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Indiana Land & Water Conservation Fund Handbook 2: Application

Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks
Community Grants and Trails
LWCF@dnr.IN.gov

The logo for the Indiana Department of Natural Resources, featuring the letters "DNR" in a large, bold, black, sans-serif font.

DNR

Indiana Department
of Natural Resources

Handbook 2: Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Application Instructions

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Foreword

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) is administered at the state level by the Indiana DNR Division of State Parks Community Grants and Trails staff. The program provides 50% reimbursement grants (up to \$1,000,000) to assist project sponsors in acquiring and developing outdoor recreation areas for public use. The minimum grant amount awarded is \$250,000 and the maximum grant amount is \$1,000,000. Overmatch is acceptable.

Prior to applying it is best to review, at minimum, Handbooks 1 – 3 and 4 if the project includes land acquisition.

Meeting the federal LWCF requirements can be time consuming and requires strict attention to detail. Missing, incorrect, or conflicting information will cause significant delays at state and federal levels.

Applicants are required to meet with the grants staff to discuss their potential project several months prior to the application submittal deadline, August 1.

For additional information or clarification contact:
Indiana Department of Natural Resources
Division of State Parks, Community Grants and Trails
402 W. Washington St., Room W298
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204-2782
LWCF@dnr.in.gov

Caveats

- 1) All land acquired or developed with Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant monies will be protected **in perpetuity** (forever) for outdoor recreation. This requires **a federal encumbrance be added to the property deed** early in the project.
- 2) In Indiana, eligibility for LWCF funds requires a legally established park board. *Park board ordinances must be dated 1981 or later and be statutorily compliant.* The Park Board must remain active and intact throughout the LWCF project timeframe. “Temporary”, “Intermittent” or “Advisory” boards do not meet legal standards and could jeopardize grant approval, future grant approval, or funding.
- 3) A current DNR approved local 5-year park and recreation master plan must be on file with the DNR Planning office.
- 4) The applicant must be in good standing with all grant programs administered by Indiana State Parks. Applications received from communities with outstanding conversions of use may be dismissed. See *Handbook 7 Post Completion Stewardship & Conversions of Use* for further guidance.

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5) If a project sponsor cannot fulfill the terms and conditions of the LWCF grant program, an application should not be submitted as this could have a negative impact on future applications.

Pre-Submission

Grantee Administration

The LWCF application can be completed by the project sponsor; however, it may require the expertise of a consultant or grant administrator for environmental and historical reviews and detailed maps. Applicants should review the handbooks and supplemental information guides to determine how to proceed.

Required quarterly reporting, design, bidding, maps, land, and project/construction oversight may require professional expertise and experience. Thorough detailed plans and timely reporting are key factors to keep the approval process and project completion on track.

Pre-Application Tasks

Public Notice & Input

Public input is a pre-application requirement for LWCF funding. This input may be in addition to public input for the park and recreation system master plan. Criteria include (1) notification that **federal funds** will be used for the project, (2) at minimum one public meeting or survey, and (3) construction in a floodway must be clearly stated (if applicable).

Note: public notification must be provided far enough in advance of the meeting or survey to allow for ample public comment. Acceptable methods of public notice and input may include:

Public Notice	Public Input
Advertisement in local newspaper	Online surveys specific to the project
Post to Park &/or Town social media	Public meeting minutes specific to the project
Yard signs at the project site (development only)	Public meeting minutes from municipal board (Park Board, Town Council, etc.)
Mailed pamphlets or postcards	Park Master Plan for the project
	Park Board's Master Plan sections mentioning the project by name &/or the application scope items

DNR Fish and Wildlife Environmental Review

Applicants must request an Early Coordination environmental review from Indiana DNR prior to applying. An email from DNR proving the Early Coordination request has been submitted will be acceptable as a placeholder until the full report is received. The response report should be included in the application packet or as soon as possible thereafter. *Grant Coordinators cannot submit the federal application documentation without the Early Coordination report.*

Instructions for submitting a DNR Early Coordination review request can be found at:

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<https://www.IN.gov/dnr/water/files/EnvironmentalReviewRequiredinfo.pdf>

The response report must be reviewed at a public meeting, in addition to signing the Early Coordination Commitment form. Further environmental review may be required.

