

COVID-19 American Rescue Plan: Boardwalk Preservation Fund

The Boardwalk Preservation Fund (BPF) grant program is administered by the Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation (DRM) at the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA). Funds are available through the American Rescue Plan (ARP), established by Section 604 of the Social Security Act, as added by Section 9901 of the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021, CFDA 21.027.

Senate Bill 3989 further established a "Boardwalk Preservation Fund," supplementing chapter 27D of Title 52 of the Revised Statutes and making an appropriation of \$100,000,000.

Purpose of the Grant Opportunity

The Boardwalk Preservation Fund (BPF) aims to make critical investments in the boardwalk infrastructure of the Jersey Shore. The goal is to address the most critical and necessary capital needs along the Jersey Shore by rebuilding outdated and crumbling boardwalk infrastructure, removing blight, and mitigating condemned/abandoned properties on the boardwalks. Targeting \$100,000,000 in capital investments along the Jersey Shore will strengthen the boardwalk infrastructure and improve local tourism and economies. Successful applications will include strategies that enable or improve commercial, retail or transportation corridors. Successful applications will also invest in state-of-the-art materials that will meet the following objectives:

- Increase storm resiliency
- Improve ADA access to boardwalk facilities
- Ensure safer and longer lasting infrastructure

Definitions

- **Boardwalk** - is a footpath, walkway, corridor, or causeway that is typically elevated and located along a beach or shore, and that may contain or provide access to commercial facilities.
- **Ancillary/ Appurtenant Structures** - Structures directly on or adjacent to the boardwalk that provide necessary amenities such as public restrooms, water fountains and ticket booths or commercial facilities.
- **MRI** - Municipal Revitalization Index (MRI) ranking. The MRI serves as the State's official measure and ranking of municipal distress and ranks New Jersey's municipalities according to eight separate indicators that measure diverse aspects of social, economic, physical, and fiscal conditions in each locality. The MRI is used as a factor in distributing certain "need based" funds. Municipalities that are ranked 1-50 are not required to produce a Local Match and the scoring criteria will be designed accordingly.
- **Local Match** - Match is the cash value of all the cost sharing made by you, the applicant, or your partners to help fund a project. In different terms, match is also known as cost share which can be defined as a detailed list of all the cost sharing being made by you, the applicant, or your

partners. For example, if your municipality is applying for \$1,000,000.00, your municipality would have to provide \$50,000.00 of local match to fulfill the 5% match requirement. Sources of Local Match for this grant includes federal or local funds, or state funds from non-COVID funded programs.

- **DCA** – refers to the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs in Trenton, New Jersey, a state agency created to provide administrative guidance, financial support and technical assistance to local governments, community development organizations, businesses and individuals to improve the quality of life in New Jersey. DCA offers a wide range of programs and services that respond to issues of public concern including fire and building safety, housing production, community planning and development, and local government management and finance. Additional information about the DCA can be found on the website, <https://www.nj.gov/dca/index.shtml>.
- **DRM** – refers to the Division of Disaster Recovery and Mitigation within DCA, which promotes the long-term resilience of New Jersey’s communities by supporting initiatives to fortify housing, neighborhoods, and infrastructure against severe weather events and flooding damage. Additional information about the division is available on the DRM website, <https://www.nj.gov/dca/ddrm/>.
- **ADA** – refers to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a federal civil rights law that prohibits discrimination against people with disabilities in everyday activities. The ADA prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability just as other civil rights laws prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, sex, national origin, age, and religion. The ADA guarantees that people with disabilities have the same opportunities as everyone else to enjoy employment opportunities, purchase goods and services, and participate in state and local government programs.
- **SFRF** – refers to the State Fiscal Recovery Funds were authorized by the American Rescue Plan Act, through the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) program. SFRF in this case refers to the portion of funds awarded to the State of New Jersey.
- **GDRO** – refers to the Governor’s Disaster Recovery Office, who’s mission in response to the COVID-19 pandemic has been to ensure that every possible avenue of relief is pursued to assist in the recovery of our State for its residents, businesses, and government entities.

Funding Considerations

Match Requirements

A Local Match of at least five percent of the project cost is required to ensure that the State’s investment reaches as many presumably eligible communities as possible. Applications that fail to identify the minimum Local Match would be considered unresponsive and not subject to scoring. Local Match may be covered using federal or local funds, or state funds from non-COVID funded programs. In addition, the scoring criteria rewards those municipalities that bring the most local resources into the project.

