



PARTNERSHIP FUND

Central Valley Park Access & Activation Grants

GUIDELINES and APPLICATION

Background

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 across the country to change that. Since 1972, TPL has created thousands of parks where they are needed most – so [everyone can enjoy the benefits of being outdoors](#). TPL works with city leaders, community advocates, and park professionals to improve how their park systems are planned, funded, and activated so that quality parks reflect a community's specific needs and meet their potential to support public health, climate resilience, economic development, and community cohesion.

Regional Context

California's Central Valley faces a pressing need for improved access to quality open spaces. In the largest three cities in the region—Stockton, Fresno, and Bakersfield—up to 68% of residents do not live within a half mile of, or a 10-minute walk to, a park. Moreover, funding for parks in these cities is below the national average of \$133 per person, which may indicate lower levels of maintenance, amenities, and programming that parks can offer. In smaller cities as well as rural and unincorporated communities, access to quality parks is further limited by lack of funding to build new parks or steward existing spaces.

To act on these needs, TPL is engaging with communities across the Central Valley to learn the opportunities and challenges around park and greenspace resources, convene a capacity-building and peer learning network for park stakeholders, and *fund pilot projects in partnership with community-based organizations*.

TPL and its Central Valley partners are working to raise awareness about the benefits of parks and recreational open space, support the efforts of municipal and local organizations in furthering park equity by improving access to parks and park use where it's needed most, build community support and advocacy for parks and open space, and identify long term funding sources to advance park equity in the region.

If addressed, these opportunities can leverage the climate, health, economic, and social benefits of parks to address other pressing needs in the region such as environmental impacts from extreme heat, air pollution, and flooding; limited healthcare resources; and food insecurity.

TPL also recognizes the insecurity many individuals and families are experiencing related to immigration pressures. Our work with partners invites creative approaches to expanding access and park activities to vulnerable communities, while respecting privacy concerns and providing a safe platform for the exchange of ideas.

About the Fund

Program Goals

Trust for Public Land is offering grants to support partnerships among community organizations, city agencies, and other sectors (such as health and education) who together can implement local projects that increase access to parks for all. Through the grants, financial support and technical assistance are available for projects that meet these overarching program goals:

- Address the Central Valley's park access needs
- Test innovative pilot ideas or build practices that advance park equity goals
- Foster meaningful collaboration between government entities and community-based organizations
- Create visible impacts that inspire more support for parks and green spaces

TPL is seeking proposals that include clear metrics to evaluate and describe how a funded project might lead to a more permanent change. For example, after the project is completed, the applicant should be able to describe why the project is important, what changes the project inspired, or how the project might support bigger park equity goals.

Available Funding

TPL plans to award grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$100,000 to projects that will address one or more of these general Central Valley park equity needs:

- Creates or enhances parks in a way that supports public health - especially physical health, mental wellbeing, heat mitigation, and improving park use for vulnerable populations
- Provides connections to parks, open space and/or recreational assets in the region via trails or public transit
- Improves the quality and/or amenities of existing local community parks to better support park use.
- Activates parks through programming and recreation activities – especially outside of major cities
- Engages community members through participatory planning related to park use/improvements

For guidance on strategies and project examples to meet these needs, the Grant Application Resources guide offers suggestions. Proposed projects can be of any type, tailored to reflect and address a specific community's needs. Within the funding opportunity, there are two grant sizes to support projects of different scales:

- **Park Activation Grants: \$25,000 per grant award**

Approximately 10 grants will be awarded for projects that support increased park use and foster social connections by providing new park experiences or physical site features, volunteer opportunities, and programming. Projects may raise awareness of parks through signage or other creative means. To advance park equity, projects that focus on engaging new park users, building relationships among groups with differences, and developing new leaders are encouraged.

- **Park Planning & Project Grants: \$50,000 to \$100,000 per grant award**

Approximately 10-15 grants are available within the range of \$50,000 - \$100,000 for projects that increase park access. Projects may be of any type, such as participatory park planning efforts, physical improvements in parks or green spaces, and enhanced connections to parks. Projects may include events, programming, broader outreach and communications. Competitive projects will integrate meaningful partnerships, community engagement, and concrete action plans.

