

Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (DNR)

2026 Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Program (ORLP)

Overview

The National Park Service (NPS) Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program was established in 2014 and a program within the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance Program. ORLP is a nationally competitive program targeting grant assistance to 1) acquire land and water for parks and other outdoor recreation purposes in qualifying areas, and 2) develop new or renovate existing outdoor recreation facilities that provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public in qualifying areas. ORLP grants require a 50% applicant match. If a grant is awarded, the assisted site must be maintained and accessible exclusively for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity.

The NPS will accept applications with a minimum grant amount of \$300,000 and a maximum amount of \$15 million. The LWCF Act provides that only State Lead Agencies for the LWCF program (Wisconsin DNR) may apply for funds. The Wisconsin DNR will apply on behalf of other state agencies, local units of government or federally recognized tribes. The NPS anticipates 20-45 grants will be awarded nationally.

Notice of Funding Opportunity, Application Deadline, and Support

View the NPS [Notice of Funding Opportunity](#) (NOFO P26AS00125) on the [Grants.gov](#) website.

Applications will be accepted by the Wisconsin DNR through **4:00 pm on September 30, 2026**. All application materials should be emailed to Pam Rood at pamelaa.rood@wisconsin.gov on or before the application deadline.

Questions can be directed to:

Pam Rood – LWCF/ORLP Grant Manager (Wisconsin DNR)

Email: pamelaa.rood@wisconsin.gov

Phone: (608) 333-3718

OR

ORLP_Inquiries@nps.gov

Applicant and Project Location Eligibility

- Eligible sub-recipient applicants must be state agencies, local units of governments, special purpose districts that manage open space, and federally recognized Native American Tribes.
- Eligible projects must be within a Qualifying Area, defined as:
 - an urban area that has a population of 25,000 or more in the most recent census, or
 - 2 or more adjacent urban areas with a combined population of 25,000 or more in the most recent census; or
 - an area administered by a federally recognized Native American Tribe.

Additional ORLP Program Requirements

- Matching Requirement - ORLP is dollar for dollar match, meaning it covers up to 50% of all project costs. Applicants are responsible for providing non-federal funds for at least 50% of project costs. Applicants are not required to have their cost-share secured at the time of their application to this NOFO, but they must provide documentation of their plan to secure matching funds. Applicants must secure their cost-share before finalizing a grant agreement with the NPS.
- Perpetuity Requirement - Projects assisted through ORLP must be maintained and accessible for public outdoor recreation use in perpetuity. This applies to the assisted park or site in its entirety, not just the area assisted by the grant funds.
- Alignment with LWCF Law and Policy - As an LWCF program, ORLP projects must align with the purposes and requirements of the [LWCF Act](#) and [LWCF Manual](#).
- Alignment with National Priorities – Projects must be responsive to Executive and National priorities, including those outlined in [Executive Order 14313](#), “*Establishing the President's Make America Beautiful Again Commission*” and [Secretarial Order 3442](#), “*Land and Water Conservation Fund Implementation by the U.S. Department of the Interior.*”
- Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Projects - This program has Federal funding for infrastructure projects. Buy America preferences apply to Federal awards for infrastructure projects in the United States. Reference 2 CFR Part 184 - Buy America Preferences for Infrastructure Project for further guidance. The recipient is responsible for complying with the BABA requirements for the entirety of the project, from bidding through construction.
- Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration - Before applying, all **applicants must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

Eligible Project Types

- Acquisition of land for public outdoor recreation, including new areas or additions to existing parks, forests, wildlife management areas, beaches, and other similar areas dedicated to public outdoor recreation, as well as physical connections among them (e.g., trails, waterways, land between recreation areas, wildlife habitat corridors) may be eligible for assistance.
- Development should encompass essential public outdoor recreation activities and the necessary support facilities for public use. Projects could involve a combination of land acquisition and site development. These projects can cater to a diverse range of public outdoor recreation activities and facilities required to enhance the use and enjoyment for the public.

Administrative Costs

In accordance with the EXPLORE Act, no more than 7 percent of funds provided for an ORLP grant may be used for administrative expenses (see [16 U.S.C. § 8464\(b\)\(2\)\(B\)](#)).

