

Agency-specific Content for the Notice of Funding Opportunity

A. Program Description

Program Background Information and Objectives: This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is to advise local units of government of the availability of funds for grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund's (LWCF) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Program. The purpose of the LWCF ORLP is to provide grants to acquire for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the purposes of the LWCF, but with the further specific goals of funding projects that:

- Are located within or serve jurisdictions delineated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census as "urbanized areas," that is, areas with a population of 50,000 or more people and consisting of densely settled territory.
- Are located in or are directly accessible to neighborhoods or communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources and where there are significant populations of people who are economically disadvantaged.

Background on LWCF: The LWCF State and Local Assistance Program was created by the Congress in 1964 to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to present and future generations of U.S. citizens and visitors "such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation in such recreation and to strengthen the health and vitality of the citizens of the United States...." This is accomplished in part by authorizing and providing grants to States, and through States to local units of government, for projects that will provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public through the acquisition of lands and waters for parks and other outdoor recreation areas. The State of IL uses all LWCF funding exclusively for the acquisition of land only.

Acquisition of land may be in fee simple or a lesser interest (e.g., a perpetual easement) if sufficient rights, including the right for the public to access and recreate on the site, would be provided. Acquired property is to be used for the development of outdoor recreation include community parks, sports fields, picnic areas, water-based recreation facilities such as swimming pools, trails, campgrounds, etc. Acquired land must ensure that it can be managed and maintained for outdoor recreation in perpetuity and otherwise remain compliant with the conversion provisions of the LWCF Act (see 54 USC 200305(f)(3)). Outdoor recreation areas and facilities assisted by the LWCF must be open to the general public and not limited to special groups. Chapter 3 of the [LWCF Manual](#) describes project eligibility requirements in detail.

The LWCF State and Local Assistance program is operated by the National Park Service (NPS) in partnership with designated lead agencies in each of the 50 States as well as American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Northern Marianas Islands, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. Each fiscal year Congress appropriates money from the LWCF for this program, which traditionally is in turn allocated to the States based on a legislative formula.

Background on the LWCF ORLP Program: In P.L. 113-76, Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2014, Congress appropriated a supplemental amount from the LWCF (\$3 million) designated for a new nationally competitive grant program to be developed by the NPS. The NPS created the LWCF ORLP in response. The program operates within the context of the traditional LWCF Program, but focuses on projects that will benefit urban areas. Congress has continued to provide funding for the ORLP in subsequent fiscal years.

Similar to previous ORLP competitions, this competition is targeting projects that will create or reinvigorate parks and other outdoor recreation spaces located in Census-delineated urbanized areas. (Note that American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas Islands, and the Virgin Islands do not have any such areas.) Illinois Department of Natural Resources will prioritize all applications received and make a recommendation to NPS. Further, the NPS will prioritize the selection of projects that will: directly connect people to outdoor places, particularly in communities that are underserved* in terms of parks and other outdoor recreation areas and have significant numbers of individuals who are economically disadvantaged; create short-term and/or permanent jobs and/or help stimulate economic development; create engage and empower members of the affected community in the development of the project; involve and expand public-private partnerships, particularly to provide for the leveraging of resources; and rely on a high degree of coordination among the public, multiple levels of government, and the private sector, to improve recreation opportunities for all. In addition to the competition objectives, selected projects must advance goals of or otherwise meet priority recreation needs identified in their State's SCORP.

* For the purposes of this competition, "underserved communities" should be considered as those with: (1) no existing parks; (2) some parks but not enough to support the size of the population or otherwise satisfy existing recreational demand; or (3) some existing parks (potentially even an adequate number of parks) that are so deteriorated/obsolete or underdeveloped that redevelopment or rehabilitation would significantly increase the number of people who could be served and/or significantly increase the types of recreational opportunities that would be provided (in a way that could be equated to the impact of a new park).

All prospective LWCF ORLP grant applicants should be aware that the LWCF Act requires that the any park or other outdoor recreation area that has benefitted from assistance from the LWCF, for acquisition purposes, and regardless of the amount or extent of assistance, may not be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses (see Section 5(f) of P.L. 88-578 or 54 USC 200305(f)(3)). As a condition of the grant, the NPS requires that language be recorded against the deed of the assisted park/recreation property advising that the property was acquired with Federal funds from the LWCF. Further, that the property must be preserved for outdoor recreation uses in perpetuity and cannot be converted to other than public outdoor recreation use without the written approval of the Secretary of the Interior. This approval is contingent upon the conversion being found consistent with the State's SCORP and the project sponsor replacing the area to be converted with a *new* recreation area involving land of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility. Before seeking an LWCF grant, project sponsors should carefully consider their ability and willingness to comply with this provision of the law.

The requirement is applied to the assisted park or other recreation area *as a whole*. Exceptions for boundaries that would apply to a lesser unit of a park will be considered only if the unit is a stand-alone (i.e., its borders do not include other areas of the park), self-sustaining (i.e., it does not rely on adjoining park area for access, utilities, support facilities, etc.) recreation area. The State and the NPS must agree to any boundary that does not comprise the whole park, and the NPS may eliminate from consideration proposals that are not consistent with this policy. We recommend that prospective applicants who wish to propose a project with a boundary that would not include the whole park contact the Illinois Department of Natural Resources office for a determination on whether the boundary would be accepted, so as not to waste time preparing an application that will not be considered or prevent a more viable application from being put forward by the State.