In addition to funding, if selected projects will receive:

- Customized technical assistance from TPL experts and advisors, as available/appropriate
- Priority access to a free virtual [Community of Practice](#), which is a workshop series designed to advance equity-driven park policies and strategies in the region
- Peer learning network and in-person convening with fellow grantees

Guidelines

All project proposals must respond to the program goals described in this document and meet the eligibility requirements listed below.

Geographic Eligibility

Projects must be implemented within one of the 10 counties that TPL is prioritizing through its Central Valley Park Equity Strategy: Fresno County, Kern County, Kings County, Madera County, Mariposa County, Merced County, San Joaquin County, Stanislaus County, Tulare County, Tuolumne County.

Grantee Eligibility

Funds are available to these applicants, provided they have existing, meaningful connections to the communities they plan to engage in the work:

- Community Based Organizations with Section 501(c)(3) non-profit status
- State, Local or Regional government entities
- Tribes (both federally recognized and non-recognized) and tribal Community Based Organizations
- Grassroots organizations may apply for Park Activation grants as described above, provided they have Section 501(c)(3) non-profit status OR a fiscal sponsor who has that status, OR is a government entity willing to take on fiscal sponsorship

Grantees are expected to:

- Collaborate or partner with local government or community organizations to scope, design, and/or implement the project
- Have evidence of sound governing operations, finance policies and practices, and a track record of building successful partnerships
- Supply the personnel and resources necessary to perform the project within grant period
- Track and report on accomplishment of project activities and deliverables in accordance with evaluation and reporting guidelines

Eligible Expenses

Grant Awards may be used for project expenses described in the scope of work including *personnel* - salaries and wages for staff working directly on the project; *services* - costs provided by a contractor such as translation, research, or instruction; and *direct costs* - such as materials and printing.

Timing Considerations

After a project is awarded, a Grant Agreement between Trust for Public Land and the Awardee is signed. Grants cover a 12-month period of performance that begins once the award is disbursed. Project must be fully completed, and all funds spent within this 12-month period (ending February 2027). *Note: All projects*

must demonstrate progress on the project—substantial completion or tangible results such as community engagement results, signed contracts with project partners, photos/videos/social media posts (see Reporting Milestones, below)—by August 30, 2026.

Award Requirements

Award Timeline

Award decisions will be announced in February 2026. The general outline of dates is shown below:

Activity	Dates (subject to change)
RFP / Invitation Issued	November 4, 2025
Pre-Application Info Sessions (free, online, open to the public)	November 18, 2025 December 12, 2025
Applications Due	January 6, 2026
Award Notice	January 23, 2026
Grant Agreement issued (period of performance begins upon execution)	February 2, 2026
Progress Milestone	August 30, 2026
Final Reports due	January 23, 2027
Period of performance ends	February 2027

Evaluation Metrics

Grantees, with support from TPL, will be responsible for collecting information as part of the project to evaluate success and inform future endeavors.

All projects must track these metrics at a minimum and report to TPL:

- # of people connected to outdoors by the project, or engaged in a planning process
- # of organizations engaged in the project
- The Grantee may track additional metrics as desired and deemed relevant to their project

Reporting Milestones

Grantees are responsible for submitting a brief progress report and final report to provide updates of project milestones, success stories, and lessons learned. The grant will follow these milestones:

1. **Kick-off Meeting.** Following the grant award, a call will be scheduled with TPL staff, the Grantee and local government contacts to ensure alignment and a smooth runway to project success.
2. **Progress Report.** By August 30, 2026, Grantees will provide a brief progress report to TPL, sharing evidence of visible, tangible progress. Evidence may include plans, photos, quotes or testimonials, social media posts, articles written about the projects, etc.
3. **Final Report.** Upon Completion, Grantees shall submit a summary of the project including these components:
 - A short (1-2 page) description of project milestones and implementation; a reflection on lessons learned, success to build upon, what's next; and evidence of measurement and impact (how project is important or supports bigger park equity goals).
 - A testimonial from the grant recipient, with permission to use name/quote, along with a minimum of 10 photos and other media/videos or project documentation, if possible.
 - A timeline of project milestones and evidence of measurement and impact.

4. **Updates (as needed).** Awardees shall notify TPL of significant deviations from the work plan, unforeseen circumstances, or potential barriers to implementation. This enables us to support the Grantee and learn from real life challenges.
5. **Follow up.** One year or so after the grant is completed, TPL will reach out to Grantees to see how the project is going. We may invite you to join us at certain events to speak about your experience and park equity status. Your participation would be optional.

