



Community Opportunity Fund - Frequently Asked Questions

A Program of the 2020 Health and Recovery Bond

*Note: We will periodically update this document with new questions and repost the latest version on the project website. **Last updated, February 23, 2026.***

For more information visit the program's website:

<https://sfrecpark.org/1123/Community-Opportunity-Fund-2020-Bond>

If you would like to receive updates about the Community Opportunity Fund (COF), please visit the [News Flash](#) section of our webpage and subscribe to "Rec Park Improvements | Initiatives: Community Opportunity Fund (COF)."

GENERAL QUESTIONS

What is the Community Opportunity Fund or COF?

The Community Opportunity Fund (COF) is a citywide capital program that invites neighbors, community groups, park advocates, and partners to nominate projects for funding. *Park users know how to make their parks better and we want to help you make those positive changes happen!*

What do I need to do to apply?

First, develop a strong idea and share it with neighbors and other park users. With general community consensus, applicants will prepare their materials, attend one of our February workshops with Rec and Park staff, and then submit an application.

How much funding is there and how many projects do you expect to award?

The 2020 Bond allocated \$6 million total for the COF program. This application cycle will directly award \$5.5 million to individual projects and hold \$500,000 in reserve to cover administrative costs and program contingencies.

Projects will be allocated in one of two budget tiers that match the scope of work:

- **Small projects:** for all project budgets up to **\$500,000**
- **Large projects:** for all project budgets up to **\$1,500,000**

With these tiers, we expect to award between 4-6 projects.

Can I bring other funding sources to help augment the COF budget?

Yes! We encourage the use of private philanthropic funds, including in-kind donations of professional services. The funds must be available at the time the applications are due. For other public funds and grants, we'd love to talk to you! These types of funding sources are often very specific, and we will need to review them with you. Please contact the Program Manager at RPDCOF@sfgov.org to discuss how we can make it work.

Can the COF award funding go to my organization's 501(c)(3)?

No, the funding will remain with Rec and Park, which will implement the projects.

Who do I contact if I have questions?

Please email Rec and Park at RPDCOF@sfgov.org

PROJECT TYPES AND SCOPES

What kind of projects are eligible for the COF program?

The ideal project is a community-supported improvement that solves a park problem, enhances a park facility, and fosters long-term stewardship of the park.

To be eligible for consideration, projects must meet these criteria:

- 1. Applicant must be San Francisco-based.**
- 2. The proposed scope must be located on San Francisco Recreation and Park land.**
- 3. The project meets the definition of capital improvement** with the result being fixed to the site and unable to be removed. Examples of capital improvements include benches, plantings and irrigation, and bulletin boards. Tools, programs, maintenance, and supplies do not qualify.
- 4. The proposed scope cannot modify** recently completed construction elements at the facility, including any improvements completed since January 1, 2020.
- 5. The proposed scope must be able to complete construction within 3 years** of project kick-off.
- 6. The proposed scope is an independent improvement** and not connected to any other facility improvements.
- 7. Proposals cannot include new restrooms or playground improvements.**

Can I propose an art feature? *(New question added 2/6/2026; updated 2/23/2026)*

New stand-alone art elements, such as sculptures and statues, are not eligible for the COF program. The San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) owns all of San Francisco's public art and has sole jurisdiction for acquiring new public artworks.

Small-scale, two-dimensional art, such as painted or tiled murals to adorn a park feature, may be eligible for the COF program. Applicants are advised that if approved for COF funding, these kinds of art proposals will require applicants to complete additional steps, including:

1. Signing an agreement with Rec and Park that the applicants will maintain the art long-term and provide funding to do so.
2. Completing the SFAC review and approval process, which Rec and Park staff will help coordinate with the applicant.

Applicants should be aware that changes to the original proposal may be required during these reviews.

As a reminder, RPD uses the funds from COF to make improvements to parks. Applicants proposing art projects should keep this in mind as they develop their proposals.

The following project delivery options are available if a project with an art element is selected.

Scenario 1: The applicant donates the design drawings to Rec Park. The COF funds are used to implement the project. Drawings must be at 100% construction documentation level and include technical specifications. Artist/designer to be available for questions during City review and implementation and must understand that scope or design may be modified.

Scenario 2: The applicant installs the art and adheres to all relevant city regulations and processes. The COF funds are used to support preparation needed to install the art. Examples, cleaning and priming a wall for a painted mural; repairing broken stairs or concrete seatwalls for tile projects.

