



# Billings Parks and Recreation Matching Grant Program

## Purpose

The Billings Parks and Recreation Department administers a grant program to promote and incentivize private donations for small projects that enhance public parks and trails, and to provide recreation facilities and lands for general public use by the citizens of Billings, Montana. This grant funding was designated by Billings City Council for FY23 to make available public dollars to match up to a 1:1 ratio.

The minimum grant award amount is \$10,000 with a maximum grant amount awarded may be up to \$100,000 depending on the number of other projects considered and criteria listed in this document. It is highly recommended that organizations/individuals discuss the project with the Parks and Recreation department prior to submitting a project for approval. Matching funds may be in any of the following forms:

- Cash
- Capital equipment, materials, or other permanent components
- Professional labor (general volunteer labor is not eligible for matching funds)

Applicant must have all contributions secured at time of application with the ability to provide proof of funds and/or letters of intent for donation of equipment, materials, and professional labor. All written estimates for work and materials must be current. All projects will require recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Department, and approval from the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board (Park Board) and if necessary, approval from City Council.

## Application Cycles

Applications must be submitted to the Parks and Recreation Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on the first Monday of each quarter for review by the Parks and Recreation Department and the Park Board. The first applications will be reviewed on January 11th and quarterly thereafter. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered until the next scheduled Park Board meeting of the upcoming quarter. Applications will be accepted until all of the funding is allocated.

## Projects Eligible for Funding

1. Capital improvements to land and buildings including, but not limited to: excavation and grading athletic fields, construction of structures or buildings to facilitate recreation programs or host public use, trail construction or improvements, sports courts, horticulture materials, parking, sports lighting, and restrooms.
2. Capital construction costs for utilities – water, sewer, electric, telephone.
3. Freight or delivery costs of equipment
4. Land acquisition.

## Projects Not Eligible for Funding

1. Routine maintenance
2. Uniforms or other program supplies such as bats, balls, etc.
3. Land development as part of required parkland dedication or projects using funds generated through a neighborhood SID.
4. Membership fees
5. Awards, plaques, and monuments

6. Salaries (i.e. fees for coaches or referees)
7. Liability insurance

## Project Application Information:

List all source(s) and amount(s) of financial match to the city share. Describe any additional sources of funding or resources, particularly if they are from partners in the project, which will be used to complete the project.

The Parks and Recreation Department requires that this grant be matched at a minimum ratio of 1:1 by the donor. This grant will favor projects that involve partnerships among that support the leveraging of resources and the extent of that leverage to allow the project budget to exceed the 1:1 match.

For acquisition projects, provide the reason(s) for the acquisition, the number of acres to be acquired, and a description of the property. Explain whether the acquisition creates a new public park or recreation area or expands an existing site and any types of resources and features on the site that make it unique, as well as any constraints.

For development projects, provide a description of the physical improvements and/or facilities that will be developed with grant assistance. Explain whether the project involves new development, rehabilitation, and/or replacement of existing facilities. Include a site sketch depicting improvements (or examples of similar projects).

**For all types of projects, the project application should address:**

1. How the project supports initiatives and long term plans within the city.
2. How the proposal implements recreation opportunities as presented in the Comprehensive Master Plan or a specific Park Master Plan, or Bikeway and Trail Masterplan and how this proposal was selected. If applicable, how the project implements or supports priorities of other relevant planning documents. Projects must be part of an existing Park Masterplan or relevant city planning document.
3. The new types of recreation opportunities and capacities that will be created as a result of the acquisition and/or development.

## Project Location and Site Maps

An aerial map of the project location must be submitted showing the neighborhood/community indicating the general location of the project and any existing recreation resources adjacent to the project site.

## Review

Applications for project funding will be submitted for review to the Parks, Recreation and Cemetery Advisory Board after initial review and approval from the Parks and Recreation Department. The project must not require any zoning action and must demonstrate public access. The project should demonstrate a clear need for financial assistance (factors such as all other available financial resources and the organization's total budget will be considered). Applications recommended for approval by the Parks and Recreation Department will be forwarded to the Park board, and if necessary, City Council, for final project approval and fund allocation.

## Evaluation Criteria

1. The extent to which the project will improve recreational opportunities and address a neighborhood/community recreational deficiency

Higher priority will be given to projects that create opportunity in an area with no other such resources within a reasonable service area, or significantly rehabilitate or enhance an existing park/recreation opportunity in an area with no other such resources within a reasonable service area, or is otherwise severely underserved.

2. The extent to which the community participated in project development and the extent of support of government agencies and elected officials

Higher priority will be given to projects that have gone through a formal planning process or have significant support from citizens, neighborhood leaders, or community groups. Letters (or emails) of support from citizens, community organizations, and elected officials may be included as appropriate.

3. The extent to which the project will leverage financial or in-kind support from sources in the public, private, and/or non-profit sectors and addresses the match requirement of the grant

Higher priority will be given to projects involving multiple and diverse partnerships and that exceed the required 1:1 match, especially from non-public sources.

4. The viability and reasonableness of the project budget as it relates to the scope of work

Higher priority will be given to clear and detailed projects budgets that contain cost items that are reasonable and clearly related to the project's scope.

5. The strength of the project's alignment with the Billings Parks and Recreation Comprehensive Master Plan, Individual Park Master Plans, or other city planning documents

Higher priority will be given to projects that address a specific identified priority or goal as well as that of other city, community revitalization, and/or economic development plans.

6. The readiness of the project

Higher priority will be given to projects that exhibit a high degree of confidence that they can begin within one year and be completed in three. Lower priority will be given to projects with plans are still at the concept stage and/or the project seems to face implementation challenges, and where the timeline is scoped out only in broad terms.

## Conditions

1. Grant funding must allow any citizen of Billings to participate in any program or use any facility that results or benefits from this grant. Citizens may not be able to participate or use a facility at the time of their choice due to scheduling conflicts. However, blanket restrictions or extraordinary fees may not be charged to restrict public access.

2. Matching funds must be committed before the City will enter any agreement.

3. Projects may not use other local public dollars as part of the match unless appropriated by City Council.

4. Projects must have a minimal impact on maintenance operations of the Parks and Recreation Department.

5. The grantee shall not discriminate against any person by refusing to furnish such person services or privileges offered to or enjoyed by all citizens of Billings, nor shall the Grantee or its employees publicize the facilities provided hereunder in any manner that would directly or influentially reflect on the patronage of any person because of race, creed, color, sex, religion, or national origin.

6. A legal agreement shall be signed by the organization/ individuals and the City Administrator, stating among other provisions; (1) if a reasonable project timeline for completion is not adhered to (2) that if the primary purpose of the project is changed without proper consent or (3) the public is denied reasonable access, the City has the option to pursue other uses of the funds as outlined in the agreement.

7. All projects must take place on city parkland or city-owned land otherwise used for recreation purposes and will be managed/overseen by City Staff in accordance with all outlined agreements, city ordinances, state or federal law.