How to Apply

Pre-Application Assistance

TPL will host two free, online Pre-Application Information Sessions to help applicants develop project ideas and proposals. We will answer questions about the grant guidelines and application. Dates and meeting information is provided in the Award Timeline and the Grant Application Resources guide.

Application

Complete the [Online Application form](#), including a description of the need for the project, proposed project activities and deliverables, intended goals and outcomes, and metrics that will be used to track progress.

The best applications will include data to demonstrate the equitable impact the project will have within the community. This can include, but is not limited to, racial demographic data, economic data, and health data of the population the project is trying to serve.

Application Deadline

Applications are due by January 6, 2026, 5:00 PM Pacific Standard Time. Complete the **Online Application** form at this link: <https://airtable.com/apppnuDvOc4dMdTkE/pagecplUFC6ypZ1bfn/form>

Application questions are provided herein for reference. It may be helpful to write your application responses first, then paste your text into the Online Application. You may submit 1 to 3 optional attachments such as a project map for context, photos, letters of support, etc.

Selection Process

A selection committee will include TPL park experts and representatives from the Central Valley Park Equity Regional Advisory Committee (RAC). The selection committee will review all grant applications according to the selection criteria summarized below and choose the projects to receive funding.

Selection Criteria

Refer to the Grant Application Resources guide for a full description of our selection criteria and scoring matrix. The committee will consider:

- Need for the project
- Alignment and advancement of grant goals, city and community priorities
- Demonstrated support for the project from community and project partners
- Impacts are visible and/or tangible
- Plans for leveraging resources, and ongoing sustainability
- Applicant readiness and experience
- Project Feasibility – scope of work, timeline, budget
- Monitoring and Evaluation

Questions?

For questions about this grant program, contact:

- Sam Savin, Associate Director, Technical Assistance and Parks Programs at sam.savin@tpl.org
- Meera Velu, Parks and Conservation Planner at meera.velu@tpl.org
- Amie Patel, Parks for People Project Manager at amie.patel@tpl.org

Download the Documents

Guidelines, Application, Resources, and a full description of the Partnership Fund background can be found here: <https://10minutewalk.org/partnership-fund/>



PARTNERSHIP FUND

Central Valley Park Access & Activation Grants

APPLICATION

Application Instructions and Deadline

This application is associated with the Central Valley Park Access & Activation Grant Guidelines. Trust for Public Land is offering resources to community organizations and government entities to plan and conduct projects of varying types – that advance the public’s access to quality parks where they are needed most.

Applications are due January 6, 2026 - by completing this online form: [\[LINK\]](#)

The following is a sample application that may be used to develop your proposal before submitting it online (copy and paste your text into the online form). If you do not have access to submit an application using the online form, you may email a completed version of this application to: Jen Isacoff (jennifer.isacoff@tpl.org) and Amie Patel (amie.patel@tpl.org). Write “CV Application” in the subject line.

Contact Sam Savin sam.savin@tpl.org with any questions about the Central Valley Park Equity Strategy or the development of your proposal.

Application Form

I. BASIC INFORMATION

Name/Email (person filling out form)	
Project Title	
Applicant/Grantee Organization	
Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable)	
Which of the following best describes the Applicant/Grantee Organization?	<input type="checkbox"/> Government Entity <input type="checkbox"/> Tribal Entity <input type="checkbox"/> CBO with 501c3 status <input type="checkbox"/> CBO with Fiscal Sponsor <input type="checkbox"/> Grassroots Organization with bank account in org’s name and EIN
Federal Employer Identification Number (EIN), if applicable	
Grantee Contact	
Grantee Contact Email Address	
Which grant are you applying for?	<input type="checkbox"/> Park Activation Grant (\$25,000) <input type="checkbox"/> Park Planning & Projects Grant (\$50,000 to \$100,000)

II. PROJECT INFORMATION

1. **Provide a short summary of your project.** Imagine your project is on the front page of the newspaper: describe the need for the project, how the project will help address this need, and what you are proposing to do – in 55 words or less.

