**Targeted Equity Grant Program**

Implementation Guidelines for Project Criteria, Eligibility, Project Selection Process and Administration of Grants

December 2, 2019

**Background**

Historically, many communities in King County have experienced inequitable and limited regional investments in parks, open space, trails, and recreation. To address these inequities, there was an allocation of up to $10 million from the six-year voter approved King County parks, recreation, trails and open space levy to be allocated for the Targeted Equity Grant Program. The Targeted Equity Grant Program provides funding to achieve equitable opportunities and access to parks and recreation in unincorporated King County and King County towns and cities for underserved areas and populations, including people with disabilities.

Funding shall be available for applications that increase access and use of parks, open spaces, and programs for recreational facilities in underserved areas. Targeted Equity Grant funds are intended to reach areas and individuals with the greatest need for access and recreation in both the incorporated and unincorporated areas.

**Eligibility to Apply for Targeted Equity Grant Funding**

The following entities are eligible to be recipients of the Targeted Equity Grant funding:

* Tribal organizations serving residents of King County
* Non-profit organizations
* Small or emerging community organizations without a 501(c)(3) status, through a partnership with a fiscal agent
* King County, cities, and towns

**Eligible Projects**

1. Capacity building to include community outreach and planning around new or improved access to local parks and open spaces
2. Land acquisition located specifically within an Opportunity Area or that serves a community of need based on established determinants of equity and consistent with KCC 26.12.003E
3. Capital projects or programs that address unmet needs in underserved areas
4. Projects that provide additional access to disabled individuals

**Project Selection Process**

1. There will be a two-pronged approach to the Targeted Equity Grant Program. In addition to an open rolling application process for grants less than $15,000, King County Parks and Recreation Division staff will prepare and advertise a request for proposals (RFP) and receive applications on an annual basis.
2. An Advisory Committee that provides guidance and direction to the Targeted Equity Grant Program will review, rank, and recommend projects for funding for all applications received through the RFP process.
3. The committee will be staffed by King County Parks and be composed of 15 people appointed by the King County Executive based on a committee composition approved by the King County Council.
4. The King County Executive will seek input from King County Councilmembers on advisory committee recommendations and provide notification to the King County Council 30 days prior to appointment.
5. The King County Executive will appoint committee members who reflect the diverse needs and populations within King County.

**The following composition shall make up the Targeted Equity Grant Advisory Committee:**

* City representatives – up to five members of the committee shall geographically represent cities or park districts in King County.
* Open Space Equity Cabinet representatives – up to five members shall represent the Open Space Equity Cabinet.
* Non-profit and community-based organizations – up to five members shall represent organizations with a strong history of community involvement and/or championing public access to parks and recreation programs for underserved areas of King County.
1. The Committee will make its recommendation to the Department of Natural Resources and Parks based upon the eligibility criteria and the strength of the application.
	1. Project proposals should be explicit regarding benefits to public access and recreation for identified underserved areas of King County. Examples of project benefits include:
		1. Acquisition of open space in a targeted equity area
		2. Providing recreational facilities specifically to serve disabled individuals
		3. A community driven planning action which results in either the recommendation or implementation of new recreational facilities to increase park and open space access for underserved individuals and/or communities
		4. Development or renovation of recreational facilities that will result in increased access and use by an underserved community
		5. Implementation of culturally appropriate recreational programs that provide new or increased opportunities for expanded use of park and recreation facilities or open spaces by underserved individuals and/or communities
		6. Actions that build community awareness, engagement, and organizing to increase access and utilization of new or improved local parks and open spaces by underserved communities, and ensure park and open space infrastructure investments are made based on community input
	2. Additional criteria for consideration shall include:
		1. Community involvement, i.e. strength and diversity of partnerships and community stewardship; how communities are engaged in outcomes.
		2. Furthering established countywide priorities: Equity and Social Justice, Strategic Climate Action Plan, improving water quality and increasing habitat, for example through green stormwater infrastructure, Land Conservation Initiative, implementation of the recommendations in the State of Play Report.
	3. Implementation Strength
		1. How their project plans increase access to parks and recreation facilities or programs
		2. Ability to leverage other partners such as community groups and non-profits
		3. Certainty of success in delivery
		4. Cost effectiveness of the proposal
		5. Identification of continued stewardship plan
		6. How successful implementation will be measured over time

Upon formation, the Advisory Committee will work closely with Parks and Recreation Division staff to further develop and refine the application, review and recommendations process to ensure a streamlined process is in place for ease of use by applicants, committee and program administrators.

1. The Executive will transmit to the King County Council a recommended list of grant awardees, including a summary description of how each project meets the selection criteria and the objectives of the Targeted Equity Grant Program. The Executive will also transmit an ordinance to approve grant funding allocations for each project.
2. King County Parks will administer the contracts for approved projects. Any town or city receiving grant funding will be required to notify the King County Council of any major milestone such as groundbreaking or ribbon cutting 30 days prior to the event.
3. King County Parks will provide an annual report to the King County Council on the status of the Targeted Equity Grant Program. Information on the number of proposals received, projects funded in that year, and a summary of completion of past projects shall be included in the report.

**Program Staffing**

The Parks Division shall be responsible for administering and staffing the program, utilizing a percentage of program funds to pay for this administration. The percentage of funding for program administration shall be consistent with other grant programs managed by County agencies.

Administration shall include development of the process, application materials, announcements, review process, contract development and administration, project tracking, financial accounting, project reporting, and audit function.