However, some municipalities are exempt from the Local Match requirement based on their MRI ranking. Please see MRI in the definitions above. A grant applicant that has one of the highest 50

distress scores on the 2020 Municipal Revitalization Index is not to be required to make a contribution or expenditure as a condition of receiving a grant and will automatically be awarded 20 points in that Local Match element of the scoring criteria.

Reimbursements for Prior Investment

In general, this funding opportunity prohibits reimbursement for prior boardwalk development projects. However, the purchase of materials and supplies related to any project proposed in the scope of this application and selected for funding can be considered for reimbursement.

Maximum Request for Funding

There is no cap on the request for funding. Applicants will have the opportunity to submit their application including the full scope and estimated cost of the proposed project. Please refer to Section 3 of the application, “Phases and Timelines” for instructions on how to describe potential phases of your project scope. Should the program be oversubscribed, DCA may cap awards to a reasonable threshold ensuring equitable distribution of funds. If a request is not fully funded, the percentage Local Match offered by the applicant will be applied to the funded amount, not to the total requested amount.

Eligible Applicants

All New Jersey coastal counties and municipalities with existing boardwalks that are seeking funding for boardwalk construction, repair, and maintenance are eligible to apply. An eligible applicant could be any of the following:

- Coastal Municipality
- Coastal County
- Coastal Municipal/County partnerships or consortia

Please note that to qualify for the match waiver, the lead municipal applicant in a joint proposal must have one of the highest 50 distress scores on the 2020 Municipal Revitalization Index.

Eligible Applications

An eligible application is one that is submitted on time by an eligible applicant with all questions completely answered and with all forms and attachments included.

Eligible Projects

For a boardwalk project to be an eligible use of Boardwalk Preservation grant funds, it must meet at least one of the following criteria:

- Boardwalk Construction that adds new boardwalk components
- Boardwalk Maintenance
- Boardwalk Reconstruction
- Repair of ancillary or appurtenant structures

Examples of Boardwalk Preservation Projects

- Replacement of old and crumbling decking along the boardwalk with resilient, longer lasting and/or safer materials.
- Replacement of deteriorating pilings and boardwalk infrastructure.
- Improving access and safety by building ADA compliant ramps and railings.
- Expanding an existing section of the boardwalk.
- Provide grant funds to businesses that need to complete upgrades to align with the proposed boardwalk construction.

Certification Statements/Assurances

Successful applicants must comply with the Statements of Assurance (SOA) which includes NJ Prevailing Wage and other Labor Standards. Please carefully review the SOA Assurances posted on the DCA website along with the application.

Grant Period

The grant application will open August 15, 2023. Grant submissions will be due by October 31, 2023. All funds must be obligated by December 31, 2024, and must be expended by the applicant by December 31, 2026.

Open Public Records Act

All applications will be subject to public disclosure, including but not limited to, a request pursuant to the Open Public Records Act (“OPRA”), N.J.S.A. 47:1A-1, et seq. If an Applicant believes that information contained in its application merits confidential treatment pursuant to OPRA, any such purportedly confidential information submitted in an application must be specifically identified and marked by the Applicant. Notwithstanding any such designation, the State, GDRO, DCA, DRM, and the DRM Deputy Commissioner reserve the right in their respective and separate sole discretion to disclose all information contained as part of the application submission.

Reservation of rights

DRM reserves the right to request additional information or clarification, if necessary, or to reject all applications with or without cause, and waive any irregularities or informalities in the applications submitted. DRM further reserves the right to make such investigations as necessary as to the qualifications of any entity applying.

Agency Approvals

All applicants must comply with and seek written approval from the Department of Environmental Protection, the State Historic Preservation Office or any other State Agency or Authority as necessary for

project implementation. If approvals are already in process, applicants must include proof of submission with their application.

DRM reserves the right to withdraw funding for any project, that at any point demonstrates the inability to meet the deadlines indicated below.

Important Dates

Applications Available	August 15, 2023
Technical Assistance Webinar	August 29, 2023
Questions Due	September 15, 2023
Responses Posted	September 22, 2023
Applications Due	October 31, 2023
Awards Offered	January 2, 2024
Grant Agreements Executed	January 31, 2024
Project Start	February 1, 2024
Funds Obligated By	December 31, 2024
Funds Expended By	December 31, 2026