



## Local Recreation Improvement Grant Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2021

**State of New Jersey  
Philip D. Murphy, Governor**

**Department of Community Affairs  
Lt. Governor Sheila Y. Oliver, Commissioner**

**New Jersey Department of Community Affairs  
101 S. Broad Street  
Trenton, NJ 08625  
P.O. Box 803  
LRIG@DCA.NJ.GOV**

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

The Local Recreation Improvement Grant is a competitive grant that supports improvement and repair of public recreation facilities including local parks, municipal recreation centers, and local stadiums. Ensuring public access to community facilities is imperative given the current strain on communities confronting the COVID-19 pandemic. Access to outdoor recreation and community resources is critical for mental and physical health, particularly for those residents with limited or no other access to quality outdoor space or private recreational opportunities. Assisting local units in achieving unmet recreational obligations addresses these equity considerations, meeting the needs of communities that have been placed under substantial stress due to the lack of quality recreational facilities and spaces. The Local Recreation Improvement Grant will allocate funds to update facilities and recreational spaces to meet this statewide need.

Local Recreation Improvement Grant funds will be allocated to each grant recipient to help cover costs associated with updating community centers, playgrounds, pools, fields, walking or bicycle trails, rail trails, multi-sport courts, and recreational facilities; one-time personnel costs directly related to improvements; project development professional services costs; equipment costs including playground and recreation facilities equipment; and environmental remediation costs required to prepare recreation sites for use.

The Local Recreation Improvement Grant (LRIG) exists to:

- Fund improvements to recreational facilities
- Provide quality outdoor recreational space to underserved communities, particularly in this time of heightened need
- Assist local units in achieving unmet recreational obligations

The grant review process will prioritize communities with a demonstrated need and commitment to enhancing recreational services. Communities that evidence a heightened systemic strain due to COVID-19, and those with existing underserved populations and/or unmet recreational improvement needs will be prioritized.

Funds can support a variety of local government recreational improvement activities, including:

- Updating community centers, playgrounds, pools, fields, walking or bicycle trails, rail trails, multi-sport courts, and recreational facilities. This is not an exhaustive list.
- One-time personnel costs directly related to improvement costs (example: labor costs directly attributed to municipal workforce; overtime costs to safeguard area while under construction).
- Professional services costs (example: engineering costs).
- Equipment example (example: cost of playgrounds or stadium or community theatre bleachers).
- Remediation costs associated with preparing recreation sites for use.
- Training costs directly related to providing staffing to the facilities being improved under the grant.
- Other directly related costs.

All costs must be articulated in the grant budget proposal and approved by DLGS.

### **APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY**

New Jersey counties, municipalities, and school districts are eligible to apply.

### **PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

To qualify for Local Improvement Grant Funding, each eligible applicant must:

- Describe the intended use of grant funding for improvement or repair of a specific local recreation site and identify any previously encountered obstacles to repair or improvement.
- Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project and to provide project management and oversight for all activities and fiscal operations.
- List key personnel and/or outside consultant that will be managing the grant funds and proposed project.
- Submit a governing body resolution acknowledging and approving any grant application and the proposed plan or design for the recreation space or community facility for which

funding is sought.

- Provide proof of ownership of the site for which the grant application is submitted.

### **FUNDING AVAILABLE**

Governor Murphy has appropriated \$2.5 million in the FY2021 budget for the Local Recreation Improvement Grant to support urgent improvement and repairs to public recreation facilities during this time of heightened community need. The Division of Local Government Services within the Department of Community Affairs will administer the Local Recreation Improvement Grant awards, which may be adjusted or capped based upon applications submitted. A recommended maximum award of \$500,000 shall govern; however, awards in excess of the cap may be authorized if warranted and depending upon program demand. LRIG may supplement existing projects, but funding duplication is not permitted and cannot supplant allocated funding from other sources. Priority will be given to unfunded projects and those that include a local match component.

### **APPLICATION PROCESS**

Applicants must submit applications utilizing the NJDCA SAGE Portal. Each application submitted to DLGS shall include a description of the intended use of grant funding for the approved local recreation improvement project; demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project and provide project management and oversight for all activities and fiscal operations; and list key personnel that will be managing the grant funds and/or proposed project, including a grant coordinator, administrator, or other primary contact.