The LWCF Grant Assistance Manual, v. 69 (October 1, 2008) establishes the eligibility, procedural, and programmatic requirements for LWCF grants, including ORLP grants. The Manual can be found at https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/upload/lwcf_manual.pdf . It outlines the criteria and process for eligible states and territories to develop a SCORP, nominate projects to the NPS, and implement grants for selected projects. ORLP projects must be implemented in accordance with the [Manual](#), as well as the NPS Grant Agreement terms and conditions, and OMB requirements at 2 CFR 200.

Secretary of the Interior Priorities

This program supports key initiatives of the Secretary of the Interior, principally “providing access to outdoor recreation opportunities.” This is the entire purpose of this program. The program also supports the “creating jobs in the American economy” initiative, and, although referring to state and locally-owned lands versus Federal, the Secretary’s Top 10 priority, “Shift the balance towards providing greater public access to public lands over restrictions to access.”

B. Funding Information

Anticipated Federal Funding: The FFY18 ORLP competition will make available up to \$13.3 million appropriated by Congress in FFY17 (\$12 million) plus some unused funds from FFY16.

Estimated Number of Agreements to be Awarded: The NPS estimates that 25-35 proposals will be preliminarily selected and invited to develop and submit final applications for funding. This is a nationally competitive grant program.

Estimated Amount of Funding Available per Award: Project sponsors must request a minimum of \$250,000 and may request up to a maximum of \$750,000.

Anticipated Start Date: The NPS is targeting March 1, 2019, for the initial selection of projects based on the proposals. Following this, project sponsors will work with their state’s lead agency to prepare a complete and final application. There is not a fixed window for this to happen, but for example, applications submitted by July 31, 2019 could be awarded by September 30, 2019. For the purposes of the competition, sponsors should use a grant start date of October 1, 2019.

Anticipated Term of the Agreement: The period of performance for LWCF grants is typically from 1 to 3 years, so for example, the initial term might be October 1, 2019 to September 30, 2022. Projects will be evaluated in part for their readiness (i.e., will begin within one year of grant award) and likelihood of completion within the stipulated period of performance. Agreements are not effective until executed

with signature from an NPS Financial Assistance Awarding Officer (FAAO). Project proposals should include a timeline with discrete benchmarks for completing the project within the initial period of performance. The NPS has the authority to extend awards (generally for a maximum of five years) if circumstances warrant, such as unforeseen problems that would prevent the project from being completed within the original award period. In order to qualify for an extension, grant recipients must be in good standing (i.e., up-to-date on all progress and financial reports), have demonstrated progress during the initial award period, and have a revised program plan that supports the claim that additional time is likely to result in successful completion of the project.

Type of Agreement: LWCF awards are given as grants. A Grant is a legal instrument of financial assistance between The National Park Service and a non-Federal entity (State of Illinois) that, consistent with 31 U.S.C. § 6302, 6304:

(1) Is used to enter into a relationship the principal purpose of which is to transfer anything of value from the Federal awarding agency to the non-Federal entity to carry out a public purpose authorized by a law of the United States (see 31 U.S.C. § 6101(3)); and not to acquire property or services for the Federal awarding agency's direct benefit or use;

(2) Is distinguished from a cooperative agreement in that it does not provide for substantial involvement between the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity and the non-Federal entity in carrying out the activity contemplated by the Federal award.

No substantial involvement on the part of the National Park Service is anticipated for LWCF grants. Any grant awarded from this NOFO will be between the State of Illinois and the applicant.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants:

In accordance with 54 USC 200305(a), each State has a lead agency designated by the State's Governor or by legislation for the purposes of implementing LWCF in that State, and only the lead agencies can be applicants for LWCF grants. Therefore, only the State lead agencies are eligible to submit applications for LWCF ORLP grants, although they may do so on behalf of themselves or another entity via a sub-award. For the purposes of this competition "States" include only the 50 U.S. States plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico (American Samoa, Guam, Northern Marianas, and the U.S. Virgin Islands, although eligible for LWCF grants generally, do not have any urbanized areas on the Census list). Eligible sub-recipients include other state agencies, local units of government (state political subdivisions such as cities, counties, and special purpose districts such as park districts), and federally-recognized Indian Tribes. Further, for a project to be eligible the sub-recipient (project sponsor) must:

- Represent a city jurisdiction of at least 50,000 people*, AND
- Be named as one of the 497 urbanized areas delineated by the Census Bureau OR be a jurisdiction that lies geographically within one of the delineated urbanized areas.
- If the project sponsor is a state agency or a county, the project must serve one or more of the urbanized area jurisdictions as described above.

* There are a few limited exceptions for urbanized areas that generally comprise two jurisdictions but where neither has 50,000 people by itself (prospective applicants should consult with their State lead agency and/or the NPS contact to determine whether they fall in this group). Further, the project itself should also be physically located within or contiguous to the boundaries of one of the 497 urbanized areas. If the project does not lie within an urbanized area boundary, the proposal must address this and explain how the project will still serve the target populations, recognizing that access and proximity factor in the scoring criteria.

