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Project Funding Assistance Program

The Collin County Parks Foundation Advisory Board administers the Project Funding Assistance Program and grant funds are awarded according to the priorities set forth in the [Collin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan \(Strategic Plan\)](#), being:

1-Land Acquisition for Parks and Open Space

2-Regional Trail Connector or Trail Project

3-Facilities (Capital) Improvements for Parks and Open Space.

The Program has been in place since 1999 when Collin County citizens approved a \$5.75 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space. In 2001, those funds were used to create the Strategic Plan and assisted with the advancement of 33 projects for 25 different entities over a 3-year period.

In 2003, the citizens approved an \$11 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space that allowed an already successful program to expand. These funds supported the development of 45 projects for 29 different entities over a 5-year period.

In 2007, the citizens approved a \$17 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space of which these funds assisted with 95 projects for 28 different entities over a 7-year period.

In 2012, the Collin County Commissioners Court adopted the county's first [Regional Trail Master Plan](#) (RTMP). The RTMP is intended to provide coordination and connectivity of trails between cities and towns for the development of a countywide system of trails. Many of Collin County's cities and towns have since adopted their own Trail Plans and some can be viewed below.

City of Allen	City of Garland	City of Princeton
City of Anna	City of Lavon	Town of Prosper
City of Carrollton	City of Lucas	City of Richardson
City of Celina	City of McKinney	City of Sachse
Town of Fairview	City of Melissa	City of Van Alstyne
City of Farmersville	City of Parker	City of Wylie
City of Frisco	City of Plano	

In 2018, Collin County Citizens approved a \$10 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space of which these funds assisted with 44 projects for 22 different entities over a 5-year period. You can view a list of 2019-2023 funded projects [here](#). You can also select a completed project below to see photos.

City of Allen Land Acquisition of Molsen Farm	City of Celina Land Acquisition of Bonfire Properties	City of Josephine City Park
City Of Josephine Splash Pad	City of Melissa Throckmorton Road Trail Connection	Myers Park Fence
Town of New Hope Pat Fowler Park	City of Plano Legacy Trail (Means Dr.-Penelope Ln)	City of Plano Preston Ridge Trail Connector
City of Princeton Crossroads Park Phase 1B	Town of Prosper Whitley Place Powerline Easement Trail	City of Richardson Breckinridge Park Trail Connections
City of Wylie Twin Lakes Park Trail		

In 2023, Collin County Citizens approved a \$20 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space. Over a 5-year (2024-2028) period, Collin County will make these funds accessible to eligible applicants within the county through an application process.

The Project Funding Assistance Program is a reimbursement program. All applications must show dollar for dollar match in funds comprised of either direct cash contribution, match based on value of land to be improved, donated labor, material or in-kind services for the project to be considered. *(Under special circumstances, at the recommendation of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board, and approval by the Commissioners Court, a direct payment may be made in lieu of reimbursement.)*

Eligible applicants must be a 501(C) (3) tax exempt organization, nonpolitical group, or any unit of local government including municipalities and school districts. Faith based organizations are eligible to apply as long as the improvement is open to the public and only used as a park and/or open space.

Proposed project goals must be similar to and support or advance the mission published in the Strategic Plan. The [executive summary](#) of that plan is available to help guide applicants. If needed, the entire Strategic Plan document can be provided upon request by emailing openspace@collincountytx.gov.

Timeline for 2024 Funding Program

Monday, April 1, 2024: Seek Commissioners Court approval of timeline

Week of April 8, 2024: Dissemination of a Press Release

Week of April 8, 2024: Electronic Distribution of Application Packet

Monday, July 8, 2024: Application Submittal Deadline by 4 p.m. and must be emailed to openspace@collincountytx.gov

August-September 2024: Review by Parks Foundation Advisory Board

October 2024: Submit Funding Recommendation to Commissioners Court

October-December 2024: Entities enter into Interlocal or Funding Agreements with Collin County

Submitting Application

2024 Applications, and all supporting documents, should be submitted by email to openspace@collincountytx.gov no later than 4 p.m. on July 8, 2024.

Applications received after the submittal deadline, established by Commissioners Court, will not be considered by the Parks Foundation Advisory Board.

Below is a list of required items to be submitted with the Project Funding Assistance Program Application. Many of the requirements listed have examples available to use as a guide.

1. **Application:** The application is a three page fillable document.
 - **Applicant and Project Information:** Please ensure that the person listed as the Authorized Project Representative is the individual that will be in contact with the County Staff and the Board for the duration of the application review through project completion, if awarded.
 - **Project Costs and Elements:** Include backup indicating how the project costs and match were determined. Provide proposals, contracts, appraisals for land acquisitions, etc. An Excel Spreadsheet can be substituted for this form.
 - **Authorized Signature:** Please ensure that the individual signing on page 3 has contract signing authority for your entity.

The Authorized Project Representative and the Authorized Signatory do not have to be the same person, and most cases will not be.

