

HENNEPIN COUNTY
MINNESOTA

Solicitation for Grant Applications

Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants

Play Area Grants

Solicitation posted: [August 1, 2024](#)

Pre-Application Conference: [August 21, 2024 at 10:00 a.m.](#)

Closing date for all questions: [September 24, 2024 at 4:00 pm](#)

Solicitation due date: [October 1, 2024 at 4:00 p.m.](#)



1 Introduction

1.1. Project overview

The County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota (“County”) is soliciting applications for the Play Area Grant (the “Grant”). As used herein, the entity/individual responsible for any awarded Grant may be referred to as the “Applicant” and the Applicant’s response to this solicitation (the “Solicitation”) may be referred to as the “Application”.

Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants is a program focused on increasing youth access to activities by providing grant opportunities for Local Government Units (LGUs) within Hennepin County. The program has three grant initiatives:

- Water safety: grants support free and reduced cost swim lessons as well as lifeguard services.
- Sports: grants available for sports equipment, playgrounds, and sports facilities.
- Arts: funding for creative and musical youth activities.

Since it began in 2009, the program has awarded more than \$38.9 million in grants. State legislation authorizing the construction of Target Field allows Hennepin County to use a portion of the 0.15% sales tax surcharge to grant over \$2.5 million dollars each year to Hennepin County communities to assist with youth activities. Over \$1.7 million has been allocated for the Play Area grants this grant cycle.

1.2 Definitions

The terms below have been used and referenced throughout the Solicitation. Definitions for the terms are provided for the purpose of this grant opportunity.

Term	Definition
<i>Local Government Unit (LGU)</i>	Municipal districts public school district, park district, and watershed district located in or operating within Hennepin County.
<i>Youth athletic activity</i>	Defined in Minnesota State Statute Sec. 121A.38 as “any sport or other athletic activity related to competition, practice, or training exercises which is intended for youth athletes and at which a coach or official is present in an official capacity as a coach or official.”
<i>Sports Facility</i>	An enclosed or open area that is specifically designated for athletic activity such as sports activities or competitions
<i>Playground</i>	A designated area that is specifically designed and built to be used by children to engage in physical activity and to develop critical social and cognitive skills. Playgrounds have a range of equipment, such as swings, slides, monkey bars, climbing structures, safety surfacing, and other site amenities to serve children of all ages and abilities. Playgrounds may be standalone structures, inclusive playground structures or themed playscapes.

<i>Play Spaces</i>	A play space facilitates play by placing amenities for children in an environment where play can take place. Small-scale play spaces create opportunities for kids to play in non-traditional settings.
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1.3 The Grant

The purpose of the Play Area Grant is to allow municipalities, park districts, watershed districts and school districts to improve and enhance opportunities for youth participation in sports and play by creating, expanding, and improving athletic facilities, recreational facilities, playgrounds, and other play spaces in Hennepin County.

Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants has been providing grants for athletic and recreational facilities since 2009. The program expanded to provide grants for playgrounds in 2016 and small-scale play spaces in 2024. Facility, playground and play spaces have been combined into one funding opportunity called the Play Area Grant.

Grant up to \$300,000 are available. Expected award ranges for playground grants are \$50,000-\$100,000 and facility grants are \$100,000 - \$300,000. There is no minimum grant request amount and applications will be accepted for small-scale play space projects and facility upgrades.

Grant funds may be used to create, expand and/or improve youth athletic and recreational facilities. Grant funds may also be used to purchase, construct, renovate or improve new or existing playgrounds or small-scale play spaces. The contract term for Play Area grants is expected to be 1/1/2025 – 12/31/2026 but may be subject to change.

1.3.1 Eligibility

To be eligible for the Grant:

- I. Applicant must be a local government unit (LGU) located in Hennepin County.
- II. The facility, playground, play space, structure, or equipment must be installed and located in Hennepin County.
- III. The majority of youth served by the proposed project must reside within Hennepin County.
- IV. The project must be used and intended for kids ages 18 years or younger, and/or be used by individuals participating in U4-U19 sports.
- V. Partner organizations and entities receiving grant funds must be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State.
- VI. Applicant may submit no more than five applications. If more than five applications are received, all applications may be considered ineligible and rejected as non-responsive.

Local government units are strongly encouraged to partner with businesses, nonprofits, and other organizations to promote play for kids in their communities.

For the purposes of this grant opportunity, charter schools and community organizations are not eligible to apply on their own. Charter schools and community organizations may partner with an eligible LGU to apply. School departments, community education programs, and other subsidiaries of school districts need to apply through the school district and not as a separate entity.

Each LGU may submit up to five applications for this grant opportunity. If more than five applications are received, all applications may be considered *ineligible* and rejected as *non-responsive*. See Attachment 1 for submission instructions.

