



Notice of Funding Availability (NOFA)
2027 Community Parks & Recreation Grant
A Program of Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation

OVERVIEW

Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation is actively seeking partners (e.g., community groups, nonprofit organizations, recreational associations, public agencies, etc.) to create and enhance public recreation facilities throughout Missoula County. Community Parks & Recreation Grants (formerly called the Matching Grants Program) provides financial support to these partners on a wide variety of capital improvement projects.

GRANT AMOUNT

\$90,000 is made available each year for community-driven projects that meet the outlined program criteria. Projects occurring on property operated by Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation will be prioritized for consideration; however, eligible projects located anywhere in Missoula County outside the City of Missoula may apply.

The maximum project funding request is \$30,000, and average awards are between \$5,000-\$15,000. An organization can submit only one grant application per grant cycle.

WHO CAN APPLY

Eligible applicants include tribal, federal, state, and local government agencies, school districts, community councils, nonprofit organizations, community groups, and recreational associations. Grant funds can be used to fund capital improvement projects that create or enhance *public recreation facilities* in Missoula County. These new amenities or improvements to an existing amenity need to add value and provide long-term benefit (5 years minimum, but preferably longer). Projects occurring within the City of Missoula limits are not eligible.

ELIGIBLE PROJECTS

- Construction of:
 - Park amenities/facilities (ball courts, shelters, picnic tables, pathways, etc.)
 - Trail infrastructure (boardwalks, fencing, interpretation, signage, etc.)
- Projects that ensure compliance with industry standards (e.g., playground inspections/replacement of engineered wood fiber or other safety surfacing)
- Project planning directly related to implementation
- Projects that provide features to increase physical accessibility (e.g., projects that bring a site/facility into compliance with the U.S. Access Board outdoor developed area guidelines)
- One-time maintenance activities necessary to implement a new project

INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

- Regular, ongoing maintenance (mowing, landscaping, painting, etc.)
- Purchase or maintenance of moveable equipment (e.g., tractors, trailers, mowers, generators, replacement parts for machinery, sport uniforms, ice skates, etc.)
- Acquisition of easements and property
- Feasibility studies and preliminary planning



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- Projects that displace fish and wildlife species, reduce habitat effectiveness, cause irreparable damage to vegetation, soils, water and wild public lands, and/or substantially increase conflicts
- Projects managed as profit-making ventures
- Projects that are currently under litigation in a court of law
- Projects that are not in compliance with all applicable state laws and county policy
- Projects occurring at Big Sky Park

If a project takes place on property not owned by the applicant, written permission granting access and verifying project support from the owner is required. This includes Missoula County Parks, Trails & Recreation staff for projects on County parkland, and any other relevant land managing agencies (e.g., Montana Department of Transportation, Montana Rail Link, US Forest Service, Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks, etc.).

MATCHING FUNDS REQUIREMENT

The minimum amount of match shown on an application must be 25% of the total funding requested. This means, if an applicant is requesting \$30,000.00 in grant funds, they must produce a match of at least \$7,500 in order to meet the 25% match requirement.

Match contributions are project costs that are not reimbursed by the County. Rather, they are contributed by you (the recipient) or a third party (a project partner or beneficiary). Match is also known as “cost share” because you are sharing in the government’s costs for your projects.

There are two types of accepted match:

Cash match is a contribution of actual cash to the project or a project-related expense that can be verified. It can range from cash donations to the expense of hiring a contractor, to building supplies associated with the project. To be recognized as a valid cash match, a copy of the invoice along with proof of payment will need to be provided to Parks, Trails & Recreation staff.

In-kind match is a non-cash contribution. In-kind contributions may take the form of donated supplies, facilities, services, equipment, or volunteer labor. General volunteer labor is when a person provides labor for standard, general work that they are not an expert in. The Community Parks & Recreation Grants Program uses a set rate to quantify the contribution for this labor based on state and national trends. Currently, that rate is \$30 per hour. To be recognized as valid in-kind match, documentation (e.g. invoice, volunteer form, or letter of donation) must be submitted that indicates the value of the in-kind contribution and that the vendor or volunteer has donated the value of the goods, services or time.

Whether cash or in-kind, every match contribution must be:

- An eligible Community Parks & Recreation Grant activity
- Clearly tied to the proposed project scope
- Incurred after the project start date (except design/engineering costs which may be incurred up to twelve months before the project start date)
- Guaranteed at the time of application



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REIMBURSEMENT PROCEDURE

The Community Parks & Recreation Grant Program is a reimbursement-based grant program. If awarded, grant recipients may request reimbursement only after eligible project expenses have been incurred and paid in full, and after submitting complete and adequate documentation. This means grant recipients must have sufficient funds available to cover project costs upfront until reimbursement is processed by the County.

