



**TRUST FOR
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2026 Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) GRANT APPLICATION TOOLKIT



Connecting everyone to the outdoors™



ABOUT THE ORLP

The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program is a nationally competitive federal grant program that provides new or significantly improved recreation opportunities in urban, low-income communities and Tribal and Indigenous communities lacking access to outdoor recreation. By helping create and revitalize parks, trails, open spaces, and community gathering places, ORLP investments can improve quality of life, strengthen community connections, and expand access to the physical and mental health benefits of time spent outdoors. The ORLP program is administered by the National Park Service through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance Program.

This document provides tools and resources for potential applicants and subrecipients to participate effectively with the ORLP program. This “toolkit” is intended to complement the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) for ORLP; however, prospective applicants and subrecipients *must read the NOFO in its entirety* to ensure their application is in alignment with the program rules and regulations. **Successful participation is multi-faceted and will require strong ongoing coordination with your State or Territory LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government and National Park Service personnel beyond the pages of this document.**

Whether transforming a vacant lot into a vibrant neighborhood park, improving access to nature for families and youth, or creating spaces that bring communities together, ORLP projects have the potential to leave a lasting legacy. This toolkit is designed to help you navigate the process and position your project for success.



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1: Definitions and Acronyms

Applying for ORLP involves navigating a variety of program requirements and federal grant terminology, so we've included the following list of commonly used terms and acronyms as a helpful reference for your application journey.

Applicant	Eligible Applicants include U.S. State and Territory Lead Agencies, Indian Tribes, Alaska Native communities or organizations, and Native Hawaiian communities or organizations. A State or Territory Lead Agency may submit an ORLP application on behalf of themselves or another eligible subrecipient (i.e., political subdivision of a state or territory or a Native Hawaiian community or organization). An eligible Indian Tribe may submit an ORLP application on behalf of themselves or an eligible subrecipient (i.e., Urban Indian Organization).
CDBG	Community Development Block Grants
CFDA	Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (located on sam.gov)
DOT	Department of Transportation
HUD	Department of Housing and Urban Development
LWCF	Land and Water Conservation Fund
LWCF Lead Agency	Each of the 50 states as well as American Samoa, the District of Columbia, Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, and the U.S. Virgin Islands has a lead agency designated by the state's governor or by state legislation for the purposes of implementing LWCF in that state or territory.
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NHPA	National Historic Preservation Act
NOFO	Notice of Funding Opportunity (located on grants.gov)
NPS	National Park Service
ORLP	Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership
SCORP	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
Subrecipient	Eligible subrecipients must apply for an ORLP grant through their State or Territory Lead Agency, or a Tribal Government (if applicable). Eligible subrecipients include: 1. Political subdivision of a state or territory, including cities and counties, or special purpose districts that manage open space, such as a park district. 2. Urban Indian Organizations (may choose to apply through a State or Territory Lead Agency OR Tribal Government)
UASFLA "Yellow Book" Appraisal	The Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition (UASFLA), also commonly referred to as the "Yellow Book" are the U.S. federal Standards for Appraisals performed in connection to most federal land acquisitions, exchanges, and/or dispensations. The standards are jointly published by The Appraisal Foundation and the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ).

2: ORLP Program Grant Basics

APPLICATION AND NOTICE OF FUNDING OPPORTUNITY: [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov)

FUNDING AWARD: Grant awards will range from **\$300,000 to \$15,000,000**. Grants require a minimum of 1:1 non-federal match, which may be derived from cash, in-kind contributions of land, materials, and/or volunteer services.

2026 CYCLE: KEY APPLICATION MILESTONES	DATE(S)
Deadline for Subrecipients to submit application(s) to an eligible Applicant	TBD by State/Territory Lead Agency or Tribal Government
Deadline for Applicants to submit application(s) to the NPS	November 1, 2026 at 11:59 p.m. ET
NPS announces selected projects to submit a full application	May 1, 2027
Final deadline for selected projects to submit full applications	April 30, 2028
Anticipated grant award period of performance	May 1, 2028–April 30, 2031
Projects should be complete and open to the public by	Spring 2031 (within 3 years of award)



3: Project Eligibility & Readiness Checklist

This section provides a checklist of the most common requirements individual projects must meet to consider applying for an ORLP grant. This includes project milestones that must already be completed prior to application submission, program eligibility requirements, and requirements that each level of government might require in addition to what is listed in the NOFO and the LWCF Manual. This checklist is intended to provide guidance for the most common eligibility questions and challenges, but it is not exhaustive and all-encompassing. For more detailed guidance, please read the [NOFO on Grants.gov](#), the [LWCF Act](#), the [EXPLORE Act](#), and the [LWCF Manual](#).

