



EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS

Rebecca Tepper, Secretary
Grant Announcement

BID ENV 24 DCS 10
Dated: December 8, 2023

Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) Grant Program **BID: # BD-24-1042-ENV-ENV01-96123**

I. GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY:

A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR: The purpose of the ORLP Program is to provide new or significantly improved recreation opportunities in urban, disadvantaged communities consistent with the purposes and requirements of the LWCF Act and LWCF Manual. To meet ORLP objectives and goals, projects must be:

- located within an incorporated city (or town) having a **population of 30,000** or more in the 2020 Census, and
- located within a community (Census tract) that is **determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#)** (includes tract of project site and community(ies) served).

B. OVERVIEW AND GOALS: The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Division of Conservation Services (DCS) administers the federally funded LWCF grant for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts on behalf of the National Park Service (NPS) and is soliciting applications to compete in the national ORLP competition. The NPS is prioritizing the selection of projects that:

- **Are Nature Based:** As green and blue spaces, and tree cover help to cool the air, reduce pollution, and have positive effects on mental and physical health, nature-based park projects will earn a 5-point bonus. Nature-based projects are those where nature is a major element of, or strongly supports, the proposed recreational activity.
- **Provide Additional Benefits:** Additional benefits beyond the above may assist a project in standing apart from other projects, but they cannot be used as a replacement for the stated priority. Additional benefits may include, but are not limited to, projects that: expand public-private partnerships to leverage matching share resources (e.g. money or donated lands, supplies or services); provide economic benefits to the local community (e.g. short or long-term jobs or stimulation to local business near the park); use sustainable design/materials; include site features that consider the needs of all demographics, and/or; involve the redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property.

C. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS: Eligible projects are those for the acquisition of parkland or the construction of a park within eligible jurisdictions. (See further detail on eligible projects in Section 2B.)

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Applications will be accepted from communities of 30,000 or more people that have an Open Space and Recreation Plan on file with DCS by the grant submission deadline (see

further detail on eligible applicants in Section 2A) for projects that are located within a Census tract that is determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (includes tract of project site and community(ies) served). Federally-recognized tribes, along with the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Fish and Game, that are proposing projects within the eligible communities are also eligible to apply.

E. APPLICATION DEADLINE: The application deadline is Wednesday, February 28, 2024 at 3:00 pm.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY: Congress has appropriated \$224,145,000 in funding for this seventh round of ORLP competition. This solicitation will be used to determine which projects Massachusetts submits to compete in the national competition for Round 7. Note that while there is no maximum number of applications Massachusetts is permitted to submit for competition, this BID process is being used to determine if a project is complete and satisfies eligibility requirements and the Commonwealth's Open Project Selection Process and is consistent with outdoor recreation priorities outlined in the [Massachusetts' SCORP](#).

G. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: The ORLP is a reimbursement grant program. The reimbursement rate is up to 50%, up to the grant award maximum of \$15,000,000. The minimum grant request is \$300,000. For municipal applicants, a successful City/Town Council or Board of Alderman vote that appropriates 100% of the total project cost is required prior to the execution of a contract. (See further detail on budget requirement in Section 2D.)

H. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S): According to the National Park Service, Projects selected under Round 7 have an expected award date of November 1, 2025. The NPS announcement of selected projects is anticipated to be November 1, 2024. Selected projects must submit a full application for NPS final review within one year of the announcement (Nov. 1, 2025) to remain eligible for funding. The period of performance for LWCF grants is typically from two to three years, so the project period is anticipated to be February 1, 2026 – February 28, 2028. This competition will favor projects that can demonstrate their ability to be completed within this timeframe.

I. REGULATIONS, STATUTES, OR AUTHORIZATION GOVERNING THIS GRANT PROGRAM: This BID is issued according to federal Funding Opportunity Number P24AS00498 and subject to the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (P.L. 88-578). To be eligible for either an acquisition or a development grant, the project must involve publicly-owned land and the project sponsor must possess sufficient legal title and control of the property to 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 U.S.C. 200305(f)(3)). All properties will become protected open space under Article 97 of the Amendments to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

J. CONTACT INFORMATION: Melissa Cryan
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
100 Cambridge Street – Suite 900
Boston, MA 02114
857-274-7173
melissa.cryan@mass.gov
<https://www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-the-division-of-conservation-services>

2. Performance and Contract Specifications

A. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Applications will be accepted from communities of 30,000 or more people that have an Open Space and Recreation Plan on file with DCS by the grant submission deadline for projects that are located within a Census tract that is determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (includes tract of project site and community(ies) served). Federally-recognized tribes, along with the Departments of Conservation and Recreation and Fish and Game, that are proposing projects within the eligible communities are also eligible to apply.

