



**Collin County
Parks & Open Space
Project Funding Assistance Program
Application Guidelines and Instructions**

The Project Funding Assistance Program has been in place since 1999 when the citizens approved a \$5.75 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space. Those funds were used to create Collin County's *Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan* and assisted with the advancement of 33 projects for twenty-five different entities over a 3-year period. In 2003, the citizens approved an \$11 million bond proposition that allowed us to expand an already successful program. The 2003 funds supported the development of 45 projects for twenty-nine different entities over a 5-year period.

In November 2007, the citizens of Collin County approved a \$17 million bond proposition for Parks and Open Space. Over the next six years (2009-2016) Collin County will make these funds accessible to cities and non-profit organizations within the County.

The Project Funding Assistance Program allows qualified organizations to apply for Parks and Open Space bond funds. These funds will be allocated on a competitive application basis to assist organizations in implementation of Parks and Open Space Projects which are consistent with the *Collin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan* (October 2001).

Submission of this application to the Collin County Parks Foundation Advisory Board is an offer to contract with Collin County based on the terms, conditions, and specifications contained in the Application and Instructions.

Please review this application carefully, sign it where signatures are required, fill in the requested information (this is a fillable document in Microsoft Word), be concise with a sufficient level of detail to explain your proposal, and insert all required documents. The original application and 12 photocopies should be completed using Arial Font size 11, stapled upper left corner and pages numbered. Please no cover pages. Questions can be addressed by phoning (972) 548-3744. **Submit original and 12 photocopies:**

Collin County
Special Projects
825 N. McDonald Street, Suite 145
McKinney, Texas 75069

Applications received after the submittal deadline established by Commissioners Court will not be reviewed by the Parks Foundation Advisory Board.

SECTION 1: Applicant and Project Information

- 1. Project Applicant Information:** This section requests general information about the Applicant. In order to be considered for funding assistance, an Applicant must be a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, non-political group, or any unit of local government, including municipalities, school districts, or county located in Collin County, Texas. Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply as long as inherently religious activities, such as worship and religious instruction are not conducted.
- 2. Project Title:** Provide a Project Title.

3. **Brief Description of Purpose of Project:** Provide a brief, concise description of the purpose of your project (No more than 50 words).
4. **General Project Information:**
 - a. Please check one. **The categories are listed in priority order for funding consideration.**
 - b. **Amount of Funding Requested:** This is the amount of funding requested from the Project Funding Assistance Program for this round of funding.
 - c. **Total Project Cost:** This is the total cost of the proposed project. The applicant is required to match at minimum one dollar for every one dollar of County funds requested. For example, if \$25,000 is listed in Amount of Funding Requested (4b), the Total Project Cost (4c) must be at least \$50,000.
 - d. **Start Date of Project:** This is the start date of the project. If this is a multi-phase project this is the start date for the portion of the project that will be funded by this application. (Note: For planning purposes the project should commence within six months of the award notification, which is typically announced in October.)
 - e. **End Date of Project:** The date you plan on completing the project (i.e. submission of an itemized final accounting of expenditures to the county). Projects should be completed in a timely manner based on the scope of the project.
5. **Authorized Signature:** This section requires the signature of the Applicant. The signatory must have contract signing authority for the Applicant. By signing this document, the Applicant is certifying that the certifications, assurances, and deliverables included in this Application have been reviewed, that to the best of the Applicant's knowledge all certifications are true and correct, and that all required deliverables are included in the Application.

SECTION 2: Authorized Representative

This form allows the Applicant to designate a project representative who will be authorized to receive direction from the Collin County Parks Foundation Advisory Board and Collin County. This person will manage the work being performed, ensure that quarterly reports are submitted in a timely manner, and act on behalf of the Applicant.

SECTION 3: Certifications and Assurances

This section contains certifications and assurances the Applicant must review prior to submitting the Application materials. Certifications are required to assist Collin County in ensuring that the Applicant and the project are eligible for funding. Assurances are summaries of pertinent Interlocal or Funding Agreement requirements and ensure that the Applicant understands that there are certain obligations associated with accepting the funds. If awarded, applicants will be asked to enter into an Interlocal or Funding Agreement with Collin County which will outline provisions required for the project.

SECTION 4: Project Costs and Elements

This form allows the applicant to depict costs and elements of the proposed project. The items listed in "Requested Amount" should total the amount of funding requested in Section 1.4.b. The items listed in "Match Amount" should equal or exceed the total "Requested Amount".

Matching funds may either be direct cash, value of land to be improved, donated labor, material or in-kind services. In order to maximize cost benefits, applicants are strongly encouraged to seek matching funds from at least one other funding organization

The value of in-kind specialized services will be determined by Collin County based on the usual and customary rates and values for services proposed. For in-kind, non-specialized services Collin County will use the calculations updated annually by Independent Sector, Inc.* as a guideline to determine the value of non-specialized volunteer time. This value is calculated from the average hourly earnings of all non-agricultural workers as determined by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics and is updated annually. http://www.independentsector.org/programs/research/volunteer_time.html

SECTION 5: Resolution

A resolution must be approved by the governing body of the entity presenting this Application. A photocopy of the signed resolution must be included with the Application. This provision is applicable to all applicants.

