

**Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Recreation Grants Branch**

Community

Outdoor

Outreach

Program

Background Information for Grant

Revised March 2014



Table of Contents

	Page #
Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) Mission Statement.....	1
Recreation Grants Mission Statement.....	1
About This Grant Program	1
Purpose and Priorities.....	1
About the Texas Recreation & Parks Account Program	2
Eligible Applicants.....	2
Eligible Projects	3
Eligible Items	3
Ineligible Projects.....	3
Ineligible Items.....	4
Distribution of Funds	4
Religious Activities Policy.....	4
Alcohol and Drug Policy	4
Where to Submit Applications	5
When to Submit Applications	5
Requirements for Funded Application	5
Frequently Asked Questions	5
Summary of Guidelines.....	7
Contact Information.....	8
Recreation Grants Newsletter	8

Community Outdoor Outreach Program

TPWD Mission Statement

To manage and conserve the natural and cultural resources of Texas and to provide hunting, fishing, and outdoor recreation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

Recreation Grants Mission Statement

To assist communities in providing recreation and conservation opportunities for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations.

About This Grant Program

This program is authorized by the Texas State Legislature in the Texas Parks & Wildlife Department (TPWD) appropriation budget as a specialized component of the Texas Recreation and Parks Account Program (TRPA).

Purpose and Priorities

To build relationships with non-traditional constituencies who have been underrepresented in Texas Parks & Wildlife Department activities and programs.

All grant applications submitted to the department for Community Outdoor Outreach Programs (CO-OP) are evaluated for program eligibility and prioritized according to the Project Priority Scoring System. In general, recommended priorities for community outdoor outreach projects are:

- 1) to ensure applicant performance on active grants and compliance on previous grants;
- 2) to improve community outdoor outreach opportunities for inner-city, rural, low-income, minority, female, physically/mentally challenged, and youth-at-risk citizens;
- 3) to reward partnerships between local applicants and other organized groups;
- 4) to increase the number of participants served;
- 5) to maximize the use of funds for direct community outdoor outreach opportunities;
- 6) to reward commitment of applicant resources;
- 7) to increase use of TPWD programs and facilities; and
- 8) to reward promotion of outdoor & environmental educational activities.

About the TRPA Program

The Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) was established by an act of the 73rd State Legislature in 1993, through House Bill 706. TRPA replaced the Texas Local Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Fund which existed from 1979 to 1993. Funds are derived from a dedicated portion of the state sales tax collected on sporting goods.

TRPA programs include the Outdoor Recreation Grant, Indoor Recreation Grant, Small Community Park Grant, Regional Park Grant, and the Community Outdoor Outreach Program (CO-OP). TRPA provides 50% matching grant assistance to eligible local governments (schools and not-for-profit organizations are eligible for funding only through the Community Outdoor Outreach Program which does not require matching funds) throughout Texas for the acquisition and development of public recreation areas and facilities, and for providing outdoor activities (CO-OP only).

TRPA grants are awarded by the Parks & Wildlife Commission each year as funds are available, and are administered by the Department's Recreation Grants Branch. Applications are assessed for eligibility and prioritized (scored) by Recreation Grants staff utilizing the "Project Priority Scoring System" appropriate to each grant program.

This application guide contains rules/regulations governing the eligibility for and disbursement of program funds, and describes the required elements of an acceptable application. This document replaces all previous procedural guides. Questions concerning this procedural guide or any aspect of these grants programs should be directed to:

Recreation Grants Branch
Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
4200 Smith School Road
Austin, TX 78744
512/389-8224
rec.grants@tpwd.texas.gov
<http://www.tpwd.texas.gov/business/grants/>

Eligible Applicants

To submit an application for the Community Outdoor Outreach Program you must be a tax exempt organization, non-political group, or local government.

Religious groups are eligible only if non-religious activities are planned.

Each applicant must submit its Federal Tax Identification Number as part of the CO-OP Application Form.

Applicants must be in good standing with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to be eligible and to receive any reimbursements.