To request reimbursement, recipients must submit copies of all relevant project invoices along with proof of payment. Acceptable documentation includes receipts showing the last four digits of the payment card, or, for payments made by check, a copy of the canceled check (front and back).

HOW TO APPLY

Prior to applying, a consultation with Parks, Trails & Recreation staff is required to see if your project meets eligibility criteria. Sign up for a consultation here:

<https://outlook.office365.com/book/CPRGrantConsultation@missoulacounty.onmicrosoft.com/?ismsaljsauthenabled>

ONLINE GRANT PORTAL

Applicants seeking funding through the Community Parks & Recreation Grant Program will submit their applications using an online platform. This grant portal system requires that prospective applicants create an account to access and submit their application. Here are the steps:

Create an account in the Missoula County Grant Portal:

- The link to the grant portal is <http://missoula.co/grantportal>.
- See below for an image of the landing page. Note the grey “Create New Account” button in the lower left-hand corner.
- If you already have an account, click on the blue “Log On” button and proceed.

Missoula
COUNTY

Logon

Email Address*

Password*

Log On Create New Account

Welcome to the Missoula County Grant Portal.

New Users: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.



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Watch the training video and review the information about the online system:

- The training video and accompanying information is helpful to understand how to create an account and navigate an application.
- It is recommended that you invest a few minutes of your time to watch the video and get acquainted with how to navigate the online system.
- Those resources can be found here <https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4479853059991>

Accessing your application:

- Once you have created an account, you will use the grant portal when returning to work on your application and ultimately to submit the application.
- The grant portal is where you will also submit your reimbursement claims and final report.
- Note the blue “Log On” button in the lower left-hand corner of the page.
- Consider bookmarking the grant portal page for ease of access.

Collaborating:

- The system has a collaborator feature that allows two users to work together on a single application.
- Note: Applicants should avoid working simultaneously on the same application to prevent overwriting each other’s changes.
- To learn how to turn on this feature, view this tutorial: <https://support.foundant.com/hc/en-us/articles/4523887747223-Applicant-Tutorial-Collaboration>

DEADLINE

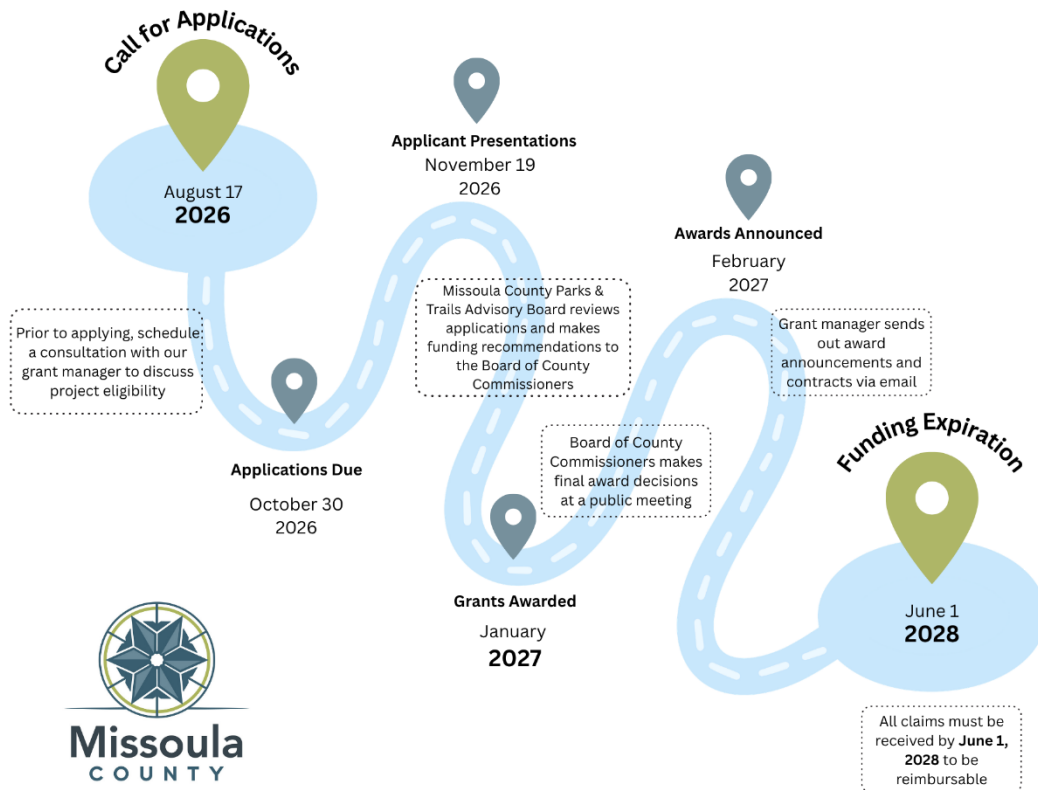
Applications are due by **11:59 p.m. Friday, October 30, 2026**. Applications submitted after this deadline will not be considered.