1. ORLP Pre-Submission Eligibility Requirements:

- ☐ **Has there been public engagement with the target community** to get input on their priorities for the use, amenities, and design of the proposed future outdoor recreation site? Is there deliverable data on this public engagement (e.g., public notification of planning, master plan engagement sessions, public meetings, hearings, site activations and tours, community surveys, etc.)?
- ☐ **Does your state have a currently approved Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)?**
(Note: SCORPs are not applicable for directly eligible Tribal applicants)
- ☐ **For development projects:** Is there a preliminary design or concept plan that shows what the site will look like with the intended amenities upon completion?
- ☐ **For acquisition projects:** Is the Applicant/Subrecipient able to obtain a [UASFLA “Yellow Book” Appraisal](#) of fair market value by the application deadline? If not, can the Applicant/Subrecipient explain the basis for the value estimate if an appraisal has not yet been performed?
 - Please note, if the project is selected for full award, the Applicant/Subrecipient will be expected to receive a Yellow Book Appraisal prior to the finalization of a grant award.
- ☐ **Has the Applicant/Subrecipient secured the required 1:1 non-federal match for the project, OR have clear commitments for match that will be secured by the award date?**
 - EXCEPTION OF NON-FEDERAL REQUIREMENT: Certain federal programs are authorized by their enabling legislation to be treated as non-federal match and can be used to meet ORLP’s cost share requirement. Examples include HUD Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), Indian Community Development Block Grant (ICDBG), and DOT Recreational Trails Program funding. For additional information on eligible federal match, and common programs, [visit the NPS FAQ document on Grants.gov](#).
 - EXCEPTION FOR INSULAR AREAS: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands, and the U.S. Virgin Islands do not need to provide 50 percent non-federal cost share. These areas can receive full (100 percent) federal funding, including grants awarded on behalf of subrecipients.
- ☐ **Is the Applicant/Subrecipient ready and able to commit to maintaining this site for outdoor recreation purposes *in perpetuity***, per the requirements of the [LWCF State Assistance Program Manual](#)?
 - This includes dedicating the necessary resources to maintain and steward the site.

2. ORLP Program Eligibility Requirements:

- ☐ **The proposed project site is located within one of the following Qualifying Areas:**
 - An urban area with a population of 25,000 or more, based on the U.S. Census's [TIGERweb](#) map
 - Two or more adjacent urban areas with a combined population of 25,000 or more, based on the U.S. Census's [TIGERweb](#) map
 - An area administered by a federally recognized Indian Tribe or an Alaska Native or Native Hawaiian community organization
- ☐ **The proposed project is one of the following:**
 - **Acquisition** of land and water for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes
 - **Development** of new or renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities that provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public
 - **Combination** of acquisition and development for outdoor recreation purposes
- ☐ **The entity preparing an application is an eligible Applicant or Subrecipient.** For more information visit the [NOFO on Grants.gov](#), pages 4–5.
 - **Eligible Applicants:**
 - State and Territory Lead Agencies
 - Indian Tribes
 - Alaska Native communities or organizations
 - Native Hawaiian communities or organizations
 - **Eligible Subrecipients**
 - Political subdivisions of a state or territory
 - Urban Indian Organizations
- ☐ **Does the Applicant/Subrecipient understand what project costs are considered eligible and which costs are considered ineligible to include in their budget?** For more information, visit the [NOFO on Grants.gov](#), pages 8 and 13.
- ☐ **Does the project align with LWCF Law and Policy?**
 - As an LWCF program, ORLP projects must align with the purposes and requirements of the [LWCF Act and LWCF Manual](#).

3. ORLP Competition & NPS Priorities:

- ☐ **Does the project meet *at least one of the program goals*?**
 - Provide recreation opportunities in low-income communities in which access to parks is not adequate to meet local needs;
 - Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and public land volunteerism;
 - Support innovative or cost-effective ways to enhance parks and other recreation opportunities or delivery of services;

- Support park and recreation programming provided by local governments, including cooperative agreements with community-based eligible nonprofit organizations;
- Develop Native American event sites and cultural gathering spaces;
- Provide benefits such as community resilience, reduction of urban heat islands, enhanced water or air quality, or habitat for fish or wildlife; and
- Facilitate any combination of these goals.

