



**GRASSROOTS**  
Field Grant Program in partnership with LISC

**LISC**  
SPORTS & YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

## **NFL FOUNDATION GRASSROOTS PROGRAM**

*A Community Football Fields Program*

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

#### **Overview**

The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program is a partnership of the National Football League (NFL) Foundation, which provides funding for the program, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which provides technical assistance and manages the program. The goal of the program is to provide nonprofit, neighborhood-based organizations with financial and technical assistance to improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of local football fields. The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program provides grants of up to \$250,000 for capital improvement projects.

To be eligible for a grant under the program, projects must be sponsored by nonprofit community-based organizations registered as exempt from Federal Income Tax under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3) or middle or high schools. In addition, **all organizations applying for funds must be located specifically and exclusively within NFL Target Markets, listed in Attachment A and serve low to moderate-income areas within those markets.**

Strong preference will be given to those proposals that (1) seek to upgrade existing facilities that are in poor condition or otherwise underutilized; (2) demonstrate active use of the fields; (3) **attract matching funding that exceeds the minimum required match of 1:1**; (4) involve local partnerships with nonprofit community partners (e.g., USA Football, Parks and Recreation Departments, YMCA branches, etc.) to promote youth sports safety and community programming on the fields; (5) provide for continuing maintenance and field safety; and (6) involve youth football programs that are currently registered and compliant with USA Football's Football Development Model education program. As noted above, grants are given only for capital expenditures. Applicants may request a maximum of \$250,000 from the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program to be used for capital improvements. Please see "Availability of Funding" for stipulations involved with a \$250,000 maximum grant request.

**Proposals are due by March 30, 2026- No Exceptions**

**Please read the complete RFP before submitting a proposal.**

**EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO**

[Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org](mailto:Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org)

**PLEASE SEND THE PROPOSAL AS A PDF ATTACHMENT AND INCLUDE ALL  
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AS PER THE RFP.**

**DO NOT SEND THE PROPOSAL IN THE BODY OF THE EMAIL.**

**Please title the attachment with Organization and Project name.**

**The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program Objectives**

Athletic fields can serve as tremendous community assets by offering opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation that contribute to the local quality of life. The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program seeks to redress the shortage of clean, safe, and accessible football fields in low and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Nonprofit neighborhood-based organizations can play a leading role in the improvement of existing or creation of new athletic playing fields. With experience in both real estate development and community building, many of these organizations possess the capacity to address both the capital aspects of playing fields' development and the program elements (i.e., youth football leagues, sports tournaments, science fairs, summer festivals, community celebrations, and after-school events). Equally important to this experience, neighborhood-based organizations have connections to their community that legitimize their operations and draw resident support for their work. If local residents have a sense of ownership and see themselves as stakeholders in the creation and maintenance of playing fields, these community assets are more likely to be protected and preserved for long-term use. The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program is intended not only to respond to the immediate shortage of playing fields, but also to build an infrastructure through partnerships and resident involvement that will sustain these open spaces for community use.

To incorporate and improve health and safety on community football fields, the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program collaborates with USA Football, the governing body of American football in the United States, the sole U.S. member of the International Federation of American Football, and a recognized sports organization of the U.S. Olympic & Paralympic Committee. Its nonprofit mission includes designing and delivering premier educational, development, and competitive programs for American football. USA Football partners with leaders in medicine, child advocacy, and athletics to support positive football experiences for youth, high school, and other amateur players. USA Football's mission is to grow, unify and advance America's favorite sport.

Organizations gain significant benefits by partnering with USA Football, enrolling in its Football Development Model (FDM) education program being among them. Supported by experts in long-term athlete development, medicine, and football, the FDM is the sport's first long-term athlete development model. The FDM teaches sport through skill-based progression that is developmentally appropriate physically, mentally, and socially for young players. The model is designed to build better athletes and provide youth programs with training and tools to ensure a high-quality and fun experience while keeping focus on the health and well-being of all athletes.

**NFL Foundation Grassroots applicants are strongly encouraged** to contact USA Football's Mike Cuzzone, Director of Consulting Sales. You may contact him at [mcuzzone@usafootball.com](mailto:mcuzzone@usafootball.com) to establish a relationship, gain information about USA Football and learn which of its programs may best suit your needs. **Please note: Mike Cuzzone is not the contact for NFL Foundation Grassroots Field Grant applications,** please email [Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org](mailto:Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org) for application questions.

