



ARKANSAS
OFFICE OF
OUTDOOR RECREATION

GREAT STRIDES/ TRAILS FOR LIFE



**FY26
APPLICATION
GUIDE**

OUTDOOR RECREATION GRANTS PROGRAM

This guide is designed to assist you through the application process.
All Great Strides/Trails for Life Grants are administered by the
Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism.

If you have questions, please feel free to call or write us at:

Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism
Outdoor Recreation Grants Program
1 Capitol Mall, Suite 4B.215
Little Rock, Arkansas 72201
Telephone Number: (501) 682-1301
Web Site: www.outdoorgrants.com

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Introduction

This application guide provides an overview of the Great Strides/Trails for Life Grant, eligibility requirements, and documents necessary to complete your grant application. Also included are explanations of required forms, procedures, and processes related to your application, and the selection process for awarding grant funds to successful applicants. Please call our office and we'll try to answer any questions that you may have. Good luck!

What Is the Great Strides Program/Trails for Life Grant?

The Great Strides Program/Trails for Life Grant is a no-match grant that is administered through the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism (ADPHT). This grant is intended to help communities in Arkansas develop smoke-free trails or other public outdoor recreation facilities that encourage physical exercise for health reasons. Funding for this grant is provided through a portion of the state Master Tobacco Settlement Award.

How Much Funding Is Available?

Applicants may request up to \$250,000 in grant funding based on cost estimates and/or quotes for facilities included in the application.

Who Is Eligible to Receive a Trails for Life Grant?

Funding assistance through Trails for Life Grant is available to all incorporated municipalities and counties in Arkansas. (Unincorporated communities must apply through the county). Applications must be signed by the Chief Executive Officer – Mayor, City Manager, or County Judge – of the local government unit applying for assistance. While other interested groups, such as non-profits or advocacy groups, may provide donated funds, labor, or other assistance to the project, all expenses must be invoiced to, and paid by, the project sponsor to be eligible for reimbursement.

How Do I Get a Grant?

Applicants must submit all Required Materials before the application deadline and have a sufficient score on the Great Strides/Trails for Life Scoring System, to be considered for a grant award. The highest scoring applications will be presented to the Great Strides/Trails for Life Grants Advisory Committee (Committee) for funding consideration. The Committee's funding recommendations will be submitted to the ADPHT Cabinet Secretary for review. A detailed explanation of the application process is outlined in the following section.

How Does the Great Strides/Trails for Life Grant Work?

The Outdoor Recreation Grants Program (Program) staff may make recommendations for barrier-free access, facility layout and location, and other matters relating to park development. Grant funds may not be used as a match for any other grant program administered by ADPHT or any other state agencies.

Great Strides/Trails for Life Grant applicants who receive a grant award are referred to as “grantees” in this guide. Grantees are responsible for adhering to procurement laws for their jurisdiction including local ordinances. Grant funding cannot be increased after it has been awarded. Grantees may use grant monies only for facilities and improvements identified in their application. Grantees may use their own funds to cover costs that exceed the grant award, but grant funding is final and cannot be increased once awarded.

Before any grant funds are released and before any grant-funded construction may begin, the mayor or county judge will be required to sign a Contract Agreement with our agency. Prior to receiving a fully-executed Contract Agreement, the applicant may, at their own expense, complete any site preparations for which grant funds will not be involved. The Contract Agreement will be based on funding recommendations from the Committee and approval by Program staff.

Projects should be completed within one year of contract date. Failure to complete a project within this time frame may affect Grantee’s eligibility to be awarded future grants from the Program. Upon completion, the grantee will send their Project Officer proof of all expenditures and the Project Officer will verify that the project was completed as outlined in the Contract Agreement.

Application Process

Step 1: Access the Website

The Great Strides/Trails for Life Grant application can be found our website at www.outdoorgrants.com.

Step 2: Set Up Account on Foundant Portal

When applying for the Great Strides/Trails for Life Grant online, you will be directed to the Foundant portal to create a new account or log in using your existing account.

