



**THE BERGEN COUNTY OPEN SPACE, RECREATION,
FLOODPLAIN PROTECTION, FARMLAND & HISTORIC
PRESERVATION TRUST FUND**

INSTRUCTIONS & APPLICATIONS

for

YEAR 2026

**MUNICIPAL PARK IMPROVEMENT
PROJECTS**

in the

TRUST FUND MUNICIPAL PROGRAM

NOTICES

- ❖ **Municipalities that currently have more than \$1,500,000 in funding from the Open Space Trust Fund are not eligible to apply for additional funding during this year's grant cycle.**

- ❖ **Trust Fund Municipal Park Improvement Program Rules & Procedures Manual**
The Trust Fund Municipal Park Improvement Program Rules & Procedures Manual document constitutes the Trust Fund rules governing the award of matching grants to Bergen County municipal governments, and qualified nonprofit organizations, for the development/redevelopment of outdoor recreation facilities. These rules establish project eligibility requirements, application requirements, funding award criteria, matching grant terms, and program administrative requirements. The Manual can be found on the Trust Fund web page.

- ❖ **Trust Fund Municipal Park Improvement Program Declaration of Intent**
All prospective applicants to the Trust Fund Municipal Program for Park Improvements must complete the **Declaration of Intent to Apply Form** for its proposed municipal park improvement project for 2026 grant funding. The Form can be found on the Trust Fund web page.

MUNICIPAL PARK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

2026 APPLICATION & INSTRUCTIONS

***PLEASE NOTE THIS APPLICATION IS FOR
OUTDOOR MUNICIPAL PARK RECREATION IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS ONLY.**

This application requires the following information:

Applicant: Provide the basic contact information of the municipal applicant.

Project Information: Provide the physical location and address, legal ownership, and brief description of the proposed project. Attach appropriate project location maps.

Project Funding Sources & Total Project Cost: Provide the specific request of the County Trust Fund. Identify other amounts and sources of available project funding. State the total project cost.

Budget: A detailed estimate of the cost to develop the proposed project that specifies units, quantities of materials to be utilized, and project elements, must be prepared, and signed, by a New Jersey-licensed engineer, architect, or landscape architect.

Consistency with Municipal Master Plan: Answer whether the proposed project is consistent with identified goals in the municipal master plan, and if so, then cite document reference.

Americans With Disability Act Compliance: Projects are consistent with the Playground Safety Subcode for New Jersey ([N.J.A.C. 5:23-11](#)), the Barrier-Free Subcode for New Jersey ([N.J.A.C. 5:23-7](#)) and Americans with Disability Act and the appropriate minimum accessibility guidelines for new and altered facilities; as per the Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (www.access-board.gov).

Historic Preservation Assessment: If applicable, describe any existing historic buildings, structures, sites, or historic districts listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, included in the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey, or in your municipality's master plan that are located within or contiguous to the project site. For assistance, contact Elaine Gold, Bergen County Division of Cultural & Historic Affairs, at: egold@co.bergen.nj.us. Attach all relevant information/communications.

Facility Improvement & Restoration Factors: Identify all applicable information. If the park improvement project impacts an undisturbed or natural portion of the project site, please submit results of the Natural Heritage Data search (available from the NJ DEP's Office of Natural Lands Management at <http://www.nj.gov/dep/parksandforests/natural/heritage/> or by calling (609) 984-1339. The Natural Heritage Database is a continuously updated inventory of rare plants and animal species and representative ecological communities in New Jersey. It is the state's most comprehensive, centralized source of information on rare plants, animals, and natural communities. The Database is a compilation of information from a broad range of sources including museum and herbarium collection records, publications, knowledgeable experts, and fieldwork. It contains information collected by the Office of Natural Lands Management on rare plants, animals, and ecological communities as well as data on rare animals provided by the Endangered and Nongame Species Program. The Database is continuously updated and improved as new data is obtained. Information from this database is available to assist individuals in the preservation of habitat for rare species and ecological

communities. The results of the search must be attached to your application.

Identify all required project permits.