Funding Restrictions

LWCF ORLP grants may only be used for costs needed to support the acquisition and/or development of lands and facilities that will provide outdoor recreation opportunities to the public. ORLP funds may not be used for:

- Acquisition support costs such as appraisals or title work;
- Facilities that support semi-professional or professional athletics such as baseball stadiums or soccer arenas;

- Indoor facilities such as recreation centers or facilities that support primarily non-outdoor purposes like dining facilities or overnight accommodation (such as a lodge or hotel); or
- Acquisition of lands, or interests in lands, that completely restrict access to specific persons (e.g., non-residents of a community).

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms and information to the DNR:

ITEM NUMBER	FORMS/ASSURANCES/CERTIFICATIONS	SUBMISSION
1	Project Abstract Summary	Required
2	Project Narrative	Required
3	Budget Narrative (A sample template is provided in Appendix A, but use of this template is not required)	Required
4	Indirect Rate Agreement (NICRA)	Required, if applicable
5	Project Timeline	Required
6	Project Site Map(s) and Rendering(s)	Required
7	Letters of Commitment for Secured or Potential Contributions of Cost Share	Required
8	Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement	Required
9	Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures	Required, if applicable
10	Uniform Audit Reporting Statement	Required
11	General Letters of Support	Optional
12	Site and Process Photos	Optional

Document Instructions

1. Project Abstract Summary

Required form ([OMB 4040-0019](#)) - Must include, in plain language:

- Award purpose
- Activities to be performed
- Expected deliverables or outcomes
- Intended beneficiaries
- Subrecipient activities (if known at time of award)

2. Project Narrative (3 Sections)

The proposal is a narrative description that should specifically address each of the review criteria (see the Application Review Information section on page 17). The project narrative must be under 10 pages, in font size of 11 or larger, and have 1-inch margins. The 10-page limit includes all text and figures. Only include information that is pertinent to the proposal.

The Project Narrative consists of the following three sections, each detailed below:

SECTION 1: PROJECT DATA PAGE

- Indicate the submission date (DD/MM/YYYY)

- Applicant name and contact information
- Sub-recipient name and contact information (if applicable)
- Project Title
- Name of Park/Property
- Name of Property Title Holder
- Project Property Address/Location
- Acreage of the project site and proposed boundary
- Project Type: land acquisition, new development, renovation, combination, etc.
- Previous LWCF or ORLP Recipient: Yes/No, if yes provide the year and funding amount.
- Brief description of the project and its proposed impact (100-words or less).

SECTION 2: PROJECT OVERVIEW

Site Description (required)

- Describe the property's physical features (e.g., terrain, water features, built structures, existing amenities) and quantify where possible (e.g. 50 acres of forested land).
- Describe current uses of the property and note any uses that will be discontinued or remain in place once the project is completed.
- Identify any known site constraints, such as utilities, easements, rights-of-way, contamination history, or other physical or legal limitations.

Acquisition Description (only complete if acquisition is proposed)

Describe the property's current ownership.

State whether the acquisition would create a new public park/recreation area or if it will expand an existing site, and if so, by how many acres.

Optional: Describe the current acquisition status, including negotiations, due-diligence steps completed or in progress (title work, appraisal status, basis of value if no appraisal yet completed).

Development Description (only complete if development is proposed):

- Describe the planned physical improvements and facilities, and whether they are new construction, rehabilitation, areas for conservation, or replacement.
- Explain any expected impacts on the natural landscape (e.g., temporary disturbance, permanent changes).

Population Description (required)

- Provide the most recent Census Population of the Qualifying Urban Area.
 - Applicants can view all Census Urban areas using US Census's [TIGERWeb](#) web page. To see an area's population, click on the relevant location and look at the "Urban Areas" field in the pop-up box.
- Describe the community's low-income status.
 - Applicants can demonstrate low-income status (as defined in [26 U.S.C. 45D\(e\)\(1\)](#)) using the Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's Census Geomapping tool, or through documentation describing the demographic factors that indicate the community's status of need.
 - To check the proposed project area's low-income status using the [Federal Financial Institutions Examination Council's Census Geomapping tool](#): 1) open the tool and select the previous calendar year in the year dropdown, 2) type in the nearest street address

to the project site, 3) select “Census Demographic Information” 4) select the “Income” tab, 5) look at the following data fields:

- **% below Poverty Line** – This must be over 20%. This is the number of people in the tract living below the poverty level divided by the tract’s total population.
- **OR Tract Median Family Income %** - This must below 80%. This compares the tract level median family income (MFI) to the Metropolitan Statistical Area/Metropolitan Division (MSA/MD) level MFI.