A list of the 497 urbanized areas was published in the Federal Register on March 27, 2012

(77 Fed. Reg. 18652-18669). The Census Bureau has published maps delineating each urbanized area, which can be found at <https://www.census.gov/geo/maps-data/maps/2010ua.html>.

Applications submitted directly to the NPS by entities other than the state lead agency will automatically be rejected without consideration. Individuals, nonprofit organizations, and other private entities are not eligible as applicants or sub-recipients.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

In accordance with the LWCF Act (54 USC 200305(c)), ORLP grant projects must be cost-shared with non-federal funds at a minimum ratio of 1:1. Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental, or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions of land, services, materials, etc. Projects with contributions of cash or land from non-public sources will score more highly than other match types and sources. Further information about eligible costs, sources of match, and other cost-sharing requirements can be found in Chapter 5 of the [LWCF Manual](#) as well as at 2 CFR 200.306. The scoring criteria also favor projects that involve partnerships among the public, private, and non-profit sectors that result in the leveraging of resources (e.g., money, donations of land, supplies, services, etc.) and the extent of that leverage that allows the *LWCF-eligible* costs included in the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match required by the LWCF Act. In other words, projects whose budgets involve matching the LWCF funds at the 1:1 level, where 100% of the match is provided by the sponsor, although eligible, will receive no points in the budget category, which will make the proposal less competitive and possibly less likely to score high enough to be funded.

The following costs may not be counted toward the non-Federal matching share (not inclusive):

- Any project costs incurred before the grant start date, unless they are an eligible pre-award cost as defined in the LWCF Manual or unless the sponsor gets prior approval from the State lead agency and the NPS (i.e., waiver of retroactivity).
- Any funds or in-kind contributions such as land or services that have been used previously or will be used in the future to satisfy the matching requirements of another LWCF grant or other Federal grant.
- Any funds or in-kind contributions such as lands or services that were or will be acquired with other Federal funds, unless otherwise provided by Federal law.

Funding that originated from Federal sources or the value of land or services acquired with Federal funds may not be used as non-Federal match unless their enabling legislation authorizes that treatment. The best known examples are HUD's Community Development Block Grants and DOT's Recreation Trails

Program, but there may be others (project sponsors should be prepared to show supporting documentation if seeking to use Federal funds from other sources as match). Other than this exception, in accordance with 54 USC 200305(f)(1) projects seeking LWCF ORLP grants may not include funds from other Federal sources, including LWCF formula funds, in the project's budget, even if all programs' match requirements are met. *Projects whose budgets contain other federal funds aside from as described above will be eliminated from the competition without consideration.*

Prospective applicants should note limitations on certain kinds of costs, whether proposed for the grant, as match, or as overmatch, including those related to project management/administration, contingencies, and design/engineering fees. This is described further in the Budget Narrative component of Section of D.2 of this NOFO. Further, project sponsors should be aware that the LWCF Act specifically excludes acquisition support costs from eligibility (see 54 USC 200305(e)(2)(A)) so such costs should not be proposed to be part of the ORLP grant share or to meet the match share within the 1:1 level.

3. Other

The process for a project sponsor to seek an LWCF ORLP grant will begin at the State level. Each State's lead agency for LWCF will be allowed to nominate up to three projects to the NPS for consideration in the national competition. The lead agency will be responsible for: further soliciting project proposals from other state agencies, local units of government, and federally-recognized Indian Tribes; conducting the initial review of proposals for completeness and eligibility requirements; evaluating and prioritizing proposals according to the criteria used for this competition criteria as well as criteria from the State's Open Project Selection Process, if applicable; ensuring that proposals are consistent with outdoor recreation priorities outlined in the State's SCORP; and selecting the proposal(s) to be nominated. If a proposal is selected for funding in the national competition, the lead agency will also be responsible for submitting the final application to the NPS. Grants will be awarded to the lead agency, which will be responsible for ensuring that allocated funds are used for the purposes of and in a manner consistent with the LWCF. The lead agency will in turn make a sub-award to the project's sponsor, which must be the public entity that submitted the proposal. Project sponsors interested in seeking a grant must contact the lead agency to get specific details about the State's process for identifying projects for this competition. A list of agency contacts can be found at: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/lwcf/contact-list.htm>.

If a project is selected, the project cost estimate generally defines the maximum federal share that can be requested, unless the additional amount is nominal, up to the overall ceiling of \$750,000. (Note this is a departure in policy from grants awarded under the LWCF formula program, which under some circumstances permit amendments to increase the federal share.) Similarly, reductions in the scope from what was competed may lead to the federal share being reduced. In general, changes to the scope of the project after selection, whether there are corresponding budget impacts or not, are discouraged as they may materially alter the circumstances under which the project was evaluated and selected. A significant departure from the project's original proposed scope could result in the withdrawal of the grant offer.

Key elements to be addressed are:

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are limited to units of local governments having specific statutory authority to acquire and develop land for public park and recreation purposes are eligible for LWCF assistance.

An entity may apply for a grant but will not be eligible for a grant award until the entity has pre-qualified through the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Grantee Portal, www.grants.illinois.gov. During pre-qualification, Dun and Bradstreet verifications are performed including a check of Debarred and Suspended status and good standing with the Secretary of State. The pre-qualification process also includes a financial and administrative risk assessment utilizing an Internal Controls Questionnaire. If applicable, the entity will be notified that it is ineligible for award as a result of the Dun and Bradstreet verification. The entity will be informed of corrective action needed to become eligible for a grant award.