DNR State Historic Preservation Office Review (SHPO)

All applicants must provide a detailed summary of any known historical or cultural resources present at the project location. If selected for award, this information will be critical for SHPO coordination.

- Review the Indiana DNR State Historic Architectural and Archaeological Research Database (SHAARD) and Structures Map and identify any resources on or adjacent to the project site.
- Coordinate with local historical groups to identify additional cultural and historical resources that may be impacted by the project.

Depending on the nature or location of the project, applicants may be advised to reach out to SHPO for technical advice prior to the initial application. See *Handbook 3: Federal Compliance Review* for guidance.

Preliminary Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO) Coordination.

Note, official tribal review and decisions of the project will occur between NPS and the THPO.

Applicants may be asked to initiate a Tribal Cultural Survey. Due to the cost and expertise involved, discussing this option with the grant coordinator is highly recommended. In some instances, it is beneficial to begin communications with the THPO during the grant application process to reduce time to federal approval.

Securing Match Funds

The applicant is required to provide documentation of matching funds at the time of application.

The documentation required to certify match sources varies depending on the type of match. Refer to the table below for further clarification.

Match Source	Documentation Required
Cash Match <i>Appropriations or other federal funds</i>	Letter from local fiscal officer, on municipal letterhead, certifying the amount, timing, and source of the matching funds

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Bond Issues	In addition to the above, provide a letter from the park board's attorney explaining the steps through which the bond issue has already progressed and a schedule for remaining action to take place. A bond issue must be completed up to the point of bond sale at the time of application. If bonds will provide the local share of a project, the bond issue should cover the entire project cost, rather than only the sponsor's 50%.
Donations	
Cash Gifts	Letter from the donor stating the donated amount and intended use for the funds. Fund balance letters from Community Foundations are also acceptable.
Land Donations	Based on real-estate appraisals, see <i>Handbook 4 Land Acquisition</i> .
Donated Materials	Materials may be valued by the lower of at least two quotes from commercial suppliers of similar items
In-Kind Labor, Local Rate	Letter from volunteer organization stating intent to perform work valued at a minimum amount. The time spent should be valued at the same rate of pay of as the applicants municipal laborers (e.g. park or street maintenance crew).
In-Kind Labor, Wage Rate	If volunteers of labor are employed in a skilled trade, time spent doing the trade may be valued at their employment wage rate. Either their employers or they (if self-employed) need to verify their rate per hour on company letterhead. The volunteer must commit to donating work valued at a minimum amount.

Force Account	A letter from the Supervisor of the department providing force account assistance, on municipal letterhead, stating the work to be provided valued at a minimum amount. The letter should state the wage rate for each employee class, the number of employees in each class, and the total hours of LWCF work expected from each employee class.
Donated Equipment <i>Park amenities</i>	A letter from the donor briefly describing the equipment, where it shall be installed in the park, and quotations from suppliers of the purchase price of similar equipment
Donated Equipment <i>Construction use</i>	A letter from the donor, briefly describing the equipment and quotations of local rental rates from other suppliers. The donor's letter for construction equipment must indicate the dates, hours, and type of work performed for the project.

Writing the Grant Application

NOTE: each section should be as concise as possible and specific to the proposed project. Maps must meet LWCF criteria (See Supplemental Documents and Forms, Boundary Map Criteria).

Arrange application documents/sections in this order.

An application checklist is provided with the Supplemental Documents.

Application Packet Details

- There may be duplication through the application.
- It is very important that items in the Itemized Cost Breakdown are referenced in the Project Narrative/Scope of Work.
- An introductory paragraph including all acquisition, facilities, renovation, etc. should be included.
- Discrepancies between the sections or information spread throughout the application could lead to a request to edit and resubmit the application packet. This will affect grant coordinator ability to provide a cohesive presentation for State Rate & Rank and to submit a complete NPS application packet to the federal program officer during early review cycles.
- Excessively long narratives or prose may result in the application being refused by the LWCF rating team.

