

Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation

Environmental Protection Fund Grants 2021

Q. For Heritage Areas, how do you become eligible under the management plan?

A. Applicants should consult with the Heritage Area contact to discuss their project's eligibility under the management plan. Contact information can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/heritage-areas/default.aspx>.

Q. Who reviews / approves the pre-planning requirement prior to application for CFA funds?

A. Contact the Regional Grants Administrator for your county. Contact information can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/contact.aspx>. Pre-development costs must be incurred during the project term or in the three years prior to the application deadline. In general, pre-development costs should not exceed fifteen percent (15%) of the construction costs. All construction documents must be reviewed and accepted and/or approved by the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) prior to advertising for bids. In addition, OPRHP must review and accept all procurement procedures and submitted bid proposals prior to the grant recipient awarding contracts.

Q. What indicators are you using to determine an Impoverished area?

A. For the 2021 grant cycle, the ZIP Code Tabulation Area (ZCTA) will be used to determine if a project is located in an impoverished area (as defined by 10 percent or more of the population below poverty level according to the most recent Census data). See the "Percent Below Poverty Level Table by ZCTA (pdf)" at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>. For the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Grants Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage, successful applicants are reimbursed for up to 50 percent of their eligible expenditures. For projects located in impoverished areas, the reimbursement can be up to 75 percent of the eligible project cost.

Q. How can I start a SHPO review?

A. For a consultation regarding the historic preservation impacts of your project, contact the Division for Historic Preservation's Outreach Unit at (518) 268-2213. This unit develops preservation planning initiatives, coordinates public outreach activities, and assists the public with NYS and OPRHP grant opportunities.

Q. If my property isn't fully appraised will you reimburse the preliminary appraisal?

A. The applicant must submit a written appraisal valuation (desktop appraisal or exterior only appraisal) by a qualified appraiser as part of the application. This cost is not covered. Exterior only appraisals and desk top appraisals can be prepared by

appraisers following the Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) guidelines under Advisory Opinion 2. However, if a grant is awarded, associated acquisition costs, such as the cost of appraisals, surveys, title search, legal fees, title insurance (required for an acquisition grant) and, where a conservation easement is required, the cost of title continuation and recordation are eligible costs. Successful applicants will be required to provide an appraisal for each parcel to be acquired; two appraisal reports for any parcel valued at \$300,000 or more. (Standards & Procedures for Appraisal Reporting can be found at: <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/forms-resources.aspx>)

Q. How many park development projects are approved annually?

A. Every application cycle is different, depending on the number and type of applications received. While there is not a set number of awards annually; over the last several grant cycles, awards to park development projects have ranged from 17-33 in any given cycle. A list of awards can be found at: <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/awards.aspx> .

Q. Is approval every year for parks?

A. Typically, each grant cycle does include awards to park projects; however, there is no requirement to do so. In determining the awards and the overall distribution of funding among the programs and the regions, the following is considered: the capacity of the applicant including the number of open contracts; need--as demonstrated by the number of applications submitted during a given round, the award of grants in the past, assessment of needs in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, and the Open Space Conservation Plan--; the priority and impact within the region as demonstrated by the Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) scores; and the priorities of OPRHP.

Q. Regarding an existing park, can the focus be ADA retrofitting?

A. Yes; assistance is available for the adaptation of new or existing recreation facilities and support facilities for use by persons with special needs. However, recreation facilities to be used exclusively by disabled persons are not eligible unless such facilities are available to the general public or are part of a recreation area that serves the general public.

Q. If a project is broken into phases over several years, should we apply for the whole project at once or apply for each individual phase?

A. Acquisition projects should be completed within one year of the approved agreement; construction projects should be completed no later than two years subsequent to such approval. All projects must be completed within five years of the grant award. Phased applications may be appropriate for projects that are expected to exceed these limits. For projects requiring substantial upfront planning, an applicant may wish to apply first for a stand-alone planning grant under the Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program. The applicant's readiness to proceed (shovel ready), as indicated by budget/finances, planning, and administrative structures, is a significant rating factor

under the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) Grants Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage. Shovel ready means you are ready to begin: you have your permits, your matching share, and your administrative staff set up to begin work as soon as possible after receipt of the grant award notification letter and our signoff on bids for construction and professional services, plans and specifications, M/WBE utilization plans, etc. Your budget proposal should outline how the grant money will be used and your anticipated schedule.

Q. Is a feasible study on different aspects of the park eligible?

A. Project planning is eligible for stand-alone funding. This funding is intended for project-specific planning, such as preparing site designs and specifications, schematic drawings and conducting project-related environmental reviews (i.e., for rehabilitation of a historic property or structural assessment of a dock for public fishing), not for planning or environmental review processes of comprehensive Open Space, Management or Master Plans.

Q. If awarded money this year, will money be available in the future for maintenance, upgrades, and expansions?

A. Successful applicants may apply again in a future grant cycle for funds to upgrade or expand a project which has received previous grant funding, as long as the new application is for new, additional eligible work not already being funded; basic maintenance is not eligible.

Q. Is a long-term lease eligible to document ownership interest?

A. Applicants must have an ownership interest in the property to apply. Such an interest may be outright ownership (fee simple) or a lesser interest, such as development rights, an easement, or a long-term lease of duration equal to the period of New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation's (OPRHP) oversight of the project. All parties with an ownership interest in the property will be required to sign the project agreement and any long-term protection document (i.e., conservation easement, public access covenant, preservation covenant recorded against the deed). All lien holders must subordinate their interests to those of the State, and may be required to sign the project agreement.