B. ELIGIBLE PROJECT(S)/SCOPE(S) OF WORK: The purpose of the ORLP Program is to provide new or significantly improved recreation opportunities in urban, disadvantaged communities lacking access to walkable outdoor recreation (a.k.a. park deserts), consistent with the purposes and requirements of the LWCF Act and LWCF Manual. To meet ORLP objectives and goals, projects must be located within an incorporated city (or town) having a population of 30,000 or more in the 2020 Census, and located within a community (Census tract) that is determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (includes tract of project site and community(ies)).

As green and blue spaces, and tree cover help to cool the air, reduce pollution, and have positive effects on mental and physical health, nature-based park projects will earn a 5-point bonus. Nature-based projects are those where nature is a major element of, or strongly supports, the proposed recreational activity.

Additional benefits beyond the above may assist a project in standing apart from other projects, but they cannot be used as a replacement for the stated priority. Additional benefits may include, but are not limited to, projects that: expand public-private partnerships to leverage matching share resources (e.g. money or donated lands, supplies or services); provide economic benefits to the local community (e.g. short or long-term jobs or stimulation to local business near the park); use sustainable design/materials; include site features that consider the needs of all demographics, and/or; involve the redevelopment of a blighted or distressed property.

In the interest of ensuring a wide distribution of LWCF-ORLP funds and addressing the needs of communities that are under-served, the following are ineligible project types:

- most indoor recreation and other buildings, such as nature centers or education centers; however, facilities to support the use of the recreating public, such as restrooms, can be eligible,
- parks/sites that are currently receiving an LWCF formula grant, or that received an LWCF formula grant that closed within the last seven years, at the same park, even if the scope of the project is different, and,
- parks/sites that have already received two previous ORLP award, or additional ORLP funds to cover cost increases of a previous ORLP grant project.

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES: Congress has made a total of \$224,145,000 available for the ORLP grant for the entire country. There is no maximum number of applications any state is permitted to submit for competition. This BID process is being used to determine if a project is complete and satisfies eligibility requirements and the Commonwealth's Open Project Selection Process and is consistent with outdoor recreation priorities outlined in the [Massachusetts SCORP](#). The minimum grant request is \$300,000; the maximum grant request is \$15,000,000.

The ORLP is a reimbursement grant program. The reimbursement rate for all projects is up to 50% of the total project cost, up to the grant award maximum of \$15,000,000. Grant awards are specifically for the acquisition of parkland, development of new parks, or the renovation of existing parks.

D. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: Municipal applicants selected to receive grant funding must show the use of funds from non-federal sources through a City Council, Board of Alderman, Town Council, etc. vote. Non-federal funding sources include, but are not limited to, other grants from private or non-profit foundations, and cash contributions from local partners or individuals. However, there is an exception for funds authorized by their enabling legislation to be treated as non-Federal match. The most common options are HUD's Community Development Block Grants or DOT-FHWA's Recreation Trails Program (it is the project sponsors responsibility to include supporting documentation of this authority in the application if seeking to use Federal funds from other sources as match). Budgets that include unallowable Federal share as match will be eliminated without further consideration.

Any donations must be secure or firmly committed at the time of application and be confirmed in a signed letter from the donor and amount/value of the contribution. If the project donation exceeds the 1:1 requirement, the budget must indicate how the additional funds contributions will be used.

This grant program is a **REIMBURSEMENT** grant program. EEA can only reimburse a grantee on the total amount spent as shown by canceled municipal checks for municipal applicants. Any non-state funding sources must be deposited into a municipal account. Any municipal votes that occur prior to the submission of a grant application **MUST** be reviewed by Melissa Cryan for approval.

E. PROJECT TERMS: If awarded, all projects will be required to abide by the Standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions, as well as the National Park Service Land and Water Conservation Fund Project Agreement. Please note that EEA does not guarantee that any contracts may result from this BID or that any particular funding level will be awarded.

F. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS: NPS has stated that the grant start date for projects selected under Round 7 will have an expected award date of November 1, 2025. The period of performance for LWCF grants is typically from two to three years. Specific timelines will be developed for any project selected for funding.

Multiple-Step Application Process. The application process for ORLP is multi-step:

1. Each State solicits proposals from eligible project sponsors and selects and submits abbreviated applications, as described in this funding opportunity, to NPS for projects they find to be eligible and meet the goals of the ORLP program.
2. Each proposal is reviewed and scored by an independent merit panel and technical reviewers.
3. Based on the reviews of an independent merit panel, the Director of the NPS determines which projects are selected and invited to submit a full application for NPS review.
4. States work with the project sponsors of the NPS selected projects to prepare a full application for NPS's final review and funding determination.

Final applications (listed as Step 4 above) must be submitted to NPS within one year of the NPS public announcement of the project's selection to remain eligible for funding.

G. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE: Any land acquired through this grant opportunity must be dedicated to park and recreation purposes under Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14 (not both). Any land receiving new parkland dedication must be dedicated under Chapter 45, Section 3. For municipal applicants, the parks built through this grant opportunity must be on land that is owned by the

municipality and under the care and control of the Parks Department or Commission. EEA representatives must be invited to any public events sponsored by the applicant in celebration of a grant award. A project sign crediting the grant program is a condition of receiving the final reimbursement.

H. REPORTING: Specific requirements for progress reports will be included as part of the approved scope of services for each contract.

I. INVOICING: Applicants selected to receive grant funding will be required to submit a Project Agreement, State Standard Contract, and billing forms, which will be sent to applicants with their award letter. Only approved expenses incurred during the period of contract are eligible for reimbursement.

3. Instructions for Application Submission

A. EVALUATION CRITERIA: Please see the attached rating form for more details. A site visit may be scheduled for EEA staff to see proposed projects in person.

B. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS: Applications must be received via email by 3:00 pm on Wednesday, February 28, 2024. Any application received after the deadline will be rejected. **One electronic copy** (the text of the application should be saved in a word processing program, not as a pdf) of the application package shall be submitted to [Melissa Cryan](#), with the subject line of BID ENV 24 DCS 10. Multiple emails may be sent for a complete application. Note that attachments should not exceed 20 MB.

It is highly recommended that the grant applicant follow up with a separate email with no attachments confirming receipt. Please note that if the applicant would like to confirm receipt prior to the grant deadline, email the application well in advance of the grant deadline, i.e., at least 24 hours in advance.

Required proposal elements: (Applications that are missing any of these items will not be accepted. All the information is needed by DCS to complete the federal application for submission to NPS.) There is an overall 40-page limit to the application, excluding letters of support. Specific page limits by document are listed below.

Save all of these documents as the underlined word/words in each bullet, followed by an underscore, followed by applicant's name, for submission by email as the grant application. For example, the Town of Rehoboth's Application form would be, "Application form_Town of Rehoboth".

- ☐ Application form (hard copy must be signed by an authorized signatory for the applicant organization)
- ☐ Project Narrative (max 10 pages) The Project Narrative consists of the following three sections, each detailed below:
 - Project Data Page,
 - Project Overview, and
 - Responses to the Project Criteria.
- ☐ Budget Narrative (max 5 pages, including tables)
- ☐ Project Timeline (max 1 page) to complete the tasks/activities under the proposal.
- ☐ Photos of current site conditions, the surrounding environment, etc.

- ☐ Map (or Aerial Photo) Delineating Project Area and Proposed Boundary – must clearly indicate area to be acquired and/or developed, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the perpetual protection provisions of the LWCF Act ([54 U.S.C. 200305\(f\)\(3\)](#)), all known outstanding rights and interests in the area held by others, total acres within the boundary(ies), and a north arrow.
- ☐ Plan or Sketch of the Site Features identifying location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc.
- ☐ Letters of Commitment of Secured Contributions clearly stating the amount and type of contribution. Contributions from project sponsor must also be confirmed.

Optional proposal elements:

- ☐ General Letters of Support (Letters of support from Congress must be included with the application in Grants.gov to be considered).
- ☐ Feasibility Report (if available)
- ☐ Massachusetts Historic Commission Review Letter (MHC **must** review all projects prior to NPS approval. Submit MHC review to DCS when received.)
- ☐ Confirmation of [IPaC Report Submission](#) to USFWS

See the Application Form (provided in Attachment A of this document) for more detail on required and optional documents.

