

FY26
Land and Water Conservation Fund Grant Round

Grant Workshop

LWCF Grant Information

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



Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan

- LWCF grants will be used to implement the findings of SCORP
- Four SCORP goals are to:
    1. Improve Access to Beaches and Other Water-based Recreation Facilities
    2. Support Trail Projects
    3. Create and Renovate Neighborhood Parks, Especially to Benefit the Underserved
    4. Create Opportunities, Especially for the Underserved, to Enjoy Protected Natural Areas





LWCF Grant Requirements

- Municipal applicants must have an up-to-date 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 via separate email
- Acquisition projects must have an appraisal done to Yellow Book standards
- Applications are due by January 8, 2026 at 3:00 pm via GMS AND mail

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



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

Donations or in-kind services are ineligible for reimbursement

100% of total project cost must be appropriated from municipal budget (for municipalities), from state budget (for state agencies), from tribal budget (for tribes)

Yellow Book Appraisals



Applicants submitting an acquisition project must coordinate the appraisal process with Melissa by December 5, 2025 via email or phone



Appraisals must be done to Yellow Book standards



Review appraiser will be hired by EEA to complete a Statement of Work in coordination with the applicant's appraiser under which applicant's appraiser will complete their work



Appraisal submittal deadline is February 27, 2026 – email to Melissa



Appraisal must be no older than one year old at the time of the grant submission (dated between January 9, 2025 and January 8, 2026)



Statement of Work is Attachment F of the BID

Grant maximum/ minimum

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



Reimbursement Percentage/ Cost Estimates

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 during the life of the grant

If site design includes elements that are NOT proposed to be funded with LWCF, highlight LWCF-funded elements

Maximum allowable contingency cost percentage is 10% - adjust budget accordingly

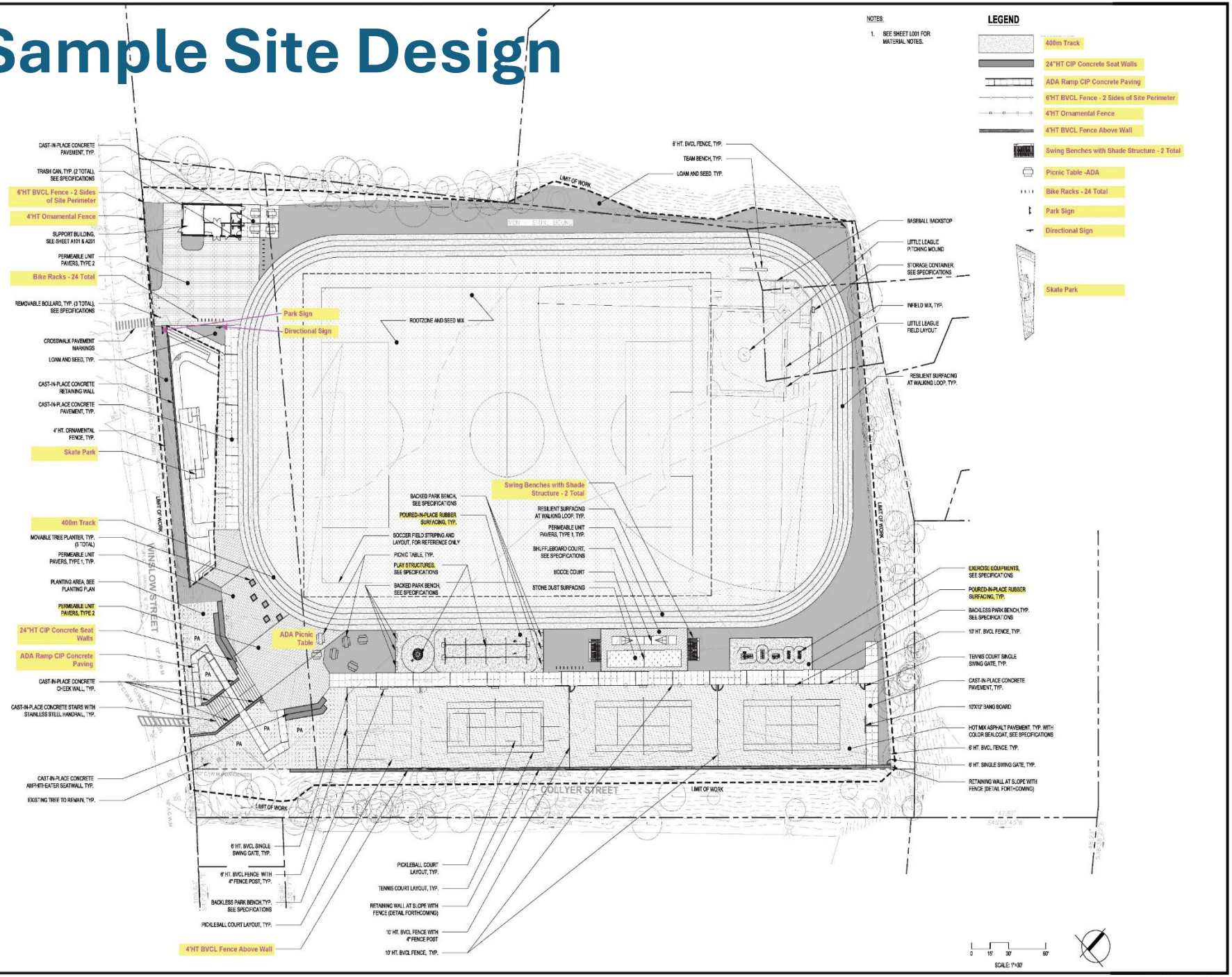
Reimbursement Percentage

Budget/reimbursement example:

- $4,000,000 project with a $1,000,000 grant award
- $1,000,000 is 25% of $4,000,000
- Grant reimbursement rate = 25%
- Grantee will be reimbursed 25% of eligible project costs for every reimbursement request submitted for reimbursement
- A grantee submitting a reimbursement request with $500,000 worth of invoices will be reimbursed $125,000 (25% of $500,000 is $125,000)

Plan your project budget accordingly

Sample Site Design



COPYRIGHT © 2023 WESTON & SAMPSON, INC.