1.3.2 Play Area Projects

Play area projects may include, but are not limited to:

<i>Eligible Play Area Projects</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseball and softball fields • Soccer, football, and lacrosse fields • Tennis courts • Hockey rinks • Skate parks • Playgrounds • Nature play areas • Adaptive playgrounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gymnasiums • Synthetic turf • Adaptive recreation facilities • Pools and water parks • Small-scale facility upgrades such as dugout roof installation • Facility upgrades that improve accessibility • Adaptive playground equipment

1.3.3 Grant Expenses

Grant awards will be paid to grant recipients through a cost-reimbursement contract. The awards are paid as reimbursement to the LGU after project costs have been incurred and the LGU has submitted documentation of project expenses.

Grant funds may be used to reimburse the following expenses which include, but are not limited to:

- Play Area equipment and installation
- New construction as well as renovations or improvements of an existing sports facility or playground
- Construction and demolition expenses may be covered if necessary to build the structure
- Signage, including the cost to purchase and install signage at the project site. Signage must acknowledge Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants as a funding source for the structure.

The following expenses are not eligible for grant funding through this initiative:

- Grant funds may not be used for overhead costs, staffing, administrative costs, insurance fees, or other charges associated with administration or programming.
- Equipment for sports and physical activity will not be covered by this grant. Examples of items that would be considered athletic equipment may include helmets, baseballs, ice skates, scoreboards, track hurdles, etc. Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants has a separate and concurrent grant opportunity for sports equipment.

1.4 Grant Application

When submitting an application, Applicants must follow the specific format and content requirements below. Failure to do so will likely prolong the evaluation process and/or may be grounds for rejection of the Application.

Applicant shall describe, in detail, the proposed uses of the Grant funds for the Project. Any other use of Grant funds is strictly prohibited. Applicant shall be solely responsible for securing all additional funds necessary for completion of the Project.

Applicant agrees to only use the Grant funds for the uses indicated above. Use of Grant funds for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. If Applicant uses Grant funds for any other purpose, Applicant shall, upon County's written demand, repay all Grant funds awarded.

1.5 Pre-Application Conference

A pre-application conference will be held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday August 21, 2024 at 10:00 a.m. Access information:

Microsoft Teams meeting

Join on your computer, mobile app or room device

[Click here to join the meeting](#)

Meeting ID: 292 505 122 498

Passcode: H69xgq

[Download Teams](#) | [Join on the web](#)

Or call in (audio only)

[+1 612-263-6117,,713012298#](#) United States, Minneapolis

Phone Conference ID: 713 012 298#

2 Evaluation and selection

2.1 Applicant evaluation and recommendation for selection

Hennepin County will consider the Application to determine whether it meets County's requirements and is otherwise eligible for a Grant award. Hennepin County will receive applications, review them for eligibility, and evaluate applications based on the criteria outlined in Section 2.3. Applications will be distributed to a

review panel for evaluation. The review panel may consist of trained staff, community volunteers and professionals with a background in youth programming. The review panel will provide initial recommendations for grant award. Recommendations will be reviewed by program staffs and County leadership. Program staffs will compile recommendations for award for presentation to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners will determine which applicants receive awards.

Submission of an Application shall neither obligate nor entitle an Applicant to enter into a contract with the County or to receive a Grant. This Solicitation does not commit the County to award a contract. Submission of an application shall neither obligate nor entitle an Applicant to enter into a contract with the County. The County reserves the following rights, to be exercised in the County's sole and absolute discretion: 1) to determine whether any aspect of an application satisfactorily meets the criteria established in this Solicitation; 2) to seek clarification or additional information from any Applicant; 3) to negotiate, sequentially or simultaneously, pricing and/or terms with any Applicant; 4) to reject any or all application with or without cause; 5) to waive any irregularities or informalities in an application; 6) to cancel or amend by addenda this Solicitation, in part or entirely; 7) to award multiple contracts to Applicant; and/or 8) award a contract to a grantee that did not submit an application.

2.2 Evaluation of responsiveness

Hennepin County will consider all the material submitted by the Applicant to determine whether the Applicant's offer is in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation. Applications that do not comply with the provisions in this Solicitation may be considered nonresponsive and may be rejected. Notwithstanding the foregoing, Hennepin County expressly reserves the right to reject any or all Applications with or without cause.

2.3 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation criteria shall include the following:

- Ability to generate measurable impacts commensurate with the public investment.
- Demonstration of need for financial assistance.
- Degree to which proposal addresses inclusivity and access for diverse and underserved populations.
- Degree to which grant funding will benefit populations who reside in areas that have been underserved or have experienced structural or institutional inequality.
- Degree to which proposed costs are reasonable and necessary.