### **Availability of Funding**

There are two levels of funding available: 1) general field support (e.g., irrigation, bleachers, lights, etc.); and 2) field surface grants.

**General Field Support:** applicants may submit requests of up to \$50,000 for capital projects not associated with the actual field surface. This support includes the installation/refurbishment of bleachers, concession stands, lights, irrigation systems, etc.

**Field Surface Grants:** Matching grants of up to \$250,000 are available to help finance the resurfacing of a community, middle school, or high school football field. Matching grants of up to \$250,000 will be available to applicants seeking to install new synthetic sports turf surfaces. The ability of these new surfaces to withstand constant use and require little ongoing maintenance costs makes this an attractive option for communities, schools, and youth groups to consider.

A smaller number of matching grants of up to \$100,000 will be available to help finance the resurfacing of a community, middle school or high school football field utilizing natural grass/ sod surfaces. If applicants choose to utilize natural grass/sod surfaces as opposed to the synthetic sports surfaces, a minimum five-year maintenance plan and corresponding financial budget must be provided to demonstrate that the applying organization will maintain the field despite projected wear and tear and potential overuse by youth sports participants. Funds from the Program may not be used to maintain field surfaces, as all grant funds must be used for capital expenditures.

### **Organizational Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, organizations applying for grant funds must meet **all** the criteria listed below:

- Be a community-based organization, middle school or high school serving a neighborhood consisting primarily of low and moderate-income families and individuals.  
**Please note:**
  - **Schools must demonstrate the ability of the community to also utilize the field.**
  - **Universities and college campuses are not eligible to apply for NFL Foundation Grassroots grants and will not be considered for funding.**
- **Have at least one-full time staff** (all-volunteer organizations will not be considered)
- **Be in existence for at least three years.**
- **Have a proven track record in real estate development and/or parks programming.**
- **Have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status/school status; and**
- **Located in an NFL Target Market** (Please see the list of eligible Target Markets in Attachment A).

Additionally, the facility should recommend that all youth organizations require all youth football coaches to earn USA Football Coach Certification for tackle or flag.

If an NFL Foundation Grassroots field grant is awarded – for the benefit of its student-athletes and

coaches – the youth and high school football organization scheduled to utilize that field should enroll with USA Football. Learn more at: [usafootball.com/programs/enrollment](http://usafootball.com/programs/enrollment).

### **Selection Criteria**

Organizations and their projects will be selected for funding based upon the following criteria:

1. **Feasibility of the proposed project.** The project budget must be based upon realistic costs, preferably written contractor's estimates.
2. **Project readiness.** Sources of funding for the entire budget should be identified. Plans for field renovation should consider the schedule of recreation activities over the course of the year. A project timeline should be specified in the proposal.
3. **Impact upon neighborhood and support from the community.** Only proposals that locate projects in low and moderate-income communities will be considered. The proposal should clearly state how the field improvements would benefit the community. It also must clearly detail how many youths and adults make use of the field for football and for other activities. Moreover, the proposal must also include a projected increase in the number of people that will use the facility because of the improvements of the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program improvements. Support letters from other neighborhood and partner organizations and joint use agreements (where applicable) must be included as well as contact information for the youth football organizations and high school football programs scheduled to use the field.
4. **Match funding.** The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program requires a minimum local match of one dollar for every NFL Foundation Grassroots Program dollar (1:1). For example, if the proposal requests \$250,000 from the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, it must demonstrate sources and commitments for at least \$250,000 in local funds, however, should demonstrate total funding sources to cover the costs of the entire project. Match funding at a higher ratio will strengthen the proposal. *\*Note: All funding levels require, minimally, a 1:1 match.*
5. **Security of future field maintenance and safety.** Proposals must have written commitments of maintenance funding for a minimum of five years and a detailed five-year maintenance plan to demonstrate that the applicant will maintain the field despite projected wear and tear and potential overuse by youth sports participants. As a reminder, NFL Foundation Grassroots funds may not be used to maintain field surfaces, as all grant funds must be used for capital expenditures.
6. **Capacity of organization and its partners to carry out project.** The applicant organization must demonstrate, through its current management team and previous experience, the ability to manage a project of this size and nature.

### **Other Terms & Definitions:**

Capital improvements refer to the physical development of the field and its surrounding amenities.

Such projects may include, but are not limited to, new or renovated irrigation systems, topsoil, sod or seeding, lights, bleachers, public address systems, fences, restroom or locker room facilities, goalposts, and scoreboards.

