



PARKS INITIATIVE FUNDING FRAMEWORK

PARTNERSHIP FUND

Background and Summary

Access to nature is essential to our happiness, health, and well-being. Yet, in the U.S., about one in three people, including 28 million children, don't have a quality park close to home. Trust for Public Land (TPL) is partnering with communities and supporters to change this.

TPL's [10-Minute Walk® program](#) (10MW) partners with mayors and city leaders nationwide to close the park equity gap. Through reenvisioning how park systems are planned, funded, and activated, the program helps cities harness the transformative potential of parks to tackle pressing challenges such as public health, climate resilience, economic development, and community cohesion.

About the Fund

Community-based organizations play a vital role in helping cities close the park equity divide. These groups not only provide programming and access to social services; they also are a direct line into the community and are key drivers of community engagement. City leaders are increasingly working with community-based organizations to engage more authentically with community members and ensure that city decisions meet the needs of community members.

Trust for Public Land created the 10-Minute Walk® Partnership Fund in 2019 to better integrate community voice into the park decision-making process. With these resources, TPL supports projects designed to meet the shared goals and needs of both the city and local community to accelerate the creation of parks and park partnerships that drive healthy and thriving communities.

The program aims to fund innovative and impactful partnerships and projects, with the goals of:

- Demonstrating on-the-ground successes to spark systems-level change in support of parks and green spaces in cities.
- Fostering a shared vision among all sectors around the integral role of parks and demonstrating how parks can be a catalyst for generating long-term, broad change for livable cities.
- Driving cities to advance park equity by increasing access to parks and connecting community to the benefits of parks.
- Building the 10MW movement by strengthening the role of nonprofits in city building, increasing the capacity of local partners and community leaders, and enabling an exchange of information and expansion of networks in and among 10MW cities.

In 2025, the Fund will support innovative pilot projects in conjunction with the efforts of cities and communities currently engaged in TPL's Park Equity Accelerator technical assistance program.

10-Minute Walk® Park Equity Accelerator “Pilot Projects” Grant Program

Program Description

Trust for Public Land’s [10-Minute Walk® Park Equity Accelerator](#) (PEA) works with cities to implement policy and systems change interventions that increase park equity. TPL’s technical assistance team works directly with city agencies – past Accelerator cities include Los Angeles CA, Fort Worth TX, Scranton PA and Cleveland OH, among others – to identify and locally address common challenges faced by park practitioners across the country. By equipping cities with knowledge, capacity, and relationships, the PEA helps cities address high impact, “frequently experienced” barriers to park equity, to support meaningful local change, test new ideas, and generate nationally applicable learnings.

In over 50 years of working closely with cities, TPL recognizes the value of community leadership and engagement to achieve a city’s park equity goals. The PEA program intentionally brings community organizations to the table to share assets, ideas, and work together with city agencies. This grant program funds community organizations to implement “pilot projects” that will strengthen partnerships and test ideas on the ground – all in the name of building park equity to ensure quality park access for everyone.

Intended Outcomes

Community and city leaders should use the findings from these pilot projects to advocate for permanent improvements, to craft policy documents, design standards/guidelines, or as evidence for additional grants and proposals.

Some examples: if a city is considering transforming vacant lots into neighborhood green spaces to increase park access – a community group might form “friends of” groups to help define, activate and steward those spaces with positive neighborhood use. If a city is considering updating park amenities to serve a changing demographic and achieve more park equity – a community group might host programming events to invite new park users to test out temporary programs.

As projects are developed, TPL asks applicants to propose clear evaluation metrics to support evidence for permanent change and/or a plan for cross sector partnerships/outreach to build political support. Following the pilot project implementation, the applicant (perhaps in partnership with the city) will be able to connect and articulate why the pilot project is important, or what the project/event catalyzed, or how/if the event supported bigger park equity goals.

Geographic Eligibility

Projects must support a city associated with TPL’s 10MW Park Equity Accelerator program. Invited cities or geographies have been determined based upon an existing relationship with TPL for technical support. Funding sources and amounts vary for these active PEA cities in 2025: Birmingham, AL; Boston, MA; Dallas, TX; Pittsburgh, PA; San Jose, CA; and Tacoma, WA. All applicants are subject to the program’s goals and guidelines that follow, along with any city-specific restrictions listed on the individual Funding Opportunity page.

