

CAPACITY FUND GRANT GUIDELINES

Partnerships for Parks builds community by helping New Yorkers care for their neighborhood parks. The **Partnerships for Parks Capacity Fund Grant** supports community groups dedicated to parks with funding for projects to build their capacity. Formed through our work with community groups over many years, we see capacity as having three inter-related components for groups:

- 1) **Self-awareness:** identifying and articulating specific and realistic goals.
- 2) **Ability:** taking ownership of the goals and establishing a plan for achieving them.
- 3) **Sustainability:** expanding existing programming and/or original goals to increase the scope of the group and becoming more independent.

The Partnerships for Parks Grant focuses on funding projects in any of the following five areas to help groups build their capacity:

- **Events & programming**
- **Outreach & communications**
- **Group development**
- **Resources**
- **Partnerships**

There are three grant cycles per year. 2014 deadlines are February 1, June 1, and October 1 and applications must be received by 6pm either via email or regular mail to be considered for that grant cycle. Incomplete or late applications will not be accepted. Grants range from \$200 to \$3,000. Applicants will be notified of funding decisions within eight weeks of the grant deadline.

We hope that the Partnerships for Parks grant will serve as a springboard for groups to learn about fundraising, and we expect that our grantees will eventually outgrow us after receiving a Capacity Fund grant or grants.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE?

Community groups whose projects take place on NYC Parks Department property are eligible to apply. Projects must engage the neighboring community and expand the group's capacity. Groups must have 501(c)(3) status or a fiscal sponsor. If you have neither and need help securing fiscal sponsorship, please contact us. Former recipients of Capacity Fund Grants must wait one year to apply again. If you are NOT a Friends group, you are strongly encouraged to include a letter of support from the Friends group in the park in which you are proposing to do your project.

PRIORITY WILL BE GIVEN TO

- NYC Parks-focused community groups who have a long-term commitment to their neighborhood park and/or street trees, over groups that are eligible for GreenThumb, Historic House Trust, or flagship parks resources, and over program/service-providers using the park as a venue for a one-time event.
- Volunteer-run groups with small budgets and limited fundraising opportunities or that are new to fundraising.
- Groups with a strong history of collaborative work with Partnerships for Parks, NYC Parks Department, and/or City Parks Foundation.

EXAMPLES OF PROJECTS

All grant projects and programs must be free and open to the public.

Projects include, but are not limited to: events or programs that bring new audiences to the park and encourage sustainable involvement; training; filing for 501(c)(3) status; outreach tools such as newsletters, letterhead, posters, postcards, bulletin boards, banners, P.O. boxes; publications and websites (see details further down). Examples of past grantees include:

- **Friends of Wingate Park** in Brooklyn was awarded \$800 for outreach materials to recruit volunteers and boost group development and identity.
- **Community Builders of 27th Street** in Queens was awarded \$1,400 for a tree guard workshop, materials for nine additional tree guards, outreach materials, T-shirts for group members, and tree signs, to support the group's work in street tree stewardship; raise the group's visibility; raise awareness of street trees in the neighborhood.
- **Bushwick Eco Action Network** received \$2,600 for the design, translation, and printing of bilingual brochures to explain what a "Friends of" group is and to promote street tree care workshops and events.
- **Friends of Mosholu Parkway Parkland** received \$1,200 to increase awareness for the parkland, recruit and retain volunteers, 501(c)(3) filing fees, and a new website.

CONSULTATIONS AND INFO SESSIONS

We strongly encourage you to call us early and discuss your project idea. Contact the Grants Coordinator, Kathryn Trainor, at Kathryn.Trainor@parks.nyc.gov or 212-676-1929, or your local Outreach Coordinator (staff directory on www.partnershipsforparks.org).

You can also attend a grant info session, offered prior to the application deadline to provide feedback on project ideas and a networking opportunity for applicants. Info sessions are recommended, especially for groups new to fundraising, but not required. Contact the Grants Coordinator for info session dates or visit www.partnershipsforparks.org.