SECTION 3: RESPONSES TO MERIT REVIEW CRITERIA

NPS will evaluate and consider only those applications that separately address each of the merit review criteria. Each applicant is required to provide a detailed project narrative of the following criteria elements. It is highly recommended that the project narrative has sections labeled by criterion.

Criterion 1 – Increasing Access to Outdoor Recreation Opportunities	
5 total points	
To what extent does the project support the following priorities:	
• Create or significantly enhance access to park and recreational opportunities in a qualifying area; • Provide recreation opportunities in low income communities in which access to parks is not adequate to meet local needs; • Develop Native American event sites and cultural gathering spaces; • Increase safety in parks, including facility related security installations within or adjacent to public parks and recreation areas; or • Develop recreational sites such as shooting sports facilities (archery ranges, skeet fields, safe shooting areas) that promote firearm safety and hunter education.	

Points	Scoring Description
5	The project will significantly improve or create outdoor recreation access in a qualified area, directly advancing some or any of the purposes listed above. There is strong evidence that the project responds to a critical recreation access gap, particularly in a low-income area.
3	The project improves recreation access in a moderate or incremental way, or alignment with the above LWCF and ORLP goals is present but not strongly demonstrated.
1	Minimal alignment with listed goals; benefits are limited or unclear.

Criterion 2 – Alignment with Community Needs	
5 total points	
To what extent does the project:	
• Provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and public land volunteerism; • Engage and empower low-income communities and youth; • Provide employment or job training opportunities for youth or low-income communities; or • Support park and recreation programming provided by local governments, including cooperative agreements with community-based eligible nonprofit organizations.	

Points	Scoring Description
5	The project demonstrates a strong, structured community engagement process that identified and incorporated residents' needs into the overall project plan . The resulting project includes initiatives that expand economic opportunity for the community such as youth programs, job training opportunities, volunteer opportunities, and collaborative programming with local partners and nonprofits.
3	Some community engagement and youth/low-income support is described, but the depth of the engagement efforts, or their incorporation into the project are moderate.
1	Minimal evidence of community engagement or empowerment.

Criterion 3 – Leveraging Resources in Support of Recreation

5 total points

To what extent does the project:

- Take advantage of coordination among various levels of government;
- Establish or expand public-private partnerships, with a focus on leveraging resources; or
- Support innovative or cost-effective ways to enhance parks and other recreation opportunities or the delivery of services.

Points	Scoring Description
5	The project demonstrates strong multi-level government coordination (e.g. alignment with a relevant Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)), robust public-private partnerships , and clear innovation or cost-effectiveness in enhancing recreation services.
3	Coordination and partnership elements exist but are not well developed or only moderately contribute to overall project success.
1	Minimal coordination and no clear partnership or innovation strategy.

Criterion 4 – Promoting Conservation and Ecological Benefits

5 total points

To what extent does the project:

- Acquire land/water or interests that provide recreation and also:
 - Support ESA-listed species recovery;
 - Reduce or eliminate habitat threats (ESA or candidate species);
 - Address threats identified in a 12-month petition finding; or
 - Fulfill conservation strategies in a State Wildlife Action Plan;
- Create wetlands (subject to Safe Harbor Agreements) providing habitat, water quality improvements, flood mitigation, and outdoor recreation opportunities;
- Improve big-game winter range and migration corridor habitat (per SO 3362);
- Invest in natural infrastructure for shoreline stabilization and habitat restoration; or
- Provide benefits such as community resilience, reduced heat islands, improved air/water quality, or wildlife habitat.

Points	Scoring Description
5	The project meaningfully incorporates conservation elements alongside recreation benefits (e.g. increased native vegetation, nature-based solutions, permeable surfaces, stormwater management, reduced heat islands, etc.), demonstrates environmental, ecological, and community resilience outcomes , and aligns with the LWCF and ORLP goals above.
3	Conservation elements are present but modest, or alignment with LWCF and ORLP goals is limited.
1	Minimal or no integration of conservation or ecological elements.

Criterion 5 – Project Feasibility

5 total points

To what extent does the project:

- Have a sound and reasonable project plan?
- Have a clear, feasible, well-detailed budget, including a plan to meet the 1:1 match requirement and minimize administrative costs?
- Demonstrate the ability to complete the proposed scope of work and maintain the project in the long term.