Logon

Email Address*

Password*

[Log On](#) [Create New Account](#)

[Forgot your Password?](#)

Welcome to the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism's Office of Outdoor Recreation - Outdoor Recreation Grants Program's grant application page!

New Users: Please click on "Create New Account" to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Note: ONLY Cities and Counties may apply for grant funding. If a consultant or third party is working with a City or County, the application must be submitted by the entity seeking funding. Applications may only be submitted by a third party on behalf of a City/County if the City or County seeking funds creates an account and adds the third party as a collaborator to work on the grant application. Instructions to add a collaborator can be found [here](#).

Please view the video (6 minutes long) and written (with screenshots) tutorial using [this link](#).

Existing Users: Please enter your credentials and log in. If you forgot your password, please use the "Forgot your Password?" link to the left to reset your password.

Questions: Please contact our office at ArkansasGoOutdoors@arkansas.gov

New Users

Please click on the **"Create New Account"** button to complete the registration process and create your logon credentials.

Returning Users

Please login using the email account associated with your profile.

Note: Only cities and counties may apply for grant funding. If a consultant or third party is working with the city or county, they can be added as a collaborator to work on the grant application.

There is a video tutorial about the Foundant application process and the collaborator feature by clicking on the links available on the login page of the portal.

Step 3: Submit Your Application

All applications must be submitted online by the designated application deadline as found on page 5 of this guide. Please retain a copy of your application for your reference.

Step 4: Application Review and Scoring

Application review and scoring begins immediately after the application deadline. Project Officers will review applications for deficiencies and score applications with the Scoring System which can be found on page 16 of this guide. Once scoring is complete, applications will be ranked from highest to lowest scores.

Step 5: Committee Review & Recommendations

The Committee will review applications based on the information submitted and will make funding recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism for their approval. Project Officers may not, and do not, advocate for individual projects. Staff do not have the authority to release the Committee's recommendations to the public prior to review by the Cabinet Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism or by the Governor's Office.

Step 6: Grant Award Announcements

Applicants will receive the results of the hearing through the Foundant portal as soon as recommendations are approved and certified.

The Application Process



Important Dates to Remember

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| March 10, 2025 | Grant applications available on the website. |
| June 30, 2025 | APPLICATION DEADLINE |
| Week of August 25, 2025 | Grant Hearings |

Application Checklist

Required for Application

City Council Resolution or Quorum Court Order

All applications must be accompanied by a City Council Resolution or Quorum Court Order from the current application year authorizing the project application and acknowledging that the site will be deemed smoke-free. Please include the wording shown in the example on page 12.

Site Plan

A site plan of the proposed project area. A site plan is required with your application. An example of a site plan is on page 13.

Proof of Land Control

A copy of the deed, lease, or a letter of intent to lease or sell property for the project site must be included with the application. An example of a letter of intent may be found on page 14.

Estimated Project Cost

Applications must include a cost estimate which should be based on quotes from an equipment vendor(s) and/or contractor(s). Facilities and project elements listed on the Estimated Project Cost form will be the basis of the Contract Agreement.

Applicants may use the following means to determine facility costs:

- A landscape architect, engineer, or architect may develop a cost estimate for the project
- Quotes or estimates for materials from local building supply vendors
- Quotes or estimates from local contractors
- Quotes or estimates from park equipment vendors

When the project is complete, the grantee may use residual grant funds to construct barrier-free access to existing facilities at the project site. Other expenditures of residual grant funds must have prior approval of department staff.

Required for Additional Points

Scoring System

Please review the Great Strides/Trails for Life Scoring System on page 16 to see how applications will be scored.

Appendix A: Public Meeting Standards

What is a Public Meeting?

“Public Meeting” refers to the regularly scheduled monthly meeting of the project sponsor’s governing body (City Council or Quorum Court). For the purposes of this application, the meeting must be held during the same calendar year (i.e., after January 1st) that the application is due.

Discussing the Project in the Public Meeting

In order to receive points for holding a public meeting, the proposed project (or proposal to submit a grant application) must be listed as a separate agenda item for that month’s meeting. Additionally, the meeting must be advertised as open to the public. Applicants may use the advertising method normally used to publicize the monthly meeting.

Documenting the Public Meeting

Applications must include the following:

1. Copy of the meeting agenda and minutes
2. Proof of meeting advertisement that includes
 - i. **Method of advertisement**
 - ii. **Date of publication**
3. Sign-in sheet

Method of advertisement may be documented by providing a copy of the advertisement itself, e.g., printing a screenshot of the advertisement from the sponsor’s official web page or social media account. If date of publication (such as a time stamp) is not clearly visible, **indicate the date** in some other way, such as writing it by hand on the document.

In the case of advertisement not readily reproduced (e.g., posted notices), the sponsor’s Chief Executive (Mayor / City Manager / County Judge) may produce a **signed** document (see page 15) articulating and affirming 2(i) and 2(ii) above. Applications utilizing signed Chief Executive statements as proof of advertising **must still include a copy of the meeting agenda, sign-in sheet, and minutes.**

Appendix B: Land Control (Scoring)

Land Control Scores

Different degrees of land control demonstrated by the grant sponsor receive different point totals in the Priority Rating System. While they are scored differently (including some that receive zero points), all of these forms of land control are eligible for grant consideration.

Tier 1 (4 points): Ownership OR Lease from Federal or State Agency

- “Ownership” means the sponsor demonstrates control of the project site amounting to sole ownership. A Warranty Deed is ideal, but other documentation, such as tax and parcel records, may be submitted as proof of ownership. (Proof of ownership other than warranty deed is subject to review.)
- A lease from a State or Federal agency for Agency-owned property is scored the same as outright ownership. Leases set to expire before the 25-year Great Strides/Trails For Life grant obligation must have an option for renewal.

Tier 2 (2 points): Lease from non-profit entity organized as sponsored community

Applies to unincorporated communities sponsored by the County, wherein the community is organized as a non-profit *operating as the unincorporated community*. A common example is found in towns that are no longer incorporated, but where buildings such as school houses or gyms remain from the time when the community was a functioning municipality, and the community has organized as a non-profit group in order to own and operate the site(s) or building(s) in question, with the non-profit bearing or incorporating the name of the community.

Tier 3 (0 points): Lease from private individual or organization, or any semi-public organization (profit or non-profit) that is not organized as the sponsored community.

Project sites leased from individuals or groups--even non-profits, service organizations, and other admirable enterprises, e.g., a local youth organization--not explicitly organized as the sponsored community **will be eligible** for grant consideration but **will not receive points**.

Appendix C: Grant Rules and Guidelines

Proof of Land Control

The Applicant must own, lease, or have a written option to buy or lease property for proposed park development. The project site must be of sufficient size, suitable for park development, and convenient for local residents.

If the applicant does not presently own or lease the proposed site for development, they must submit a letter from the owner of the site expressing their willingness to sell or lease the property for a term of at least 25 years from the date of the application (See example letter on page 16). Applicants who presently own or lease the proposed site must include a copy of the deed or lease with their application. Applicants who submit a lease that is set to expire before the end of the 25-year grant period should include a letter of intent-to-lease (page 16) reflecting the 25-year life of the grant.

Funds will not be released to grantee until a fully executed deed or lease is submitted. If the property is ever sold, the lease is terminated, or the site is abandoned or grossly neglected prior to the 25-year term, the grantee may be required to reimburse the State of Arkansas for the total amount of the grant.

Licensed Design Professional

Up to 12% of the Great Strides/Trails for Life grant may be used for professional design services. Applicants who receive a grant award will be required to retain the services of a landscape architect, engineer, architect, or other relevant professional licensed to practice in the State of Arkansas.

Applicants will receive 2 points on their Great Strides/Trails for Life Scoring if they include a letter from the design professional that they intend to use, on their letterhead, stating that they will assist with the project upon award.

After applicants are notified of a grant award, the grantee shall retain a design professional to develop a site layout plan clearly showing proposed facility locations. Construction drawings and specifications will be required for site-built facilities. The design professional will oversee construction of the project and ensure that the development is being constructed in accordance with plans and specifications.

Administrative Services

Up to 10% of the Great Strides/Trails for Life grant may be used for administrative services. This is an optional expense.