Response:

2. **Describe the project in more detail and how it meets the goals of this grant program.** Include a summary of how you foresee your project activities advancing specific community needs and your city's goals around the future of parks and green spaces.

As applicable, include information and data from needs assessments, indexes (such as TPL's [ParkServe®](#), the CDC's [Social Vulnerability Index](#), and findings from community engagement. Also reference specific city plans or initiatives (i.e., parks master plans, sustainability plans).

Response:

3. **What is the population you are hoping to reach?** Why are they selected and what strategies will you use to reach them?

Response:

4. **Which Central Valley park equity need(s) are you planning to address?** (select all that apply)

- ☐ New or enhanced parks as a strategy for public health
- ☐ Improved connections to parks and/or recreational assets in the region
- ☐ Improved park quality to increase park use
- ☐ Park activation through programming and recreation opportunities
- ☐ Community engagement and participatory planning

5. Which **park equity strategy** does your project primarily reflect?

- ☐ Park Access and Park Design
- ☐ Programming and Activation
- ☐ Partnership Development
- ☐ Policy and Planning

6. Will your project include or influence any of the following **project activities**? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Community engagement
- ☐ Connections to parks (e.g., trails, "safe routes")
- ☐ Programming or events
- ☐ Wayfinding/signage or other promotion of parks
- ☐ Capital improvements (e.g., benches, drinking fountains, shade)
- ☐ Communications
- ☐ Planning or design for a new park or existing park renovation
- ☐ Green Infrastructure (e.g, trees, stormwater management, resource conservation)

- ☐ Trainings or convenings
- ☐ Programs or park features related to physical health and/or mental well-being
- ☐ Resource creation (e.g., guidebook)
- ☐ Planning at city scale (e.g., master plan)
- ☐ Policy at city level
- ☐ Other (please describe):

7. Describe the timeline and work plan for your project. Detail the proposed activities, timeline, key milestones, and products that will be created. Identify all project partners and what meaningful roles they will play on the project. What tangible progress (plans or designs, press clippings, event photos, etc.) will you be able to show by August 30, 2026?

Response:

8. Describe what relevant experiences make you a strong partner to advance parks and the city/county/region's 10-minute walk goals. Please include any experience you have working with government, community-based organizations, and other partnerships.

Response:

9. Explain what permits or permissions might be required for your project proposal, and how you plan to secure them.

Response:

10. What obstacles do you anticipate during the project, and how do you plan to overcome them?
Please describe any technical assistance you might need to be successful.

Response:

11. What are your goals and vision of success for the project? What do you hope the project's influence might be on park equity and access in the Central Valley?

Response:

12. Describe the outcomes/impacts that are directly tied to project activities and contribute to park access and activation. Please structure your response as follows, offering at least 3 metrics:

- OUTCOMES: What is the impact you want to have?
- RELATED PROJECT ACTIVITIES: What will you plan, make, or do to try and achieve the impact?
- TRACKING: What can you count that will help you measure progress or success?

OUTCOMES	PROJECT ACTIVITIES	TRACKING
<i>Example: Generate new champions of parks, focusing on the health sector</i>	<i>Create a "guidebook to local parks and trails" for health clinics and community organizations</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Track number of copies shared/downloaded - Count number of event attendees - Survey about interest in parks engagement
Add yours below...		

III. BUDGET QUESTIONS

13. Overall Project Budget: \$_____ If this project is part of a larger project, please indicate the full budget amount of the project.

14. Amount Requested from this grant: \$ _____

15. Budget Detail for this Request. Provide a simple narrative project budget based upon the activities described.

Response:

Budget should address the following categories, including a description and amount for each item:

Category	Description	Amount
Staffing/Personnel/Labor (for people working on the project)		
		\$
		\$
		\$
Services (such as vendor, contractor, or instructors)		
		\$
		\$
		\$
Expenses (such as printing, materials, travel, etc.)		
		\$
		\$
		\$
Total amount (grant request)		\$

Note: Grant cannot support more than 50% of a Grantee's operating budget or the full subsidy of a nonprofit organization's salary line

16. Leveraged funds/sustainability. Do you currently have, or plan to seek, other funding/ resources to support the pilot project idea? Tell us how you think the proposed project might influence park equity goals beyond the project, be replicated, or inspire change beyond the grant term.

Response:

17. The last word. Tell us why you are excited about this project!

Response: