



POTTSTOWN
METROPOLITAN
REGIONAL
PLANNING
COMMITTEE



2023-2026 Pottstown Regional Park Improvement Mini-Grant Program Guidelines and Eligibility

The Pottstown Regional Park Improvement Mini-Grant Program is a reimbursement grant program funded in partnership by the [PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources \(DCNR\)](#) and the [Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation \(PAHWF\)](#) and administered by the [Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee \(PMRPC\)](#), with assistance from PAHWF.

WHO CAN APPLY

Per the Pottstown Metropolitan Region Intergovernmental Cooperative Implementation Agreement for Regional Planning, the following municipalities are eligible to apply for funding under this grant program:

- Douglass Township (Montgomery County)
- East Coventry Township (Chester County)
- Lower Pottsgrove Township (Montgomery County)
- New Hanover Township (Montgomery County)
- North Coventry Township (Chester County)
- Borough of Pottstown (Montgomery County)
- Upper Pottsgrove Township (Montgomery County)
- West Pottsgrove Township (Montgomery County)

MINI-GRANT PROGRAM MISSION AND GOALS

The Pottstown Regional Park Improvement Mini-Grant Program is designed to fund park improvements to increase park usage, which will help improve the health and well-being of area residents. In addition to implementing a project or addressing a need identified in a municipal parks and recreation plan (if applicable), projects should advance goals and initiatives that are consistent with the goals and priorities of one or more of the Pottstown Regional Parks Mini-Grants partners, as outlined below.

Pennsylvania's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan: 2020-2024

DCNR's statewide outdoor recreation plan outlines several priorities that are relevant to the Pottstown Regional Park Improvement Mini-Grant Program, including health and wellness and recreation for all. To download the full plan, please visit:

<https://www.dcnr.pa.gov/Recreation/PAOutdoorRecPlan/Pages/default.aspx>.

Planning and Design Strategies for Healthy Living, Parks, and Recreation in the Pottstown Area

The study provides detail at the municipal level for amenities and improvements to enhance each park, preserved open space location, and school facility. This mini-grant program is designed to implement the study's recommendations and regional recreation objectives related to park improvements:

- Address common barriers to park visitation including access, safety, and quality
- Provide a well-rounded range of recreation opportunities through a breadth of facilities that meet the diverse needs of area residents.

To download the full report, please visit: <https://pottstownfoundation.org/resources/studies-reports/pottstown-area-parks-and-recreation-study/>. Preference will be given to applications for development projects that add park amenities consistent with the Penn State study recommendations.

Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Comprehensive Plan

The Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee completed a regional comprehensive plan update in 2015, which includes regional as well as municipal-specific parks and recreation goals and recommendations. To download the full plan, please visit:

<https://pottstownmetroregion.com/about/plans-and-studies/>.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The Pottstown Region Parks Mini-Grants program supports two major types of projects: Development and Planning. A project may include aspects of both subcategories; however, in the case of a school district property, a shared use agreement must be in place and proof of such must be submitted to the program administrator before the applicant may proceed with any grant-funded development.

Development Project examples may include:

- Installation of signage in order to enhance awareness and/or access to an existing park or preserved open space.
- Creation of a trail, sidewalk, pathway or other amenity to connect an existing park to an existing residential community, school district property, or commercial spaces to improve access. The Penn State Study identifies trail connections to maximize options for residents to walk and/or bike to area parks from their homes.
- Placement of playground equipment in an existing park or facility that previously lacked equipment for children's active play.
- Installation of recreational user amenities such as bicycle racks, restroom facilities, or drinking fountains at an existing park, preserved open space, or trailhead.
- Improvement of physical connections between existing municipal and school facilities such as walkways and trails between existing parks or between a park and a school.
- Planning and development of green schoolyard infrastructure on school district property. This may include habitat or vegetable gardens, natural stormwater runoff features, impervious surface removal, educational signage, murals that support education and the environment, rain gardens, shade tree areas, native meadows, natural play areas, trails, and playground equipment.

Planning Project examples may include:

- Completion of a master plan for improvements to an existing park. *The master planning process must incorporate a public engagement component.*
- Updates to existing park site plans to broaden the scope of amenities offered. *The park plan update process must incorporate a public engagement component.*
- Preparation of shared use agreements between municipalities and adjacent school district properties and/or community organizations to expand public access to existing recreation resources and amenities.

TERMS AND ELIGIBILITY

- The maximum grant amount is \$25,000.
- Although no municipal match is required, applications offering municipal match will be ranked more highly. Staff time, in-kind services, and non-DCNR grant funds may be quantified and included as part of the municipal match.
- Mini-grants may not be used to fulfill match requirements for other DCNR-funded grant projects.
- All projects must be completed within a 24-month contract term. Early completion is encouraged.
- A change to the project end date may be requested if the grant recipient will not expend all of the allocated dollars and/or complete the scope of work at the scheduled end of the grant term. Please submit an email request to the grant program administrator with a new project end date and a narrative describing the reason for the request. After review, and if approved, the grant program administrator will provide notification by email. Please use the 18-month progress report to anticipate any changes.
- Grantee will acknowledge the funding assistance provided through this program in all reports and printed materials produced using grant funds.
- DCNR Grantees are responsible for following the competitive bidding requirements that apply to their organizations. These vary based on whether the organization is a municipality or a non-profit. Grantees not familiar with the applicable bidding requirements are strongly advised to consult with their solicitor/attorney. Further information is available at [Competitive Bidding Procedures](#). All applicants must adhere to DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program requirements. Visit the [DCNR website](#) for more information.