Estimated Project Completion Date. Trust Fund grant projects must be completed within 24 months from the date of final County Commissioner grant approval via resolution. Final Commissioner approval via resolution for this round is anticipated by or about November 2026. Provide approximate date for completing the project within the allotted time frame. Banking or stockpiling of Trust Fund grants is not permitted. Failure to complete the project within the grant contract time period will result in forfeiture of the grant for failure to comply with the terms of the Trust Fund Project Contract.

Project Narrative: Briefly describe the proposed project and explain why it is necessary.

Project Scope of Work: State the exact park improvements to be undertaken using the County Trust Fund grant. Be specific. What are the park features or elements being improved?

Applicant Certification: Sign and attest to the Application.

Application Questions & Checklist: Answer questions and review for completeness. Note whether Board of Education property or facilities are located on the site of the proposed park improvements.

Public Hearing:

The applicant is required to hold a **Public Hearing** in this calendar year on its proposed park development project **before** it submits its application in order to gauge public support. The applicant shall publish two (2) notices of the public hearing in the official newspaper of the municipality. One public notice must publicize the public hearing in a paid display advertisement at least 10 days before the hearing. The size of the display advertisement is at the discretion of applicant. However, the size should not be smaller than a “business card size” (approximately 3.22 inches wide by 2.36 inches high). The second public notice is to be published in the Legal Notice section of the newspaper at least 10 days before the hearing. The hearing notice must specifically reference the proposed Bergen County Open Space Trust Fund application. The public hearing must be held in the evening, and may be held as part of a regular public meeting, as long as the hearing is properly advertised. A sample Public Notice announcement is provided at the end of this application.

Municipal Resolution:

Following the municipal Public Hearing, the governing body is to pass the attached sample resolution authorizing the submission of the Trust Fund Municipal Program Application.

Grant Funding:

Applicants are required to provide a dollar-for-dollar cash match for any Open Space Trust Funds awarded. “Sweat equity” work does not apply toward applicant’s required cash match. Use of municipal labor does not apply toward applicant’s required cash match. If funding is available, soft costs, such as architectural/engineering/surveying services, fees, permits, legal, administrative, environmental, or any other similar expenses may be eligible for reimbursement from the Municipal Park Improvement Program.

Board of Education Property/Facilities:

Answer the question as to whether any Board of Education property or facilities are located on the site of this proposed municipal park improvement project grant funding request. A cooperative agreement between the applicant and Board of Education must be approved by the Trust Fund before any grant award is disbursed.

Application Attachments:

- Tax Map or Aerial Location Map
- Conceptual site plan, drawn to scale, indicating proposed park developments, existing topography, facilities, improvements, natural features, proposed areas clearing three (3) or more trees, and any other relevant existing physical features
- Color site photographs of existing conditions of the park. Photographs should be submitted as pdf-document or jpeg images via e-mail address below
- Project Budget on Professional Letterhead
- Municipal Resolution as per Sample
- NJDEP Natural Heritage Search Report, if applicable
- Historic Preservation Assessment, if applicable
- Public Hearing Advertisements as Published
- Public Hearing Minutes (portion if part of larger meeting)

The application deadline is FRIDAY, APRIL 24th 2026.

The application and its attachments shall be submitted as electronic files (PDF) as email attachments, or if above **50 MB**, via a cloud storage/file sharing service. Paper copies are no longer accepted.

Submit **ONE (1)** complete application and required attachments to:

Department of Parks/Division of Open Space
County Administration Building
One Bergen County Plaza, 4th Floor
Hackensack, NJ 07601-7076
Attn: Nancy Witkowski, 201-336-7255,
Email: nwitkowski@co.bergen.nj.us

BERGEN COUNTY OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND

2026 Municipal Park Improvement Grant Application

PLEASE NOTE THIS APPLICATION IS ONLY FOR PARK IMPROVEMENT/DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS.
IT IS **NOT** FOR USE WITH ANY OTHER TRUST FUND PROJECT CATEGORY.