Barrier-Free Access

Plans must clearly show provisions for barrier-free access, consistent with the provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act - Accessibility Guidelines (ADA), for all grant-funded facilities. A person confined to a wheelchair should have the ability to travel unassisted from a designated accessible parking space in the parking lot to each of the grant-funded facilities. Accessible walkways and ramps shall be paved and follow the general contours of the site with consideration given to slopes, cross slopes, surfaces, widths, and distances.

Post-Completion Responsibilities

Upon completion of the project, the Grantee must submit copies of invoices and canceled checks documenting that all grant funds were spent and that those expenditures were for project facilities and design expenses itemized on the Contract Agreement. A permanent Great Strides/Trails for Life program acknowledgment sign will be provided to the Grantee for placement in a prominent location in the park.

Park Use

Great Strides/Trails for Life grant-funded facilities must be open to the general public at all reasonable times and consistent with guidelines outlined in the Americans with Disabilities Act - Accessibility Guidelines (ADA) as amended. Park facilities may occasionally be reserved for special events or closed for limited periods for security purposes. Grantee may make reasonable rules governing park use.

Facilities developed with assistance from the Great Strides/Trails for Life grant program must be kept in good condition for public use and kept open for public use at reasonable hours of the day and times of the year. If the facilities are ever to be locked, the Grantee must post a sign in a prominent location indicating the times the facilities are available for public use.

Eligible Expenses

The Outdoor Recreation Grants Program staff will review all design drawings and specifications submitted by each Great Strides/Trails for Life grantee and determine if the proposed development is acceptable. Priority will be given to facilities that provide a balance of passive and active recreation activities for children and adults.

Great Strides/Trails for Life grant funds can only be used to develop walking trails and associated facilities including accessible lighting, parking, signage, and benches. Grant funds must be spent for construction, materials, labor, and fixed equipment only. Tools, construction equipment, portable recreation equipment, supplies or repairs to existing facilities are not eligible grant expenses. Salaries for public officials, city workers, administration fees, and travel are not eligible grant expenses.

Grant funds may be used for:

- Construction and/or installation of open-air outdoor recreation facilities
- Renovation of existing outdoor recreation facilities.

Ineligible Expenses

Grant funds may not be used for:

- Enclosed structures including restrooms or concession stands
- Purchase or lease of park property
- Regular maintenance of existing parks
- Removable equipment or facilities
- Purchase of tools and construction equipment
- Supplies such as gloves, bats, balls, etc.
- Work done by public officials and/or city workers
- In-kind equipment use or in-kind labor

Appendix D: Typical Great Strides/Trails for Life Facilities

The following is a partial listing of typical outdoor recreation facilities and associated requirements that Great Strides/Trails for Life funds may be used to construct or install:

Benches

Benches purchased with Great Strides/Trails for Life funds must be permanently mounted with the seat 18"-20" above grade.

Exercise Trails

Ideally, trails should be a minimum of 8' wide to accommodate multiple users at the same time. Recommended layout of the trail is a serpentine loop of at least 1/8 of a mile in length with one or more benches installed along the trail to provide resting station(s) for trail users.

Asphalt paving over a crushed stone base is preferred but concrete is also an acceptable trail surface. Grades should not exceed 5% linear-slope and 2% cross-slope.

Parking

Parking should be graded for positive drainage and surfaced with compacted crushed stone, asphalt, or concrete. Parking lot must include at least one clearly marked wheelchair-accessible paved parking space that shall be a minimum of 9' wide with an adjacent 5' wide access aisle that is striped. The access aisle shall connect to a paved walkway for barrier free access to all funded park facilities.