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GRANT PROGRAM TIMELINE

The following is a preliminary timeline of activities associated with the submission, review, and award process for the 2027 Community Parks & Recreation Grant cycle.



APPLICANT OBLIGATIONS

- Prior to applying, a consultation with Parks, Trails & Recreation staff is required to see if your project meets eligibility criteria. Sign up for a consultation here:
<https://outlook.office365.com/book/CPRGrantConsultation@missoulacounty.onmicrosoft.com/?ismcaljsauthenabled>
- Before submitting the application, applicants will be required to certify that they understand and abide by the terms and conditions listed in the application to receive the grant funding.
- Applicants will be invited to attend the November 19th Parks & Trails Advisory Board meeting to give a brief presentation of the project and answer any questions the advisory board might have prior to scoring applications. This meeting will be offered in a hybrid format to allow for virtual and in-person attendance. More information will be provided to individual applicants upon submission of a grant application.
- Applicant is responsible for determining any tax implications from receiving this grant. Upon notice of award, submission of a W9 is required to receive payment from Missoula County.



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- All projects must be completed and claims for reimbursement must be received by June 1, 2028.

FUNDING CRITERIA

Considering the individual needs of each park and available funding, projects that show the following will be given priority:

1. Demonstrated need and community support (25 points)

- a) The need or demand for the project is clearly defined and articulated (5 points)
- b) The need or demand is supported with creditable data or documentation to make a compelling and persuasive case for the project (5 points)
- c) Involves community or neighborhood participation and support (5 points)
- d) Supported by additional cash funding or in-kind contributions from other organizations and individuals (5 points)
- e) Aligns with a community planning document or formal agreement (5 points)

2. Project resiliency and maintenance considerations (25 points)

- a) Project demonstrates a clear and sustainable plan for ongoing maintenance, including identified funding sources and understanding of routine and long-term maintenance needs (5 points)
- b) Project aligns with organization's available maintenance capacity, including realistic staffing assumptions and clearly assigned long-term responsibility (5 points)
- c) Project demonstrates proactive management of safety and liability risks through appropriate design, compliance with standards, and mitigation of known hazards (5 points)
- d) Project avoids materials with high long-term maintenance or replacement burdens, reduces need for specialty parts, tools, or training (5 points)
- e) Project improves long-term environmental resilience of the site (examples: addresses flooding, drought, extreme heat, wildlife mitigation, improves soil health and erosion control, supports pollinators and wildlife corridors, minimizes disturbances to sensitive areas) (5 points)

3. Recreational Opportunity (25 points)

- a) Enhances or expands recreational, educational, and/or social opportunities for a variety of user groups (5 points)
- b) Reduces barriers to outdoor access and engagement for nontraditional users (e.g., persons with limited mobility, senior citizens, low-income populations) (5 points)



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- c) Addresses an identified recreation need or service gap within the community (5 points)
- d) Expands year-round or multi-season use (5 points)
- e) Improves connectivity and access to existing systems (5 points)

4. Project feasibility (25 points)

- a) Demonstrates readiness (preliminary design is completed, stakeholder coordination is evident, permitting (if applicable) is accounted for) (5 points)
- b) Project implementation timeline is well-defined, including clear scope, roles, timeline, and consideration of potential risks or constraints. (5 points)
- c) The degree of urgency for funding this project now versus in the future is clearly articulated (i.e. lost opportunities for easements, assistance, funding match, etc.)
- d) Budget line items are detailed, cost estimates are accurate and reasonable, and fundraising strategy is evident
- e) Financial and/or in-kind capability of the applying entity is clearly outlined

SCORING PROCESS

Applications will be scored according to the funding criteria listed above. Each scoring category will be assigned a score from 0-25 for a total of 100 points. Two scores will be generated: a Parks, Trails & Recreation staff score, and a Parks & Trails Advisory Board score. These two scores will be averaged to create one overall average score. The overall average score is placed in a ranked recommendation list, which includes summarized notes from reviewers. This recommendation list is provided as an appendix to the board packet for the Parks & Trails Advisory Board prior to the funding decision meeting, which is expected in January of 2027.

PROJECT PERIOD

The project cannot begin until the award contract is signed by the grantee and the Missoula County board of County Commissioners. Expenses incurred prior to the contract execution date will not be reimbursed. The review and contracting process can take up to 60 days. Projects must be completed by June 1 of 2028.

REPORTING

A final report will be required upon close out of the grant.

QUESTIONS?

Contact the Parks, Trails & Recreation department by emailing countyparks@missoulacounty.us or calling (406)-258-4657 if you have questions about this grant opportunity.