2026
COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM
Guidelines

PREFACE

The Marion County Parks And Recreation Commission (MCPARC) provides technical and financial assistance to municipalities and community groups for the planning, development and rehabilitation of public park and recreation facilities. Financial assistance is provided through grant programs administered by the MCPARC and total amount of money granted is determined during fiscal budget planning of the MCPARC board of directors.

This application manual sets forth the general conditions under which groups may participate in the community grant program. It explains the appropriation and allocation of program funds and summarizes major program provisions. The manual also defines the types of projects eligible for funding, describes the project selection criteria, explains the application steps and post-completion responsibilities. This application manual is intended to expedite, simplify, and standardize the administration of this program.

OBJECTIVE

The MCPARC annually allocates funds, as available, in the form of a grant, for the development of recreation facilities. By design, this grant will primarily assist communities in the development of parks, playgrounds and facilities.

PRIORITIES

Projects that provide recreational opportunity for large groups, demonstrate community wide interest and cooperation, and can be completed within one calendar year.

FUNDING LEVEL

All grants must be matched by at least 50% by the applicant entity or community either in monetary support or in-kind labor and materials.

SUMMARY OF PROJECT TYPES

A municipality or community group may apply for grant assistance to undertake any of the following three types of projects:

1. Park Rehabilitation and Development Projects
2. Small Communities/Small Projects
3. Technical Assistance Grant Projects

The following is a summary of each of the three types:

1. Park Rehabilitation and Development Projects

Projects under this component involve the rehabilitation and development of parks, indoor recreation facilities and outdoor recreation facilities; rehabilitation and development of historic or open space resources which are outstanding examples of West Virginia's cultural heritage and which will enhance community conservation and community economic development; renovation of existing parks and indoor/outdoor recreation facilities to improve accessibility to special populations; and completion of the development of public parks and indoor/outdoor recreation facilities on lands which have previously been acquired for these purposes.

Parks or recreation facilities not owned by the applicant must be controlled by them through lease arrangements and agreements with the term of the lease giving the applicant control for a length of time equivalent to the life expectancy of the improvements being accomplished under the project. In all cases, the applicant will be held responsible for the operation, maintenance and use of the park or recreation facility.

Eligible projects include park and recreation facilities servicing a particular neighborhood, community, county or region. Examples of facilities that may be rehabilitated or developed include playground areas, picnic areas, ball fields, court game areas, swimming pools, ice rinks, gymnasiums, exercise courses, natural areas, trails, and passive sitting areas. Support facilities which serve park and recreation areas may be eligible for funding and include such items as locker rooms, comfort stations, utilities, roads, parking lots, walks, lighting, signs, and landscaping. In cases where support facilities serve both eligible and ineligible areas and/or uses, the MCPARC will on a case-by-case basis evaluate the facility.

Parks or recreation facilities may be rehabilitated or developed in sections or stages, but the scope of the project work proposed for grant assistance must be comprehensive enough to result in a complete and usable recreation facility or area. Staged or phased projects will only be funded one stage or phase at a time. A current master plan, if available, should be submitted with the grant application and may be required for new development, stages or phased projects.

Rehabilitation work must be for existing facilities that have deteriorated because of age or use and not because of lack of maintenance on the part of the applicant. Supplies, operational equipment, and furnishings such as bases, balls, nets, chairs, etc. are not eligible for funding.

All construction must be completed in accordance with applicable state and local laws. Donated labor, equipment, and materials may be used to help complete the project work; the value of the donation is an eligible project match.

2. Small Communities/Small Projects

Rehabilitation and development of basic parks and recreation facilities such as picnic areas, tot lots, informal ball fields, fitness courses, hiking and nature trails, etc. and minor renovations of indoor recreation facilities may be funded under this component. Materials for support facilities that serve parks and recreation areas may also be eligible for funding and include items such as walkways, parking lots, benches, comfort stations, locker rooms, and landscaping.

3. Technical Assistance Grant Projects

Study Projects - Involves the collection, analysis and presentation of information, alternatives and recommendations to assist applicants with the development of planning strategies and courses of action to address local park, recreation and conservation concerns. The studies are to be completed by professional consultants with experience and expertise in recreation and park administration. Citizen involvement in the study process is a requirement. Examples of study projects are:

> Comprehensive recreation, park and open space studies - These studies examine existing recreation and park goals, administration, personnel, facilities, programs, finance, maintenance, etc.; compare them against professional standards, practices and procedures; and make recommendations for future actions in these areas.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The following seven criteria are considered by the MCPARC board for selection of grant applications to be funded.

1. Economic Development - Explain how the project will contribute to the overall economic revitalization efforts of a neighborhood, community, or region. Factors to be considered include: number of temporary and/or permanent employment opportunities created to complete the project and for future operation, maintenance, programming, etc.; revenue producing potential, enhancement of tourism opportunities, creation of public/private partnerships, impact on small business activities, and coordination with other economic revitalization activities.

2. Community Conservation - Indicate how the project will support or complement community conservation, preservation, and/or revitalization efforts related to unique natural areas, wetlands, rivers/streams, areas of significant historic, heritage, or cultural value, etc. Other factors to be considered are the project's impact on improving the overall quality of life within a neighborhood, community, or region through social and/or cultural experiences.

3. General Recreation Needs - Explain how the project will meet the general recreation needs of a neighborhood, community, or region. Information should include a description of the project's service area; number, size, location, condition, and usage

levels of existing recreation areas/facilities in the service area; and needs to be addressed by the project. Supporting data from plans, studies, survey, petitions, public hearings, etc. should be cited and/or submitted when applicable.