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

RESOLUTION No. _____

WHEREAS, _____, Arkansas recognizes the need to provide public recreation facilities for its local citizens and visitors, and

WHEREAS, the **City or County** wishes to apply for Great Strides/Trails for Life grant funds through the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism to develop a smoke-free public trail at the following location:
_____; and

WHEREAS, the **Mayor or County Judge** and the **City Council or Quorum Court** understands that if granted funds for park development, they must provide land, by lease or ownership, on which to develop park facilities; and

WHEREAS, _____, Arkansas will sign a contract agreeing to provide the necessary resources to maintain this park and facilities for a period of 25 years;

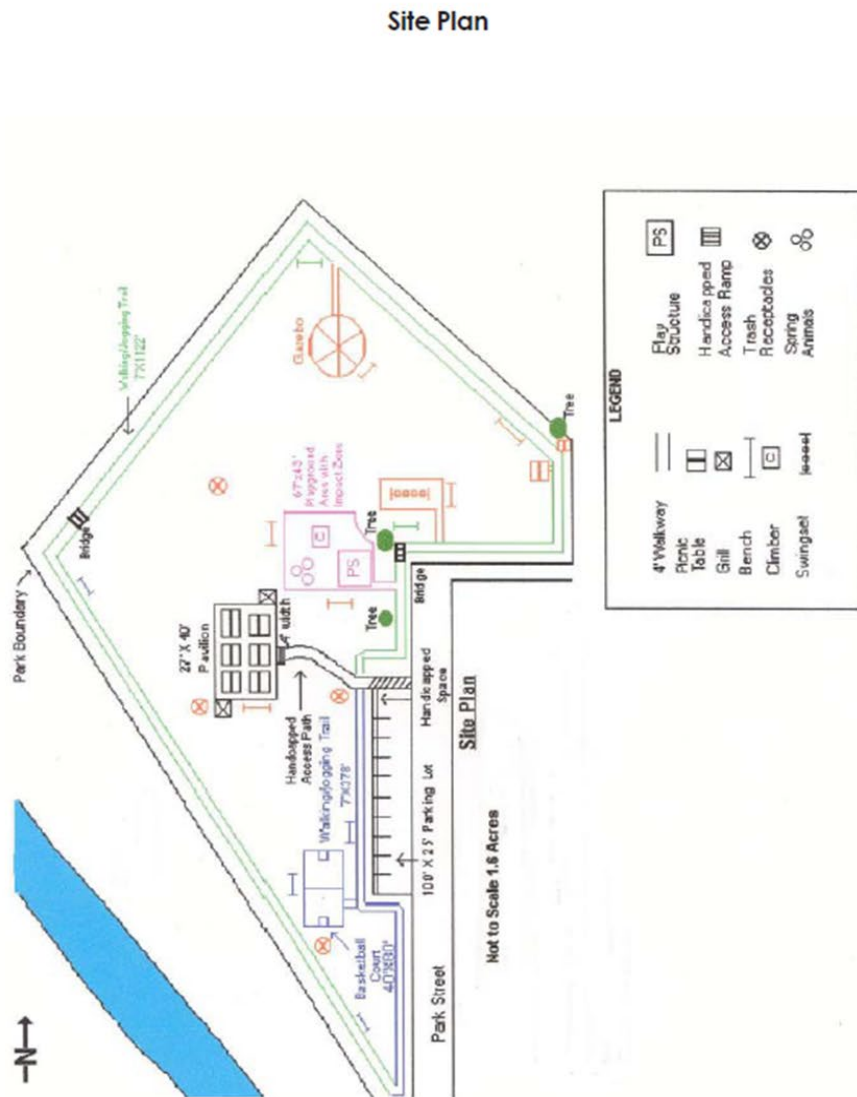
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED the **City Council or Quorum Court** of _____, Arkansas hereby authorizes the **Mayor or County Judge** to submit an application for grant funding to the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism to develop a public trail.

Passed this _____ day of _____, 2025

APPROVED: **Mayor or County Judge**

Clerk

EXAMPLE



EXAMPLE

June 30, 2099

The Honorable Mayor or County Judge's name
P.O. Box 1234
Sampleville, Arkansas 72960

Dear Mayor or County Judge's name

I am hereby submitting this letter confirming my intent to sell or lease for a term of 25 (minimum) years to the City of Sampleville, a ___-acre parcel of land located at street address. The execution of this sale or lease is contingent on the City of Sampleville receiving a FY 2026 Great Strides Program/Trails for Life Grant from the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism to develop a public walking trail.

If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at (123) 456-7890.