PROJECT NAME:

APPLICANT: NAME OF MUNICIPALITY:

ADDRESS:

**MUNICIPAL/ORGANIZATION
ADMINISTRATOR/MANAGER/CLERK:**

**PERSON HAVING DAY TO DAY
RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS APPLICATION:**

EMAIL ADDRESS:

PHONE NUMBER:

FAX NUMBER:

NAME OF PARK FACILITY:

STREET ADDRESS:

TAX BLOCK(S)/LOT(S):

SITE OWNER LISTED IN TAX RECORD:

TOTAL PARK AREA (ACRES):

EXISTING RECREATIONAL USES OF PARK:

(If new park facility w/o existing uses, then state so.)

SITE LOCATION MAP: Attach a legible (8 ½" x 11") street map with site clearly indicated.

TAX MAP: Attach Tax Map (8 ½" x 11") with site clearly indicated.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION: Briefly Describe Project and Distinct Elements of Project

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 24th 2026

ESTIMATED COST OF PROJECT:*

- 1. CONSTRUCTION COSTS: \$ _____
- 2. PROFESSIONAL SERVICES: \$ _____
- 3. INCIDENTAL COSTS: \$ _____
- 4. PERMIT FEES: \$ _____
- 5. PRELIM. SITE ASSESS: \$ _____

- TOTAL PROJECT COSTS: \$ _____
(Sum of Items 1-5)

- TOTAL REQUEST THIS ROUND: \$ _____

* Refer to Section 4 of "Municipal Park Improvement Program Rules & Procedures Manual" for allowable project costs

MUNICIPAL MATCH:

- 1. GREEN ACRES GRANT/LOAN: \$ _____

Status of Green Acres Funding _____
- 2. MUNICIPAL OPEN SPACE TRUST FUND: \$ _____
- 3. MUNICIPAL FUNDS: \$ _____
- 4. OTHER (Specify): \$ _____

- TOTAL OF ALL OTHER SOURCES: \$ _____
(Sum of Items 1-4)

Attach a detailed estimate of the project's budget that specifies item number, description, units, unit cost, planned quantity, and total cost. Project contingency cannot exceed 10% of the construction cost. State the exact park improvement work to be accomplished using the requested grant. All cost items should be quantified using current year pricing. **Project Budget must be prepared, and signed, by a New Jersey-licensed engineer, architect, or landscape architect.**

Note: Neither "sweat equity" labor, nor municipal labor, can apply toward applicant's required "cash" match contribution.

PROJECT SCOPE OF WORK OR LIST OF PARK IMPROVEMENT ITEMS OR ELEMENTS

Please provide a detailed description of the actual proposed park improvements. State the exact work that will be undertaken by using this grant in this park (i.e., creating or renovating ball fields, playing courts; adding landscaping, water features, pathways, adding/replacing playground equipment, park furniture, or fences, etc.). Be specific. List items individually.

CONSISTENCY WITH MUNICIPAL MASTER PLAN

Is project consistent with Municipal Master Plan and/or Open Space Recreation Plans? YES NO

If yes, provide Municipal Master Plan/Open Space Recreation Plan page reference/citation _____

If inconsistent, then explain why? _____

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITY ACT (ADA) COMPLIANCE

Does this project meet ADA requirements? YES NO

Describe:

ONGOING MAINTENANCE & PUBLIC ACCESS

What are the on-going maintenance requirement of this park project?

Who will perform the maintenance, and what will be your on-going contribution to this maintenance?

Will there be any public access or use restrictions? YES NO

Describe:

(Please note: The municipality/Grantee shall not enter into exclusive use agreements or allow discriminatory scheduling of the use of the project area based on residency or otherwise in violation of the Law Against Discrimination, N.J.S.A. 10:51 et seq., or other applicable law.)

HISTORIC PRESERVATION ASSESSMENT

Identify any existing historic buildings, structures, sites, or historic districts listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, included in the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey, or in your municipality’s master plan, that are located within or contiguous to the project site. List by name, address, and/or block and lot numbers. Contact Bergen County Division of Cultural & Historic Affairs (Elaine Gold at egold@co.bergen.nj.us), if necessary. Attach applicable remarks provided by County Division of Cultural & Historic Affairs. Indicate here whether Historic Preservation Assessment is Not Applicable.

