FY24 Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Round

Grant Workshop

Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- LWCF grants will be used to implement the findings of SCORP
- Four SCORP goals are:
 - Access for Underserved Populations
 - 2. Support the Statewide Trails Initiative
 - Increase the Availability of Water-based Recreation
 - 4. Support the Creation and Renovation of Neighborhood Parks

LWCF Basics

- LWCF is a federal program that the Division of Conservation Services administers on behalf of the National Park Service
- Eligible applicants
 - Municipalities
 - Departments of Fish and Game and Conservation and Recreation
 - Federally-recognized tribes

Requirements for All Projects

- Municipal applicants must have a current Open Space and Recreation Plan (if one is already on file at DCS, don't send another)
 - It is possible to submit it at the same time as the grant application, please submit under separate cover via email
- Acquisition projects must have an appraisal done to Yellow Book standards
- Applications are due by January 11, 2024 at 3:00 pm via
 online form AND mail

Appraisals

- Applicants submitting an acquisition project must be in touch with Melissa by December 4, 2023 to coordinate the appraisal process
- Appraisals must be done to Yellow Book standards
- Review appraiser will be hired by EEA to work in tandem with the applicant to complete a Statement of Work under which the appraiser hired by the applicant will complete appraisal
- Appraisal deadline is February 29, 2024 email to Melissa
- Appraisal must be no older than one year old at the time of the grant submission (dated between January 12, 2023 and January 11, 2024)
- Statement of Work is Attachment F of the BID

Eligible Project Types

- Conservation projects:
 - Purchase land in fee simple or a conservation restriction
 - Land will be under the care and control of the Conservation Commission
- Recreation projects:
 - Purchase recreation land
 - Develop new recreational facilities
 - Renovate existing parks
 - Land must be dedicated as parkland

Eligible Project Types

- Trails projects:
 - Development of trails on existing municipally- or state-owned conservation or recreation land
 - Projects on state land must be submitted by DCR or DFG, not by the municipality in which they are located
- Federal definition of trail: Trails can connect parks with communities or other parks, be within parks, or serve as stand-alone recreation features.

Eligible Project Costs

- For acquisition projects:
 - Reimbursement is based on purchase price or appraised value, whichever is less
 - Only acquisition cost is eligible for reimbursement
- For renovation/development projects:
 - Engineering
 - Design (grants solely for design are not eligible)
 - Construction
 - Construction supervision

Eligible Project Costs

- For trail projects:
 - Development and marking of trails
 - Support features such as trailheads, overlooks, and turnouts
- We cannot reimburse for donations or in-kind services
- Must have 100% appropriated from municipal budget (for municipalities), 100% from state budget (for state agencies), 100% from tribal budget (for tribes)

Grant maximum/minimum

- Minimum grant request: \$50,000
- Maximum grant request : \$1,000,000

Reimbursement Percentage

- LWCF grants have a maximum 50% reimbursement rate
- The specific reimbursement rate for a successful project is based on what percent the grant award amount is of the total eligible project cost and remains the same for each reimbursement request submitted for payment

• Example:

- \$4,000,000 project with a \$1,000,000 grant award
- \$1,000,000 is 25% of \$4,000,000
- Grantee will be reimbursed 25% of eligible project costs for each reimbursement request submitted
- A grantee submitting \$1,000,000 worth of invoices will be reimbursed \$250,000 (25% of \$1,000,000 is \$250,000)

Plan your project budget accordingly

Selection Process

- All projects are visited by DCS staff, then rated and ranked (rating system is included in the application package)
- Recommendations are approved by EEA
- Recommendations are approved by the National Park Service
- Anticipated state grant decision announcement date is late spring 2024 (this is an estimate)
- Anticipated federal grant award announcement date is fall
 2024
- Project completion date is December 2026

Municipal Votes

- All municipal projects must have a town meeting or city council vote
- The vote will:
 - Authorize the submission of the grant application
 - Approve appropriation of 100% of the total project cost
 - Dedicate the land to recreation (Chapter 45, Section 3 or 14) or conservation purposes (Chapter 40, Section 8C)
- Sample vote language is in application package
- Send all draft vote language to me for approval
- Vote can occur after application deadline, but must occur before the contract is signed with the grantee

Project Description

- Become familiar with the rating system and make sure that your project description hits on all of the areas where your project can receive points (2 pages max, 11 pt font, ¾" margins)
 - Climate resiliency focus of this year's grant round
 - Relevance to statewide and local plans, including SCORP
 - Accessibility
 - Environmental Justice
 - Expansion of recreational resources, including hunting and wildlife viewing
 - Environmental education
 - Stewardship

Climate Resilient Parks Ideas

- Climate resiliency should be incorporated into park design and site selection
- Some ideas:
 - Redeveloping vacant lots into community gardens and urban forests
 - Dramatically increasing tree canopy in any park design
 - Removing significant amounts of pavement
 - Installing pergolas as shade structures
 - Incorporating water spray parks into design as cooling feature

Post-completion Responsibilities

- All sites that receive LWCF funding are protected by both Article 97 of the Amendments to Massachusetts Constitution and Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act, which means the land must remain as conservation or recreation land in perpetuity
- Site must be open to all this includes both nonresidents and people with disabilities
- Fair fee policy
- Sign requirements

Important Things to Remember

- LWCF is funded through the National Park Service and is subject to its approval, as well as federal rules and regulations
- Division of Conservation Services administers the program for NPS
- Any work completed prior to receiving a signed state contract is ineligible for reimbursement
- Clearly mark all attachments and use the application form as an attachment checklist

Other Things to Remember

- Mass Historic Commission and Natural Heritage review letters must be submitted
- Use the online application form
- Mail one hard copy (double-sided, if possible)
- Submit an application form as a part of the hard copy – fillable pdf on the website
- Focus on the big picture if one thing is filled in incorrectly, the application will (most likely) still be eligible

New This Year

- Projects must comply with Build America, Buy America
 - Affirms, consistent with E.O. 14005 (Ensuring the Future is Made in All of America by All of America's Workers), the priority is to maximize the use of goods, products, and materials produced in the United States.
 - Increase domestic supply chains
 - Make domestic supply chains more resilient
 - Provide demand to domestic producers

(OMB Memorandum M-22-11)

Contact Information

Melissa Cryan 100 Cambridge Street, 10th Floor Boston, MA 02114 (857) 274-7173 melissa.cryan@mass.gov

www.mass.gov/grant-programs-offered-by-thedivision-of-conservation-services www.nps.gov/lwcf