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Application Packet Part A: All Projects

Eligibility

1) State LWCF policy requires a copy of the ordinance establishing the park board under current law. Park authorities do not comply with State LWCF policy. The ordinance must have been updated in 1981 or later to be legal. If not current a new ordinance must be created under current statutes and recorded. For a sample ordinance and the statutes see the Planning web site “How to Form a Park and Recreation Board”. <https://www.IN.gov/dnr/outdoor-recreation/planning/park-planning-information-and-guidelines/>.

2) Page(s) from the current DNR approved local Five-Year Park and Recreation Master Plan highlighting the need for the proposed project acquisition and or development. Links to the Master Plan will not be sufficient for proving eligibility. *Do not include the entire master plan.*

Application Form

The form is entitled *Grant Application (State Form 55049, R/3-20)*. See Supplemental Documents and Forms.

- Description should include all items in the Itemized Cost Breakdown and Project Narrative.
- Cost Classification Line 1 is for Pre-Agreement Costs
- Total Project Amount should include overmatch, if applicable
- Total Project Amount (Line 6) – Grant Request (Line 7) = Applicant’s Share (Line 8)
- Must be signed by the park board president.

Itemized Cost Breakdown

The Itemized Cost Breakdown should include:

- Pre-agreement costs (Application prep, Environmental reviews, Cultural surveys, etc.)
- Pre-Construction costs (Design & Engineering, Permitting, Bidding, Administration)
- Acquisition (if applicable)
- Site work
- Demolition and removal
- Construction (including equipment rental)
- Development/Equipment (recreational and support)
- Miscellaneous
- Contingencies
- Each line item should include Quantity, Unit Price, Total Cost
- Total project cost
- Grant Request/Ask
- Local Match (including overmatch)
- Notes explaining each pre-agreement cost with the date the costs began to be incurred.

The total project cost shown on the Cost Breakdown must match the figures listed on the *Grant Application* form.

Certification of Local Funds

The applicant must have its minimum match share of the project costs available for the project at the time of application. The required documentation must be included. See “Securing Matching Funds”.

Project Priorities

A brief description of how the project meets the LWCF Project Priorities. Use the guiding questions below. *Note: Guiding sections are in alphabetical order and do not indicate priority rank.*

Acquisition

1. Does this project include land acquisition?
 - a. Number of acres?
 - b. Does the acquisition include prime farmland?
 - c. Are any of the following professionally documented areas included?
 - i. Woodlands, wetlands, or riparian areas?
 - ii. Prairie or other native vegetation?
 - iii. Established fish and or wildlife habitat?

Meeting Local Need and Accessibility

2. Is this project specifically mentioned in the community 5-year park and recreation master plan?
 - a. Page number(s)?
3. Is there a master plan specific to the project?
4. How does this project meet local need?
5. Does this project include:
 - a. New development?
 - b. Renovation of current facilities?
 - c. Replacement of outdated facilities with new?
6. How does this project address:
 - a. Accessibility (beyond the 2010 ADA Standards and guidelines)?
 - b. Connection within the park?
 - c. Connection to community?
 - d. Universal design?

Recreational opportunity

7. What are the proposed new recreational opportunities?
8. What current facilities are planned for renovation and why?

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9. How does this project provide cohesion and interaction between natural resources and outdoor recreation?

Natural Resource Preservation

10. Does this project protect, preserve and or enhance current natural resources?
 - a. Number of acres?
11. Does this project include establishment of new natural resource areas?
 - b. Number of acres or number of plots and total size?
 - c. What natural resources are being added?
12. What eco-friendly initiatives are included in the project design?

Additional

12. How does this project help Indiana achieve outdoor recreation goals as set forth in the current Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan?
13. Any pertinent information regarding local deficits to explain why this project should be funded. Deficits may include recreational need, building community capacity, lack of local funding, correlation to economic development endeavors, etc.