Does the project site include or in proximity to any existing historic buildings, structures, sites, or historic districts listed on the State and National Registers of Historic Places, included in the Bergen County Historic Sites Survey, or in your municipality’s master plan, that are located within or contiguous to the project site? YES NO

Describe:

FACILITY IMPROVEMENT AND RESTORATION FACTORS

(Please check all that apply.)

A. Type(s) of Outdoor Recreational Facility Improvement:

- Project provides UPGRADED recreational facilities
- Project provides EXPANDED recreational facilities
- Project provides NEW recreational facilities
- Project provides MULTIPLE recreation uses for both active and passive recreation

B. Age (estimated) of Existing Park Facility Being Replaced/Upgraded:

- Less Than 10 Years Old
- Greater Than 10 Years Old

C. Public Access to Water:

- Project provides NEW opportunities to access water either visually or physically
- Project ENHANCES existing access to water either visually or physically
- Project RESTORES/IMPROVES degraded waterfront/stream corridor

D. Public Access to Site:

- Project provides NEW public access where none exists or existing access is undeveloped/restricted
- Project incorporates trails, bike paths, or greenways

E. Environmental Factors:

- Project incorporates wildlife habitat protection
- Project incorporates the reclamation of an underutilized area
- Project located in an already cleared area to minimize additional clearing of trees and vegetation
- Project located where topography and soil conditions are suitable to minimize excavation, fill, and drainage of site
- Project retains, enhances, or establishes vegetative buffers to minimize impacts on forests, wetlands, habitat, etc.
- Project impacts an undisturbed or natural area of site.

F. Facility Impacts

- Project enhances historic and/or archaeological resource
- Project provides new/expanded educational opportunities

G. Project Factors:

- Concept Plan Completed. ___Yes ___No
- Preliminary Design Plans Completed. ___Yes ___No
- Project Budget in Place. ___Yes ___No

H. Permits Required from any Governmental Agency:

- Yes Identify: _____
- No

I. Public Involved in the Project Planning Process Beyond Minimum of Requirement of Public Hearing:

- Yes Describe: _____
- No

ESTIMATED PROJECT START DATE: _____

ESTIMATED PROJECT COMPLETION DATE: _____

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 24th 2026

PROJECT NARRATIVE

Please provide a brief description explaining the need for this project. Explain in detail how your proposed project is in support of increasing or improving outdoor active and/or passive recreation activities in your community. **Why does it need to be done?** Identify any factors that contribute to this need, i.e., lack of similar recreational facilities, outdated or unsafe equipment, increased demand, etc. **INCLUDE A PROJECTED TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION.**

CHECKLIST

This checklist is for your use to ensure that you submit a complete application. Before submitting your application, be sure to go through the following checklist and answer questions as necessary.

___ Completed application signed and certified above

___ Site location map (legible aerial or street map)

___ Tax map outlining boundaries of the park site

___ Property is owned by the Board of Education ___ YES ___ NO

If YES, then is there a cooperative agreement with BOE for use of property as public parkland? ___ YES ___ NO

___ Conceptual Site Plan of Proposed Park Improvements, as well as any existing facilities and improvements, as prepared by an authorized, licensed professional.

___ Project Cost Estimate Budget showing units and quantities, prepared and signed by an authorized, licensed professional.

___ Trust Fund Grant Request Amount of _____ Exceeds Available Funding Limit per Region ___ YES ___ NO

___ Historic Preservation Assessment Completed ___ NOT APPLICABLE

___ Minutes of Public Hearing (or portion pertaining to this application only)

___ Resolution Authorizing Submission of Application

___ Digital Color Photographs of existing Project Site – sent via email

___ Certified copies of Public Notice and Display Advertisement of the Public Hearing held for Application

CERTIFICATION

I, _____, (*Person having day-to-day responsibility for this application*) hereby certify that I have read this application and its instructions and that it has been completed in full. All information contained herein and attached hereto is accurate to the best of my knowledge.

I do understand that the grant is awarded on a reimbursement basis, and if awarded, the municipality/nonprofit would be required to provide full funding in advance.