☐ **Does the project meet *at least one of the program priorities*?**

- Create or significantly enhance access to park and recreational opportunities in a qualifying area;
- Engage and empower low-income communities and youth;
- Provide employment or job training opportunities for youth or low-income communities;
- Establish or expand public-private partnerships, with a focus on leveraging resources; and
- Take advantage of coordination among various levels of government.

☐ **Can the Applicant/Subrecipient demonstrate how the project furthers relevant Secretarial and Executive Orders including [Executive Order 14313](#) and [Secretarial Order 3442](#)?**

☐ **Can the Applicant/Subrecipient demonstrate how the project meets the competition priority for low-income status (as defined in 26 U.S.C. 45D(e)(1)) using the [Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's Census Geomapping tool](#)? For more information, visit the [NOFO on Grants.gov](#), page 12.**

- U.S. territories and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico can document low-income status by submitting alternate documentation, if Census or other federal government data is unavailable.

4. ORLP Project Considerations:

☐ **Can the Applicant/Subrecipient wait to begin work on the proposed project until the NPS completes its project selection and executes the award agreement?**

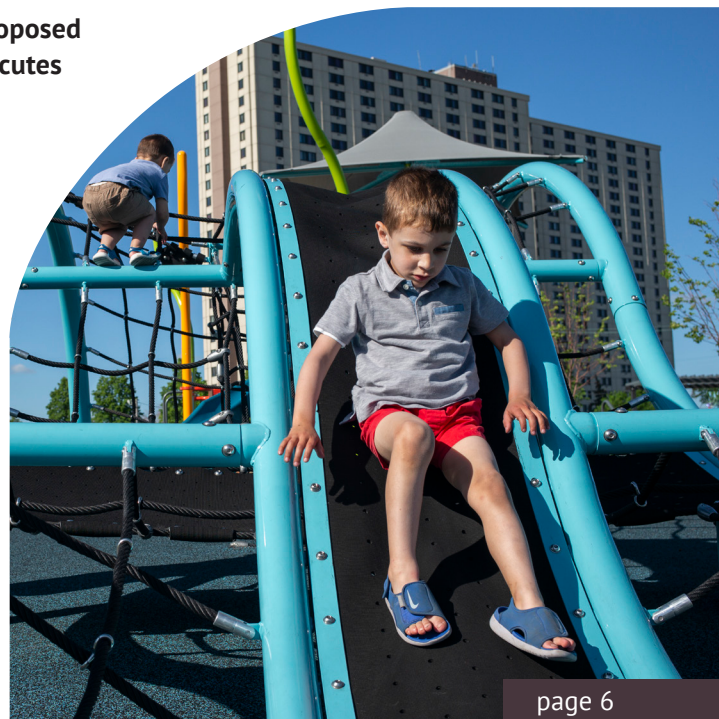
- This could take anywhere from 1–2 years from the November 1, 2026, application deadline.

☐ **Can the project be completed within the 1–3-year grant timeline?**

- Projects should break ground within 1 year and be complete and open to the public within 2–3 years.

☐ **Are there existing or anticipated contracts or purchases the Applicant/Subrecipient plans to include in the grant budget (i.e., design, construction management, etc.)?**

- If so, please ensure the Applicant/Subrecipient is following the [federal procurement guidelines](#).



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- **Purchases of less than \$15,000:** [Micro-purchases](#) may be awarded without soliciting competitive price or rate quotations if the recipient or subrecipient considers the price reasonable based on research, experience, purchase history, or other information, and maintains documents to support its conclusion.
- **Purchases of \$15,001 to \$350,000:** [Simplified acquisition threshold](#) means the dollar amount below which a recipient or subrecipient may purchase property or services using small purchase methods (see [§ 200.320](#)). Small purchase procurement procedures must be followed (i.e., three quotes must be collected from qualified sources prior to initiating a contract).
- **Purchases of more than \$350,000:** [Formal procurement methods](#) are required when the value of the procurement transaction under a federal award exceeds the simplified acquisition threshold. Formal procurement methods are competitive and require public notice (i.e., [sealed bids](#) or [request for proposals](#)).