Public agencies (other than public schools) may not apply for grants from the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program. However, community-based non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) designation, middle schools and high schools meeting all other organizational criteria, and private schools with 501(c) (3) designation may apply to make improvements on fields owned and managed by public sector entities (e.g., City, Parks, and Recreation Departments, etc.). In those cases, the applicant must show evidence that (1) the public entity supports the proposal; (2) the public entity authorizes the applicant to carry out the proposed capital improvements (this authorization must take into account relevant labor/union regulations and liability issues); (3) the public entity demonstrates its financial commitment to field maintenance; and (4) the field is open to and used by the community for organized athletics and other events through joint use agreements.

### **Application Procedures**

To apply for funding under the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, please email a scanned copy of the following:

**Cover Sheet:** A one-page cover sheet including the following information:

- Name, address, e-mail address, telephone, and facsimile numbers of the organization.
- Executive director and contact person (if different) for this application.
- Brief description of proposed project
- Amount of funding requested.

***Please note that use of the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, NFL, NFL Foundation or LISC logos are expressly prohibited.***

**Narrative:** In no more than five (5) typed pages, address the following:

- *Description of the organization:* mission, history, and accomplishments, with a focus on capacity to develop the proposed project.
- *Description of the neighborhood:* boundaries of the catchment area, income levels and ethnicity of the population served, condition of housing stock and main commercial areas, existence and conditions of local parks and open spaces (including community facilities).
- *Description of the project:* location, current condition, plans for site use, progress on this plan (including status on site control, zoning, environmental review, and physical improvements), project budget and match funding, timeline for completion of the project, community support for project, and agreements with partner organizations.
- *Impact of the project and future sustainability:* planned or anticipated programming in field space including youth and high school football programs, plans for continued maintenance and

safety of field (including long-term maintenance budget and timeline), and how project fits into community plans for neighborhood.

- Please indicate how you learned about the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program.

**Organizational Attachments:** Please attach the following items:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Two most recent audited financial statements (preferably annual statements for 2022 and 2023)
- Most recent IRS 990 form (preferably 2023)
- Current List of organizations' Board of Directors (contact information)
- Current list of youth football league organizations utilizing (or will use) the field including league contact information.
- Current list of other youth sports organizations/activities utilizing the fields.
- IRS W-9 Form

**Project Attachments:** Please include a copy of the following items:

- Project budget for the renovations/construction of football field
- Financing commitment letters from match funding sources
- Financial commitment letters and detailed maintenance plan from organizations responsible for field maintenance.
- Landscaping or park design plans
- Environmental reports (if necessary)
- Agreements and budgets for field programming (i.e., youth football)
- Letters of support and joint use agreements from field users and other community organizations
- Contact information for the youth football organizations and high school football programs scheduled to utilize the field.

Proposals should be emailed to [Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org](mailto:Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org)

**Proposals are due by March 30, 2026-No exceptions.**

If you have questions regarding this RFP, please contact LISC Sports & Youth Development by e-mail at [Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org](mailto:Sportsandyouthdevelopment@lisc.org)

<b>NFL Foundation Grassroots Program – Attachment A</b>	
<b>Note: Only organizations located in low-moderate income areas within the following Target Markets are eligible to apply.</b>	
<b>NFL Team</b>	<b>Target Market</b>
Arizona Cardinals	Phoenix, Peoria, Glendale, Tempe, Flagstaff, Sacaton, Tucson, AZ