Q. Is there a change from previous years on budget detail?

A. No. All applicants to OPRHP's Environmental Protection Fund Grant Program for Parks, Preservation and Heritage (EPF) are required to complete a Cost Share Summary uploaded as an attachment in the Documents section of the application. For the historic preservation category, applicants must also provide the narrative and work detail which describe both existing conditions and the proposed work to correct issues, along with the budget showing the estimated costs to accomplish the work. For sectarian projects, applicants should refer to the Information and Instructions for Sectarian Projects to present a narrative and budget comparing Basic Repair and True Restoration. Helpful guidance documents, templates and samples can be found at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>.

Q. When must funds be expended?

A. Once all conditions of award are met (see Successful Applicant Requirements in the CFA Guidance Document at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>) and a contract is executed with the State, it is anticipated that acquisition and planning projects will be completed within one year and construction projects within two years. Projects must be completed within five years from the date of the award of the grant. OPRHP will monitor the progress of project work and will recapture awarded funds if significant progress is not made. Expenditures must be made within the approved contract term to be eligible for reimbursement or for match, with two exceptions: (1) professional services and materials purchased or donated, but not installed, up to three years prior to the application deadline may be applied toward the matching share; (2) acquisition costs retroactive no more than one year prior to the application deadline are eligible costs.

Q. When rating acquisition applications, does a purchase agreement get more points than just a letter of intent?

A. Documentation of the owner's intent to sell, donate or transfer the property supports Readiness and Feasibility within the Reasonableness of Cost criteria which may support up to 20 points of the Grant Selection Criteria as provided at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>.

Q. Do we need an appraisal before applying?

A. The applicant must submit a written appraisal valuation (desktop appraisal or exterior only appraisal) by a qualified appraiser as part of the application. This cost is not covered. Exterior only appraisals and desk top appraisals can be prepared by appraisers following the Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) guidelines under Advisory Opinion 2. However, if a grant is awarded, associated acquisition costs, such as the cost of appraisals, surveys, title search, legal fees, title insurance (required for an acquisition grant) and, where a conservation easement is required, the cost of title continuation and recordation are eligible costs. Successful applicants will be required to provide an appraisal for each parcel to be acquired; two appraisal reports for any parcel valued at \$300,000 or more. (Standards & Procedures for Appraisal Reporting can be found at: <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/forms-resources.aspx>).

Q. What do we use the appraisal to demonstrate?

A. An appraisal is used to document the market value as of a specific date of any property acquired, donated or converted from other purposes that is to be included as part of the proposal. For real property owned by the applicant and converted from other purposes, the value of such property may be included as matching share (applicant share) under the EPF budget, provided it has not been previously designated as parkland or otherwise used for purposes related to this project. Acquisition costs must be incurred during the project term or up to one year prior to the application deadline.

Q. Is there a certain percentage of defined soft cost to go toward project cost?

A. Design Fees and other Professional Fees are allowed for the preparation of construction documents and to satisfy other pre-construction requirements. Pre-development costs must be incurred during the project term or in the three years prior to the application deadline. In general, pre-development costs should not exceed **fifteen percent (15%) of the construction costs**.

Grant Administration costs include expenses associated with administering the grant after it is awarded, such as preparing the project agreement, affirmative action, solicitation of Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBES), and payment request documentation. In general, these costs should not exceed **ten percent (10%) of the grant amount**. The cost of preparing the grant application is NOT eligible.

Q. Are appraisals and surveys considered pre-development, administration or part of soft costs?

A. For projects involving acquisition, the cost of appraisals (one appraisal is required for any parcel valued under \$300,000; two appraisals are required for any parcel valued at \$300,000 or more), surveys, title search, legal fees, title insurance (required for acquisition grants) and, where a conservation easement is required, the cost of title continuation and recordation are considered associated acquisition costs/expenses. For more information, see the CFA Guidance Document, Cost Share and Budget Help document, Cost Share Summary templates, and Sample Cost Share Summaries at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>.

Q. What is the limit on the size of uploads?

A. Uploaded files must be in PDF, JPG or ZIP format and cannot be larger than **30 MB** in size. You may combine multiple PDF files into a single .ZIP file if necessary. Avoid using special characters like (*, %, #, :, ;, \$, @) in your document name as this will cause errors in the upload. If an attachment question requires more than one document, you must create a single PDF or JPG file that contains all the required documents or a ZIP file that contains the required documents. More information is available on how to create PDFs from other documents (see <https://apps.cio.ny.gov/apps/cfa/help.cfm?section=pdf>) and how to create ZIP files (see <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/help/14200/windows-compress-uncompress-zip-files#1TC=windows-7>). You may proceed with your application without uploading the required documents; however, since supporting documents are required, you must return to the Documents section and upload the required documents before you will be able to finalize your application. All required attachments must be submitted through the CFA; mailed hardcopies of attachments will not be accepted. For assistance scanning your documents, please contact the Regional Grants Administrator for your County at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/contact.aspx>.

Q. How many applications have been received for the historic preservation category?

A. Approximately 100 eligible historic preservation applications are received each year through the CFA; of that number, approximately 20-25 awards are made statewide in the historic preservation category.

Q. How can we confirm that a building is historic?

A. For applications to the historic preservation category, properties must be listed on the State or National Register of Historic Places. Questions about, or proposals for, listing on the State or National Register should be directed to the OPRHP National Register Unit at (518) 268-2213. All work must conform to the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and professional qualifications as defined in "Historic Preservation Terms and Professional Qualifications" available at <https://parks.ny.gov/grants/consolidated-funding-app.aspx>.