SIGNATURE: _____

ATTEST: _____

TITLE: _____

TITLE: _____

DATE: _____

DATE: _____

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 24th 2026

PUBLIC HEARING

In accordance with the rules and regulations of the Bergen County Trust Fund, the Governing Body of _____ (*name of municipality/nonprofit*) conducted a public hearing on this application on (*date of public hearing*) _____. A copy of the minutes of this meeting (or portion pertaining to this application only) is attached together with a copy of the public notice advertisements of the meeting.

The Governing Body adopted the attached resolution authorizing the municipality to submit this application.

Clerk's Signature

SAMPLE PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT

PUBLIC HEARING ON THE SUBMISSION OF A 2026 BERGEN COUNTY TRUST FUND GRANT APPLICATION

Application of (*NAME OF MUNICIPALITY*) for Bergen County Trust Fund Municipal Program for Park Development Grant Funding for 2026.

TAKE NOTICE: that the (*NAME OF MUNICIPALITY*) will hold a Public Hearing on submitting the following application to the 2026 funding round of the Bergen County Trust Fund Municipal Program for Park Development:

- PARK NAME TAX BLOCK(S) & LOT(S) STREET ADDRESS
- BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF PROPOSED PARK DEVELOPMENTS

Date of Public Hearing:

Time:

Location:

Formal action may be taken.

In accordance with the regulation governing the submission of Bergen County Trust Fund Municipal Program for Park Development application, the (*NAME OF GOVERNING BODY*) will conduct a public hearing to obtain citizen input concerning the grant application.

PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT GUIDANCE

In the official newspaper of the municipality, the applicant shall inform the public of the public hearing. It shall take steps to place a:

1. Public Notice advertisement in the Legal Section at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting and specify a public hearing on the Trust Fund application.
2. Display ad at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting and specify a public hearing on the Trust Fund application. The size of the display ad is at the discretion of applicant. However, the size of display ad should not be smaller than a "business card size" (approximately 3.22 inches wide by 2.36 inches high).
3. The text for the legal advertisement and display advertisement should be identical.

APPLICATION DEADLINE: FRIDAY, APRIL 24th 2026

TRUST FUND APPLICATION MUNICIPAL ENDORSING RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Bergen County Open Space, Recreation, Floodplain Protection, Farmland & Historic Preservation Trust Fund (“County Trust Fund”), provides matching grants to municipal governments and to nonprofit organizations for assistance in the development or redevelopment of outdoor municipal recreation facilities; and,

WHEREAS, the *(insert name of applicant)* desires to further the public interest by obtaining a matching grant of *(insert amount of grant request)* from the County Trust Fund to fund the following project: *(insert name/description of project)*; and,

WHEREAS, the governing body/board has reviewed the County Trust Fund Program Statement, and the Trust Fund Municipal Program Park Improvement application and instructions, and desires to make an application for such a matching grant and provide application information and furnish such documents as may be required; and,

WHEREAS, as part of the application process, the governing body/board received held the required Public Hearing to receive public comments on the proposed park improvements in the application on *(insert date)*; and,

WHEREAS, the County of Bergen shall determine whether the application is complete and in conformance with the scope and intent of the County Trust Fund; and,

WHEREAS, the applicant is willing to use the County Trust Fund in accordance with such rules, regulations and applicable statutes, and is willing to enter into an agreement with the County of Bergen for the above named project and ensure its completion on or about the project contract expiration date.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the *(insert name of legal body or board)*:

1. That it is hereby authorized to submit the above completed project application to the County by the deadline of **APRIL 24th 2026**, as established by the County; and,
2. That, in the event of a County Trust Fund award that may be less than the grant amount requested above, *(insert name of legal body or board)* has, or will secure, the balance of funding necessary to complete the project, or modify the project as necessary; and,
3. That *(insert name of legal body or board)* is committed to providing a dollar for dollar cash match for the project; and,
4. That only those park improvements identified and approved in the project application, its Trust Fund contract, or other documentation will be considered eligible for reimbursement.
5. That *(insert name of legal body or board)* agrees to comply with all applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations in its performance of the project; and,
6. That this resolution shall take effect immediately.

PROPER SIGNATURES & CERTIFICATION BY MUNICIPAL OFFICERS