To the extent possible, grants will be distributed to communities throughout Hennepin County. The County reserves the right to consider the equitable geographic distribution of awards throughout Hennepin County when presenting recommendations to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners for award determination. Additionally, County reserves the right to adjust award amounts based on overall funding availability.

The County reserve the right to determine whether any aspect of the Application satisfactorily meets the criteria, the right to seek clarification or additional information from any Applicant(s), and the right to waive any irregularities or informalities that County deems is in their best interest.

2.4 Execution of Grant agreement

The County may condition the Grant award upon Applicant's execution of a Grant agreement provided by County. As applicable, the Grant agreement shall define the legal relationship between County and Applicant.

All awards are subject to approval by the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. At the County's discretion, some applications may not be funded or will only receive partial funding.

Grant awards will be paid to grant recipients through a cost-reimbursement contract. Before a contract becomes effective between the County and any Applicant, the contract award must be ratified and signed by the County Board or its designee. If for any reason the County Board or its designee does not ratify and sign the contract, then there are no binding obligations whatsoever between the County and the Applicant relative to the proposed contract.

The County may condition the Grant award upon Applicant's execution of a Grant agreement provided by County. As applicable, the Grant agreement shall define the legal relationship between County and Applicant.

The awards are paid as reimbursement after the Local Government Unit submits documentation showing services rendered. Grant recipients should maintain a system to track grant budget expenditures. Grant recipients will need to have documentation that supports budget line-item expenses. If subcontracting is an allowable expenditure in the approved budget, grant recipients should follow applicable state and federal procurement laws and select responsible vendors who are not debarred or suspended, not engaged in unlawful practices and who are qualified. All entities receiving grant funds must be registered with the Minnesota Secretary of State.

Hennepin County must be notified of programming events, such as grand opening events for Play Area grants. Grant recipients may be asked to coordinate activities with Hennepin County departments including Purchasing, Finance and Communications. Hennepin County Communications may attend events and activities to take photos and promote the program with portable signage.

Grant recipients will be asked to submit project information to the County including data for program evaluation purposes. Awardees may also be required to provide additional information as deemed appropriate by the County.

No awards may be used for programming, operations, or maintenance of any Play Area. Recipients may contract operations and maintenance to a non-public entity, but ownership and operational responsibility must remain with the local government unit.

If you receive a Play Area award, you must include recognition of funding from the Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants program on your facility signage.

3 General rules

3.1 Solicitation for Grant Applications and Grant overview

This Solicitation for Grant Applications is an invitation for Applicants to submit a Grant Application to Hennepin County. It is a means by which the County may facilitate the acquisition of information related to awarding the Grant and is **NOT A COMMITMENT OR OBLIGATION TO AWARD ANY AMOUNT.**

Nothing in this Application shall obligate County to (i) award any amount; (ii) award any subsequent grants; or (iii) pay or otherwise make any additional distributions.

3.2 Estimated timeline and extension of time

Recommendation of award – December 2024

Anticipated Grant award – January 2024

These dates are subject to revision or cancellation by Hennepin County and the County in their sole and absolute discretion.

3.3 Application submission

Applications will be received by the County via the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). To submit a proposal, you must first register with the Supplier Portal. For more information on how to register, go to the [Supplier Portal help page](#). Register early to allow enough time to resolve technical issues which could cause you to miss out on this opportunity.

The County will receive electronic and paper applications during the open application period via the Supplier Portal. LGUs may submit up to five applications. If submitting more than one application, the applications must be uploaded in one bid response on the Supplier Portal. While compiling materials from applicants, the County will review applications to ensure that they contain all necessary and required information. If information is missing from an application, Hennepin County reserves the right to contact applicants to request that the missing information is included with the final application.

Applicants are strongly encouraged to make their submissions well in advance of the due date as the process may take some time to complete.

The County will compile, review, and evaluate applications. Records will be stored by the County in adherence with County record retention policies. Award recommendations will be presented to the Hennepin County Board of Commissioners. The Hennepin County Board of Commissioners will determine which applicants receive awards.

Failure to submit an Application on time may be grounds for rejection of the Application; however, the County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to accept Applications after the Application due date.

3.4 Questions and Pre-application Assistance

Applicants are invited to contact the Hennepin County Grant Coordinator for feedback on project ideas before applying. For more information visit [Hennepin County Youth Activities Grants | Hennepin County](#) or contact the Grant Coordinator at Youth.Grants@hennepin.us or call 612-348-8172.

Applicants are also invited to schedule an individual Technical Assistance (TA) session with program staff to discuss questions specific to individual projects. TA sessions are offered in one hour time slots between the hours of 9am and 2pm, Monday through Friday. Prospective Applicants may sign up for a TA session by contacting the Grant Coordinator at Youth.Grants@hennepin.us or calling 612-348-8172.