Additional Requirements for Development Projects

- ADA Compliance: Development projects must comply with DCNR's Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) policy, available [here](#), which includes guidance for trails projects.
- Site Plans: Development projects may be required to submit a plan set stamped by a licensed engineer, or other appropriate professional, prior to commencing site work, depending on the extent of the proposed site work. Awardees will be notified as part of the contract process whether this requirement applies to their particular project.
- Site Visit: A final site visit is required for all development projects.
- Proof of Legal Agreement: When applying for a development project at a school district property, please submit the shared used agreement along with the application.
- Funding Acknowledgment Sign: Development projects will acknowledge mini-grant funding assistance on a permanent sign constructed on the project site in a location that is visible and accessible to the public. The following funding statement must be included on the sign: *"This project was made possible by the partnership of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee with funding support from the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, the Keystone Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation."* This information is also included as Item VI on the Grant Agreement. Example acknowledgment sign language and required logos are available [here](#). When multiple projects are funded at a site with mini-grant funding, or the project is of a linear basis, the mini-grant program administrator may waive the requirements for additional permanent signs on a case-by-case basis. Awardees will be notified as part of the contract process whether this requirement applies to their particular project.

Additional Requirements for Planning Projects

- **Funding Acknowledgement Statement:** Planning projects will acknowledge mini-grant funding assistance by including the following funding statement on any published documents: *"This project was made possible by the partnership of the Pottstown Metropolitan Regional Planning Committee with funding support from the Pottstown Area Health & Wellness Foundation. This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, the Keystone Fund, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation."*

APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications are required to be submitted through e-mail to: Timothy Konetchy, Montgomery County Community Planner, at Timothy.Konetchy@montgomerycountypa.gov

The following enclosures are required as part of the application package:

- Proof of tax exempt status
- Budget
- Quotes or bids for construction or planning work, if applicable. If quotes or bids cannot be provided at the time of the application due to time constraints, this should be noted within the application and the grant program administrator will follow-up with the applicant to receive this additional information.
- Site Map
- Signed PNDI Receipt
- Signed DCNR Certificate of Title Form

SELECTION CRITERIA

The grant applications will be reviewed by a committee of representatives from the funding and administering agencies, as well as members of the local community. A proposed project **must satisfy** the following criteria.

- Project is located inside the stated geographical boundaries.
- Project site is owned by the municipality.
- Project is consistent with Local, County, and/or State plans, such as open space, land use, greenway, rivers conservation and recreation plans.
- Project furthers the mission and goals of the PMRPC, PAHWF and DCNR.
- Project sponsor has the capacity to conduct and implement the project.
- Matching funds are secured for the project, if applicable.
- Project can commence in a timely manner and be successfully completed within 24 months. Shorter timeframes are preferred.
- Project incorporates green and sustainable practices. Examples include, but are not limited to, natural landscaping and stormwater best management practices.
- Applicant has described how the public has been or will be engaged in the planning, design, implementation, long-term maintenance, and/or stewardship of the project.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS & DOCUMENTATION

1. Funding agreements must be executed prior to project startup. Once the funding agreement has been signed, up to 90% of the grant award amount may be dispersed to the applicant. If an application includes both a planning and development aspect, the funding allocated to development may be withheld until the final plans, legal agreement, or planning document are reviewed and approved by the program administrator.

2. Grantee must submit two completed status reports to the grant program administrator. The first status report must be submitted no later than 12-months from the start date of the funding agreement and a second status report must be submitted no later than 18-months from the start date of the funding agreement. Any grant extension requests must be submitted in writing at the time of the 18-month progress report.
3. Once the project is complete, the grantee must submit the following information to complete the grant project closeout process. More detailed closeout instructions and document templates are provided on the [PMRPC website](#).
 - Final payment request form
 - Budget summary cost sheet
 - All invoices and corresponding cancelled checks equal to the total stated cost of the project. Proof of in-kind labor or services must be provided, if applicable.
 - Completed Project Success Story document including information about the location of the project, total funds invested, a list of deliverables and partners, and before and after photos, if applicable.
 - Final Products:
 - For planning projects, the final plan, study, or product must be provided
 - For development projects, the grantee must contact Craig Colistra at ccolistra@pottstownfoundation.org to arrange a date for a final site inspection
 - Once all closeout documentation has been received and approved, the remaining 10% of the grant award will be dispersed to the applicant.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Montgomery County's Comprehensive Plan (2015), "[Montco2040: A Shared Vision](#)"
- Chester County's Comprehensive Policy Plan (2018), "[Landscapes 3](#)"
- Federation of Northern Chester County Communities, "[Regional Parks, Recreation and Open Space Plan](#)"