



## Local Recreation Improvement Grant Guidelines

Fiscal Year 2025

**State of New Jersey  
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**Department of Community Affairs  
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## **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, public school recreational facilities and local stadiums. Ensuring public access to community facilities is imperative since access to outdoor recreation and community resources is critical for mental and physical health, particularly for those residents with limited or no access to quality outdoor space or private recreational opportunities.

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; 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
- 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 rank highest as mostly distressed within their respective county and/or have underserved populations and/or unmet recreational improvement needs will be prioritized.

Funds can support a variety of local government recreational improvement activities including, but not limited to:

- Updating community centers, playgrounds, pools, fields, walking or bicycle trails, rail trails, multi-sport courts, and recreational facilities
- Professional services costs (example: engineering and architectural costs)
- Equipment (example: cost of playgrounds or bleachers for stadiums or community theatres)
- Remediation costs associated with preparing recreation sites for use
- 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 Recreation 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 improve.
- Demonstrate the applicant's capacity to complete the proposed project and provide project management and oversight for all activities and fiscal operations.
- List key personnel and/or the outside consultant that will be managing the grant funds and proposed project.
- Provide a cost breakdown to allow DLGS to prioritize the costs and consider partial funding.
- 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. Including and accepting grant award in the same resolutions will expedite execution of a grant should one be awarded. A sample resolution can be found on the DLGS website at: <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/lriggrants.shtml>.
- Certify that the property where improvements will be made is owned by the county, municipality, or school district.

### **FUNDING AVAILABLE**

The State's FY2025 budget appropriated \$20 million for the Local Recreation Improvement Grant to support improvements and repairs to public recreation facilities. The Division of Local Government Services (DLGS) within the Department of Community Affairs (DCA) will administer the Local Recreation Improvement Grant awards, which may be adjusted or capped based upon the number of viable applications submitted. A recommended maximum award of

\$100,000 shall govern; however, awards in excess of the cap may be authorized, if warranted, and depending upon program demand. **A LRIG may supplement new and existing projects, but funding duplication is not permitted and cannot supplant allocated grant funding from other sources.** This means that a grantee cannot replace funding that has already been allocated for the project either through a capital ordinance, bonding, or appropriation in the annual budget. **Therefore, any purchase orders, vendor invoices and proof of payment documentation dated prior to the award announcement date are not eligible for reimbursement.** Priority will be given to underserved populations and 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, 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 uploaded in the application:

- a. Statement of Board President
- b. Statement of Mayor / County Official
- c. Certification Sheets Schedule G, H and I
  - Certification Regarding Debarment and Suspension
  - Certification Regarding Lobbying
  - Governing Body Resolution
- d. Letter certifying that the applicant maintains ownership of property where improvements are being made. Uploaded at the bottom of the certification sheets page.

Additional information can be found at <https://www.nj.gov/dca/dlgs/programs/lriggrants.shtml>.

You can also review the application instructions on the application menu tab.

## **NJDCA SAGE PORTAL**

All applications must be submitted through the NJDCA SAGE Portal located at:  
<https://dcasage.intelligrants.com/portal.asp>.

\*\*All applicants are to ensure that their SAGE Agency information contains up-to-date information including all email contacts of personnel responsible for administering the grant.

## **VENDOR ID REQUEST**

Applicants who do not already have a NJSTART Vendor ID number are required to complete a [W9 form](#). You will also need to complete an [ACH form](#) for electronic receipt of grant funds. Please email complete forms to [AAIUNIT@treas.nj.gov](mailto:AAIUNIT@treas.nj.gov). For assistance, please call (609) 984-5210. Once you receive your vendor number, please update your agency profile.

## **SUBMISSION DEADLINE**

DLGS must be in receipt of one electronic copy of the completed application in SAGE by 5:00 P.M. EST on **January 31, 2025**, for the applicant(s) to be eligible for grant funding.

Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications not submitted on or before 5:00 P.M. EST on **January 31, 2025**, will be rejected.

## **GRANT REVIEW AND SELECTION PROCESS**

DLGS will evaluate all applications. Grant applications will be ranked by distressed community ranking, financial need, feasibility, local unit match commitment, and scope of impact. 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 (up to 30 points)
  - a. Demonstrated need for project
  - b. Degree of transformation
  - c. Projected attendance/use of facility

2. Quality and Feasibility of Work Plan (up to 20 points).
  - a. Quality
  - b. Feasibility
  - c. Expense eligibility
3. Demonstration of Applicant Commitment to Recreation (up to 20 points).
  - a. Local Match
  - b. Existing and forward-looking plan for recreational opportunity creation and maintenance
4. Ranking Within County (up to 30 points)
  - a. Distressed City Ranking within County
    - 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 programs, 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 two (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 Recreation Improvement Grants are reimbursement based. There will be no advance payment of grant funds. Reimbursements may be made semi-annually when semi-annually progress reports are due. 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, invoices and copies of cancelled checks (front & back) documenting the expenditure of funds for which reimbursement is sought. Requests for reimbursement can be submitted at any time but cannot be more than once every six months.

### **WHEN FULL AWARD AMOUNT WILL NOT BE EXPENDED**

Prior to submitting a final Financial Status Report (FSR) when exact award amount is not fully expended, which results in a grant balance, the grantee must 1<sup>st</sup> file a grant amendment to amend the grant amount to the amount equal to grant funds expended. Once the grant amendment is approved by DLGS, the grantee may file the final Financial Status Report (FSR).

Reimbursement requests are required to be received by the division no later than two (2) months

after the expiration of the agreement.

Payment will be made via electronic transfer of funds to the account and financial institution identified within the vendor number listed on your agency information page.

### **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 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 the grant agreement have been satisfactorily completed.

### **ASSISTANCE**

Applicants may contact [LRIG@dca.nj.gov](mailto:LRIG@dca.nj.gov) to discuss program and project needs up to submission of the application.