



Community Opportunity Fund

A Program of the 2020 Health and Recovery Bond

Application Instructions

COMMUNITY OPPORTUNITY FUND INTRODUCTION

The Community Opportunity Fund (COF) is a citywide capital program that provides an opportunity for neighbors, community groups, park advocates, and partners to nominate capital projects for funding. Proposed projects compete for Bond funding through an application and selection process facilitated by the Department and awarded by the Recreation and Park Commission.

COF Program Goals:

1. Projects should create community stewardship of parks.
2. Projects should enhance the park's experience and identity.
 - Ideal projects introduce a new, low-maintenance amenity or feature to the park.
3. Projects should leverage community resources.
4. Deliver the program in an efficient and streamlined manner:
 - Start implementing projects in summer 2026 and deliver as quickly as possible.
 - Maximize the use of cooperative purchasing contracts to limit administrative costs.
 - Avoid projects that have potential for obvious scope creep in order to meet budget and schedule requirements.
5. Align with Department's strategic goals for geographic equity and disadvantaged communities.

Additional program information can be found at the COF website:

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

SCHEDULE AND DEADLINES

January 15, 2026: Application Materials are 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

PROJECT ELEGIBILITY

To be eligible for COF funds, the following criteria must be met:

1. The proposed scope must be located on San Francisco Recreation and Park land and the applicant should be San Francisco-based.

2. The project meets the definition of a capital improvement: the result must be fixed to the site and cannot be removed. For instance, a bench, planting and irrigation, or bulletin board are all examples of capital improvements whereas tools, programs, maintenance, and supplies are not.
3. The proposed scope cannot modify recently completed construction elements at the facility. This includes any improvements completed since January 1, 2020.
4. The proposed scope must be able to complete construction within 3 years of project kick-off.
5. The proposed scope is a discreet improvement and is not dependent on any other facility improvements.
6. Proposals cannot include new restrooms or playground improvements.

BUDGET

The 2020 Health and Recovery Bond allocated \$6.0 million for the COF program. This application cycle will award \$5.5 million to individual projects and hold \$500,000 in reserve to cover administration costs and a program reserve.

Individual Project Budgets: The application will not require a detailed cost estimate. Instead, during the pre-application reviews, staff will work with applicants to select a budget tier that aligns with the proposed scope of work:

Small project = up to \$500,000 total project cost

Large project = up to \$1.50 million total project cost

The total project cost includes hard costs, soft costs, and project contingencies.

There are multiple ways to divide the \$5.5 million budget for awarded projects. Rec and Park will not pre-determine this split but will let this organically develop during the selection process. We anticipate approximately 4-6 projects will be awarded, but the final number will vary depending on the applications received.

NOTE: Awards of projects do not guarantee that the full scope of the proposal will be implemented. Once awarded, staff will work with applicants to further develop scopes of work to align with regulatory requirements and project budget maximums.

Examples of projects for each budget tier are listed below, however, budgets will be dependent on the final scope of work, site conditions, and regulatory requirements. RPD staff will determine the project budget in consultation with professional cost estimators if necessary.

Small projects, up to \$500,000 total project cost:

- Fitness equipment and Fitness courts
- Site furnishings, such as new benches, picnic tables, bike racks, etc.
- Planting and Irrigation improvements
- Nature exploration areas
- Park and facility signage
- Painting, murals, and other “beautification” improvements

Large projects, up to \$1,500,000 total project cost:

- Community Gardens
- Dog Play Area improvements
- Green Infrastructure projects
- Sports courts, sports facilities, bleachers, etc.
- Lighting and security
- Trail segment improvements

APPLICATION PROCESS

The intent of the application is to help applicants develop their park ideas into a specific and successful project. The process will include the following steps:

1. **January 2026:** Informational PDF application released to the public and registrations open for the pre-application workshops. Please note that the informational PDF is an exact replica of the final application that applicants can use to draft responses, but it cannot be used to submit a final application.
2. **February 2026:** Pre-Application Workshops: Tuesday February 10, 2026 and Saturday February 21, 2026.
Applicants are required to attend one pre-application workshop/meeting. The workshops will include one-on-one meetings between staff and applicants to review proposed scopes, provide feedback to applicants, and review feasibility and budget values of the proposals. Applicants must receive pre-approval of the scopes prior to submitting applications. After receiving a pre-approval letter from Rec and Park staff, applicants will be sent a link to the online application to formally submit.
3. **March 2026:** Applications due.

APPLICATION INFORMATION

The following sections provide detailed guidance for submitting an application. As noted above, prior to submitting, applicants are required to meet one-on-one with Rec and Park Staff and receive a pre-approval letter. After receiving a pre-approval letter from Rec and Park staff, applicants will be sent a link to the online application to formally submit. Please note that some of these instructions will only apply after the final application is provided.

There are two options for submitting applications:

1. **Google Form Application:** RPD encourages all applicants to submit their documents through the Google Form. Staff is available for technical assistance throughout the application process. Please email to arrange a time to speak to our team if technical support is needed. The Google form link will be provided to applicants with the pre-approval letter from Rec and Park.
Email: rpdcof@sfgov.org
2. **PDF application:** A fillable PDF document will be available upon request for those who cannot submit an online application. Please see the final section of these instructions for submitting a pdf application and attachments.

Both application options have the same questions, requirements, and character limits. The sample application on the RPD website mimics the final application and should be used to draft responses. Rec and Park encourages applicants to review the requirements as soon as possible.

Additionally, Rec and Park encourages all applicants to thoroughly review the information available at the program website, including the Implementation Plan and Score Sheet. These documents will help applicants create effective proposals.