2. **Resolution:** A signed copy of an approved resolution by the governing body for the entity presenting the application must be submitted.
3. **Project Narrative:** The narrative should include all of the following points and be clear and concise.
 - **Project Description:** Describe how your project addresses recommendations made in the Strategic Plan. Describe the elements for which assistance is requested. If land is to be acquired, explain how it will be acquired (by purchase, donation, condemnation, dedication by plat, or any combination of methods) and include the acreage of the land. If funding for capital improvements is requested, specify what facilities are to be built, renovated, demolished or removed. Describe if you intend to construct the improvements by contract, through force account, in-kind services, with assistance of other governmental entities, through volunteer efforts or any combination of these methods. Describe any plans to make this an on-going program.
 - **Objectives and Need for Project:** Briefly describe the recreational needs that are trying to be met and why they are needed. Give a brief history of the project and describe who will benefit. Explain how the project relates to current and future needs within the project service area. Please acknowledge that upon completion of the project, the park or proposed improvements will be accessible to all Collin County residents and meet ADA compliance. Address how the project will impact the conservation of natural resources, i.e., natural areas, wetlands, open space and view sheds, areas vulnerable to development, greenbelts and linkages, and environmental impact. Be sure to address any unique or innovative features, special land uses, planning, or community involvement.
 - **Funding Mechanisms:** Explain the method(s) for financing the project, include all matching funds (in-kind, donations, grants, city bonds) and relationships. Describe any relationship between the proposed project and the other work planned, anticipated or underway or previous governmental grants or assistance related to the proposed project. Describe any non-traditional funding methods. It is preferred that dollar for dollar matching funds be available at the time application is made. If not, there must be reasonable expectation of matching funds within six months from the time Commissioners Court approves funding for the project. *It is important to indicate if the project within this application will move forward regardless if the Board awards funds towards it or not.*
 - **Project Schedule:** Provide a detailed project action plan for completion of the proposed project. For planning purposes, the project should commence within six months of the executed ILA or Funding Agreement. *If funded, an updated progress report will be required to be submitted by the end of each quarter. (March, June, Sept, Dec.)*
 - **Implementation and Maintenance:** Describe who will oversee the project and who will be responsible for maintaining the completed project area, include level of expertise and how the project will be operated and maintained.
4. **Location Maps, Site Photos, Project Sketches, etc.:** Applicant must show accurate location of proposed project by including either the address or the Property ID information from Collin County Central Appraisal District. Please provide detailed visuals pertinent to the project including zoomed out aerials to show where the parcel(s) are located and

zoomed in to the specific parcel(s) with north arrow included. Indicate clear connections of how it will tie into the RTMP and your own Trail Plan if one has been adopted. If proposed project is not on the RTMP, please indicate this. Make it easy for anyone looking at the information to understand exactly what it is you are proposing to do and where.

5. **Letters of Commitment:** Provide letters of commitment for all services, cash, labor, equipment, and materials that will be used as a match for the project. If this is a land acquisition, a Letter of Commitment or a Contract must be in place between the applicant and the landowner at the time the application is submitted. A copy of such agreement is required to be included in your application packet.
6. **Evidence of Non-Profit Status:** Applicants, other than public agencies, must provide evidence of their non-profit status.

Approval Process

The Parks Foundation Advisory Board will review applications that are submitted prior to the approved deadline. The decision to recommend or not recommend an application for funding will be determined by how well the project meets the application criteria in the opinions of the members of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board and the amount of funds available to award.

If a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board accepts the proposal as complete, finds that it satisfies the review criteria and determines that adequate funds are available, they will submit the proposals along with their recommendations to Commissioners Court for consideration. The final decision to approve or reject the recommendation will be at the discretion of Commissioners Court. If Commissioners Court approves the recommendation, funds will be awarded. Prior to commencement of the Project, an Interlocal or Funding Agreement must be executed between all involved parties.

Interlocal Agreement (ILA) or Funding Agreement

Upon the Commissioners Court's approval of the Board's recommendations of funding awards, Collin County will initiate an Interlocal or Funding Agreement with each awarded entity. This agreement will need to be approved and signed by the entity and then returned to Collin County for final execution by Commissioners Court. Once fully executed, a copy will be returned to the respective entities and project funding can begin at that time.

Payment of Funds

Funds will be made available as reimbursement for approved project expenses. Expenses incurred prior to full execution of the Interlocal or Funding Agreement are not eligible for reimbursement.

Reimbursement requests can be submitted any time after the ILA or Funding Agreement has been executed and funds have been spent. The project does not need to be complete to request reimbursement and multiple reimbursements can be made until completion of project.

To submit for reimbursement, please email the following items to openspace@collincountytx.gov

- Invoice from entity to Collin County with indication of what money was spent on, how much was spent, and how much of that is being requested as reimbursement.
- Itemized list of expenditures.
- Proof of payment from entity to Vendor.

Examples of reimbursement requests can be found [here](#).

Right to Reallocate Funds

It is the responsibility of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board to actively monitor the progress of approved projects. If the Parks Foundation Advisory Board determines that an approved project is not likely to come to fruition within a responsible length of time or the scope of project has changed considerably, the project applicant may be given an opportunity to submit a revised proposal for consideration. Based on the merits of the revised proposal, the Parks Foundation Advisory Board may vote to request the Commissioners Court reallocate the funds for use of the revised project. If Commissioners Court approves the reallocation of funds, a new Interlocal or Funding Agreement must be executed between all involved parties prior to commencement of the revised project.

For general questions, or to be added to the distribution list for future funding information, send an email to openspace@collincountytx.gov with name, entity, address, phone number and email address.