The following forms must be submitted with the Local Recreation Improvement Grant:

- a. Grant Application
- b. Governing Body Resolution
- c. Project Narrative
- d. Detailed Proposed Project Budget
- e. Proof of Ownership

Further information including any required documents will be posted at:

<https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/lriggrants.shtml>

### **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

DLGS must be in receipt of one electronic copy of the completed application in SAGE by 5:00 P.M. EST on May 24, 2021 for the applicant(s) to be eligible for grant funding.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications not submitted on or before 5 P.M. on May 24, 2021 will be rejected.

### **GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

DLGS will evaluate all applications. Grant applications will be ranked by community and financial need, feasibility, local unit match commitment, and scope of impact. DLGS will review grant applications and notify applicants of grant awards no later than June 11, 2021.

Grant application decisions are final and not subject to appeal.

### **APPLICATION SCORING CRITERIA**

Applications will be scored based on the following criteria, on a scale of 100 points:

1. Scope of Community Impact (40).
  - a. Need for project.
  - b. Taxpayer impact.
  - c. Degree of transformation.
  - d. Projected attendance.
  - e. Sustainability and source of proposed funding mechanism.
2. Quality and Feasibility of Work Plan (40).
  - a. Quality.
  - b. Feasibility.
  - c. Expense Eligibility.

3. Demonstration of Applicant Commitment to Recreation (20).

- a. Local Match.
  - b. Other Recreation Grants for this or other projects.
  - c. Existing and forward-looking plan for recreational opportunity creation and maintenance.
- Applications for LRIG funding must be consistent with the policies and priorities of any relevant State agency which has jurisdiction or supervisory responsibility over the project site or function (e.g. Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Education). Applications for grants may be reviewed in part by, and are subject to the comments of, such agencies.
  - Funds will be awarded to grantees only if they are in good standing and in compliance with all program, statutory, and regulatory requirements.
  - Recipients must use funds awarded to support costs associated with the authorized project activities.

**GRANT FUNDING PROCESS**

All awards are subject to the continuing availability of appropriated funds.

Upon completion of grant review and award notification, DLGS will enter into an agreement with applicants approved for funding. Following execution of the agreement, the grantee can seek reimbursement of eligible costs, provided that all award conditions have been satisfied.

Grantees shall maintain and retain accounting and other grant-related records and information for the duration of the project funded by the grant, as required by applicable state and local laws and regulations, for no less than 2 calendar years.

Such records shall be subject to examination, audit, and inspection by DLGS and/or any other federal, state, or local agency that has jurisdictional authority.

DLGS reserves the right to rescind or reclaim funds, withhold future grant funding and/or disqualify a grantee from participating in future grant awards if any condition of the grant program is unmet, including if grant funds received by the grantee are not properly accounted for, or if the grantee fails to meet reporting or certification requirements.

Following execution of the agreement, the grantee is permitted to move funds between authorized categories within these guidelines for eligible items without requesting prior approval from the Division.

### **REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS**

Local Government Improvement Grants are reimbursement-based. There will be no advance payment or drawdown of grant funds. Eligible costs are reimbursed to the grantee upon submission of evidence of payment by the grantee.

Requests for payment must be made through NJDCA SAGE portal by submitting a Financial Status Report (FSR), Expense Report, Payment Voucher, and Project Progress Report. The recipient must also attach copies of fully executed purchase orders and copies of cancelled checks (both sides) documenting the expenditure of funds for which reimbursement is sought. Requests for reimbursement can be submitted at any time but must be not less than once every six months.

Funding for reimbursement requests received more than two (2) months after the close of the fiscal year during which the costs were incurred cannot be guaranteed.

Payment will be made via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified by the grantee.

### **GRANT CLOSEOUT PROCESS**

At the conclusion of the approved project period, which may coincide with the date upon which the grantee requests final payment, but shall not be before the completion of the approved LRIG funded recreation improvement project for which funding was provided, except as otherwise

provided in writing by DLGS, the recipients must submit a final report documenting that all administrative responsibilities and required activities under grant have been satisfactorily completed.

**ASSISTANCE**

Applicants may contact Laurie Ann Doyle at (609) 292-4132 to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application. Questions may also be submitted via e-mail to [lrig@dca.nj.gov](mailto:lrig@dca.nj.gov).