Project Narrative

The project narrative is to be specific to the project. This information should be reflected in the Grant Application Project Description and the Itemized Cost Breakdown. Include all elements of the total project (scope of work).

The following eight (underlined) items are included under Project Narrative.

1. Project Description

- 1) Park name/Acquisition title
- 2) Location/complete address, including county
- 3) Total Acreage (Identify currently owned versus being acquired)
- 4) For land acquisition describe in detail:
 - a. When and how the land will be acquired (donation, easement, or fee)
 - b. If any structures or buildings are being purchased, the expected value and how it was determined (i.e., an estimate from a certified general appraiser with federal experience)
 - c. Why the acquisition is needed
 - d. How the acquisition will contribute to the outdoor recreation needs of the community.
- 5) For all land, owned or potential acquisition, describe:
 - a. The site conditions (include any pre-existing or planned indoor facilities)
 - b. All easements, ROWs, leases, subsurface rights, reversionary interests, etc.
 - c. Any other agreements that convey rights to non-public and or non-recreational

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- interests to access or use the area proposed within the LWCF boundary area
- d. If the project site is contiguous with or connected to a federally owned recreation area or part of a larger management area such as a greenway or regional recreation area, include this information
- 6) Provide a detailed description of the development and facilities proposed for the grant project. If the grant is part of a larger project or a phased project, add a sentence or two describing the larger project.
 - a. Describe the development method(s) that will be used for the project (contract, force account, in-kind contribution, or a combination of these methods).
- 7) Include the short and long-term public benefits that will be achieved because of the project.

2. Eligible Pre-agreement/Pre-award Costs

List all eligible pre-agreement/pre-award costs and the date they started. These may include professional/consulting fees (i.e., feasibility studies, site planning, application preparation), environmental, archaeological, and cultural reviews, and or construction plans. The total amount of these fees equals Line 1 of the Grant Application.

Appraisals, appraisal reviews, and land surveys are not reimbursable costs.

3. Certification for Development Projects

A short statement that all local, state, and federal requirements and guidelines shall be met in regard to development, permitting, legal codes, and best practices.

4. Accessibility Commitment

A short statement of compliance with the appropriate current design standards for the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (Public Law 90-480); Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and the Americans with Disabilities Act. *In Indiana, projects are expected to follow the 2010 ADA Accessibility Guidelines, Public Rights-of-Way Accessibility Guidelines (PROWAG, 2023), and ABA Accessibility Standards (ABA, 2013) where applicable.*

Listing elements that promote universal design is encouraged.

5. Overhead Wire Burial or Removal Commitment

A statement of commitment to remove and or bury overhead wires.

6. Public Notice and Participation

Provide

- 1) Copies of public notices, public meeting minutes, planning meetings, and public surveys. Include dates, the method of transmission (e.g., web site, newspaper, posted notices, etc.).
- 2) Proof the public was informed the park board was applying for the *federally funded* Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF).
- 3) Participation numbers and participant comments/responses.

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7. Match or Additional Funding

List any matching funds and state or federal assistance. Include in-hand, pending, or promised.

8. Historical, Archaeological, and Architectural Information

Briefly describe the historical, archaeological, and architectural significance of the site. Include recent surveys.

Indicate if the site, adjacent sites, or any structures on either is listed in the Indiana Historical Preservation Program and Survey or on the National Register of Historic Places.

Project Timeline

A clear projected project timeline. This should be realistic, based on anticipated federal approval date, and itemized by project component as much as possible. Gant charts or similar visuals are acceptable and encouraged.

Location Map(s)

The location map(s) shows the project property in reference to the surrounding area. This map may be a county/city/town map with the *project location and entrance* identified. A second (zoomed in) map may be included with the purpose of being able to find the property without need of asking directions.

LWCF Boundary Map(s): 6(f) boundary/federally protected area boundary

See Supporting Documents for Required Map Criteria.