Previous CO-OP Grant recipients can apply once every two years as long as all funds have been properly spent, and all grants have been properly closed out. All final documentation must be turned in at least thirty days prior to the next funding deadline.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include but are not limited to the following TPWD related activities:

**Backpacking / hiking
Birding / wildlife viewing
Camping
Canoeing / kayaking
Environmental / outdoor education
Equestrian
Fishing / angling
Hunting / shooting sports
Nature photography
Orienteering/Geocaching
Outdoor classrooms (on a case by case basis)
Outdoor cooking
Outdoor service projects
Rock climbing**

Eligible Items

Eligible items include, but are not limited to the following:

**Cameras / photography supplies / developing film
Camping equipment / supplies / fees
Computer / computer supplies if used as part of the program
Fees for park entry
Fishing equipment / supplies
Leasing transportation / mileage / gas for grant approved projects
Program liability insurance
Program food / non-alcoholic beverages / eating supplies (No restaurants)
Program t-shirts
Program staff / both employees & contracted (Up to 40% of grant funds)
TPWD-related outdoor recreation equipment / supplies
Purchase or leasing of a trailer for transporting equipment & supplies**

Ineligible Projects

Ineligible projects include but are not limited to the following:

**Community festivals / expositions / promotional / fundraising events/tournaments
Indoor classroom only projects
Facility construction projects
Landscaping
Multimedia projects
Research projects
Training only projects
Tours
Traditional sports/recreation programs such as baseball, basketball and soccer
For profit programs
Ropes / challenge course programs
Out-of-state travel**

Ineligible Items

Ineligible items include but are not limited to the following:

Alcohol

Computer games

Curriculum development

Design consultants

Facility construction (includes any permanent structure such as benches, gazebos, etc.)

Forfeited deposits

Indirect costs (telephone, utilities, etc.)

Office / meeting room rental

Prizes / souvenirs / awards / certificates

Property leasing

Purchase of automobiles / motor boats / anything with motor

Religious activities (revivals, etc.)

Restaurant receipts

Ropes / challenge courses

Sales tax & tips

Software / website development

Distribution of Funds

The minimum amount to be awarded to eligible applicants is \$5,000 and the maximum amount is \$40,000 and no match is required. These monies will be distributed through grants to eligible organizations on a reimbursement basis (applicants are required to make grant eligible purchases and then be reimbursed for approved expenses). Grant applications must be written for a one year period (or less) and must start within 6 months of grant award date. Unused funds cannot be rolled over or re-allocated, therefore, grant applicants are encouraged to request only what they need. Failure to comply with grant requirements could mean penalties imposed on future applications or future eligibility.

Religious Activities Policy

- Recipients of the Community Outdoor Outreach Program grant cannot use any part of these monies to fund religious worship, instruction or proselytization.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

The use, possession, sale, manufacture, or distribution of a controlled substance during CO-OP applicant events/activities is prohibited. The abuse of prescription drugs or inhalants and/or their use in any ways which adversely affects safe performance of duties involving CO-OP events/activities is also prohibited.

CO-OP applicants and participants will not use or possess alcoholic beverages or illegal drugs while conducting CO-OP sponsored events/activities. Reporting to CO-OP sponsored events/activities under the influence of alcohol or drugs is also considered a violation of this policy.

The operation of any vehicles of any type used to transport participants and volunteers of CO-OP sponsored events/activities while under the influence or in possession of alcohol, drugs, or other intoxicants is prohibited.

Any receipts submitted for reimbursement which include alcoholic purchases will be disallowed.

Where to Submit Applications

Applications must be submitted online at www.tpwd-recgrants.fluidreview.com

When to Submit Applications

(One time application submission deadline June 1, 2014)

The annual application submission deadline is *February 1st*.

Applications submitted by the deadline are grouped together and reviewed. Application reviews take approximately two months to complete from the time of submission until funding - be sure to take this into account when planning your project. Applications must be written for a one year period (or less) and start within 6 months of grant award date. Each project is extensively reviewed for eligibility and underserved population impacts. Awards will be announced annually, on April 15th (For the one time June 1, 2014 grant deadline, awards will be announced August 1, 2014.) Applications written for more than one year will be ruled ineligible. In the event that the deadline falls on a Sunday, applications must be completed no later than the following Monday after by 5p.m.

Requirements for Funded Applications

Funded applications will be required to submit the following documentation:

Signed program agreement

Quarterly status reports

Evaluation forms

Comprehensive final report

Reimbursement requests (invoices, receipts, copies of cancelled checks or bank statement will be required)

Auditable proof of applicant contribution (matching funds).

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Who is the Applicant?

The applicant is the organization applying for the grant. The applicant must provide their Federal Tax ID number on the application form. There can only be one applicant.

2. What is a resolution and who should sign it?

A resolution is a document signed by the governing board or senior official. The resolution must authorize application submission, any applicant contribution, and must designate a project official. Resolutions must be signed, dated, and be less than one year old.

3. Do you require matching funds?

Matching funds are not required however points are awarded based on documented sponsor contributions to the project. Contributions can include in-kind, volunteer time and available funds and must be supported by proper documentation.

4. What is auditable proof of contribution?

Applicants must provide documentation to support contributions listed in the budget summary. This will include letters of commitment from partners and the resolution from the applicant stating monetary value of contribution.