2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost sharing or matching funds are required for awards of these grants. The LWCF grant will reimburse up to 50 percent of the total approved project cost up to the maximum allowable grant. The remaining 50 percent (or greater) will be borne by the project sponsor. The LWCF is a reimbursement program, meaning that a project sponsor must have sufficient cash or donations to pay for the project costs and then be paid back the grant percentage after approval of a reimbursement request.

3. Indirect Cost Rate

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant organization must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs: a) Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The organization must provide a copy of the federally NICRA. b) State Negotiated Rate. The organization must negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have Federally Negotiated Rate or elect to use the De Minimis Rate. The indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted to the State of Illinois within 90 days of the notice of award. c) De Minimis Rate. An organization that has never received a Federally Negotiated Rate may elect a de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC). Once established, the de minimis rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the de minimis rate.

Limitations on indirect costs restrict the amount and/or type of indirect costs that are allowed to be charged to grant awards. Indirect cost limitations and restrictions must be clearly stated in this section. For example, the grant award may be subject to state and federal statutory requirements that limit the allowability of costs. The maximum amount allowable under a limitation cannot exceed the total amount under the NICRA. State and federal statutes may restrict the amount of salary that can be charged to a grant award, if the base salary exceeds the Federal Executive Level II Pay Scale. If additional statutory restrictions or limitations are imposed, such as parameters for direct administrative costs, facility costs, and indirect administrative cost levels, those restrictions or limitations must be stated in this section. The statutory reference or guidance imposing the indirect cost limitation or restriction must also be stated within this section.

4. Other

One of the goals of the LWCF program is to provide and improve recreational access opportunities for people with disabilities. As such, all facilities assisted with LWCF monies must conform to standards outlined by the United States Access Board: Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board: Final Guidelines for Outdoor Developed Areas dated November 25, 2013. <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards/recreation-facilities/outdoor-developed-areas/a-summary-of-accessibility-standards-for-federal-outdoor-developed-areas>.

No official or employee of the unit of local government who is authorized in his/her official capacity to negotiate, make, accept, approve or take part in decisions regarding a contract or subcontract in connection with an approved LWCF grant project shall have any financial or other personal interest in that contract or subcontract.

No person performing services for a local government in connection with an approved LWCF grant projects shall have a financial or other personal interest other than his/her employment or retention by the local government in any contract or subcontract in connection with said LWCF grant project. No officer or employee of a person retained by the local government shall have any financial or other personal interest in any real property acquired under an approved LWCF grant project unless that interest is openly disclosed on the public records of the local government and that officer, employee or person has not participated in the acquisition for, or on behalf of, the local government.

D. Application and Submission Information

Application Format

The Application and Budget forms should be on letter-sized paper and type font size must be 9 or greater. Any and all project descriptions, proposals, pictures, charts, tables and maps on separate sheets must be included with the application. These forms are designed to allow the IDNR and the review committee to obtain sufficient information to properly evaluate the proposed project. IDNR recommends use of the application forms provided in our manual for this program along with the GATA Uniform Application and the GATA Uniform budget.

Application Package

The complete application package consists of two uniform templates and supplemental documents listed below:

1. Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance (fillable pdf)
2. Uniform Budget Template (use Internet Explorer if having problems opening this template).

Note: Budget Instructions for the Uniform Budget Template are available at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/sites/GATA/Documents/Resource%20Library/GOMBGATU-3002.pdf>

Supplemental Documents to be Submitted
See next page.

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLPP)

Grant Application Checklist

This outline lists the required elements of the application and summarizes content for each scoring criterion. It is not necessarily expected that projects will check all the boxes.

Project Narrative: 10 page max rec.

Overview - Development

- Street address
- Planned physical improvements
- Reason why development is needed
- New or rehab
- Types of resources, site features and constraints
- Current status of planning
- Timeframe for completion and open to the public

Overview - Acquisition

- Street address
- Description of property
- Reason why acquisition is needed
- New park or expansion
- Types of resources, site features and constraints
- Plans for development
- Status of acquisition

Improving Access & Addressing Deficiencies: 20 pts

- Improve/Create access to close-to-home recreation
- New or expanded types of rec opportunities
- Meets an identified rec need or deficiency

Improve Rec Service and Economic Opportunities for Target Population: 15 pts

- Uses and activities after development
- Benefits for target population
- Job opportunities (short & long term)
- Economic benefits (outside park!)
- Include statistics/demographics

Engagement & Participation: Who, How & When: 15 pts

- Efforts to engage community served by proposed project
- Partnerships: neighborhood groups, private orgs
- Evidence of support: public notifications
- Opportunities: meetings, comment periods

Innovation and Transformative Attributes (IF ANY): 10 pts

- Redevelopment/revitalization
- New or non-traditional partners
- Unique features in design
- Novel solutions to rec needs
- Affect or advance complementary and intrinsic benefits

Updated: 5-3-18
Credit to JMA

Alignment with SCORP and Other Plans: 5 pts

- Meet priority need or goal of SCORP
- Meet priority need or goal of other recreation plan(s)
- Meet priority need or goal of other local or regional plan(s)

Project Readiness: 5 pts

- Timeline for scope of work, period of performance
- Benchmark activities
- Current use or condition to be discontinued/remedied
- Any existing non-outdoor rec / Non-public uses

Applicant & Partner Capacity: 5 pts

- Experience with LWCF or similar federal projects & awards
- Partners' roles & capacity (if applicable)
- Sufficient title and commitment to rec mgmt forever
- O & M resource availability

Budget Narrative: 5 page max rec.