Atlanta Falcons	Georgia Statewide, Montana Statewide
Baltimore Ravens	Baltimore, MD
Buffalo Bills	Buffalo, Lackawanna, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Tonawanda, Cheektowaga, Lockport, Alden, Akron, Gowanda, NY
Carolina Panthers	North and South Carolina
Chicago Bears	Chicago, Brookfield, Chicago Heights, Decatur, Rock Island, Riverdale, Blue Island, North Chicago, Waukegan, Aurora, Peoria, IL, and Hammond, IN
Cincinnati Bengals	Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Dayton, Montgomery County, Clermont, Butler, Warren, OH; Louisville and Northern Kentucky (Boone County, Campbell County, Kenton County,) <b>Kentucky Counties</b> (Gallatin, Carroll, Grant, Owen, Pendleton, Bracken, Mason, Robertson, Lewis, Nicholas, Fleming, Bourbon, Fayette, Franklin, Scott, Woodford, Henry, Trimble, Oldham, Jefferson, Shelby Gallatin, Carroll, Grant, Owen, Pendleton, Bracken, Mason, Robertson, Lewis, Nicholas, Fleming, Bourbon, Fayette, Franklin, Scott, Woodford, Henry, Trimble, Oldham, Jefferson, Shelby). <b>Ohio Counties</b> (Preble, Clinton, Greene, Clark, Miami, Drake, Madison, Franklin, Fayette, Pickaway, Ross, Highland, Brown, Pike, Scioto, Jackson, Lawrence, Gallia, Meigs, Vinton, Athens, Hocking, Fairfield, Perry, Morgan, Washington, Muskingum, Logan, Champaign, Union, Delaware, Licking, <b>IN Counties</b> (Switzerland, Dearborn, Ripley, Jefferson, Franklin, Union, Fayette, Scott, Clark, OH
Cleveland Browns	Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Cuyahoga, Lake, Ashtabula, Garfield Heights, Parma Heights, Columbus, Trumbull, Mahoning, Columbiana, Toledo, Stark, Wayne, Medina, Summit, Portage, Geauga, Youngstown, Lorain County, OH
Dallas Cowboys	Dallas, Arlington, Fort Worth, Irving, Frisco, TX
Denver Broncos	Colorado Statewide
Detroit Lions	Michigan Statewide
Houston Texans	Houston, TX
Green Bay Packers	Green Bay, Eau Claire, Lacrosse, Madison, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, New Richmond, Racine, Sheboygan, Menasha, Appleton, Little Chute, WI
Indianapolis Colts	Indianapolis, Muncie, IN
Jacksonville Jaguars	Jacksonville; Nassau, Clay, St. John's, Baker, Putnam, and Flagler Counties, FL; Daytona, Panama City Beach, Tallahassee, Fort Walton Beach Areas and Gainesville, FL; Camden and Glynn Counties, GA;
Kansas City Chiefs	Kansas City, Independence, MO; Kansas City, KS
Los Angeles Chargers	Los Angeles County, CA; Orange County, CA; San Diego, CA
Los Angeles Rams	Los Angeles County, CA, Ventura County, Inland Empire, San Fernando Valley, CA
Miami Dolphins	Miami- Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Collier, Lee, Monroe, Martin, and Port St. Lucie Counties, FL
Minnesota Vikings	Minnesota Statewide; Fargo, ND; Sioux Falls, SD; Des Moines, Cedar Falls and Cedar Rapids, IA
New England Patriots	Boston, Brockton, Lynn, Lawrence, Springfield, Foxborough, Attleboro, MA Nashua, Manchester, NH; Providence, Central Falls, Cranston, RI

New Orleans Saints	Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Baton Rouge, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Claiborne, Grant, Iberia, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafourche, La Salle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Orleans, Ouachita, Plaquemines, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. James, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, St. John, St. Charles, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermillion, Vernon, and Washington Parishes. New Orleans, LA; Southern Mississippi
New York Giants	Englewood, Hackensack, Jersey City, Newark, Irvington, Paterson, Hoboken, NJ; Mount Vernon, Yonkers, Peekskill, Poughkeepsie- Dutchess County, Newburgh NY - Orange County and Albany NY. Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, CT
New York Jets	Morris County (Dover, Morris Township), Orange and East Orange, NJ; Hempstead, Wyandanch, NYC, Peekskill, Roosevelt, Uniondale, NY
Las Vegas Raiders	Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, NV
Philadelphia Eagles	Philadelphia, PA; Chester, PA; Camden, Southern NJ; Wilmington, DE
Pittsburgh Steelers	Pittsburgh and Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Blair County, Butler, Cambria County, Clinton County, Fayette, Green, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset, Washington, & Westmoreland counties, Lawrence, Mercer, Crawford, and Erie Counties, PA; Fairmont, Weirton, WV
San Francisco 49ers	San Francisco, South San Francisco, East Palo Alto, Pajaro, Salinas, San José, Watsonville, Santa Clara, Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Richmond, Union City, Walnut Creek, CA
Seattle Seahawks	Washington State
Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Hernando, Hillsborough, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Seminole, Manatee, Polk, Pasco, and Sarasota Counties, FL
Tennessee Titans	Chattanooga, Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis and Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, Wilson, Robertson, Cannon, Hickman, Macon, Maury, Smith, Humphreys, Trousdale Counties, TN; Huntsville, Birmingham, AL
Washington Football Team	Washington, DC; Prince George's County, MD Silver Spring, MD; Richmond, Virginia Beach, Henrico County, VA. West Virginia Statewide