – \$600,000

Park District of Highland Park – \$528,500

Village of Deer Park – \$600,000

Village of Lake Zurich – \$600,000

LaSalle County

City of LaSalle – \$300,000

City of Peru – \$600,000

City of Streator – \$219,900*

Lee County

Dixon Park District – \$68,200

Livingston County

Village of Dwight – \$600,000*

Macon County

Macon County Conservation District – \$600,000*

Village of Harristown – \$150,000

Macoupin County

Village of Modesto – \$600,000*

Madison County

Granite City Park District – \$500,000*

Madison County Mass Transit District – \$500,000

Marion County

Village of Central City – \$599,600*

McHenry County

Crystal Lake Park District – \$329,000

Huntley Park District – \$509,500

Marengo Park District – \$600,000*

Montgomery County

City of Litchfield – \$300,000

Moultrie County

City of Sullivan – \$576,000

Ogle County

Oregon Park District – \$600,000

Village of Mount Morris – \$152,600

Piatt County

Sangamon Township – \$45,000

Pike County

Village of Perry – \$600,000*

Pulaski County

City of Mound City – \$599,800*

St. Clair County

City of Belleville – \$99,200

Sangamon County

Village of Southern View – \$280,700*

Stark County

City of Toulon – \$600,000*

Tazewell County

Pekin Park District – \$210,500

Will County

Frankfort Square Park District – \$600,000

Lockport Township Park District – \$600,000

Manhattan Park District – \$234,200

Village of Shorewood – \$600,000

Williamson County

City of Hurst – \$586,000*

Winnebago County

Rockford Park District – \$600,000*

Village of Roscoe – \$531,400

Winnebago County Forest Preserve – \$389,900*

**Denotes an economically distressed community.*

###