Viable & Reasonable: 10 pts

- Narrative & Table
 - Standard Form 424C (State may prep)
 - Use of ORLPP and Match funds
 - Overmatch (how it will be used)
 - 5% Project Admin
 - 10% Design/Eng
 - 10% Contingency
 - State Indirect (if applicable)
 - No other federal dollars (unless eligible as match)!
- Your budget is not required to have these costs, but if so, observe limits.

Partner Support/Leveraging: 15 pts

- Match Types
- Amounts & sources
- ORLPP role in leverage

Project Location & Maps

- Locale including nearby recreation
- Proposed 6(f) Boundary Map
- Site Plans

Optional elements

- Letters of Support
- Photos

For States:

- Letter of recommendation
- Advance SCORP
- SF-424

Application Submission

The applicant must provide all information requested in the application package. Only one (1) pre-application including the GATA application & GATA budget with supporting documentation and legally authorizing signature needs to be submitted. Applications must have original signatures on all required pages and the hard copy document must be received by the application deadline. **The application deadline is 5:00 p.m. July 20, 2018 to be received at the IDNR office and stamped in. Mailed documents must be received in this office no later than 5:00 p.m., July 20, 2018 to be considered.**

Applications considered incomplete will be will not be considered and will be returned to the applicant.

All documents that are signed must be done by persons authorized by their organization to enter into formal contractual agreements. All communication, oral or written, between the applicant and IDNR will be with the signer, or their designee. Applications that are not signed will not be accepted.

Applicant Qualification

An applicant's organization will be subject to the following:

- Verification of Duns and Bradstreet number
- Check status if on the Illinois Debarred and Suspended List
- Check Good Standing status with the Illinois Secretary of State

Based on any of the above checks, the applicant will be notified if they are ineligible for grant award.

Intent to Award

Following a decision of intent to award, IDNR is required to conduct a financial and administrative risk assessment of the applicant. Additional information may be required at that time from the successful applicant. For the applicant to remain eligible for the award they must provide the requested information within 30 days after notification of intent to award.

E. Application Review Information - IDNR

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used by the Department for evaluating and ranking grant applications, to be forwarded to NPS for further review. Each criterion indicates the weighting that will be given to that criterion.

1. Statewide Outdoor Recreation Priorities and Project Need - 60%

- a. 35% is based on the extent to which the project addresses the following major outdoor recreation/conservation priorities identified in the state plan:
 - i. protection or enhancement of a State or locally significant natural area, or threatened/endangered species habitat, or an area identified in a Conservation 2000 Partnership Plan;
 - ii. protection or enhancement of significant wildlife habitat;
 - iii. protection or enhancement of natural wetland areas;
 - iv. promoting conservation education opportunities;
 - v. promoting recreational use of Illinois' surface waters;

- vi. protection or recreational use of linear greenways (excluding bike & snowmobile trail construction);
 - vii. interagency cooperation in providing and/or effectively utilizing local recreation resources;
 - viii. enhancing recreational opportunities for minority and less affluent populations;
 - ix. promoting adaptive reuse of properties for open space and park purposes;
 - x. use of resource conservation elements and/or native landscaping.
- b. 25% is based on a local "needs assessment" or comparison of 1) the existing supply of recreational facilities per capita for the proposed project component(s) to a statewide median as calculated by the IDNR in its statewide planning process and 2) the existing supply of local open space/parkland acreage, measured in acres/1000 population for particular park types (e.g., neighborhood, community parks, etc.), to the statewide median and 3) the availability of similar park facilities within the proposed project site's service area.* If multiple entities overlap or share the same boundaries within a community, all existing facilities are considered.

* The current statewide average for the supply of local open space and parkland acreage according to the Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory (IRFI) is approximately 11.35 ac/1000 population for overall community parkland acreage and approximately 52.69 ac/1000 population for regional parkland acreage. The IDNR uses criteria that approximately 20% of local parkland/open space acreage should be allocated to neighborhood or mini-park facilities serving an area up to ½ mile radius and approximately 80% allocated to community parks serving a community-wide area or up to 2-mile radius in high density urban areas.

A local/regional acreage standard or goal lower than the above indicated statewide median figures may be accepted by the IDNR for a given locality if the variant standard is supported by that agency's comprehensive recreation plan. Verification of a different local/regional acreage standard or goal should be submitted to the IDNR as part of the LWCF application.

- i. Priorities for LWCF acquisition assistance will be given to local agencies with less acreage than the statewide median for the particular park type and recreation facilities being proposed in the application.
- ii. Priorities for LWCF development assistance is given to local agencies having a park system (supply) that meets or exceeds the current statewide median based on acres/1000 population, parkland diversity and distribution, and where a deficiency of the proposed recreation facilities exists.

