

BUREAU OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

Title: Small Community Program Policy (Development Only)		
Issued by: Bureau of Recreation and Conservation	Effective Date: 12/30/09 Scheduled Review: Annual	Document Number: 2300-033
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Approved By: Tom Ford, Bureau Director	Program Area: All	

AUTHORITY

Act 18 of 1995, Section 306, Community Recreation and Heritage Conservation. The Department shall have the power to administer Federal and State programs for grants and loans to local governments, municipal authorities and nonprofit organizations for community and regional projects involving the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and development of public park, recreation and conservation areas, facilities and programs.

SCOPE

Provides directive for administration of the Community Conservation Partnerships Grant Program

PURPOSE

The Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund Act (Act 50 of 1993) authorizes the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) to award grant funds with smaller match requirements to Commonwealth municipalities with a population of 5,000 or less. This policy outlines the priorities and requirements of the Small Community Program.

POLICY

Commonwealth municipalities with a population of 5,000 or less, as documented in the most recent U.S. Census, are eligible to receive grant funds for rehabilitation and/or new development of basic outdoor recreation and park facilities under the Small Community Program. Eligible municipalities may request a minimum of \$60,000 and a maximum of \$100,000 in grant funds. The required match is calculated based on the grant award amount. Eligible municipalities are strongly encouraged to request the maximum grant amount to ensure compliance with program requirements and successful completion of the project. Municipalities with large and complex projects should apply for a Park Rehabilitation and Development (PRD) grant which allows for larger grant requests and requires \$1 for \$1 match.

A. Small Community Program Priorities and Requirements:

- 1. Priorities:** Grants are available for the rehabilitation and/or new development of basic outdoor recreation and park facilities that provide a high level of recreational value. The project site must be owned or controlled by the eligible municipality and open to the public. The grant-funded project must be complete and functional and comply with current safety and ADA design standards (accessible routes, parking, amenities, etc.). These grants are best suited for rehabilitation and/or new development of basic facilities such as playgrounds, pavilions, prefabricated restrooms, and sport courts with ADA accessibility.
- 2. Separation of Project Costs:** The funding legislation requires the separation of costs for Professional Service Fees and Construction Costs. Construction Costs are comprised of Materials, Equipment, and Labor. The detailed budget form submitted with the grant application and the final project accounting must itemize all costs into these categories. Lump sums will not be accepted.

3. **Total Project Costs:** Total Project Costs under the Grant Program include all Professional Service Fees and Construction Costs (materials, equipment, and labor) associated with a complete and functional project.
4. **Match:** The required match is calculated based on the grant award amount. The required match may be all cash or a combination of cash and non-cash value. Cash match is strongly encouraged. All non-cash value proposed as match must be pre-approved to ensure program eligibility.
5. **Professional Service Fees:** Professional Service Fees may include design costs associated with the development of drawings and specifications by a licensed architect, landscape architect, or engineer; bid advertisements and postage; construction observation; property surveys; solicitor/attorney fees; permitting fees; etc.
 - a) \$10,000 of the grant award is earmarked for Professional Service Fees and does not require a match. This \$10,000 cannot be used for Construction Costs (materials, equipment, or labor). Any unused balance earmarked for Professional Service Fees will be returned to DCNR and disencumbered from the Grant Agreement.
 - b) Professional Service Fees exceeding \$10,000 may also be eligible for reimbursement. Total reimbursement of Professional Service Fees is limited to a maximum of 20% of the total eligible construction costs.
 - c) In small communities where capacity may be limited, the Professional Service Fees allowance is intended to support a greater leadership role by a design consultant to ensure compliance with program and permitting requirements for successful completion of the project. Roles and responsibilities may include community and municipal leadership engagement, grant management oversight, construction management and/or observation, etc.
6. **Construction Costs:** Construction Costs include Materials, Equipment, and Labor.
 - a) \$20,000 of the grant award is earmarked for Materials and/or Equipment Costs and does not require a match.
 - b) Grant dollars above \$30,000 may be used for Materials, Equipment, and/or Labor Costs. Additional Professional Service Fees may also be eligible but cannot exceed the maximum of 20% of total eligible construction costs.
7. **Small Community Program Grant Examples:** Eligible municipalities may request a minimum of \$60,000 and a maximum of \$100,000 in grant funds. The first \$30,000 in grant funds does not require a match. Each grant dollar above \$30,000 requires a \$1 for \$1 match. Examples are as follows:

DCNR Grant	Match Requirement	Total Project Costs (Grant + Match)
\$60,000	\$30,000	\$90,000
\$70,000	\$40,000	\$110,000
\$80,000	\$50,000	\$130,000
\$90,000	\$60,000	\$150,000
\$100,000	\$70,000	\$170,000

8. **Grant Request Less Than \$60,000:** A grant request for less than the minimum of \$60,000 will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Prior to the grant submission deadline, the Applicant must discuss the project proposal and grant program requirements with the appropriate DCNR Regional

Advisor. The DCNR Regional Advisor is then responsible for notifying Central Office Staff of the request and reaching consensus on project viability.

B. Additional Considerations:

1. Municipalities that are eligible for a Small Community Program Development grant based on population are not required to apply under the Small Community Program. Municipalities are eligible for several different funding programs offered by DCNR, each with unique requirements. Municipalities should consult the appropriate DCNR Regional Advisor to discuss potential projects and determine the most appropriate funding opportunity.
2. If an eligible municipality applies for a Small Community Program Development grant, they may not also apply for a Park Rehabilitation and Development grant in the same grant cycle.
3. The Small Community Program funding opportunity is restricted to Park Development projects. Land Acquisition, Planning, and Motorized/Non-Motorized Trail* project types are ineligible for grant funding under the Small Community Program. Development of pathways and trails within a park are eligible.

***Note:** Trail Projects include the acquisition, planning, development, rehabilitation, or maintenance of designated routes on land or water for motorized and non-motorized recreational activities. A project that has at least 75% of the total project cost related to trail activities and/or trailside facilities is classified as a Trail Project.

4. If selected for grant funding, upon receipt of a fully executed Grant Agreement, the Grantee may submit a completed Partial Payment Request form for 50% of the grant award. All payments are subject to the Grant Agreement Terms and Conditions.
5. DCNR reserves the right, at its sole discretion, to implement Small Community Program pilot projects as alternate funding sources become available.

DISCLAIMER

The policies and procedures outlined in this guidance document are intended to supplement existing requirements. The policies and procedures herein are not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on the part of DCNR to give the rules in these policies that weight or deference. This document establishes the framework within which DCNR will exercise its administrative discretion in the future.

PAGE LENGTH

3 pages

EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately. This policy is to be reviewed and updated every year.

EXPIRATION

This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.

Tom Ford, Bureau Director

12/14/2023

Name/Title of Bureau or Office Director

Date