For technical questions related to the Supplier Portal, contact the Hennepin County Supplier Portal Help Desk at 612-543-5412 or supplierportal@hennepin.us.

3.5 Addenda

The County reserves the right to modify this Solicitation at any time prior to the Application due date. It is the responsibility of each prospective Applicant to assure receipt of all addenda. Applications should be based on this Solicitation document and any formal written addenda. Applicants should not rely on oral statements, or site visits.

3.6 County's right to withdraw, cancel, suspend and/or modify the Solicitation

The County reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend, and/or modify this Solicitation for any reason and at any time with no liability to any prospective Applicant for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the Solicitation or otherwise.

3.7 Applicant's right to edit or cancel an Application

An Application may be edited or cancelled in the Supplier Portal prior to the Application due date. For instructions, visit [Supplier Portal help | Hennepin County](#).

3.8 Applications will not be returned

Upon submission, Applications will not be returned. Applications will be stored by Hennepin County for record keeping in accordance with County record keeping protocols.

3.9 Public disclosure of Application documents

Under Minnesota law, applications are private or nonpublic until the proposals are opened on the proposal due date. Once the applications are opened, the name of the Applicant becomes public. All other data in the application is private/nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. The evaluation process is completed when the County enters into a contract with an Applicant. At that time, all remaining data submitted by all Applicants is public with the exception of data classified as private/non-public trade secret data under Minn. Stat. § 13.37 of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Applicants must not submit trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37, as part of their application. The County does NOT consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by the statute. Applicants may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration, if applicable.

The Applicant agrees, as a condition of submitting its Application, the County will not, as between the parties, be liable or accountable for any loss or damage which may result from a breach of confidentiality related to the Application. The Applicant agrees to indemnify and hold the County, its officials, agents, and employees harmless from all claims arising out of, resulting from, or in any manner attributable to any violation of any provision of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, including legal fees and disbursements paid or incurred to enforce this provision. This indemnification survives the County's award of a contract. In submitting an application in response to this Solicitation, the Applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the Application is in the County's possession. The County is required to keep all the basic documents related to its contracts, including applications, for a minimum of seven years.

3.10 Applicant's costs

The County shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in relation to this Solicitation. Applicant shall bear all costs of Application preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this Solicitation or otherwise.

3.11 Conflict of interest

The Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge the submission of its Application, or any resulting Grant award, does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Strictly for illustration purposes, a personal relationship with a County employee directly or indirectly involved in the Grant process may be a conflict of interest.

The Applicant agrees that should any actual or perceived conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify the County and will advise whether it will or will not avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the conflict of interest.

The County may make reasonable efforts to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize a conflict of interest by an Applicant. To avoid a conflict of interest by an Applicant, the County may utilize methods including disqualifying an Applicant from eligibility for the Grant or cancelling the Grant if the conflict is discovered after the Grant has been issued. The County may, at its sole and absolute discretion, waive any conflict of interest.

4 Attachments

4.1 Attachment 1 – Application Format and Content

4.2 Attachment 2 – Attestation Letter Template

Attachment 1 – Application format and content

Applications must be submitted via the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). A LGU may submit up to five applications for this grant opportunity. If submitting more than one application, the applications must be uploaded in one bid response. Application uploads should be coordinated by the LGU and done by a single LGU representative. For questions about the submission process, please contact Youth.Grants@hennepin.us.

To submit an application, you must be registered with the Supplier Portal. Information about registration can be found here: [Supplier Portal help | Hennepin County](#).

Applications must be completed in size 10, 11 or 12 black font, no other font colors will be accepted. Font options include Times New Roman, Segoe or Garamond. Application responses should be clearly laid out and easy to read.

Include one copy of the signed attestation letter, completed application and any attachments in the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). Submitted documents should be titled with the name of the LGU and the name of the document. For example, "City of New York - Grant Application" or "City of New York – Attestation Letter".

Attachment 2 – Attestation letter template

Applications must include an attestation letter. The letter must be on official letterhead and signed by the LGU representative with authority to sign contracts up to the requested grant amount. Documentation of signatory authority may be requested at County's discretion.

Copy and paste the following attestation letter template on official LGU letterhead and submit it with signature as part of your application.

(Date)

Hennepin County
Youth Activities Grants
300 South 6th Street, MC 683B
Minneapolis, MN 55487

To Whom It May Concern:

This letter serves as an attestation to the following:

- The Local Government Unit (LGU) has reviewed this application and believes it is consistent with its program goals. The LGU is prepared to be the fiscal agent for the award, to disburse the funds, and ensure the funds are used as listed in this application.

- Disclosure of any personal or organizational conflicts of interest in accordance with the Solicitation:
 - No conflicts of interest
 - The following conflict(s): _____

Sincerely,

(Name, Professional Title, Phone Number, Email)
(Signature with Date)