C. ADDITIONAL REQUIRED DOCUMENTATION: If selected, the applicant may be required to submit additional forms as required by the National Park Service. Any acquisition projects that are selected must provide a Yellow Book appraisal before a contract will be signed.

4. Deadlines and Procurement Calendar

A. RELEASE OF BID: December 8, 2023

B. INFORMATION SESSION AND QUESTIONS: It is strongly recommended that all applicants set up a meeting with EEA staff for assistance with project development prior to grant submittal, as well as review the [original NOFO](#) that this BID is written in response to. This will help ensure this is the appropriate grant program for the project.

C. APPLICATION DUE DATE: Applications are due Wednesday, February 28, 2024, at 3:00 pm

D. ESTIMATED AWARD DATE: NPS estimates it will notify the applicants selected for award under Round 7 by November 1, 2024 and that projects selected will have an expected award start date of November 1, 2025.

F. ESTIMATED CONTRACT START DATE: Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form. The estimated start date for contracts resulting from this BID is November 1, 2025.

5. Miscellaneous

A. TYPE OF PROCUREMENT: Grant

B. USE OF THIS PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS: This BID is a single department procurement. All contracts awarded under this BID will be utilized solely by EEA.

C. REQUEST FOR SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS: This BID may result in multiple contracts.

D. BID DISTRIBUTION METHOD: This BID has been distributed electronically using the COMMBUYS system. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check COMMBUYS for any addenda or modifications to a BID to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended BIDs and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Applicants are advised to check the “last change” field on the summary page of BIDs for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent BID files. The application and answers to questions will also be posted on the DCS website at <https://www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-the-division-of-conservation-services>.

Applicants may not alter BID language or any BID component files. Those submitting a proposal must respond in accordance to the BID directions and complete only those sections that prompt an Applicant for a response. Modifications to the body of this BID, specifications, terms and conditions, or which change the intent of this BID are prohibited. Any unauthorized alterations will disqualify response.

E. LIST OF ATTACHMENTS:

- A. Application Form
- B. Project Selection System

File naming convention: Save all documents as the applicant's name, followed by an underscore, followed by underlined word/words that are the document name in each bullet, for submission by email to the grant administrator. For example, the Town of Rehoboth's Application form would be, "Town of Rehoboth_Application form".

Required proposal elements: (Applications that are missing any of these items will not be accepted. All the information is needed by DCS to complete the federal application for submission to NPS.) There is an overall 40-page limit to the application submitted by DCS to NPS, excluding letters of support. Specific page limits by document are listed below.

- ☐ Application form (hard copy must be signed by an authorized signatory for the applicant organization)
- ☐ Project Narrative (max 10 pages) The Project Narrative consists of the following three sections, each detailed below:
 - Project Data Page,
 - Project Overview, and
 - Responses to the Project Criteria.
- ☐ Budget Narrative (max 5 pages)
- ☐ Project Timeline (max 1 page) to complete the tasks/activities under the proposal.
- ☐ Photos of current site conditions, the surrounding environment, etc.
- ☐ Map (or Aerial Photo) Delineating Project Area and Proposed Boundary – must clearly indicate area to be acquired and/or developed, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the perpetual protection provisions of the LWCF Act ([54 U.S.C. 200305\(f\)\(3\)](#)), all known outstanding rights and interests in the area held by others, total acres within the boundary(ies), and a north arrow.
- ☐ Plan or Sketch of the Site Features identifying location of planned recreational improvements and other features such as where the public will access the site, parking, etc.
- ☐ Letters of Commitment of Secured Contributions clearly stating the amount and type of contribution. Contributions from project sponsor must also be confirmed.

Optional proposal elements:

- ☐ General Letters of Support (Letters of support from Congress must be included with the application in Grants.gov to be considered).
- ☐ Feasibility Report (if available)
- ☐ Massachusetts Historic Commission Review Letter (MHC **must** review all projects prior to NPS approval. Submit MHC review to DCS when received.) Send the MHC a PNF with a copy of the USGS locus map with the property boundaries clearly indicated, smaller-scale property maps if available, and a cover letter to include information about any known historic or archaeological sites. Send this certified mail, return receipt requested, so that you know when it was received. MHC will review and comment to DCS (and copy the applicant) within 30 days of receipt. There is no need to telephone or email the MHC. See these webpages for any questions:
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcpdf/pnfguide.pdf> and
<http://www.sec.state.ma.us/mhc/mhcrevcom/revcomidx.htm>.

