The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State Assistance Program was established by the LWCF Act of 1965 to stimulate a nationwide action program to assist in preserving, developing, and assuring to all citizens of the United States of present and future generations such quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources as may be available and are necessary and desirable for individual active participation. The Program provides matching grants to States and through States to local units of government, for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation sites and facilities.

**PROGRAM INFORMATION**

**LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND**

**PROGRAM**

**2019 Funding Cycle**

STATE ADMINISTERING AGENCY

**ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY AFFAIRS**

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| --- | --- |
| Amount Available (Estimated) | $2,500,000.00 |
| Grant Ceiling | $350,000.00 |
| Matching Percentage | 50/50 |
| Applications Accepted After | September 11, 2019 |
| Application Deadline | 12 Noon, Friday,  November 8, 2019 |
| Award Date (Estimated) | November 2020 |
| Selection Method | Competitive |

**ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

All political subdivisions of the state are eligible to participate in the LWCF Program. As such, municipalities, counties, state agencies, and state authorities created by the legislature may apply for LWCF assistance.

Public outdoor recreation areas and facilities for coordinated use by the general public and by public schools, including colleges and universities, are eligible for LWCF assistance provided such facilities are not part of the normal and usual program and responsibility of the educational institution. Stadiums, stadium-like seating, and portable bleachers are not eligible for LWCF assistance. Facilities needed to solely meet the physical education and athletic program requirements of a school may not receive LWCF assistance. This policy does not preclude exclusive school use of certain facilities such as athletic fields, tennis courts, and swimming pools, at certain times for instruction or competition provided the public outdoor recreation use remains primary, and there is adequate public access at other times. However, the grant application must include a schedule of the time the facility will be available to the public. Additionally, adequate signs must be installed at the site, prior to final payment on the project, indicating when the outdoor recreation facilities are available to the general public. The educational entity sponsoring the project must provide in the LWCF application, documentation indicating awareness of agreement to the LWCF provisions requiring the facility to be open and available to the public in **perpetuity**.

**ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES**

LWCF assistance can be used to acquire land and water interests for park purposes, develop new outdoor recreation facilities, and in certain instances, renovate existing recreation facilities. Virtually all public outdoor recreation activities are eligible for assistance under the Program including playgrounds, ball fields, (including lights – concrete or metal poles only), court sports, picnic areas, camping areas, trails, splash pads, etc. In addition, support facilities such as concession stands, restrooms, park access roads, parking areas, utilities, and site preparation necessary to make a recreation activity area usable may qualify for assistance.

Please note, applications to develop elaborate, tournament only, or professional sports facilities are not eligible and will not be considered for funding.

**OWNERSHIP AND CONTROL OF PROJECT LANDS**

The project sponsor must possess sufficient title and adequate legal control of the property that is to be placed in the LWCF protected boundary. Facilities may be developed on land and water owned in fee simple by the project sponsor or where ownership of less-than-fee interests, such as easements, provides permanent control of the property commensurate with the proposed development.

**MATCHING SHARES**

The LWCF Program provides up to 50 percent of project costs, not to exceed the grant ceiling ($350,000.00). The project sponsor must match these funds dollar for dollar with cash and/or in-kind match. Any project costs exceeding the grant amount and required match must be paid by the project sponsor. The LWCF grant funds are distributed on a cost reimbursable basis.

**GRANT LIMIT**

The maximum grant amount is $350,000.00. An applicant does not have to request the entire grant amount and ADECA may provide partial funding for projects if necessary. A minimum grant amount of $50,000.00 is required for recreation areas that have never received LWCF assistance.

**PROGRAM CRITERIA**

The following Program criteria apply to all applicants seeking LWCF assistance:

* The property proposed for development must be owned by an eligible applicant and the need for the facility/activity documented in Alabama’s Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).
* The applicant must agree to manage and operate the LWCF assisted site for public outdoor recreation purposes in **perpetuity.**
* The applicant must agree to comply with all other laws, rules, and regulations associated with the LWCF Program.
* Existing outdoor recreation areas owned and operated by the applicant must be well maintained.

**FUNDING CRITERIA**

The following examples represent the type of criteria that are used to assess the relative merits of applications submitted for LWCF assistance:

* Relative need for the proposed activity in the project area
* Project feasibility
* Recreation delivery system
* Operation and maintenance of existing recreation facilities
* Site location and accessibility
* Amount of new acreage being added to the public outdoor recreation trust
* Amount of local match exceeding the minimum required
* Degree to which citizen groups are involved in the development of the project
* Degree to which the project furthers the goals of the SCORP:
  + Explore Alabama’s outdoor resources.
  + Provide quality of life opportunities.
  + Promote healthy lifestyles.
  + Develop active and passive recreational facilities.
  + Ensure accessibility of outdoor recreation facilities to all citizens.
  + Recognize and promote the economic impact of recreation in Alabama.
  + Promote connectivity of trails.
  + Support sustainable trails and trail maintenance.
  + Ensure distribution of information.
  + Conserve and promote trail resources.
  + Develop trail partnerships and collaboration.
  + Increase accessibility to trails.
  + Ensure protection and enjoyment of wetland areas.

If you are interested in obtaining more information about the LWCF Program, require technical assistance in determining an appropriate project scope, or have questions regarding the application process, please contact William Robbins or Shante’ Holley.

**THRESHOLDS**

**An entity may not apply for both Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and LWCF assistance.**

**An entity may not apply if it has an open RTP or LWCF grant as of November 8, 2019.**

**An entity may not apply if it has unresolved compliance issues from a previous LWCF or RTP grant.**

**An entity may not apply if it did not respond in writing to a LWCF or RTP inspection report that contained deficiencies.**

**An entity may not apply if it has not received approval from ADECA of a Plan of Correction for previous compliance issues.**