Points	Scoring Description
5	Clear, reasonable plan; feasible budget; high likelihood of project success and meeting LWCF's perpetuity requirement.
3	Moderate feasibility; some gaps in the overall project plan or budget.
1	Limited evidence of feasibility.

3. Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. **Applicants can use the [recommended budget template](#) linked in the NOFO, although it is not required.** The budget must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions. Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary, and
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to 2 CFR 200.414(f).
- Negotiated Rate: State if your organization will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

The budget should reflect only the costs related to construction or acquisition activities to be completed under an ORLP grant if selected. A separate total budget for the entire project (including work beyond

what would be funded under the grant) may also be provided. The ORLP-funded portion of the project must result in a viable park or recreation opportunity that is not dependent on other funding, even within the scope of a larger project.

Note on Administrative Costs: In accordance with the EXPLORE Act, no more than 7 percent of funds provided for an ORLP grant may be used for administrative expenses. Additionally, the EXPLORE Act specifically excludes acquisition support costs including appraisal and titling.

4. Indirect Rate Agreement (NICRA)

If your organization has previously negotiated an indirect cost rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

5. Project Timeline (1 Page Limit)

Detailed timeline showing all project milestones, and measures that will provide quantifiable progress towards reaching the project's milestones. Each planned contract must be listed with an expected date for bidding.

6. Project Site Map(s) and Rendering(s)

Provide high-quality PDF or JPG files for maps and renderings and avoid using compressed or scanned images.

- Map (or Aerial Photo) Delineating Project Area and Proposed Boundary - clearly indicate area to be acquired and/or developed, as well as the proposed boundary of the larger park/recreation area that would be subject to the perpetual protection provisions of the LWCF Act (54 U.S.C. 200305(f)(3)), all known outstanding rights and interests in the area held by others, total acres within the boundary(ies), scale, and a north arrow.
- Site Analysis Map that illustrates site attributes such as flood zones, storm data, slopes, conservation areas, tree canopy, nutrient-rich soils, impervious surfaces, view sheds, and impervious cover.
- Plan or Sketch of Planned Site Features that highlight locations for public access, parking, playgrounds, conservation areas, rain gardens, concepts for managing stormwater, and other features, aligned with site analysis and community feedback.
- Any other supporting graphics that illustrate the objectives of the project proposal.

7. Letters of Commitment for Cost Share or Plans for Securing Cost Share

For Already Secured Sources of Cost Share: Clearly state the amount, type, and anticipated date of contribution.

For Planned Sources of Cost Share: Describe the source, anticipated amount, and status of cost share discussions. Identify any major barriers that could prevent the share from being realized.

8. Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, NPS may choose not to make an award.

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description of any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, “There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects”.

9. Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures (Required if applicable)

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

10. Uniform Audit Reporting Statement

U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit organizations expending \$1,000,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant’s fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse’s Internet Data Entry System](#), in accordance with 2 CFR 200 subpart F. U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribes, institutions of higher education, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website.

11. General Letters of Support (OPTIONAL)

If an applicant includes letters of support from elected officials, community members, or other supporters, they must be uploaded with the application in Grants.gov to be considered. Please do not send separately from application.

12. Site and Process Photos (OPTIONAL)

Applicants may choose to provide photos of the site and proposed development. These could include site features or constraints, community engagement, or current uses.

Timeline and Next Steps:

Application Submission Deadline September 30, 2026	Applications must be emailed to Pam Rood, DNR Grant Manager, at pamelaa.rood@wisconsin.gov , by 4:00 pm on September 30, 2026 . <i>Applications submitted directly to the NPS by entities other than the DNR will automatically be rejected by the National Review Committee without consideration.</i>
DNR Application Review 10/1/2026 – 10/16/2026	DNR reviews applications and determines if an application is complete. <u>Only complete applications will be submitted to the NPS for review.</u>

Applicant Notification and Submission to NPS 10/19/26 -10/30/26	DNR notifies applicants of their score and status. DNR finalizes application packages and submits them to NPS by November 1, 2026.
Federal Review 11/1/2026 – 5/1/2027	A National Review Committee will review all competitive applications from states.
Grant Award Announcement 5/1/2027	The ORLP NOFO (page 16) states NPS will announce selected awards.
Full Application Completed 5/1/2027 -4/30/2028	DNR must submit a full application for NPS final review within one year of the announcement for the project to remain eligible for funding.