



DELAWARE STATE PARKS

YOUR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE STARTS HERE

Outdoor Recreation, Parks & Trails Program

Park Grant Guidance

Program Summary

The Outdoor Recreation, Parks and Trails (ORPT) Program, formerly known as the Delaware Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund (DTF) was established in 1986 as an investment of state monies to provide a stable source of funding for the acquisition of open space and the development of outdoor recreation projects. The ORPT Grant Program is administered by the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control, through its Division of Parks and Recreation, and Trust-earned income is used to fund the competitive Program. Annually, local governments and park districts are notified of available matching funds to assist with park planning, acquisition, and development.

Eligible Grant Applicants

County and municipal governments and park districts may request and receive ORPT grant assistance. Projects sponsored by municipalities and counties may receive up to fifty percent (50%) in DTF assistance of an approved project's total costs; park districts, municipalities that have not received ORPT funds in the past, and projects located in or serving Census Tracts identified as highest vulnerability by the CDC Social Vulnerability Index (SVI score range 0.75 – 1.00) are eligible to receive up to seventy-five percent (75%) in ORPT assistance of an approved project's total costs. The CDC Social Vulnerability Index can be found at <https://svi.cdc.gov/map.html>. The balance of funding of an approved project must be provided by the project Sponsor. The Sponsor may obtain its share through partnerships with other governmental agencies, non-profit organizations, and other non-traditional recreation providers. Partnerships with other agencies and organizations are encouraged however, only the municipalities and counties are eligible to apply for ORPT assistance.

Eligible Projects

ORPT grant assistance is available for the following types of projects:

- Fee simple acquisition of parkland, open space, or conservation areas
- Purchase of development rights for public parkland, open space, or conservation areas
- Replacement of outdated and unsafe outdoor facilities
- Outdoor recreation facility engineering and design
- Outdoor recreation facility construction for example:
 - Athletic fields and courts
 - Playground equipment
 - Swimming pools
 - Picnic tables and pavilions
- Park maps for information boards or kiosks
- Park infrastructure such as entrance roads, parking, restrooms, and way finding
- Municipal or countywide park/open space comprehensive plans
- Universal accessibility upgrades to outdoor recreation facilities
- Professional services for park master planning

Funds for indoor projects are not eligible. A Sponsor's expenses associated with administering and managing an approved ORPT grant is not an eligible source of project match nor may the project Sponsor submit administrative costs for reimbursement. Park operations and maintenance are not eligible for the ORPT Program.

Long Term Responsibilities

When an eligible grant application has received all approvals, the Division of Parks and Recreation will prepare a Grant Agreement outlining the project scope, funding, and responsibilities of both the State and the Sponsor. The Grant Agreement is a contract between the State and the Sponsor and is signed by each. When a Sponsor accepts ORPT Program assistance, the Sponsor agrees to dedicate the land acquired or improved with ORPT Program assistance to public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity and assume responsibility for continued operation, maintenance, and stewardship of the area.

Grant Match Sources

The following funding sources may be used to match ORPT Program assistance:

- City/ County cash
- Transportation Enhancement (TE)
- Federal grant funds (NOAA, NERR, EPA)
- Community Transportation Funds (CTF)
- Corporate or private donations
- Foundation grants
- Donated materials or labor
- Volunteer or in-kind labor
- Value of land (only if pre-approved by the Division of Parks and Recreation)

A Sponsor's expenses associated with administering and managing an approved ORPT grant is NOT eligible for reimbursement or a source of match.

Grant Pre-Applications

Pre-Applications can be submitted online requiring a username and password for security: <https://de.gov/ORPT> or mailed to:

Mike Tholstrup
Grant Coordinator
Park Resource Office
DNREC, Division of Parks and Recreation
89 Kings Highway
Dover, DE 19901

Grant Applications

After Pre-Applications are evaluated, a Sponsor of an eligible project will be invited to complete a full ORPT Grant Application. An application will be mailed to the Sponsor.

Questions or information, contact Mike at Michael.Tholstrup@delaware.gov or telephone at 302 739-9215.