WE DO NOT FUND

- Ongoing programming support
- Fundraisers or materials that will be sold for profit
- Major capital improvements to parks
- Staff time. In special cases we can make grants to bring in outside consultants, such as educators, web designers, or performers, who provide a needed service or expertise. Exceptions are also made for intern stipends when an internship program builds the capacity of the group.
- Local travel and transportation
- Overhead costs such as rent, insurance, utilities, etc.

APPLYING FOR A PUBLICATION/WEBSITE

PfP designs publications and/or websites to support several community-based park groups a year. These materials can promote a park, enhance the group's sense of identity, further its mission, and strengthen its relationship with NYC Parks and City Parks Foundation.

Interested groups should apply for a Capacity Fund grant to pay for printing costs, website start-up fees, and any additional resources required, up to \$3,000. Groups can choose to work with our Art Director, in which case design services will be included in the grant package. If you plan to hire a website or graphic designer instead, you should include the additional cost for these services in the amount requested.

Our process involves close collaboration between the group, the PfP Art Director, and staff to shape the content and design of the publication/website. Successful candidates for publications and/or websites often have:

- A minimum membership of 3-5 core members who meet regularly
- A demonstrable track record of accomplishments (clean-ups, participation in It's My Park Day, other activities)
- Previously worked with their PfP Outreach Coordinator, or participated in other PfP programs. *While we welcome groups who are new to PfP, a publication or website is not the ideal first project.*
- **For websites:** Groups applying should have experience using other forms of social media (ex. Facebook, blogs, etc.) and be able to demonstrate that they need web functionality beyond what these platforms offer. At least one member of the group should be comfortable with online technology and will receive

training in how to maintain and update a website built on a customized WordPress template. Subsequent maintenance will be the group's responsibility.

Our timeframe for producing a publication averages 6 months within the one year term of the grant, but not always immediately upon receipt. (For example, a grant for a publication received in the February round may begin production in June and be printed in December.) Groups should keep this in mind when making their distribution plan.

All publications/websites produced with funding from the Capacity Fund are subject to review and approval.

Costs vary based on the size of the publication, number produced, and additional resources required. Use the estimated costs below to help create your budget, or contact PFP's Art Director at 212-788-8077 for more details. Sample costs:

- Brochure (Color, 3- or 4- panel, 3.75" x 8.5" folded): 5,000 Brochures: \$1,500; 10,000 Brochures: \$2,500
- Postcard (Various sizes): 2500 cards: \$250-\$500; 10,000: \$500-\$1,200
- Business Reply all-in-one envelope: \$500-\$1,000 depending on quantity
- Website/domain name start up fees: \$150-\$200 depending on services chosen
- Other resources might include: Map-maker \$500 and up

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships for Parks offers the following resources for group development. For more information, please call us at 212-360-1310 or visit our website at www.partnershipsforparks.org.

- **Partnerships Academy** is a training program that supports community-based parks groups to more efficiently and easily get their important work done and make a difference in their communities. Participants see results in clarifying their mission and goals, accessing funds, expanding programming and events, and increasing community support. Participants also receive one-on-one consultations to apply the trainings to their specific projects.
- **Support for your volunteering or event planning project** in parks or street trees is offered by PFP's outreach coordinators (staff directory on www.partnershipsforparks.org) throughout the five boroughs. They can help you navigate the NYC Parks Department, connect you to staff and decision makers at the agency; connect you to local organizations and interested volunteers; and help you acquire resources, such as tools.
- **It's My Park Day** brings together thousands of New Yorkers come together to volunteer and celebrate their neighborhood parks. Dedicated community groups organize It's My Park Day volunteer projects and free cultural events in their neighborhood parks, from horticulture to painting projects, along with a variety of free events.
- **The Corporate-Community Connections** program can connect your community group to groups of corporate volunteers and material resources to complete a park project (painting, horticulture, or maintenance).
- **People Make Parks** helps communities participate in the design of their parks. People Make Parks consists of an online toolkit (www.peoplemakeparks.org) where people can learn about the capital process in New York City parks and how they can most effectively become involved at each stage.

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