Program Goals

As cities commit to providing safe, easy access to quality parks for all their residents, the 10MW PEA grant program helps amplify community involvement in the process to build a city’s capacity for action – by fostering collaboration between municipal government and community-based organizations. The grant

program supports community pilot projects that are aligned with PEA goals and “test” or build towards practices that may achieve defined park equity outcomes.

Proposed projects will align with one of four program areas related to park equity and access: Park Design and Construction, Programming and Activation, Partnership Development, and Policy/Planning. Proposals to the fund should align with one of these program areas – with community as the center of focus as a valued partner, and all project efforts conducted towards greater park equity outcomes.

Examples of project activities within each program area are listed below, though TPL encourages community-based proposals tailored to the unique qualities of a city and community.

Program Areas + Project Activity

Examples of project activities within each Program Area may include, but are not limited to:

1. PARK ACCESS

We fund projects that increase access to quality parks for those who need them most. Funds in this category may go to install or construct physical improvements in a publicly accessible park or green space to facilitate park use for all. Partnership Funds may be used to “close the gap” for shovel-ready projects.

Project types:

New parks , for example: transforming undeveloped or non-traditional parkland into a usable public park or green space.	Park improvements , for example: adding permanent park amenities such as landscaping, benches, and picnic tables.	Pilot “prototype” improvements , for example: temporary structures such as planter boxes and artwork to help residents visualize and experience future park amenities.
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2. PROGRAMMING & ACTIVATION

We fund projects that encourage increased park use and foster social connections through organized activities, based on community needs and often in partnership with the community. Funds in this category may be used to provide new park experiences, activate the site with consistent programming, and to bring people together to foster meaningful collaboration. Ideally, projects will identify and invest in community skills and assets.

Project types:

Park stewardship and volunteerism , for example: tree-planting programs, volunteer, or public service activities, or “friends-of” programs.	Park programming, activation, recreation , for example: sport or recreation leagues, arts or cultural programs, or gardening groups.
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3. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

We fund projects that foster intentional collaboration and relationship-building between municipal government and nonprofit organizations or neighborhood groups, members of different social groups, or non-traditional partners *towards a specific, defined purpose* related to park equity and access.

Project types:

Relationship building , for example: hire community organizers, spend time at existing community events, build trust with residents who have close ties with the community.	Capacity building , for example: organizational skill-building, leadership capabilities; inclusive engagement efforts.	Accessible communication , for example: cultural or language translation, expanded media outreach, interpretive signage.
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4. POLICY & PLANNING

We fund projects that set the conditions to codify community-centered park policies, decision-making guidelines and protocols—to secure park equity within the government’s purview. Funds in this category may be used to engage community members and partners in strategic processes that yield a tangible result.

Project types:

Participatory planning and decision-making , for example: formation of park advisory boards, neighborhood councils, or participatory budgeting programs.	Connecting community to public processes , for example: simplifying permitting processes for park use and stewardship; inclusive outreach around available resources and programs	Formal agreements , for example: joint-use agreements, MOUs related to park access and use, establishment of stewardship groups.
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Guidelines

PEA “pilot project” grants are city-specific, and in most cases by invitation only. The primary goal of these grants is to support pilot projects that test ideas generated in the PEA and build or strengthen working relationships between community and municipal leaders. All projects must respond to the Partnership Fund program goals described in the background, summary, and program description - and meet the eligibility requirements listed in these guidelines.

Grantee Eligibility

Grants are available to community-based organizations (CBOs) that work in a 10MW city participating in TPL’s PEA technical assistance program or individuals who meet the eligible criteria. Funding sources and restrictions may vary depending on the specific funding opportunity to which you are applying. Grantees must:

- Meet the following eligibility:
 - Be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization in good standing, that is not a private foundation, OR
 - Have a fiscal sponsor that meets these criteria, OR
 - Be a grassroots organization with a bank account under the organization’s name and have a Federal employer identification number (federally registered as an organization), OR
 - Be an individual who represents a developing “Friends” group and is willing to receive funds as an individual for tax purposes, if they provide a copy of their W9.
- Have an existing working relationship with a 10MW city, a history of collaborative work, or shared interest in piloting a partnership;
- Be representative of a community or significant segments of the local community or community they serve, and/or provides services to individuals in the community;
- Have evidence of sound governing operations and finance policies and practices; and
- Have a strong track record of serving and/or representing community members, and/or building successful partnerships /coalitions.