Items to consider:

1) Identify pre-existing indoor recreation facilities and or any facilities that are not eligible for LWCF funding (e.g., senior centers, cell towers, community centers).

2) If the property parking is directly connected to a street or road or is shared with another entity do not include it.

Color Photos

A few good photos of the project area. Does not need to include the entire property. Identify the map the photos are keyed to.

Application Packet Part B: Land Acquisition Projects

It is highly recommended the applicant obtain a preliminary land value or appraisal using the **Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA)** or a Statement of Value made by a certified general appraiser with federal experience. UASFLA values may vary from Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP). *USPAP appraisals will not be accepted by NPS as this may not be an accurate reflection of total cost or value.*

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Supplemental Acquisition Form

One copy of the completed Supplemental Acquisition Form.

Statement of Value, Letter(s) of Intent, Waiver of Retroactivity

Include statement of value for each parcel being acquired. Letter of intent to donate. The Waiver of Retroactivity including all federal forms for the type of purchase.

Option(s) to Purchase

Submit one copy of the signed Option to Purchase document with the Statement of Just Compensation and Offer to Purchase, or a Waiver of Right to Just Compensation.

Escrow Agreement(s)

Submit one copy of the signed agreement.

Relocation Plan

Submit the relocation plan for land acquisition projects which will involve moving owners and/or tenants from their dwellings, businesses, or farm operations.

Application Packet Part C: Supplemental Documentation

IDNR Early Coordination/Environmental Review Report

Provided by DNR Division of Fish and Wildlife. A signed DNR Early Coordination Recommendations Certification of Compliance form.

Environmental Review

A brief summary of the proposed action (project scope) as it relates to environmental impact (or lack thereof).

- A statement of alternative actions and the expected effects.
- List agencies, databases, websites, etc. that were consulted for this review
- Was a farmland review completed? Include the report.

Most projects will require more extensive reviews to meet requirements for projects using federal funds. These may need to be submitted to the grant coordinator after the application submission. The additional reviews may include:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) Coordination. See *Handbook 3 Federal Compliance Review* for links to agencies involved in NEPA Coordination
- National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 Historical/Archaeological Review (Section 106). Completed by the DNR Division of Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO).
- Tribal Consultation/Cultural Review. Although NPS will complete a consultation with each Tribal Historic Preservation Officer (THPO), project sponsors may be asked to have a Phase 1 Cultural Resource Survey completed to decrease time to NPS approval.

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Grant coordinators may request project sponsors initiate any or all of the above reviews prior to project approval at the state level. This is largely due to the time it takes to complete the reviews (up to 6 months) and that NPS cannot approve projects until these reviews are fully submitted.

Property deeds

Copy(ies) of property deeds for the LWCF project area and or the entire property that will be included in the LWCF protection. While a small project may be within the property boundaries (such as a pool renovation) the entire park property will be included in the LWCF 6(f) protection. Therefore, all deeds associated with the property must be submitted.

If the property deed(s) already has the LWCF protection clause note this in the application.

Proof of Flood Insurance

A copy of the flood insurance if the project is in the floodplain or may be affected by floodwaters. This includes projects that may be above the flood zone but access to the project is within the flood zone.

Floodplain is determined by FEMA's National Flood Hazard 100-year floodplain.

Following documents found online in Supplemental Documents

Certification Regarding Debarment, Suspension, Ineligibility and Voluntary Exclusion-Lower Tier Covered Transactions

Signed copy of the document.

Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title VI, Assurance of Compliance form

Signed copy of the document.

Build America, Buy America

Signed copy of Statement of Compliance.

IDNR Subrecipient Information Sheet

Completed signed form.

Additional Resources

For additional Indiana LWCF programmatic guidance, refer to the Documents available on the Indiana LWCF webpage.

For detailed guidance regarding the LWCF Program, including federal requirements and codes, refer to the National Park Service LWCF Manual. *Note: The Federal Manual and NPS Programmatic requirements are updated periodically and may supersede Indiana's published guidelines.*

