

2025 Park Partners Grant Proposal

Community-Led Stewardship of Louisiana's Local Parks for Long-Term Sustainability

The Mission: Establish a statewide grant program that promotes private stewardship of parks by private citizens and businesses to build a culture of park philanthropy across Louisiana to build long-term sustainability.



Why This Matters:

Louisiana's local parks are underfunded and often underutilized. Studies and empirical evidence have shown the transformative power of local residents when they steward their parks.

Community-led park revitalization:

- o Improves park quality and safety
- o Strengthens social connections
- o Spurs economic development
- o Builds trust between residents and local government

The Request

\$800,000 to establish the Park Partners Grant Program.

Grants of up to \$100,000 per project are awarded to municipalities and park departments.

12% of funds are retained by LRPA to administer and oversee the program.



5-Year Program Plan

Year 1: \$800,000 for a minimum of 7 grants to parks departments with the assistance of private residents and businesses, and coaching by LRPA.

Year 2: \$500,000 to promote successes from year 1 and to award up to 4 more grants, using Lessons learned from year 1 for the most successful models for private stewardship.

Year 3: \$500,000 to promote successes from years 1 & 2 and to award up to 4 more grants, using lessons learned from years 1 & 2 for the most successful models for private stewardship.

Year 4: \$500,000 to promote successes from years 1 - 3 and to award up to 4 more grants, using lessons learned from years 1-3 for the most successful models for private stewardship.

Year 5: \$200,000 to promote program successes and to assist local communities and parks departments with establishing private support structures for long-term sustainability.

Grant Requirements

Community Stewardship Requirements

Minimum 10% match (cash or in-kind), with preference for private contributions (businesses, civic groups, donors).

Park Partnership Team (3+ residents) required:

1. Complete LRPA's stewardship orientation + 2 technical guidance meetings
2. Lead public input for design/programming choices
3. Host volunteer events/programs to implement & launch the project

Eligible Uses (examples):

- Play, fitness, and shade amenities
- Trails and wayfinding signage
- Native landscaping and green infrastructure
- Lighting and safety features
- ADA access improvements
- Public art and community gathering spaces
- Start-up programming, community gardens, volunteer tools/supplies

Accountability & Oversight

Statewide RFP within 90 days of appropriation

All awards under a grant agreement require:

- o Quarterly progress reports (budget, milestones, match, volunteer hours)
- o Final report with outcomes, photos, and 12-month stewardship plan

(Awards determined by LRPA selection committee)

All funds tracked and reported per state requirements



Louisiana Case Study: Palmetto Island State Park

In 2010, volunteers formed **Friends of Palmetto Island State Park** when budget cuts threatened its closure.

From 2023–2024 alone, the group

- o Raised **\$100,000+** in cash and in-kind donations
- o Volunteered **11,970+ hours**
- o Hosted **16 free community events**
- o Restored the native **Abbeville Red Iris** flower population



Research by Trust for Public Land
(The Power of Parks to Strengthen Communities, 2024)
has shown that people are passionate about their parks and when that passion is united around a common goal, communities come together!



Investing \$800,000 in Park Partners means more vibrant, safe, and community-driven public spaces across Louisiana.

