



How to prepare to get Prop 68 grants for parks in your community and region

Proposition 68 Funds are Coming!!! Proposition 68, informally known as the ‘Parks-Water Bond’, was passed by the voters in June 2018. It allocates hundreds of millions of dollars for parks throughout the communities of California (the most relevant of these funding allocations are listed at the end.) Some of these funds are being made available as direct grants to cities and counties, but most of the funding will be in the form of competitive grants.

Sierra Nevada communities are nestled among rolling hills and forested mountains, but many are still ‘park-poor’ – there are few public outdoor places for gatherings, play, and relaxation and events. Some communities would like to develop recreational trails to connect with other recreational opportunities, or interpretive facilities for areas of natural or cultural interest. These grants can help you get funding for this kind of project; **if you are ready!**

Are you Prepared? The funding will be made available through a variety of grant programs, and most of these programs have not released their final application guidelines or solicitations yet. However, there are several things that communities can do to make themselves more competitive for all the grants. These are:

- 1. Maximize Community Engagement in Project Planning and Prioritization**
- 2. Develop Necessary Partnerships and Agreements**
- 3. Move Toward ‘Project Readiness’**

Get Started! Here are some recommendations on how to start preparing for these grant programs:

Community Engagement – Applications which reflect the priorities of the local community will score higher, particularly if you can document that there has been a public planning/prioritization process. This is not hard to do. Here are the basic steps:

- Identify a local organization to act as the ‘lead’ agency. This will probably be the county, a Resource Conservation District, a local nonprofit organization (Boosters, Chamber of Commerce, or other community organization), or Tribe.
- Pull together a planning committee with representatives from community organizations, local government, tribes, school districts, etc. Ask your County Supervisor to assign a county staff person to attend these planning committee meetings to answer questions.
- The planning committee makes a list of possible parks/trails projects. Find out a little about each of these potential projects: How many miles of trails? How many acres in the park? Who are the current landowners? What are the major components of the project (restrooms, shade areas, signage, etc.)
- Hold one or two community meetings to prioritize these projects (For more information about how to facilitate this type of meeting, download the free book: [How to Get Things Done in a Small Town](#) and look at the chapter on facilitation.) Make sure to keep a sign-in sheet to document these meetings!
- Write up the results of the sessions as a ‘Park Priorities Plan’.

Develop Necessary Partnerships and Agreements – In most communities, you will need to develop a partnership to design, build, own, and maintain a park. For instance, the county may own the land but may not be able to commit to maintaining a park. Or one organization is willing to apply for and manage the grant, but another promises to help recruit volunteers. If you discuss this before the grant solicitation is released, you will have a better chance of putting together a winning application – granting agencies love partnerships and collaboration!

Project Readiness – Most grant programs will give you a higher score if your project is ready for implementation. This means that the environmental assessment has been completed (Prop 68 grants will require CEQA), there is a complete design and budget for the project, and land tenure is in place. Don’t worry if this sounds daunting, you don’t have to have all of it done. But the closer your project is to being ‘shovel ready’, the more competitive you will be, so try to take as many steps as you can in this direction. You’ll need resources to get these tasks done. Possible sources are the County, local volunteers with professional expertise, and even small planning grants, possibly from local banks, corporations, or service organizations.

Ask for Help! The Sierra Nevada Conservancy is happy to help organizations in our Region develop funding strategies. Contact your [Area Representative](#) to make an appointment with the Funding Team for a consultation.

Most appropriate sources of Prop 68 funding for community and regional parks:
(DPR = Department of Parks and Recreation) – you can find information about competitive grant program guidelines [here](#):

Section (Public Resources Code)	Allocation – recipient and amount	What is it for?
80050	DPR - \$725 million	Safe neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods
80051	DPR - \$14.5 million	Safe neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods: rehabilitation, repurposing, or substantial improvement of existing park infrastructure in communities of the state that will lead to increased use and enhanced user experiences.
80052	DPR - \$48 million	Safe neighborhood parks in park-poor neighborhoods: local park creation and improvement grants to the communities identified by the department as park deficient within central valley, Inland Empire, gateway, rural, and desert communities for active recreational projects, including aquatic centers, to encourage youth health, fitness, and recreational pursuits.
80062(a)	Cities and Districts - \$120 million	Local park rehabilitation, creation, and improvement grants to local governments on a per capita basis
80062(b)	Counties and park districts, \$80 million - \$400,000 per county	Local park rehabilitation, creation, and improvement grants to local governments on a per capita basis <i>“Overlapping and adjoining jurisdictions and applicants with similar objectives are encouraged to combine projects and submit a joint application. A recipient may allocate all or a portion of its per capita share for a regional or state project.”</i>
80065	DPR - \$30 million Grants to park districts, counties, and regional open-space districts	To create, expand, improve, rehabilitate, or restore parks and park facilities, including, but not limited to, trails, regional trail networks, regional sports complexes, low-cost accommodations in park facilities, and visitor, outdoor, and interpretive facilities serving youth and communities of color.
80065(a)	DPR - \$30 million	Parks and Park Facilities, including trails and regional trail networks
80090	DPR - \$25 million	Roberti-Z'berg-Harris funds. Can be used for trails, bikeways, visitor centers, tourism amenities

Note – This legislation reserves 20% of the parks funding for very low-income communities (called a ‘severely disadvantaged community’). You can find a map of severely disadvantaged communities [here](http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities): <http://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities>. If your community meets these income requirements, you will have less competition for grant funding.