TECH HELP

Rec and Park staff is available to help any applicant that needs technical support. To schedule a tech support time, please email: rpdcof@sfgov.org

GOOGLE FORM INSTRUCTIONS

To use the google form, the person submitting the application must have an email address linked to a google account. A google account can be created for a non-gmail email address; there is no need to create a new gmail email address.

If you do not have a google account, instructions for creating a google account can be found here:

https://support.google.com/accounts/answer/27441?hl=en&ref_topic=3382296&sjid=17415556669168622065-NC

Special notes:

- The google form should automatically save your progress as you fill in the application. However, it is highly encouraged that applicants use another software to draft application responses, then copy-paste their final text into the google form in one session.
- Sections with an asterisk (*) are required. The google form will not allow you to progress to the next section until the required items are complete. However, users can click “back” and “next” through the form prior to submitting and applications can be revised after submission.
- Once an application is submitted, an automatic email will be sent to the applicant. **Please save this email!** You can use the email link received to revise your application up until the deadline.
- The google form includes instructions for each question. Examples and more information for specific questions are below.

GOOGLE FORM ATTACHMENTS

The application requires attachments to be submitted as a single document for each individual question. For example, photos must be combined onto pages then uploaded as a single document. The form does not allow individual image files. Many computers come with free photo software that can automate this. For example, Microsoft Photos allows a user to select multiple images, then print as a multi-page pdf. Similarly, free software is available to combine pdf files into multi-page documents. If you need technical assistance, please email the COF program email address listed above to set up an appointment.

PDF APPLICATION

The fillable PDF application includes the same questions, requirements, and character limits as the google form. To request a fillable PDF application, please email rpdcof@sfgov.org.

When complete, submit via email to: rpdcof@sfgov.org Please note that the email account only allows attachments up to 25 MB. If applications exceed this limit, consider a free file sharing service such as <https://wettransfer.com/>

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FOR APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

- 1. Project Scope (max 1,500 characters)*:** Describe the physical changes that your proposal seeks to deliver, including how it is feasible to implement a practical change to the facility. Describe how the project is innovative or imaginative in a way that will inspire users to engage with the park. Be as specific as possible so that readers can fully understand your vision.

To help you formulate a response, consider the following prompts:

- What is unique and innovative about the proposal that you want others to notice?
- How will Rec and Park maintain the improvement? What feedback from Rec and Park Operations staff was given at the pre-application workshop?
- Can the proposal be completed within the program's budget and time requirements? Consider feedback given at the pre-application workshop.

Below is an example response for a fictional proposal (this example is 1,156 characters):

This proposal seeks to deliver an expanded fitness facility in the heart of the Panhandle Park. The improvements will include 5 new pieces of fitness equipment: a pull-up bar, balance beam, rowing machine, shoulder press, and a leg press. Three new park-style benches and one picnic table will be located at the edge of the equipment. New paving and drainage will be required to accommodate all of the equipment and benches. Additionally, a new or upgraded accessible pathway will connect to the existing fitness court, path system, playground, bathroom, and basketball court.

This proposal expands the current facility into a relatively flat and un-programmed area. Therefore, construction will be straightforward and uncomplicated. The project does not expect any existing utility or irrigation changes will be necessary except for drainage connections. Rec and Park staff already maintain the adjacent fitness facility. Focusing the fitness equipment in one area of the park will minimize any maintenance workload increase. The expanded outdoor fitness zone is a unique opportunity to create the largest public outdoor fitness facility in San Francisco.

- 2. Project justification: (max 1,500 characters)*:** Pitch your project! Tell us how your proposal addresses a clearly defined park need. Describe the anticipated benefits and how the project will enhance the park's identity, inclusiveness, and user experience.

To help you formulate a response, consider the following prompts:

- What problem is your proposal solving?
- What important benefits does the proposal provide?
- Will the improvement enhance the existing facility?
- Who benefits from the improvement and how? Have you considered all the potential park users and how they will use the proposed improvements?
- How does your proposal satisfy the COF program goals?

3. Describe the Community Support (max 1,500 characters): Describe how the community supports your proposal, including how the proposal has wide consensus across the community and will not impinge on other park users' enjoyment of the park. Describe the applicant's commitment to this project, including other community work at the park or neighborhood, and long-term stewardship plans for this improvement. The most successful answers will provide specific information, such as documentation from community events, testimony from community leaders, or neighbor signatures. Note that later sections of the application require letters of support for your proposal and large project applications may submit additional information in the recommended attachments section.

To help you formulate a response, consider the following prompts:

- Have you gathered feedback from community members on the proposal? Is there consensus among the community for this proposal?
- Why are you the right person/organization to apply for this project & are you ready to partner with Rec and Park to see this project realized?

PROJECT SELECTION & NOTIFICATION PROCESS

After submission, the following steps will be taken:

1. Pre-Vetting by Rec and Park Staff: Applications will be pre-vetted by Rec and Park staff to ensure they are complete and meet the minimum requirements. Applications will then be distributed to the Recommendation Committee members.
2. Recommendation Committee:
 - 1) Committee members review and evaluate proposals individually based on the published scoring criteria, which is available on the Rec and Park website.
 - 2) Committee meets to evaluate projects together & create final list of recommendations based on the scoring criteria and staff feedback.
3. Recreation and Park Commission: Rec and Park staff recommend awardees to the Commission.
4. Rec and Park staff will notify all applicants after the Commission award. All unsuccessful applications will receive specific feedback that can be used to help develop proposals for the next COF round cycle.