- ☐ **Is the Applicant/Subrecipient prepared to, initially, use their own resources to pay for all project costs?** The ORLP program, as with all LWCF programs, is reimbursement-based.
- ☐ **Is the site going to be located on public school property, or used by public schools?** If so, the recreation area may only have limited school use, with hours posted, and the application must include documentation of the school's agreement to the provisions of the LWCF Act. See Chapter 3, section C.6.A. of the [LWCF Manual](#) for more details.
- ☐ **Does the site have extant historic structures?** Outdoor recreation and support facilities may be located on historic sites or in conjunction with historic structures. However, the restoration or preservation of historic structures is not eligible. See Chapter 3, section C.6.A. of the [LWCF Manual](#) for more details.
- ☐ **Does the site have existing utilities/rights-of-way?** Assuming grantees possess adequate control and tenure of land and there is specific agreement from the utility company, outdoor recreation and support facilities may be located on utility company lands such as rights-of-way, reservoir lands, etc. unless the recreation resource management plan of the utility's license application filed with the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission indicates the facilities are to be provided at the sole expense of the licensee. See Chapter 3, section C.6.A. of the [LWCF Manual](#) for more details.

5. Subrecipient Requirements & Considerations:

- ☐ **Is the Subrecipient prepared to meet the State or Territory Lead Agency or Tribal Government deadline for preliminary submission of their application?**
- ☐ **Has the Subrecipient connected with their State or Territory Lead Agency or Tribal Government contact to discuss the proposed project?**
- ☐ **Has the Subrecipient checked with the State or Territory Lead Agency or Tribal Government about if there are any additional requirements for submission of the preliminary application?** Some examples of additional requirements include:
 - City/legislative body resolution
 - 5-year inspection forms for LWCF assisted sites
 - State historic preservation review and determination letter
 - State environmental impact review and determination letter

6. Applicant & Subrecipient Requirements & Considerations:

- ☐ **Does the eligible Subrecipient or Applicant require a legislative/council resolution** to pass to allow for application submission? If so, how does that fit into the application timeline?
- ☐ **For development projects:** If the proposed project is intended to develop a new park on existing, publicly owned land, is the parcel properly zoned for park use in perpetuity?
- ☐ **For acquisition projects:** Is the Applicant/Subrecipient committed to (upon project completion) holding the title to the property, and maintaining it for outdoor recreation purposes, *in perpetuity*?
- ☐ **Is there a plan, funding, and resources available to support the continued operation and maintenance of the site upon project completion?**

7. Post-Selection NPS/LWCF Requirements & Considerations:

- ☐ **If selected for award, is the Applicant/Subrecipient prepared to comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) review process requirements?** See Chapter 4, sections B and C of the [LWCF Manual](#) for more details.
- ☐ **If selected for award, is the Applicant/Subrecipient prepared to provide the NPS with proof of ownership (e.g., deeds, title reports, leases, parcel maps, etc.)?**
- ☐ **For acquisition projects:** If not already obtained, is the Subrecipient able to obtain a [UASFLA “Yellow Book” Appraisal](#) of fair market value within the required 1-year timeline?
 - Please note: if the post-selection Yellow Book Appraisal has a higher value than the proposed project budget, the NPS is only able to provide funding for the original amount requested.
- ☐ **For development projects:** Does the Subrecipient’s design plan and budget incorporate Build America Buy America (BABA) requirements (e.g., purchasing playground equipment from an American manufacturer)? If the Subrecipient’s project is awarded an ORLP grant, this could have implications for the design plan and project budget. For more information about the Department of the Interior’s BABA requirements and general applicability waivers, visit:
 - [DOI Build America Buy America Act FAQs–October 2025](#)
 - [“Buy America” Domestic Sourcing Guidance and Waiver Process for DOI Financial Assistance Agreements](#)
 - [Approved DOI General Applicability Waivers](#) (examples of possibly relevant general applicability waivers below)
 - General Applicability Waiver for De Minimus Purchases
 - General Applicability Waiver for Small Grants
 - General Applicability Public Interest Waiver for Pacific Island Territories
 - General Applicability Public Interest Waiver to Indian Tribes
- ☐ **Can the Applicant/Subrecipient commit to not convert the site, at any point, to any use other than public outdoor recreation without approval of the NPS?** (This approval would be contingent upon the Applicant/Subrecipient replacing the area to be converted with a new recreation area involving land of at least equal fair market value and reasonably equivalent recreational utility, and the conversion and its replacement being found consistent with the state’s SCORP). See the [LWCF Manual](#), Chapter 8, section F for more information.