5. How do I document volunteer labor?

1. Applications must include a partnership letter from the volunteer. If a partnering organization is providing several volunteers then a letter from that organization is sufficient. If the volunteers are part of the applicant's organization, then this information can be included in the resolution.

6. What should be included in a partnership/commitment letter?

Partnership letters must be current, dated, signed and include what they are providing to the program as well as the value of the contribution if applicable (i.e. cash donation, volunteer labor, participant base, transportation, food or equipment donation). Letters must be included in the grant application for consideration. Applicants cannot partner with themselves.

7. Do you fund projects involving construction?

Funds cannot be used for facility construction projects, gazebos, ponds, benches, etc. The CO-OP grant is to be used to fund programs, not construction projects.

8. Can funds be used for training programs?

The CO-OP funds were designated to be used for hands-on programs/activities. Training programs will be reviewed if part of the training involves actual hands-on participation programs. Training and research programs only will not be funded.

9. Can funds be used to pay indirect/overhead expenses?

No. Indirect expenses will not be reimbursed.

10. Do we need to do the budget summary just like the example in the application packet?

Yes. Improperly completed budget summaries may be ruled ineligible.

11. Do we get points for both inner city and rural if we do programs in both areas?

No. Your organization can only receive points for inner city or rural, not both. This will be determined by the physical location of the applicant organization.

12. Does the application need to be completed by the June 1 or February 1st deadline?

The application must be completed by June 1 or February 1st . Applications submitted after these dates will be ruled ineligible. In the event that the deadline falls on a Sunday, applications must be completed no later than the following Monday by 5p.m.

13. When will we be notified if we received the grant?

Application reviews take two months. Awards will be announced annually, on April 15th. For the one time June 1, 2014 grant deadline, awards will be announced August 1, 2014. You will be notified email.

14. Can funds be used for staff salaries?

Yes. Up to 40% of the grant money can be used towards program staff salaries. This includes both employees and contracted staff.

15. What happens if my application is not funded?

Applications not approved for funding will receive an email. Any organization wishing to request a critique of their application is welcome to do so. All critique requests must be in writing and be submitted at least one month prior to the next application deadline.

Summary of Guidelines

For Administration of Community Outdoor Outreach Program projects

(Revised January 2005)

The Texas Parks & Wildlife Commission, by authority of Chapter 24 of the Parks & Wildlife Code, has adopted Guidelines for Administration of Community Outdoor Outreach Program Projects, to read as follows:

It is the Commission's policy that the Department shall administer Community Outdoor Outreach Program projects in accord with the following guidelines, with interpretation of intent to be made to provide the greatest number of public recreational opportunities for citizens of Texas.

1. Approved projects shall be pursued in a timely manner by the applicant, unless delays result from extraordinary circumstances beyond the applicant's control. Failure to meet the following time frames may be grounds for the Department to initiate cancellation of the affected project in order to recommend reallocation of available funds to other projects, or to deny requests for additional grant funds for new projects:

<u>Activity</u>	<u>Time Frame</u>
Project Approval	Begin 1-year project period
Quarterly Status Reports	Due within 2 weeks of quarter closing dates of March 31, June 30, September 30, and December 31
Project Completion and Grant Close-Out	Within 1-year after project approval (a 1-year extension may be awarded if needed)

2. Determinations as to whether the Department will award new grant funds to applicants with completed outreach grants will be based on the following criteria:

- **All previously completed outreach grant projects must be in compliance with all the terms of the contract agreement under which they received assistance; and**
- **All previously funded outreach projects must be completed, reimbursed, and closed out.**
- **Recipients may not request assistance in consecutive years.**

A grantee may also be considered to be “high risk” based on financial stability or non-conforming management standards, requiring additional special conditions and restrictions as determined by grant management standards.

Failure to meet any one of the above criteria may be grounds for denying new grant funds. Assessment of the above criteria in conjunction with requests for new grants will be made 30 days in advance of grant award.

Under extenuating circumstances Department staff may recommend new grant fund approval if a project applicant has not met all of the above criteria. Grant award, however, may be contingent upon certain conditions to be specified.

Contact Information

For questions on the CO-OP application process, please call (512) 389-8224 or e-mail Darlene Lewis at darlene.lewis@tpwd.texas.gov or Cappy Smith at cappy.smith@tpwd.texas.gov

For information about TPWD State Parks, Historic Sites, programs and activities go to our website at www.tpwd.state.tx.us or call toll free (800) 792-1112.

Recreation Grants Newsletter

To be notified of upcoming grant deadlines, workshops, and public hearings go to our website <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/> and click on “sign up for email updates” in the top left hand corner.