4. Special Recreation Needs - Describe how the project will help alleviate deficiencies in recreation opportunities for special population groups such as minorities, low income, elderly, and handicapped/disabled. Socio-economic characteristics and information on existing recreation opportunities in the project service area should be provided along with other supporting information such as statistics, survey results, etc. Also included under these criteria are projects that will help alleviate health, safety, or liability problems; support drug prevention programs; demonstrate or introduce an innovative concept, technique, or approach; or enhance river-based recreation opportunities.

5. Other Resources/Private Funding - Indicate the amount and sources of public and/or private financial commitments to the project that are beyond the minimum local matching requirements. Projects with a higher percentage of the total cost from other resources/private funding will be given a higher rating. Donations and other non-financial resources should also be identified. Private contributions to the project must be documented by a firm written commitment.

6. Intergovernmental Cooperation - Does the project involve an intergovernmental cooperative effort to provide park and recreation facilities or programs? Documentation verifying the cooperative effort should include the identification of municipalities and/or schools involved, description of their involvement, copies of written cooperative agreements, and evidence of financial support for the project or ongoing operation, maintenance, programming and administration.

7. Administrative Capability - The capability of an applicant to efficiently complete a project and adequately maintain its park and recreation system will be considered. Other factors are overall administration of recreation services, including organization, financing, programming, and staffing; and past performance on grant projects. MCPARC reserves the right to eliminate an applicant from funding consideration because of administrative problems related to previous grants, unresolved park conversion or use issues, or inadequately maintained recreation facilities.

PROGRAM GENERAL PROVISIONS

1. Eligible Applicants

Any municipality or community group within Marion County: Recreation boards, community service action agencies, non-profit groups or organizations, schools and athletic organizations.

2. Public Participation

Prior to submission of the grant application, the applicant is responsible for assuring that the general public, including appropriate local citizen groups and neighborhood associations, and the local park and recreation agency or advisory boards have had an opportunity to comment on the proposed work. Written verification is required in the form of a letter of support, board minutes, petitions or other means.

3. Matching Funds

All projects may be funded with a grant up to 50% of eligible costs. The applicant through monetary support, in-kind labor or materials must account for the other 50%. Matching provisions must be clearly defined in grant application.

4. Wetlands

Applicants must identify any wetland areas located on or immediately adjacent to a project site and certify that they will be protected in accordance with applicable state/federal laws and regulations.

5. Project Boundary Map

A project boundary map will be required to show the areas/facilities to be developed. In projects involving construction, the area within the project boundary must be owned or controlled by the applicant, either in fee simple title or through a long-term lease agreement. The life of the lease must commensurate with the life expectancy of the facilities to be constructed or rehabilitated. Property developed under this program may not be disposed of nor converted to uses other than those permitted under the grant without prior written consent and in accordance with such terms and conditions as deemed appropriate. Disposal or conversion without such approval will result in repayment by the applicant of the grant plus interest.

MEANS OF IMPLEMENTATION

The MCPARC staff and an appointed committee shall annually review all requests and make recommendations to the Park Commission. The funds will have to be matched 50/50 either in cash, labor, or materials (donated or purchased).

All requests shall be submitted to the MCPARC office by Wednesday March 11th, 2026. The MCPARC will announce the recipients after the March 16th, 2026 board meeting. The recipients will have until December 31st of 2026 to complete the project.

The Park Commission will make final grant approval. **The Directors will advise the commission but will not have a vote.** His/her duties will include serving as a liaison between

the committee and requesting organizations, preparing to purchase and deliver approved equipment, coordinating the payment of invoices.

Grant funds will be distributed by providing invoices to be approved by MCPARC.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAM GUIDELINES

1. The request should meet specific recreational needs of the community and must be available to the public.

2. **Requests should be for capital improvements rather than operating equipment such as mowers, balls, bats, bases, uniforms etc**. Because of limited funding, equipment (when properly installed) that lends itself to immediate play such as swings, slides, climbers, etc., will be given priority.

3. The Park Commission may take any or all equipment back if it is not used for public purpose or properly maintained.

4. Grant funds are to be used exclusively for projects outlined in grant application. Any amendments to grant projects involving use of community grant funds must first be approved by the MCPARC board.

5. Grant recipients will post a sign provided by MCPARC by the completed grant project. The sign will read – This project is supported by the MCPARC Community Grant Program.

6. Grant funds must be used and projects completed by December 31st, 2026 unless written permission is granted by the MCPARC board for an extension.

7. A typical range for approved community grants is from $500 – $5,000.

APPLICATION DEADLINE - March 11th, 2026

2026
Application Form
MCPARC COMMUNITY GRANT PROGRAM
1000 Cole St. Suite B
Fairmont, WV 26554

1. Name of organization (non-profit) or agency requesting grant assistance:

   _____

2. Name, address, phone number, **e-mail** of applicant representative:

   _____

   _____

3. Where will the project be located: Is property owned by applicant agency. If no explain:

   _____

   _____

4. Amount of grant request and description of materials or equipment. (Be specific)

   _____

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   _____

5. Purpose of community grant funds. Describe the project goals, procedures and participants.

   _____

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   _____

   _____

   _____

6. Provide information and source of the 50% matching funds and/or in-kind services by sponsoring organization.

_____
_____
_____

7. Who will be responsible for the project and maintaining the equipment or facility.

_____
_____

8. Grant Request Amount $ _____
   Matching Funds $_____
   Total Project Amount $_____

8. Provide on a separate sheet any additional information you feel is pertinent to the application. Including but not limited to: Letters of support, estimates, pictures, matching funds verification, deeds, meeting minutes.

9. Our organization agrees to post an acknowledgement sign at the site of the project provided by MCPARC. Applicant representative initials _____

Application Submitted by - Name_____

Address_____

_____

E-mail _____

Phone Number _____

Signature_____

Date_____