4: Sample ORLP Application Timeline

A. Development Project Example Timeline

Bringing an ORLP application from concept to completion takes time, coordination, and flexibility. The sample timelines below outline a typical project journey and highlights key milestones along the way, but Applicants should be aware that schedules can vary considerably based on project complexity, review requirements, and other factors beyond an Applicant's control.

TIME TO APPLICATION SUBMISSION	ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
Prior to Starting an Application (up to 2+ years)	Project selection process. Identify priority project(s) for ORLP funding; assess Applicant/Subrecipient and project eligibility. Community engagement. Co-create and implement a robust engagement strategy with the community to be impacted by this project (e.g. conduct public meetings, surveys, and consult the SCORP to gauge public priorities). Start planning. Conduct a participatory design process with the community to decide the scope of work and future site amenities. Create a schematic/concept design of the site, based on community input. Work with a licensed landscape architect to create a preliminary project budget estimate. Review NOFO and any updated eligibility requirements; determine project alignment and eligibility with the NOFO. Work with partners from the public (local, county, state, Tribal) and private (nonprofit, businesses, foundations, individuals) sectors to identify and secure sources of matching funding to meet the 1:1 match requirement. Submit grant proposals, incorporate the project into your local government's annual budget, and/or work with partners to support fundraising goals. ** If you are a CITY, TOWN, COUNTY, PARK DISTRICT, SCHOOL DISTRICT, or HOUSING AUTHORITY you MUST contact your LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government (Applicant) to learn more about their application process. You will submit your application to your Applicant, not NPS. APPLICATION DEADLINES AND REQUIREMENTS VARY. **
28 weeks	Begin working on ORLP application ahead of the Applicant's ORLP application deadline.
27 weeks	If your project is eligible, determine who the Subrecipient will be. If necessary, seek approval from your organization's leadership to apply for the ORLP grant.
26 weeks	Schedule a kick-off call with your application team to assign responsibilities and plan your application timeline. Develop a 3–4 sentence project description and draft a partner letter of support. Reach out to partners and your members of Congress to request letters of support with a specific deadline.
25–22 weeks	Draft your project narrative and required attachments. Develop your grant budget using the template on grants.gov and seek internal review.

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A. Development Project Example Timeline (cont'd)

TIME TO APPLICATION SUBMISSION	ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
21 weeks	Complete first draft of project narrative. Draft all required attachments.
20 weeks	Request feedback and edits on application elements from colleagues and partners (as appropriate). Partners and members of Congress return letters of support to the Subrecipient to include in proposal package.
19 weeks	Incorporate feedback and edits into project narrative and required attachments; complete final drafts.
APPLICANT DEADLINE	All federal forms, budget, project narrative, and attachments are finalized and submitted to your LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government (Applicant) by their required deadline. **Deadlines and requirements vary. Please contact the Applicant for more information.**
Post-Applicant Deadline	Applicant reviews and selects Subrecipient applications to move forward to NPS.
18–5 weeks	Applicant provides feedback to selected Subrecipients to edit and strengthen their proposals and ensure the project meets eligibility requirements. Subrecipients return updated materials to the Applicant.
0–4 weeks	Applicant finalizes application materials and submits application(s) to NPS.
NPS DEADLINE	November 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM ET

B. Acquisition Project Example Timeline

TIME TO APPLICATION SUBMISSION	ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
Prior to Starting an Application (up to 2+ years)	Project selection process. Identify priority project(s) for ORLP funding; assess Applicant/Subrecipient and project eligibility.
	Ensure there is a willing seller and willing buyer.
	Enter into negotiations with the willing seller to get the project under contract.
	Community engagement. Co-create and implement a robust engagement strategy with the community to be impacted by this project (e.g., conduct public meetings, surveys, and consult the SCORP to gauge public priorities).
	Conduct pre-acquisition due diligence. Conduct a site survey, create a site map, and confirm the boundary of the site.
	Prepare legal descriptions and secure title evidence.
	Procure professional services to conduct an appraisal to determine the fair market value (FMV) of the property.
	Review NOFO and any updated eligibility requirements; determine project alignment and eligibility with the NOFO.

