

MUNICIPAL PARKS AND TRAILS GRANT PROGRAM

2024 Program Guidelines

The Tompkins County 2024 budget includes \$50,000 to fund small grants to municipalities within Tompkins County that wish to improve local parks and/or trails. The program is administered by the Department of Planning and Sustainability.

Eligible Applicants and Funding

- City, town, and village governments within Tompkins County are eligible to apply for these funds.
- Grant awards of up to \$5,000 are available to fund improvements to publicly managed or supported parks and/or trails.
- Municipalities may apply for more than one project; however, the total funding for any one municipality shall not exceed \$5,000.
- A resolution from an elected body or a support letter from a supervisor or mayor is required in the application.

Eligible Projects

1. Park or trail infrastructure (e.g., construction of new trail segments, water connections for restrooms or fountains)
2. Park or trail improvements (e.g., benches, trash cans, lighting, tree plantings)
3. Park or trail recreational equipment (e.g., playground equipment, soccer goalposts)
4. Land acquisition for parks or trails, including easements
5. Staffing costs for installing infrastructure, improvements, or equipment funded by the grant. (Note: programming and staffing for operations are ineligible for this program.)

Evaluation Criteria

In addition to the criteria listed below, preference will be given to municipalities that did not receive funding in previous rounds.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Degree to which the project is documented as a priority in a County or locally adopted planning document
- Readiness of the project to be completed within six months of grant award
- Demonstrated need for the funding
- Likelihood that the project will increase the number of park/trail visitors, enhance their experience, or increase the length of time spent at the park/trail
- Demonstrated history of successful completion of other projects funded by the County (if applicable)

Process

Eligible entities will be informed about the grant opportunity, process, and guidelines in advance of the program opening. The online application will open in the spring and close approximately six weeks later. The application form will be accessible via a link on the Department of Planning and Sustainability webpage (<http://tompkinscountyny.gov/planning>). The application will ask for contact information, amount requested (with detailed budget breakdown), project category, location, description, timeline, documentation in County or locally adopted plan, SEQR requirements, and documentation of municipal support.

After the deadline, project proposals will be reviewed by the Tompkins County Department of Planning and Sustainability, with approval by the Commissioner of Planning and Sustainability. Applications will be reviewed for completeness and evaluated based on the evaluation criteria identified above. Within one month of the application deadline, applicants will be notified if their proposal will receive funding or not. Upon approval, the County will prepare a contract for the awardee's signature. The County will make payments to the municipality upon receipt of documentation of project completion and funds spent.

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