



Community Challenge Grant Opportunity

Request for Proposals (RFP)

About the Community Challenge Grant Program

The Anchorage Park Foundation (APF) invites applications for the 2026 Community Challenge Grant Program, a competitive grant opportunity supporting community-led projects to improve Anchorage parks, trails, greenbelts, and outdoor recreation.

Offered every two years with generous support from Rasmuson Foundation, the Community Challenge Grant Program empowers residents, neighborhood groups, and local organizations to take an active role in caring for and improving public green spaces. These grants support projects that provide public benefit, build community, and encourage stewardship.

Important Dates

- **Friday, January 30, 2026:** Request for proposals opens
- **Tuesday, March 10, 2026 – 5:30 pm:** Applicant Assistance Workshop (online)
- **Thursday, March 19, 2026 – 5:30 pm:** Applicant Assistance Workshop (in person, Russian Jack Springs Park Chalet)
- **Friday, April 10, 2026 – 5:00 pm:** Application deadline
- **May 15, 2026:** Grantee kickoff event
- **May 15, 2026 – October 31, 2027:** Project period

Funding & Match Requirements

A total of \$300,000 is available for the 2026 grant cycle. Grant awards range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. A 1:1 community match is required. For every dollar requested from APF, applicants must provide one dollar in match. Eligible match sources include volunteer time, donated materials or professional services, cash donations, or non-federal grants that directly contribute to the project.

Federal funds may not be used as match. All match sources must be clearly described in the project budget narrative and secured by the end of the grant period. Applicants are encouraged to contact APF to confirm allowable match sources.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include a wide range of community-based groups, such as nonprofit organizations, community councils, tribal entities, schools and PTAs, recreation or sports groups, community-focused businesses, and other similar organizations. Informal neighborhood or community groups made up of at least two individuals are also eligible to apply.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects must be located on, or directly benefit, public land within the Municipality of Anchorage and demonstrate a clear and meaningful public benefit. Eligible projects improve or enhance access to municipal parks, trails, greenbelts, recreation centers, or other public green spaces and support community use, stewardship, and enjoyment. Past Challenge Grant projects can be viewed [here](#). Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following general categories:

Trails, Access, and Connectivity

Projects that build, restore, or improve trails, trail access points, neighborhood social trails, or connections to parks and recreation facilities.

Environmental Stewardship and Habitat Improvement

Projects focused on invasive species removal, native tree planting, landscaping, streambank or habitat restoration, and long-term ecological health, including efforts supported by volunteers or Youth Employment in Parks crews.

Recreation Facilities and Amenities

Projects that repair, construct, or install park and recreation amenities such as fences, dog waste stations, exercise equipment, scoreboards, timing systems, or equipment that enhances the public experience at sports facilities and municipal recreation facilities.

Community Gathering, Art, and Placemaking

Projects that enhance public spaces through creative placemaking, including public art installations, little libraries, interpretive signage, educational panels, and community gardens or food forests.

Youth, Education, and Learning Spaces

Projects that create or enhance outdoor learning labs, school-adjacent park improvements, and other education-focused uses of public greenspaces.

Safety, Security, and Maintenance

Projects that improve safety and usability of public spaces through security features, lighting, maintenance upgrades, or durable design improvements.

This list is intended to be illustrative rather than exhaustive. Projects that align with the intent of the Community Challenge Grant Program and provide a clear public benefit to public land within Anchorage will be considered.

Applicant Assistance Workshops

Two optional workshops will provide guidance to prospective applicants. Workshops include support from Anchorage Parks and Recreation planners and landscape architects from the Alaska Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

1. **March 10, 2026 – 5:30 pm** (online)
2. **March 19, 2026 – 5:30 pm** (in person) @ Russian Jack Springs Park Chalet, 1600 Lidia Selkregg Lane

Please RSVP by emailing Diana@anchorageparkfoundation.org to receive the meeting link or confirm in-person attendance.

How to Apply

To apply, download and complete the [Community Challenge Grant Application](#). The project narrative should respond to all required proposal content listed below and **must not exceed three pages, excluding the budget**. In addition to the narrative and budget, applicants must include all required supporting documentation including photos and/or a map of the project location, and a letter of support for the project.

Submit all application materials together as a single PDF or Word file via email with the subject line **“Community Challenge Grant”** to info@anchorageparkfoundation.org. Applications must be received by **5:00 pm on Friday, April 10, 2026**, to be considered. Only complete submissions received by the deadline will be reviewed.

Review Considerations

Funding decisions are guided by the criteria outlined below, which support a fair and transparent review process and reflect the Anchorage Park Foundation’s priorities and community values. These considerations are not exhaustive and may be weighed alongside other factors as funding allows. Applicants are encouraged to clearly address each area in their proposal narrative.

1. **Community Impact and Stewardship**

Projects are evaluated on the extent to which they provide a clear public benefit, engage volunteers or community members, and demonstrate long-term stewardship of public spaces.

2. **Alignment with Anchorage Park Foundation Priorities**

Consideration is given to how well the project advances one or more APF priorities, including Youth Employment in Parks, Schools on Trails, invasive species removal and tree planting, trails and trail access, the Alaska Long Trail, and Indigenous place naming.

3. **Project Readiness and Funding Capacity**

Reviewers assess the applicant’s readiness to move forward, the feasibility of the proposed timeline, and the ability to manage project funds and required match.

4. **Design Quality and Maintenance Planning**

Projects are reviewed for quality and appropriateness of design, durability, and the clarity and realism of plans for ongoing maintenance and long-term care.

Public Process and Permitting

Some projects may require public involvement or approvals, including community council review, permitting, or review by municipal commissions.

Contact

Potential applicants are encouraged to contact the Anchorage Park Foundation with questions or to discuss project ideas—staff are happy to provide guidance and support on the application process.

Diana Rhoades, Programs Director
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Diana@Anchorageparkfoundation.org

Thank you to Rasmuson Foundation, the Municipality of Anchorage Parks and Recreation Department, and the Anchorage Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects for partnering with the Anchorage Park Foundation on this grant program.

Anchorage Park Foundation is an equal opportunity provider.