- ❑ Confirmation of [IPaC Report Submission](#) to USFWS

Project Abstract Summary

The project abstract form must be completed to meet federal award reporting requirements. Ensure the project abstract succinctly describes the project in plain language that the public can understand and use without the full proposal. If the application is funded, this information will be made available for public access including on USAspending.gov.

Project Narrative (10-page limit 12-point font)

The Project Narrative consists of the following three sections, each detailed below:

- Project Data Page
- Project Overview
- Responses to the Project Criteria

Project Data Page (1-page limit):

Provide the following information:

1. Project Sponsor Name:
2. Name of Park/Property:
3. Project Title:
4. Name of Property Title Holder:
5. Project Property Address/Location:
6. 2020 Census City Population (must be over 30,000):
7. Census tract numbers of project site and community(ies) served – all tracts must located within a Census tract that is determined to be disadvantaged per the [Climate and Environmental Justice Screening Tool](#) (CEJST) (NPS recommends applicants maintain a screen shot of each tract’s “disadvantaged” determination as Census data within the CEJST may change prior to NPS review of application and proof of previous data may be needed):
8. Statement of Project Type: Acquisition, New Development, or Renovation, or combination acquisition/development:
9. Statement that project Creates a New Park, Expands an Existing Park or Neither:
10. Brief statement (aka Project Summary) providing a “publicity blurb” about the project. (250-words or less.):

Project Narrative – Project Overview (2-page limit):

Provide the following information in narrative form with each of the questions below copied and pasted in your response so that it is clear which question is being responded to. Any application not responding to all the questions below may be considered incomplete and withdrawn from funding consideration.

All Projects:

- Describe and quantify the types of resources and features of or on the property (e.g., 50 acres of forested area, 2,000 feet of waterfront, scenic views, unique or special features, recreation amenities, historic/cultural resources)
- Describe the current uses (if any) or disposition of the property to be acquired or developed, if uses will need to be discontinued, or the site rehabilitated. If there are any existing non-outdoor recreation or other non-public uses that are intended to continue on the property on an interim or permanent basis and/or proposed in the future, these should be explained.
- Describe constraints of the property (e.g., existing development; hazardous materials/contamination history; and restrictions such as institutional controls, easements, rights-of-way, reversionary interests, above ground/underground utilities; etc.).

Development Only:

- Describe the planned physical improvements and/or facilities, and the reason(s) such development is needed. Explain whether the work involves new development or rehabilitation or replacement of existing recreation facilities.

Acquisition Only:

- Provide a description of the property (including the current ownership) and an explanation of the need for its acquisition.
- State whether the acquisition would create a new public park/recreation area or if it will expand an existing site, and if so, by how much.
- Describe the plans for developing the property for recreation purposes after acquisition and the timeframe for the start and completion of development and when it will be open for public use.
- Describe the status of the acquisition, including negotiations with the landowner and development of due diligence materials such as title work and appraisal.
- Land acquisition costs must be based on the Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (aka yellow book) estimate of fair market value. Be sure to explain the basis for the value estimate if an appraisal has not yet been performed.

Combination Projects:

- Provide information requested under all “All Projects”, “Development Only” and “Acquisition Only”.

Project Narrative – Project Criteria Information (remaining pages):

Provide responses to the following criteria from the Project Selection System in narrative form with each of the bullet points below copied and pasted in your response so that it is clear which bullet is being responded to. Any application not responding to all the questions below may be considered incomplete and withdrawn from funding consideration.

Criterion 1 – Project Merit

- State if the project is, or is not, a nature-based park, and if so, provide a description of the natural elements and how these elements support the proposed recreation.
- Describe any additional relevant benefits to the disadvantaged community, beyond being nature-based, that the project will provide, such as transforming a previous brownfield, involving of new or non-traditional partners, reaching new user groups, etc.
- Describe the process that led to the development of this proposal. Focus on the efforts made to engage the disadvantaged community(ies) served, and their participation in the project's design as well as that of other interested/affected entities. Include details such as number of meetings held and number of attendees, number of community members contacted, number of responses received.
- Describe the partnerships or other collaborative efforts that have helped, or will help to, facilitate the project.
- Describe initiatives and/or strategies that are in place to substantially limit gentrification of the project area.