Consideration is given to projects that provide the first and only park site in the service area, if the site is the first passive or active site in the service area or if the project provides a brand new recreational element to the service area.

2. **Local Planning - 10%**

Consideration is given to projects identified in or consistent with adopted local plans AND where direct public participation in the planning process and/or project proposal is clearly evident. Current plans (less than 5 years old) and grass-roots public participation in the planning process are highest priority. To be fully considered as an acceptable planning document, basic elements such as an overall needs assessment, current facilities inventory and direct constituent input should be included.

Please refer to IDNR's Community Park and Recreation Planning guide for detailed information on planning. It is recommended that a series of public meetings be held for the proposed project. Any additional sources of public input (referendums, surveys, open houses, fundraisers, etc.) are also strongly encouraged.

Projects not identified in local plans that represent unique or unforeseen opportunities are given partial credit IF the proposal is generally consistent with local recreation/open space objectives and strong public support is evident.

(NOTE: The level of public involvement and support for a project is a critical factor considered under this evaluation category.)

3. **Site Characteristics and Development Plan - 25%**

Projects are evaluated primarily in terms of the project site's suitability for the proposed recreation uses including considerations of 1) physical characteristics such as terrain, drainage, adjacent land uses, soil conditions, vegetation, etc. 2) site accessibility factors including safe pedestrian, bicycle and vehicular access and sufficient parking; and 3) overall site plan considering such factors as creativity, sensitivity to environmental factors, diversity of recreation opportunity, and neatness.

Projects are considered diverse if there is more than one recreational element proposed. The more diverse projects tend to score higher, especially if the recreational elements are of high need based upon criteria stated in A2. All components that formulate a single recreational element are considered one element. For example, site grading, seeding, fencing, dugouts, scoreboard and bleachers are all counted as one element and that is baseball. All components of a play area such as swing sets, climbing walls, jungle gym bars, modular play units, etc. are all counted as one element and that is a playground.

The site development plan submitted should be accurate, neat and show good design.

Infrastructure costs are considered and if these costs are higher than 40% of the total project costs, points will be deducted.

4. **Project Special Considerations - 5%**

The following are also considered in the evaluation of projects:

- i. Projects involving voluntary, third party donations of land or cash (> 50% of local share) as part of the project scope.
- ii. Projects providing initial access to, and development of, an undeveloped park site.
- iii. Projects that are part of the overall economic development of an area.

- iv. Previous amount of assistance awarded to the local agency (fair share factor).
- v. Projects being undertaken by newly established recreation agencies or incorporated municipalities (5 years old or less)
- vi. Projects improving or increasing necessary recreation opportunities in high density urban areas.

5. **Project Penalty Considerations**

A local agency may be penalized during project evaluation for failure to contact and discuss the proposed project application with IDNR grants staff prior to application submittal, as requested, AND for poor performance in: 1) the execution of previous LWCF projects or 2) responding to IDNR requests for necessary application information, or 3) ability to maintain existing recreation/public facilities, or 4) providing required post-completion compliance certification information regarding prior grant projects.

Applications for funding assistance will not be considered by the Department if 1) an unresolved program violation exists relative to a previous grant project or 2) the local applicant has failed to provide local recreation facilities information as requested by the Department for the Illinois Recreation Facilities Inventory (IRFI).

Review and Selection Process

All applications received on time and containing the information required by the application packet will be reviewed by IDNR staff. Incomplete applications will be discussed with the applicant for completion and information submittal. Submitting an incomplete application does not extend the application deadline beyond the designated deadline date. All complete, eligible and timely applications will be reviewed for evaluation and recommendation to the IDNR Director, who will make the recommendation to NPS for the national competition.

Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates

The NPS is anticipating an announcement date of March 2019

Application Review Information – NPS

1. Criteria

Part I – Relevance of Proposed Project to Core Program Goals (Merit panel; 60 points total)

- a. Improves physical and recreational access and addresses recreational deficiencies - 20 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the proposed project will create or significantly enhance access to close to home park and recreation opportunities by expanding the quantity or quality of parks or other outdoor recreation areas by either: creating a new park/outdoor recreational area or significantly enhancing the quality of an existing park/outdoor recreation area by upgrading the infrastructure to be able to provide high priority recreation services.

Priority will be given to projects located in 1) densely settled neighborhoods or communities that lack any other or adequate parks/outdoor recreation areas within a reasonable service area (i.e, within .5 miles or a 10-minute walk for a neighborhood park, or within 1 mile for a park serving multiple neighborhoods or a community); or 2) whose existing park/outdoor recreation

areas are not of a comparable caliber to park/recreation areas elsewhere in the jurisdiction; or
3) whose park/recreation areas are otherwise inadequate to serve community needs.

- b. Improving recreation service to economically-disadvantaged neighborhoods/communities while also creating jobs and/or spurring economic development - 15 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project will (a) improve outdoor recreational opportunities for low to moderate income individuals or families for whom serious recreation deficiencies exist, (b) provide short-term and/or permanent employment opportunities, particularly within the same target community, and/or (c) help generate economic benefits for the community outside of the park.

Priority will be given to projects located where they will serve neighborhoods with significant populations of the target group that are lacking in recreation opportunities along with providing employment and economic benefits. Applicant responses are encouraged to include available data/statistics about the local populations to be served by the park/recreation area and be as specific as possible in describing anticipated employment and economic opportunities.