Grantee Role

Grantees are expected to:

- As applicable, partner with a city contact to scope, design, and/or implement the project. Though a city partner does not need to have in-depth involvement in the project, a specific role should be determined prior to submission of an application.
- Supply the personnel and resources necessary to perform the scope of work within grant period.

- Perform grant obligations in accordance with the same qualifications, skills, operations, staff and readiness criteria that led to the Grantee selection.
- Track and report on accomplishment of project activities and deliverables. This includes:
 - Collecting data and analyzing findings/how the project event is important or supports bigger park equity goals.
 - Collecting and sharing photos, videos, flyers, and other documents related to the project.
 - Submitting a Final Report and participating in an interview with 10MW communications or evaluation consultants.

How to Apply

- Confirm Eligibility
- Fill in the standard **Application**, which includes a description of project need, proposed activities and details, planned deliverables, intended outcomes (what the partnership expects to achieve to advance city's priorities), and planned methods used to track progress. Form link: <https://forms.office.com/r/aNJUPS9mXs>.
- Application deadline and timing considerations are listed in each funding opportunity's guidelines.

Selection Process

The Review Committee consists of a cross-section of Trust for Public Land's 10MW team and staff who possess knowledge and expertise in various aspects of our Parks Initiative. The Review Committee will evaluate eligible applications and determine the awards.

Selection Criteria

The Review Committee will consider the following selection criteria:

- Alignment and advancement of the 10MW goals, in concert with the city's priorities. Project activities shall be designed to lead towards achieving the PEA's goals, at varying scales.
- Addressing demonstrated needs, especially through equitable and inclusive practices and project strategies that best serve a defined audience that is vulnerable or otherwise underserved. The proposed project will also maximize or expand a local community organization's capacity and/or embed parks into long-term considerations and practice.
- Partnership and readiness: Strength of potential CBO partnership, and readiness to implement the project will be assessed. Community organizations must have demonstrated ability to perform the work, including experience in the project activities for which they are applying and working in the selected city. The degree to which the CBO is committed to equity and inclusion will also be considered. The partnership and proposed project are feasible within the terms of the grant requirements and timeline.
- Impacts. A relevant plan is proposed for tracking progress and impact. Applicants should describe how the pilot project fits within the "big picture" of a city's 10MW equity goals, and leverage or identify next steps towards bigger outcomes.
- Financial Readiness. Grants intend to catalyze and extend a CBO partner's ability to perform this work, rather than be the sole funding source to sustain operations. A reasonable budget must be included.

Period of Performance

The grant term /period of performance is 12 months and will begin after the grant agreement is signed. See individual funding opportunities for specific dates and deadlines for the application, project implementation, and grant reporting. The general award timeline is below:

	General Timeframe (in months)												
Activity	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Applications Due	x												
Grant Agreements Executed		x											
Period of performance begins		x											
Project Planning with TPL		x	x										
Project execution			x	x	x	x	x	x	x				
TPL follow up with grantees										x	x	x	
Final Reports due											x	x	
Period of performance ends													x

Grant Agreement

After awards announcements are made, TPL will finalize a Grant Agreement with each grantee organization. These must be executed ahead of grant disbursement (or reimbursement, in some cases).

Reporting Guidelines

Grantees, with support from TPL Sponsors, will be responsible for submitting a brief written report with information to provide an update on progress, share success, identify lessons learned, inform 10MW measurement efforts, and inform the Partnership Fund structure and implementation overall.

- Following the grant award, a “kick-off” call will be scheduled with TPL’s 10MW team, the Grantee and city contacts, as applicable, to ensure alignment and a smooth runway to project success.
- A brief final report will be submitted after the pilot project is completed, 1 to 3 months before the grant term/period of performance ends. This will include a testimonial from the partner organization (what was the value of the award for the partner organization), with permission to use name/quote, along with photos/videos and other media. It will also include a timeline of project milestones and evidence of measurement and impact.

Marketing & Communications

On occasion, the Grantee may be contacted for "human interest" stories or other anecdotal information, copies of flyers, reviews, relevant news clippings, photographs, or other evidence of your accomplishments. This may include brief interview questions to be used in promotional activities (i.e., social media, impact reports, brochures, etc.). Grantees will make all reasonable efforts to provide such requested information.

Likewise, all marketing and communications developed by TPL or the Grantee around the work funded by Trust for Public Land’s 10-Minute Walk program will reference Trust for Public Land and will be subject to review by the 10-Minute Walk team.