Criterion 2 – Technical Excellence

- SCORP and any other relevant city, regional or stated plan goals or initiatives the project directly supports. State specifically, how the project supports each plan's priority or initiative (provide the plan title and date).
- Describe any other park or outdoor recreation plan (provide date of plan) that the project advances or supports, and state precisely how the proposed project aligns with it/each.
- Describe the status of planning referencing the milestones and measures in the timeline.
- Describe the non-recreational features within the project boundary such as leases or easements.
- Describe the basis/justification for the proposed budget estimates and identify who developed the budget estimates.
- Describe the qualifications of the parties responsible for managing the project, the grant, and long-term management and maintenance of the site (physically and financially).

Detailed Budget Narrative (maximum 5 pages)

The project budget shall include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all estimated project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget. Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the [SF424A](#) or [SF424C](#).

Budget information should reflect only costs related to work/acquisition that will be completed under an ORLP grant if selected. A total budget for the entire project (including work beyond what would be funded under a grant) may be provided separately. Note that the ORLP funded portion of the project must result in a viable recreation opportunity that is not reliant on other funding even in the context of a larger planned project.

The detailed budget must:

- Include a detailed breakdown of proposed project costs, using the categories from [SF424C](#).
- List all agencies, organizations or other entities providing contributions and describe the type (e.g., cash donations, city budget). A letter from each secured contributor must be included in a letter confirming the commitment (includes contribution from project sponsor).
- State the value and type (cash donations, city budget, etc.) of each contribution.
- State that the contribution is secure or firmly committed at the time of application.
- Provide a description of the methodology used to determine the amount of any contingency costs included.
- Identify who developed the estimated budget and on the basis for the estimates.

ORLP projects are limited to using a maximum of 25% of the total budget for costs not directly attributable to physical development/rehabilitation activities, supplies, equipment, or cost of land. Additionally, the LWCF Act specifically excludes acquisition support costs (such as title research and appraisals). (See “Program Funding Restrictions” under Section D6 for detailed explanation and additional restricted costs.)

Timeline (1 page limit)

The detailed timeline must be included showing all project milestones, and measures that will provide quantifiable progress towards reaching the project's milestones. Each planned contract must be listed with an expected date for bidding.

FY24 ORLP Rating System

The grant rating system is taken directly from the National Park Service Notice of Funding Opportunity P24AS00498. The criteria below are copied from pages 19-20 of that document. It is highly recommended that all applicants review the NOFO thoroughly before completing this application. Massachusetts will use the same criteria to evaluate the applications it receives as well.

I. Criteria

NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria in the Project Narrative application requirement. Each applicant is required to provide a detailed project narrative, in accordance with section D.2., of the following criteria elements. It is HIGHLY recommended that the project narrative has sections labeled by criterion and bulleted topic.

Criterion I – Project Merit

Maximum Points: 50

This criterion assesses the quality of the proposed project in addressing the lack of outdoor recreation in, and wants and needs of, the target urban, disadvantaged community(ies). A five-point bonus will be awarded to nature-based projects (projects where nature is a major element of, or strongly supports, the proposed recreational activity). Otherwise, projects will be scored based on their ability to meet or surpass all of the following priorities: (1) demonstrating a high degree of effort or initiative to engage residents of the disadvantaged neighborhood(s) in the project's development, (2) demonstrating significant collaboration among the public and private sectors, including multiple levels of government, private/non-profit organizations, and community groups, and (3) having strong initiatives, policies, incentives, etc., to protect the area from gentrification (for more insight, see the National Recreation and Parks Associations' paper *Greening Without Gentrification* at <https://www.nrpa.org/parks-recreation-magazine/2019/december/greening-without-gentrification/>). Please provide the following information:

- State if the project is, or is not, a nature-based park, and if so, provide a description of the natural elements and how these elements support the proposed recreation.
- Describe any additional relevant benefits to the disadvantaged community, beyond being nature-based, that the project will provide, such as transforming a previous brownfield, involving of new or non-traditional partners, reaching new user groups, etc.
- Describe the process that led to the development of this proposal. Focus on the efforts made to engage the disadvantaged community(ies) served, and their participation in the project's design as well as that of other interested/affected entities. Include details such as number of meetings held and number of attendees, number of community members contacted, number of responses received.