- c. Project Engagement and Participation – 15 points:

This criterion will assess the level and degree of active partnership building in support of the project among the local project sponsor, members of the public (particularly residents that would be served by the park and neighborhood groups), local government(s), and the private sector (including community organizations and businesses). In particular, the panel will evaluate the extent to which the project was developed with local neighborhood and/or community participation, input, and engagement, especially through or with the assistance of organizations that assist governments and communities with revitalization.

Priority will be given to projects that can demonstrate that there has been and continues to be a deliberate initiative or effort by the project sponsor and/or its partner(s) to engage residents of the target neighborhood(s) in the project's development. Further, where there is a substantial level of collaboration among the public and private sectors, including multiple levels of government, private/non-profit organizations, and community groups.

- d. Innovation and Transformative Attributes – 10 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project encompasses or exhibits innovation, especially in ways that can be transformative for the neighborhood(s) and community in terms of revitalization. These qualities could be related to aspects such as: redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property; involvement of new or non-traditional partners; unusual features in the project design; employment of novel solutions to issues in/challenges to addressing the community's recreation needs; the ability to affect or advance other complementary and intrinsic benefits beyond providing new or enhancing park or other outdoor recreation spaces; and other similar characteristics.

This is a somewhat open-ended criterion but is an opportunity for project sponsors to describe and promote features of the project that go above and beyond the recreation services or opportunities the project will provide. Priority will be given to projects that demonstrate unique features that make them stand out relative to the other proposals submitted for the competition as well as the "typical" LWCF project.

Part II: Technical Merit and Qualification of Applicants (Technical panel, 15 points total)

e. Project's Alignment with SCORP and other applicable plans – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project advances or is otherwise tied to the priority recreation needs and/or goals of the applicable state's SCORP and other relevant park and recreation plans. Projects can also receive credit for aligning with or advancing priorities of other comprehensive or master plans at the city, regional, and/or state level such as community revitalization, economic development, or open space plans.

Priority will be given to projects that meet clearly identified goals and/or needs in the SCORP, particularly any that are specific to urban areas, together with other applicable planning documents at different levels of government and/or private sector initiatives.

f. Project Readiness – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the status of the project to evaluate the readiness to be implemented, the likelihood of successful execution, and the viability of the period of performance for the project's execution.

Priority will be given to projects that are well into or mostly done with the planning stages such that implementation can likely begin within one year and the project could be opened to the public within 2 to 3 years.

g. Applicant and Partner Capacity – 5 points:

This criterion will assess the ability and likelihood of the project sponsor and partner(s) (if applicable) to initiate and successfully complete the project as well as effectively manage and sustain the park or recreation area to ensure long-term viability, particularly in the context of LWCF requirements. Also, assesses the project sponsor and/or partner's demonstrated capacity for appropriate grant management and successful compliance with grant conditions, particularly with past LWCF and/or other federal grants (if applicable).

Priority will be given to projects where the sponsor and/or partner(s) have experience with federal grants and have successfully completed similar projects with no problems complying with grant regulations or program-specific terms and conditions; and where there appears to be capacity for successful long term park management and protection. If the sponsor is a past LWCF grant recipient, the sponsor does not have any known outstanding Section 6(f)(3) conversion issues that are not in the process of resolution.

Part III – Financial Support and Leveraging (Technical panel, 25 points total)

h. Viability and reasonableness of the project's budget – 10 points:

This criterion will assess the eligibility and reasonableness of the costs included in the project's budget, whether the budget seems realistic for the scope of work, and the availability of or firmness of commitments for the full amount of funds needed to complete the project, including any match commitment(s) that exceed the 1:1 requirement.

Priority will be given to project proposals with clear and detailed budgets that contain all or mostly LWCF-eligible cost items that are reasonable and obviously related to the scope of the work for which the grant funds are specifically being requested. Priority will also be given to projects where funding to cover the entire project budget is mostly in place (excluding the grant amount), particularly any amounts promised as overmatch.

i. Partner Support and Leveraging – 15 points:

This criterion will assess the degree to which the project is or will be supported by partnerships with the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors through contributions of money, land, supplies, services, etc., and the extent of financial leveraging of the federal share with non-federal public, private, and/or non-profit resources that allow the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match required by the LWCF Act.

Priority will be given to projects involving multiple and diverse partnerships that have resulted in contributions of financial resources, particularly non-public resources; and that exceed the minimum 1:1 match level primarily with LWCF-eligible costs.

2. Review and Selection Process

Once a pre-application has been received from a State lead agency, the NPS LWCF program office will conduct an initial screening to determine whether the application is complete (i.e., at a minimum contains all Required Elements) and meets basic eligibility requirements (i.e., project is from an eligible applicant and/or sponsor, provides the minimum cost share, and its purpose is generally consistent with the LWCF Act and the objectives of this competition). Presuming it is found to be eligible for consideration, the project will be evaluated and scored in a field review conducted by both a technical panel of NPS staff focused mainly on LWCF-based requirements and a peer-based merit panel focused mainly on the project's purpose, purported benefits, and relevance to the competition objectives. (See Section E.1 to see which criteria each panel will review.) All proposals will be scored individually in accordance with the assigned weights of the evaluation criteria. Each proposal will be reviewed by at least 4 (four) reviewers but no consensus advice will be given. Both federal and non-federal experts may be used for the merit panel. Reviewers' scores will be compiled and averaged as needed to create a final score.