Scenario 3: The applicant donates the conceptual design to Rec Park and the design is then completed by a licensed design professional at Public Works. For example, the application is for specialty pavement and a Public Works landscape architect completes the construction documents.

Additional information about public art can be found on the [SFAC website](#), including guidelines for [mural design approvals](#).

If you have additional questions about your specific proposal, please email RPDCOF@sfgov.org and we can provide early feedback.

Is a designer required for the COF application?

A designer is not required for the COF application, just a great idea! The process for nominating projects is intended to be easy and accessible for everyone.

All interested parties are encouraged to attend one of our two pre-application workshops in February or reach out for more information.

Why can't we propose improvements to playgrounds and restrooms?

The COF program is intended for low-maintenance and discrete improvements to parks. Both restrooms and playgrounds are often more complex, requiring new utility connections, accessibility upgrades, and increased ongoing maintenance. Restroom and playground projects often cost above \$1.5 million and take multiple years to complete.

Rec and Park has begun testing a new delivery process for these improvements. If it continues to be successful, we may include these types of projects in future COF programs.

Note: Proposals for park facilities or areas next to a playground or restroom (e.g., mural on a clubhouse, sport courts, new plantings, etc.) can qualify for COF funds as long as they meet the project eligibility criteria listed above.

SCHEDULE QUESTIONS

What is the schedule for the nomination process and what are the key deadlines?

January 15, 2026: Application Materials Released
February 10, 2026: Pre-Application Workshop #1
February 21, 2026: Pre-Application Workshop #2
March 26, 2026: Applications Due
April 2026 - May 2026: Review and Evaluation of Applications
June 2026: Award Notification

Please follow along at the [program's website](#) or subscribe for project updates using the instructions at the top of this FAQ.

When will we hear if our project was selected?

Rec and Park Commission will select the projects to award in summer 2026. We will notify all applicants shortly after the Commission meeting when awards are decided. We will provide specific feedback to those who were not selected.

When will our project get built and what is the process?

Most projects will follow a typical "design-bid-build" process. Once awarded, projects will be assigned a Rec and Park project manager (PM) who will coordinate with San Francisco Public Works (PW) to assemble a design team that will design the project and lead the required regulatory and permitting processes. The PM will then bid the construction documents, hire a contractor, and coordinate the construction of the project.

We anticipate the typical project to begin construction approximately 18 months after a PM is assigned, but this timeline could vary significantly depending on the projects awarded.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

Who can apply?

Applicants must be San Francisco-based and can be individuals, groups, or established organizations. The COF program supports park improvements proposed by park users; applicants should be familiar with the park they wish to improve.

What is required in the application?

This COF round features a more streamlined and simpler application process. Applicants will need to compile the following items for the application:

Required Application Elements, all projects:

- Online application form, which asks for information such as:
 - Point of contact (name, phone number, email)
 - Park facility name
 - Project budget tier (Small or Large)
 - Project scope (max 1,500 characters)
 - Project justification (max 1,500 characters)
 - Community support (max 1,500 characters)
- Attachment 1: Pre-application approval letter from Rec and Park. Details provided at the pre-application workshops in February.
- Attachment 2: Photos of existing conditions
- Attachment 3: Map with location of proposed improvements
- Attachment 4: Letters of Support from the community and elected officials

Recommended Application Attachments – Small Project Applications may submit:

1. Design Concept Information (max 4 pages)

Recommended Application Attachments – Large Project Applications:

1. Design Concept Information (max 8 pages)
2. Additional Community Support Information (max 4 pages).

Please note that we will not be requiring cost estimates with the application. Applicants will coordinate with Rec and Park staff early in the process to identify which of two budget tiers best fits their project:

- **Small projects:** for all project budgets up to **\$500,000**
- **Large projects:** for all project budgets up to **\$1,500,000**

Will Rec and Park host community events to help applicants develop their scopes?

Yes! The department will host pre-application workshops on February 10 and February 21. Applicants are required to attend at least one workshop to learn about the program and meet one-on-one with our staff to discuss their draft scopes of work and budget tiers. Applicants are required to receive approval of their scopes of work and budget tiers prior to submitting their application.

How do I demonstrate community support for my proposal?

It is critical that projects have broad community support and that applications clearly demonstrate this support.

Some ways to show community support include:

- Signatures from community members
- Letters/emails from neighbors, community leaders, and elected officials
- Meeting minutes and photographs from community events, such as community meetings, tabling, pop-up events, or volunteer events.