- Describe the partnerships or other collaborative efforts that have helped, or will help to, facilitate the project.
- Describe initiatives and/or strategies that are in place to substantially limit gentrification of the project area.

Criterion 2 – Technical Excellence

Maximum Points: 50

This criterion measures the project's conformance with LWCF requirements and its likelihood to be successful. Projects will be scored based on their ability to meet or surpass all of the following priorities: (1) directly aligning with at least one goal or need that is clearly identified in the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), particularly any that are specific to urban or disadvantaged areas within the state or the area in which the project is located, (2) breaking ground within one year after award of a grant and be complete and open to the public within 2 to 3 years, (3) having a justified, reasonable, allowable and allocable detailed budget estimate that includes all information requested in Section D under "Detailed Budget Narrative", and (4) being managed by a qualified, experienced teams with federal grant awards and construction project experience, as well as having qualified entities to maintain the site long-term, both physically and financially. Please provide the following information:

- SCORP and any other relevant city, regional or stated plan goals or initiatives the project directly supports. State specifically, how the project supports each plan's priority or initiative (provide the plan title and date).
- Describe any other park or outdoor recreation plan (provide date of plan) that the project advances or supports, and state precisely how the proposed project aligns with it/each.
- Describe the status of planning referencing the milestones and measures in the timeline.
- Describe the non-recreational features within the project boundary such as leases or easements.
- Describe the basis/justification for the proposed budget estimates and identify who developed the budget estimates.
- Describe the qualifications of the parties responsible for managing the project, the grant, and long-term management and maintenance of the site (physically and financially).

2. Review and Selection Process

NPS personnel, and in some cases independent reviewers, will review all proposals. All proposals for funding will be considered using the criteria outlined above. A summary of the review panel comments may be provided to the applicant if requested.

a. Initial Review

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed by NPS

to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; and (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination). If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non-responsive and eliminated from further review.

b. Comprehensive Merit Review

All applications that satisfactorily pass the initial review will be eligible for the Comprehensive Merit Review, by a panel made up of professionals in fields related to the program criteria. The scores and reviewer evaluations will be used by the competition managers to produce a ranked list of proposals that will be recommended to the competition's selecting official for final selection.

Each criteria element will be scored on the 0 -50-point scale below.

Superior (40-50 points): The project strongly meets all priorities as well as providing several additional benefits for that criterion and/or has no technical weaknesses.

Good (30-40 points): The project strongly meets all priorities and/or contains only one or two minor technical issues.

Satisfactory (20-30 points): The project comes close to meeting all priorities and/or has a few minor technical issue(s).

Marginal (10-20 points): Project is weak in meeting more than one of the priorities and/or contains several minor issues or a moderate technical issue.

Poor (1-10 points): Application is far from meeting all priorities and/or contains one significant, or more than one moderate, technical issue(s).

Not Acceptable (0 point): Application does not address one or more priorities and is weak in meeting other priorities, and/or contains one significant, or numerous minor and moderate technical issue(s).

Applicants of selected projects must submit a full application within one year of the date of the NPS announcement of selected projects. The full application will be reviewed by the NPS for compliance with federal laws, most notably compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and with the National Historic Preservation Act. If these reviews reveal features of the project that affect its eligibility or viability, the NPS may remove the project from the competition.

During the full application review, budgets will be evaluated by program staff. Deficiencies identified, and adjustments suggested by the merit panel reviews, as well as corrections for unallowable or unreasonable costs, will be addressed with the State and may result in a reduced award.

c. Selection

The Selection Official may consider the merit review recommendations and program policy factors to make a final determination about selections including:

- 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,
- Issues uncovered during the NPS compliance review that cannot be resolved prior to the date of selection of projects,
- The amount of funds available to select applications for funding, and
- Benefits of acquisition and new development projects over rehabilitation projects.

d. Discussions and Award

The Government may enter into discussions with a selected applicant for any reason deemed necessary, including, but not limited to: (1) only a portion of the application is selected for award; (2) the Government needs additional information to determine that the applicant is capable of complying with the requirements of DOI Financial Assistance Regulations, and/or (3) additional specific terms and conditions are required. Failure to satisfactorily resolve the issues identified by the Government may preclude award to the applicant.