SECTION 6: Project Narrative Instructions

The project narrative is very important. Please be clear and concise in your narrative. All information is necessary to properly review your project. As a guide, the project narrative should be no longer than five (5) pages, single-spaced, using Arial Font size 11.

- 1. Project Description:** Describe how your project addresses recommendations made in the *Collin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan* (October 2001). Describe the elements for which assistance is requested. If land is to be acquired, state that fact, give acreage and how it is to be acquired (by purchase, donation, condemnation, dedication, or any combination of methods). If funding for capital improvements is requested, specify what facilities are to be built, renovated, demolished or removed. Describe if you intend to construct the improvements by contract, through force/account/in-kind services, with assistance of other governmental entities, through volunteer efforts or any combination of these methods. Describe any plans to make this an on-going program.
- 2. Objectives and Need for Project:** Briefly describe the recreational needs that are trying to be met and why they are needed. Give a brief history of the project and describe who will benefit. Explain how the project relates to current and future needs within the project service area. Please acknowledge that upon completion of the project the park or proposed improvements will be accessible to **all** Collin County residents and meet ADA compliance. Address how the project will impact the conservation of natural resources, i.e., natural areas, wetlands, open space and view sheds, areas vulnerable to development, greenbelts and linkages, environmental impact. Be sure to address any unique or innovative features, special land uses, planning, or community involvement.
- 3. Funding Mechanisms:** Explain the method(s) for financing the project include all matching funds (in-kind, donations, grants, city bonds) and relationships. Describe any relationship between the proposed project and the other work planned, anticipated or underway or previous governmental grants or assistance related to the proposed project. Describe any non-traditional funding methods. It is preferred that dollar for dollar matching funds be available at the time application is made. If not, there must be reasonable expectation of matching funds within six months from the time Commissioners Court approves funding for the project.
- 4. Project Action Plan:** Provide a detailed project action plan for completion of the proposed project. For planning purposes the project should commence within six months of the award notification, which is typically announced in October. If funded an updated action plan/project timeline will be required with the submission of each quarterly progress report.

5. Implementation and Maintenance: Describe who will oversee the project and who will manage the completed project area; include level of expertise and how the project will be operated and maintained. If arrangements exist (or are anticipated) for others to perform the operation, programming or maintenance describe those arrangements. Provide assurance from each contributor. Discuss operation and maintenance budget considerations.

SECTION 7: Location Maps, Site Photos, Project Sketches, etc.

The Applicant should provide any maps, drawings, site photos, project sketches, etc, which may be pertinent to the project.

SECTION 8: Letters of Commitment

The Applicant should provide letters of commitment for all services, cash, labor, equipment, materials which will be used as a match for the project.

SECTION 9: Evidence of Non-Profit Status

Applicants other than public agencies must provide evidence of their non-profit status with their application. Any of the following is acceptable evidence.

1. A copy of the applicant organization's listing in the Internal Revenue Service's most recent list of tax-exempt organization described in section 501(c) (3) of the IRS Code; or
2. A copy of a current valid IRS tax exemption certificate.

REVIEW CRITERIA

Applications will be reviewed against the following criteria:

1. Availability of Parks and Open Space Program bond funds or other funds.
2. Elements of the proposed project that support or advance the objectives of the *Collin County Parks and Open Space Strategic Plan* (October 2001).
3. Adequacy of funds and level of commitment from other sources to cover the matching portion of funding. At **minimum** the matching ratio must be dollar for dollar. Dependent on the project proposed, a higher matching ratio may be required based on the recommendations of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board and approval by the Commissioners' Court.
4. Perception of need and benefit to the citizens of Collin County.

APPROVAL PROCESS

The Parks Foundation Advisory Board will review applications submitted prior to the announced funding selection deadline. The decision to recommend or not recommend an application for funding will be determined solely by how well the project meets the application criteria in the opinions of the members of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board.

If a two-thirds (2/3) majority of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board accepts the proposal as complete, finds that it satisfies the review criteria and determines that adequate funds are available, they will submit the proposals along with their recommendations to Commissioners' Court for consideration. The final decision to approve or reject the recommendation will be at the discretion of Commissioners' Court. If Commissioners' Court approves the recommendation, funds will be awarded. Prior to commencement of the Project an Interlocal or Funding Agreement must be executed between all involved parties.

PAYMENT OF FUNDS

Funds will be made available as reimbursement for approved project expenses. Expenses incurred prior to full execution of the Interlocal or Funding Agreement are not eligible for reimbursement. Direct payments may be made under special circumstances for large expenditures or for smaller communities or organizations on the recommendation of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board and approval by the Commissioners' Court.

RIGHT TO REALLOCATE FUNDS

It is the responsibility of the Parks Foundation Advisory Board to actively monitor the progress of approved projects. If the Parks Foundation Advisory Board determines that an approved project is not likely to come to fruition within a responsible length of time or the scope of project has changed considerably, the project applicant may be given an opportunity to submit a revised proposal for consideration. Based on the merits of the revised proposal, the Parks Foundation Advisory Board may vote to request the Commissioners' Court reallocating the funds for use of the revised project. If Commissioners' Court approves the reallocation of funds, a new Interlocal or Funding Agreement must be executed between all involved parties prior to commencement of the revised project.