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B. Acquisition Project Example Timeline (cont'd)

TIME TO APPLICATION SUBMISSION	ACTIVITIES FOR DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS
Prior to Starting an Application (up to 2+ years) <i>continued</i>	Work with partners from the public (local, county, state, Tribal) and private (nonprofit, businesses, foundations, individuals) sectors to identify and secure sources of matching funding to meet the 1:1 match requirement. Submit grant proposals, incorporate the project into your local government's annual budget, and/or work with partners to support fundraising goals. ** If you are a CITY, TOWN, COUNTY, PARK DISTRICT, SCHOOL DISTRICT, or HOUSING AUTHORITY you MUST contact your LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government (Applicant) to learn more about their application process. You will submit your application to the Applicant, not NPS. APPLICATION DEADLINES AND REQUIREMENTS VARY. **
28 weeks	Begin working on ORLP application ahead of the Applicant ORLP application deadline.
27 weeks	If your project is eligible, determine who the Subrecipient will be. If necessary, seek approval from your organization's leadership to apply for the ORLP grant.
26 weeks	Schedule a kick-off call with your application team to assign responsibilities and plan your application timeline. Develop a 3–4 sentence project description and draft a partner letter of support. Reach out to partners and your members of Congress to request letters of support with a specific deadline.
25–22 weeks	Draft your project narrative and required attachments. Develop your grant budget using the template on grants.gov and seek internal review.
21 weeks	Complete first draft of project narrative. Draft all required attachments.
20 weeks	Request feedback and edits on application elements from colleagues and partners (as appropriate). Partners and members of Congress return letters of support to the Subrecipient to include in proposal package.
19 weeks	Incorporate feedback and edits into project narrative and required attachments; complete final drafts .
APPLICANT DEADLINE	All federal forms, budget, project narrative, and attachments are finalized and submitted to your LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government (Applicant) by their required deadline. **Application deadlines and requirements vary. Please contact the Applicant for more information.**
Post-Applicant Deadline	Applicant reviews and selects Subrecipient applications to move forward to NPS.
18–5 weeks	Applicant provides feedback to selected Subrecipients to edit and strengthen their proposals and ensure the project meets eligibility requirements. Subrecipients return updated materials to the Applicant.
0–4 weeks	Applicant finalizes application materials and submits application(s) to NPS.
NPS DEADLINE	November 1, 2026 at 11:59 PM ET

C. Post-Selection To Full Award Example Timeline

TIME FROM APPLICATION SUBMISSION	ACTIVITIES
0–24 weeks	NPS will review all received ORLP grant applications for eligibility. All applications that are deemed eligible will move on to Merit Review. The Selection Official selects the ORLP applications for award.
24–39 weeks	NPS notifies the Applicant and Subrecipient that their projects have, or have not been, selected to receive an ORLP award. Subrecipients work with the Applicant to complete the forms, documentation, National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) and National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) reviews, etc. required after selection to complete their “full application package” for the review and approval of the NPS. The Applicant will finalize and submit these forms, documentation, and completed site reviews to NPS as the “full application package” for the review and approval of the NPS.
40–51 weeks	The NPS will review all submitted “full application packages” for approval. If there are discrepancies or more information required, the NPS will return to the Applicant and Subrecipient to revise the package.
52–60 weeks	Once the NPS award officers are satisfied that all eligibility and compliance thresholds have been met, and all required documentation has been submitted, the Applicant will receive an official award agreement. The Applicant will execute a subaward agreement with the Subrecipient.

5: ORLP Grant Writing Tips



Overall Best Practices

Read the guidelines carefully:

- Read the Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) guidelines and requirements carefully.
- Ensure you are following the formatting requirements listed in the NOFO such as page limits and font size (this is basic, but easy to overlook or forget).

If you are an eligible Subrecipient, be sure to meet with your LWCF Lead Agency or Tribal Government (Applicant) before you start preparing your ORLP application.

Review, edit, and get feedback:

- Build in at least one review into your application timeline.
- Make sure to include project partners in your review process, especially to make sure the application is easy to understand from an outside perspective.



Project Narrative

Stay focused and aligned:

- Connect your request directly to community needs, with evidence from your public engagement process.
- Make sure you can clearly articulate how your project aligns with the stated priorities and goals of the ORLP program.
- Match the language in your application to that of the NOFO and the NPS and Administration priorities referred to in the NOFO, including [Executive Order 14313](#) and [Secretarial Order 3442](#).

Be clear about your request:

- Define the project and capital need concisely.
- To make it easier for the review panel, respond to the questions and evaluation criteria in the order they are listed. Use formatting tools to make it clear to a reviewer where you are responding to the next question / criteria.
- Create a logic model to include in your project narrative, like what is listed in the NOFO on page 26.