Sincerely,

Owner signature

Owner name

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

June 30, 2099

I am hereby submitting this letter confirming this grant proposal was a dedicated agenda item at the **June 7, 2099** monthly meeting of the **City of Sampleville City Council / Sample County Quorum Court**. I also certify that the meeting was open to the public, was advertised in advance of the meeting, and that the grant proposal was explicitly noted in the advertisement, the method of which was as follows:

METHOD OF ADVERTISEMENT: Posted Notices

LOCATION: Sampleville Hardware Store, Sampleville Post Office, Sampleville Grocery Store.

DATE: Posted on May 30, 2099

A copy of the official meeting agenda, minutes, and sign-in sheet is included with this application. If I can be of further assistance, please do not hesitate to call me at **(123) 456-7890**.

Sincerely,

Mayor/County Judge signature

Mayor/County Judge name

EXAMPLE

EXAMPLE

Appendix F: Great Strides/Trails for Life Scoring System

Documents submitted after the application deadline will not be scored.

1. Applicant provided a site plan that identifies all application line items and ADA parking and associated pathway(s) providing barrier-free access to proposed facilities (Identify ADA parking and pathway(s) that will provide access to proposed facilities even if ADA parking and/or pathway(s) already exist):

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Yes | 2 |
| Site plan shows some elements | 0 |

2. Applicant provided documentation that the proposed project was presented as a dedicated agenda item at a City Council /Quorum Court monthly meeting, per instructions on page 7.

| | |
|----------------------|---|
| Fully documented | 2 |
| Partially documented | 1 |
| Not documented | 0 |

3. Applicant provided price quotes **from vendors and/or contractors** for facilities or elements of the proposed project:

Applicant does not need a quote from A/E to meet this requirement

** Price quotes created & submitted by A/E do not need vendor sheets*

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| All facilities and elements | 4 |
| Some facilities and elements | 2 |
| Did not provide price quotes | 0 |

4. Land control - Applicant provided documentation affirming land control in the following manner (please see page 8 of this guide for explanation of each form of land control):

| | |
|---|---|
| Site is sponsor-owned or is leased from a State or Federal agency. | 4 |
| Site is owned by a non-profit organized as the community being sponsored. | 2 |
| Site is leased from a private individual, private or semi-private group, or non-profit not organized as the unincorporated community being sponsored. | 0 |

6. Applicant provided a signed letter from a licensed design professional stating they will assist with the project upon award:

| | |
|---------|---|
| Did | 2 |
| Did not | 0 |

Appendix G: Application Assistance

Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism
Outdoor Recreation Grants Program
1 Capitol Mall, Suite 4B.215
Little Rock, AR 72201
(501) 682-1301

Planning and Development Districts

**Central Arkansas Planning
and Development District**
902 N. Center Street
Lonoke, AR 72086
(501) 676-2721
<https://www.capdd.org>

**Southwest Arkansas Planning
and Development District**
P.O. Box 767
Magnolia, AR 71753
(870) 234-4030
<https://www.southwestar.org>

**East Arkansas Planning
and Development District**
2905 King Street
Jonesboro, AR 72403
(870) 932-3957
<https://www.eapdd.com>

**West Central Arkansas Planning
and Development District**
P.O. Box 6409
Hot Springs, AR 71902
(501) 525-7577
<https://www.wcapdd.org>

**Northwest Arkansas Economic
Development District**
818 Hwy 62-65-412 North
Harrison, AR 72601
(870) 741-5404
<https://www.nwaedd.org>

**Western Arkansas Planning
and Development District**
1109 South 16th Street
Fort Smith, AR 72901
(479) 785-2651
<https://www.wapdd.org>

**Northwest Arkansas Regional
Planning Commission**
1311 Clayton Street
Springdale, AR 72762
(479) 751-7125
<https://www.nwarpc.org>

**White River Planning
and Development District**
P.O. Box 2396
Batesville, AR 72503-2396
(870) 793-5233
<https://www.wrpdd.org>

**Southeast Arkansas Economic
Development District**
P.O. Box 6806
Pine Bluff, AR 71611
(870) 536-1971
<https://www.southeastarkansas.org>