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 2026 (this is an estimate)
- Anticipated federal grant award announcement date is fall 2026
- Project completion date is December 31, 2028



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



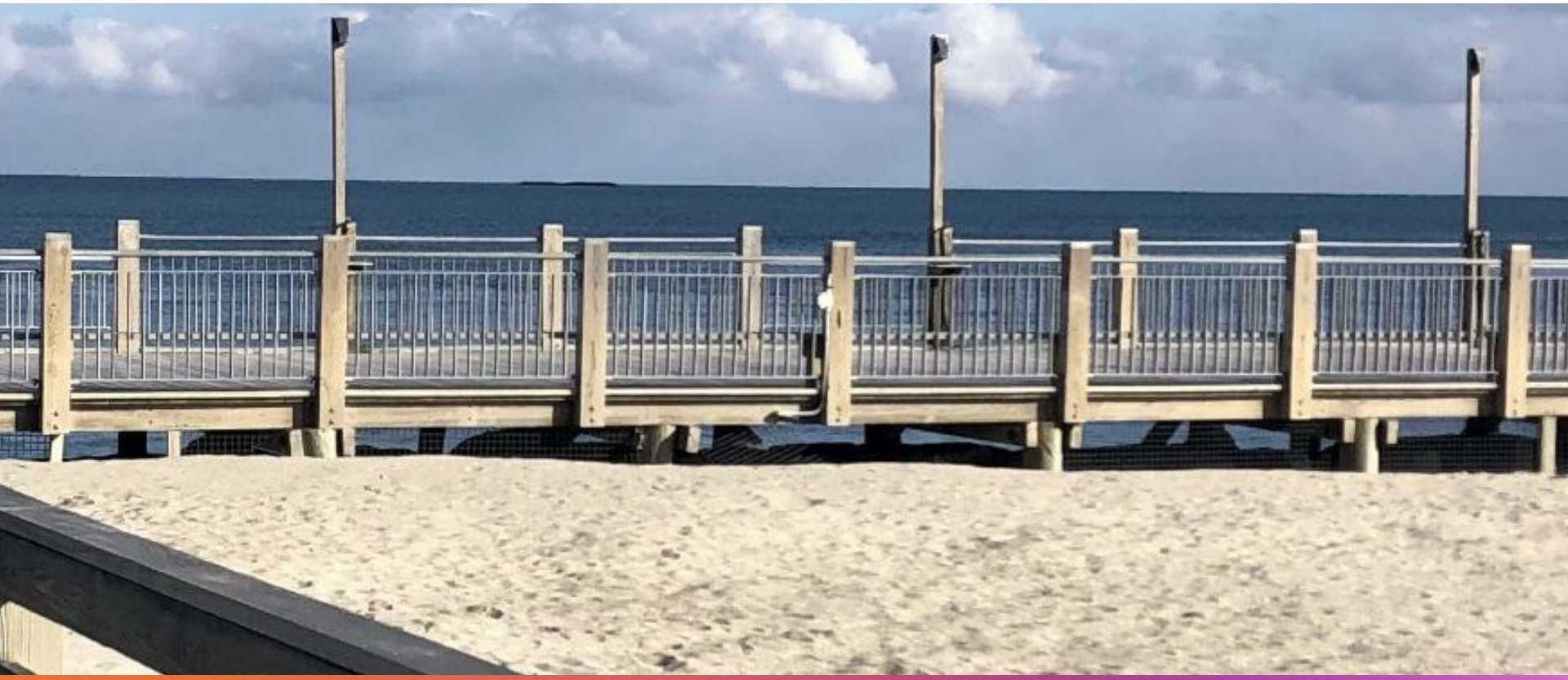
Project Description



- Use the rating system as your guide and include a description of what the funding will go towards (2 pages max, 11 pt font, ¾” margins)
  - Environmental Justice
  - Access for people with disabilities
  - Water-based recreation
  - Climate resiliency
  - Relevance to statewide and local plans, including SCORP
  - Access to open space
  - Trails
  - 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

- Article 97 of the Amendments to Massachusetts Constitution and Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act protection – land must remain as conservation or recreation land in perpetuity
- Site must be open to all – this includes both non-residents 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 (see page 19 of the BID)
- Use the Grant Management System to apply
- Mail one hard copy (double-sided, if possible)
- Submit application form as a part of the hard copy – fillable pdf on the website
- Don’t stress… But plan in advance and focus on details and register for GMS

Buy America Requirements



- 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)

New Grants Management System (GMS)



- Centralizes grants management in one place
- Applications are submitted, reviewed, and managed through this system
- Will soon be used for all EEA grant programs (applicants can browse all grant opportunities)
- Requires that each applicant create an account, which can have multiple users
- RPAs and consultants may still assist with creating application materials, but the **application must be submitted by a person directly affiliated with the applicant** (staff, board/commission member, etc.)

New Grants Management System (GMS)



- Sign up for GMS: Visit Grants Management System (GMS) | Mass.gov for instructions
- Watch our instructional playlist on YouTube: https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzQVK6KiTOqyPW5PUOcFE42iRJgdm8LA_&si=Wm2l78OgFDZ-1nA_
- See our user guide at the GMS Portal: Help - Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs Grants Management System

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-the-division-of-conservation-services
www.nps.gov/lwcf