The scores and reviewer evaluations will be used by the competition managers to produce a ranked list of projects that will be recommended to the competition's selecting official – the Director of the National Park Service – for final selection. Generally, projects will be recommended in the ranked order unless there is justification to select out of order based upon:

- Availability of funding
- Geographic distribution of projects and/or funds
- Program objective and priorities (see Section A of this NOFO)
- The applicant's prior performance in managing LWCF grants and/or assisted sites
- The project's capacity to leverage non-Federal dollars.

The NPS will then request complete and final grant applications (see following Sections E.3 and Section F).

3. Evaluation of Recipient Risk

In accordance with 2 C.F.R. § 200.205, applications selected for funding will be subject to a pre-award risk assessment, which may include a review of information contained within the applicant's proposal, past audits, Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS), and/or past performance on previous Federal financial assistance awards. Negative information that leads to a recipient being designated as "Medium Risk" or "High Risk" may result in specific conditions, as identified in 2 C.F.R. § 200.207, being incorporated into the final award.

If the Federal share of the project cost is anticipated to be over \$150,000.00, prior to making a Federal award, any information about the applicant that is in the designated integrity and performance (currently FAPIIS) will be reviewed and considered (see 41 U.S.C. § 2313). Applicants may review and comment about any information about itself in FAPIIS. The Federal awarding agency will consider any comments by the applicant, in addition to the other information in the designated integrity and performance system, in making a judgment about the applicant's integrity, business ethics, and record of performance under Federal awards when completing the review of risk posed by applicants as described in 2 C.F.R. §200.205

4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

The initial technical review of proposals will begin immediately following the application deadline and panel reviews are expected to begin in November, 2018. The NPS is targeting March 1, 2019 for an announcement about preliminary selection of projects. Once this selection has been made, the State lead agencies for the selected projects will be directed to work with the sponsors to prepare the final grant applications.

The final applications will comprise the originally required elements of the pre-application, which sponsors may be asked to revise based on comments from the panels with respect to objectives, work plans, or budgets; as well as the Supplemental Elements. The revised application, particularly the Supplemental Elements, will need additional review by the NPS before a final decision about whether to make an award. If the Supplemental Elements reveal previously unknown features of the project that affect its eligibility or viability, the NPS may decide to withdraw the initial recommendation for funding and move on to the next project on the list. Although there is no fixed deadline.

There is not a fixed window for the submission of the final application, but, if it was submitted by July 31, 2019, award could be made by September 30, 2019. For the purposes of the competition, sponsors should use a grant start date of October 1, 2019.

When a decision has been made (whether an award or declination), summaries of technical and merit reviews will be made available to the State lead agency and/or the project sponsor upon request.

Declined applications will be held by the NPS for three years, in accordance with the current retention requirements, and then destroyed.

F. Award Administration Information

After the NPS has made the final decision any successful applicant will be notified by email and/or letter of any final requirements before the state grant can be awarded to them. Once all the final requirements have been completed, the Grant Agreement between IDNR and the applicant will be sent for the applicant to sign and return. Once the agreement is fully executed by the IDNR a copy will be returned to the applicant.

Only after the Grant Agreement has been signed by the Director can expenses be incurred for grant reimbursement. Any expenses incurred outside of the grant period (before or after) are at the applicant's risk and are not eligible either as match or for reimbursement related to the grant unless a waiver has been previously issued.

Administrative and National Policy Requirements

2 CFR 200 is the Federal Code that this grant will be administered under.

Code of Federal Regulations / Title 2 - Grants and Agreements / Vol. 1 / 2014-01-01194

Reporting

Financial reporting will include all funds including matching funds spent in the undertaking of the project. Various types of reporting are required for grant agreements awarded under this grant, including:

Performance Progress Reporting:

The grantee shall be required to provide reporting of its activities under this project. The IDNR may withhold or suspend payment if the grantee fails to submit the required reports. The following reports are required under this Agreement and the forms are provided in the Implementation and Billing Packet that will be received upon award:

Quarterly Progress Reports: The grantee is required to provide to the IDNR quarterly progress reports that describe the progress of the project and expenditures of funds according to the budget line items as detailed in the approved Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance. The Quarterly Progress Report will be due as follows:

Quarterly Progress Report Due By:

April 1

July 1

October 1

January 1

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

To contact the IDNR with questions related to this grant, please use the following means:

By US Mail: Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Office of Grant Management and Assistance
Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program Grant Manager
One Natural Resources Way
Springfield, IL 62702-1271

By e-mail: DNR.grants@illinois.gov

By phone: (217) 782-7481

By fax: (217) 782-9599

H. Other Information, if applicable

More information can be found at IDNR's website: <https://www.dnr.illinois.gov/AEG/Pages/OpenSpaceLandsAcquisitionDevelopment-Grant.aspx>.

The State of Illinois is not obligated to make any award of the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program as a result of this Notice of Funding Opportunity.

Only the Director of Natural Resources makes the determination of what grants shall be awarded after considering the recommendations. Grant applicants are not authorized to proceed on their projects until the Director has signed the Grant Agreement.