Use data to support your case:

- Provide relevant data (local, regional, or national) that shows a real, documented need whenever available.
- Balance statistics with human stories. Both matter.

Project Narrative (cont'd)

Make sure you have a solid answer to the following questions:

- Sustainability: How will this project be funded and maintained in the long run? Who will be responsible?
- Qualifications of the project team: Who is responsible for the success of the project? How many years of experience, and what type of experience do they have?



Timeline

Include all project milestones in your timeline document, from start to finish.

- Include pre-application steps you've completed such as public engagement, post-selection milestones such as NEPA and NHPA review, and the post-award milestones such as contract bidding and construction / acquisition project steps.
- Make it clear what stage of the project you are currently in—what has been completed and what is yet to come.
- Incorporate grant requirements into your timeline document, such as reporting expectations and federal compliance reviews.



Budget

Make sure your budget matches your narrative.

- Make sure every line in your budget connects directly to your proposal.
- If you describe a program component or expense in your narrative, it should appear in your budget.

Use real numbers, not estimates.

- Use actual cost quotes from qualified landscape architects or appraisers when possible.
- Avoid rounding large numbers, precision builds credibility.

Include other sources of support.

- Include all sources of identified match funding, such as cash, in-kind volunteer time or materials, or the donation of land.

Review for consistency and accuracy.

- Ensure all math is correct and totals match between budget, narrative, and federal forms.
- Have someone else review your budget before submitting it.

6: Helpful Resources

HELPFUL DATA SOURCES

1. [PLACES: Local Data for Better Health](#) (CDC, Interactive Map)
2. [Coastal Flood Exposure Mapper](#) (NOAA, Interactive Map)
3. [Food Access Research Atlas](#) (USDA, Interactive Map)
4. [ParkServe®](#) Data (TPL, Interactive Map)
5. [ParkScore®](#) Index (TPL, Dataset)

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

1. [Building Common Ground: A Toolkit for Community Engagement in Parks and Public Spaces](#) (TPL, 2026)
2. [Grounds for Change: A Policy Playbook for Social Connection and Civic Life](#) (TPL, 2026)
3. [The Common Ground Framework: Building community power through park and green space engagement](#) (TPL, 2023)
4. [Creating Parks and Public Spaces for People of All Ages](#) (AARP, 2018)

PUBLIC HEALTH

1. [Parks: The Great Unifiers](#) (TPL, 2025)
2. [The Power of Parks to Promote Public Health](#) (TPL, 2023)
3. [Parks, Trails, and Health Workbook](#) (NPS, 2020)
4. [Community Schoolyards Boost Physical Activity and Access to Nature](#) (TPL, 2026)

ECONOMIC BENEFITS

1. [The Undeniable ROI of Community Parks and Greenspaces](#) (TPL, 2026)
2. [The Economic Impact of Local Parks](#) (NRPA, 2023)
3. [City Parks Infographics: Making the Case for Park Investments](#) (CPA, 2022)



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ENVIRONMENT

1. [The Heat Is On](#) (TPL, 2022)
2. [Nature-Based Solutions for Managing Stormwater in Parks](#) (CPA, 2024)

OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE

1. [The State of Park System Operations and Maintenance: Exploring Opportunities and Challenges to Create Better Parks](#) (TPL, 2025)
2. [Operation and Maintenance Considerations for Green Infrastructure](#) (EPA, 2017)

PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

1. [Partnership Building Resources](#) (NRPA, 2021)
2. [Park Advocate Handbook](#) (NRPA, 2009)

ACCESSIBILITY

1. [Universal Design: Playgrounds](#) (ASLA)
2. [Accessibility & Universal Design Standards](#) (NPS)

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

1. [NRPA Youth Workforce Development Framework](#) (NRPA, 2026)
2. [Workforce Development: A Resource Guide for Parks and Recreation](#) (NRPA, 2021)

Examples of state, regional, and local plans to reference in your application (in addition to the SCORP)

- City Parks and Recreation Master Plan
- County Health Improvement Plan
- City Comprehensive Plan
- County Park Master Plan
- State Environmental Resilience Strategy
- Regional Coastal Resilience Plan



Trust for Public Land is a national nonprofit that works to connect everyone to the benefits and joys of the outdoors.

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