



# COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM

Great Outdoors Colorado's (GOCO) Community Impact Program seeks to enhance a community's quality of life and access to the outdoors through investments in capital infrastructure projects and the community-driven processes that inform them. We believe when partners work together with community members in project visioning and design, and when processes elevate unheard voices, outdoor connections are more impactful and communities become more cohesive and inclusive. For FY25, GOCO plans to invest \$10.3 million in local government funds and \$8.6 million in open space funds to advance projects across all base programs, including Community Impact, Land Acquisition, Planning & Capacity, and Stewardship Impact.

People and communities experience a multitude of benefits from an increased connectedness to the outdoors ranging from improvement to physical and psychological health, to diversified local economies, to educational impacts and more. Funding for the outdoors can also be a meaningful equity lever in Colorado – and a means to address issues of disparity and disproportionality. When developing local projects, we ask partners to consider the multi-faceted benefits of outdoor recreation and outdoor education and advance the most needed and urgent projects that will serve the highest and best interests of their communities.

Through this program, GOCO invites partners to apply for funding to develop and revitalize parks and other outdoor recreation amenities that enhance a community's quality of life and access to the outdoors, as identified and prioritized by the communities they serve. To facilitate project outcomes, applicants may request funding, as needed, for the following components:

- Local capacity building through investments in existing staff, community connectors and resident leadership, and/or consultants
- Community planning, organizing and collaboration to identify existing barriers to outdoor experiences and solutions for overcoming them
- Land acquisitions
- Site-specific, community-centered design
- Storytelling, project communications, and celebrations

Proposed projects must reflect one or more of GOCO's program values as identified in our [2020 strategic plan](#) and outlined later in this document. These values are intentionally open to interpretation and definition by our partners; how they are or could be reflected in each



community is unique. And not every project will integrate multiple values. Projects that demonstrate several values, as well as projects that embody a singular value, can have meaningful impacts and significant merit.

GOCO regional program officers look forward to working with partners on project visioning and development to ensure your valuable time is spent on projects that will compete well in this program. Please connect with us early so that we can provide guidance on competitive proposals, review our concepting to application framework, and have our team provide feedback on draft materials. We know the community needs of our statewide network are vast and we look forward to hearing your ideas and working with you to advance projects throughout Colorado.

**ABOUT US:** GOCO invests a portion of Colorado Lottery proceeds to help preserve and enhance the state's parks, trails, wildlife, rivers, and open spaces. GOCO's independent board awards competitive grants to local governments and land trusts and makes investments through Colorado Parks and Wildlife. Created when voters approved a constitutional amendment in 1992, GOCO has since funded more than 5,700 projects in all 64 counties of Colorado without any tax dollar support. Visit [GOCO.org](http://GOCO.org) for more information.

## General Guidance and Grant Information

**BEFORE YOU BEGIN:** Contact your GOCO regional program officer to discuss your project in detail using the contact information on our staff [webpage](#). Together, you will determine whether your vision will compete well in the Community Impact Program.

**APPLICANT ELIGIBILITY:** This program is open to entities eligible to receive GOCO local government and open space funds as listed below. Ineligible entities can partner with an eligible entity to apply. As always, GOCO strongly encourages partnerships.

- a. Colorado municipality or county
- b. Title 32 special district eligible to receive distributions from the Conservation Trust Fund
- c. Political subdivision of the State of Colorado that includes in its mission the identification, acquisition, or management of open space and natural areas
- d. 501(c)(3) non-profit land conservation organization that includes in its mission the identification, acquisition, or management of open space and natural areas, e.g., land trusts
- e. Colorado Parks and Wildlife



**CONCEPT PAPER DEVELOPMENT:** Applicants should work with their regional officer through a concepting process, which can take several months or longer depending on the proposal. GOCO will accept draft concept papers on a rolling basis and can provide feedback. As part of an iterative process, staff will reflect on the readiness and competitiveness of a proposal and make recommendations regarding a concept paper submission.

GOCO may ask clarifying questions of applicants at the concept or application stage to better understand your project. Staff may coordinate site visits to learn more about the opportunities in a community and hear more from the residents and stakeholders involved in planning processes. We may also seek additional written information for certain proposals. The content of conversations and any additional information submitted become part of the concept or application and open for discussion during staff or peer review as a means of vetting the merit of individual projects. All application materials and related communications may be subject to Colorado Open Records Act requests.

**PROGRAM VALUES:** Projects should encompass one or more of GOCO's program values as identified in our [2020 strategic plan](#):

*Resource conservation* | We value strategic land conservation and resource protection work.

*Outdoor stewardship* | We support sustainability of and improvements to the state's natural and recreational resources.

*Community vitality* | We invest in conservation and outdoor recreation efforts that support communities and quality of life.

*Equitable access* | We partner with communities to break down barriers to the outdoors.

*Youth connections* | We believe children and their families deserve opportunities to get outside and experience all the benefits of doing so.

**GRANT AMOUNT AND MATCH REQUIREMENTS:** GOCO will consider grant requests between \$100,000 and \$1,000,000, with consideration for requests outside that range on a case-by-case basis. Please remember that GOCO serves communities throughout Colorado and appreciates applicants keeping requests reasonable and reflective of expected outcomes. Applicants will work with their GOCO regional program officer to customize a match amount for your project based on your community's ability to match and to identify expenses eligible as match.



**TIMELINE FOR COMPLETION:** Applicants will work with their GOCO regional program officer to customize a timeline for your project based on the various deliverables. GOCO will prioritize projects that will begin immediately upon notice of award or execution of a grant agreement.

**PROPERTY OWNERSHIP:** The applicant or partner entity must own or have control over the property upon which the proposed project will take place. GOCO requires a formal agreement between parties when the applicant is not the owner or controlling entity. Applicants seeking funding for projects involving federal land must discuss the proposal with GOCO staff prior to submitting a concept paper or application. GOCO cannot fund the recreational development of a property that a government entity condemned specifically for that recreational development. GOCO may consider participating in recreational development on lands previously acquired through condemnation for a purpose *other* than recreational development.

**PUBLIC ACCESS:** The public must have reasonable public access to any project funded by GOCO.

**WILDLIFE REVIEW:** Applicants should work with their GOCO regional program officer and the local CPW Area Wildlife Manager (AWM) to understand, document, and mitigate any impacts to wildlife habitat. Concept papers invited to application will be required to submit the wildlife review form as part of the application packet. We ask that you contact the AWM well in advance of the application deadline.

**SITE VISITS:** GOCO staff may conduct site visits scheduled in collaboration with the project leads identified in the concept paper or application.

**ELIGIBLE COSTS AND MATCH:** The following table, though not comprehensive, outlines specific eligible costs for this program. Please discuss any potential project expenses with GOCO to determine the eligibility of those expenses prior to applying.

ELIGIBLE COSTS
Costs associated with project planning/coordination/implementation/communications/celebration
Staff expenses incurred by the applicant and any contracted service providers for professional services directly related to project outcomes and administration.
Costs of surveys, engineering, design, GIS/mapping, land acquisition due diligence costs, etc.
Costs associated with community engagement and related capacity.
Costs associated with volunteer engagement and retention, e.g., prizes, awards, food, etc.



**PROPOSAL REVIEW:** The guidelines and criteria that inform GOCO’s project review and decision-making process is available on our [website](#). GOCO strives to support applicants through the concept paper and application process with feedback and guidance to minimize the investment of partner time and resources on concepts and applications deemed less competitive. GOCO is committed to a fair, equitable, and efficient review process from concept papers to applications and will use a consensus-based process to arrive at funding recommendations. GOCO relies upon the collective wisdom of reviewers rather than vesting power or authority in individual reviewers.

GOCO staff will review draft concept papers on a rolling basis, prior to the concept paper submission deadline for the concurrent grant cycle. The concepting stage is an iterative process between GOCO’s regional program officers and partners to generate the best possible proposal for any given grant round. Upon concept submission, GOCO staff will evaluate the merit of each proposal and assess the project’s relative potential to help advance one or more of GOCO’s program values. Staff collectively considers all concept papers submitted in a cycle and will invite the most competitive projects to submit a full application. The review is comprehensive across GOCO’s four base programs – Community Impact, Stewardship Impact, Planning & Capacity, and Land Acquisition. GOCO staff will invite successful concept paper applicants to submit a full application and will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

Invited applications submitted by the due date are subject to a formal peer review process where GOCO will convene a group of peer reviewers to evaluate project merit. Reviewers will assess each application, including any additional supplemental or clarifying information submitted. As with the concept paper review, GOCO will provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants.

**COMMITTEE PRESENTATION & BOARD ACKNOWLEDGEMENT:** Partners recommended for funding may have the opportunity to briefly speak to project outcomes at GOCO’s Programs Committee meeting and will be recognized by the GOCO Board as part of their quarterly meeting. Please confirm these dates with your regional officer.

## Grant Administration Information

If a grant is awarded, GOCO will assign a Grants Officer to work with the project lead on all aspects of grant administration including execution of a grant agreement, due diligence items, reporting criteria, grant payment options, and signage requirements.

GOCO prefers to disburse funds on a reimbursement basis with a single payment occurring when the project is completed. However, grantees can request one progress payment of up to 75% of the grant amount prior to project completion with the remaining 25% paid upon project



completion. Should either reimbursement option create barriers for project completion, please discuss available alternatives with your regional program officer.

Please contact a Grants Officer now if additional grant administration information is a necessary consideration prior to application. You can find relevant contact information at the link below.

## Contact

Our Grant Programs team is available to discuss your project and proposal so feel free to reach out using the contact information found on our staff [webpage](#). We look forward to working with you!



# CONCEPT PAPER

## Project Summary Information

Project Title:

Applicant Organization(s):

Applicant Name(s):

Partner Organization (if applicable):

Partner Name (if applicable):

Amount Requested:

Estimated Total Project Cost:

Estimated Grant Period (years):

Brief Project Description (limit to space provided without expanding the text box; use 10 pt font)



Please use the summary information sheet above as the cover sheet for the concept paper. Refrain from using letterhead or logos as part of materials and limit submissions to the following documents.

A concise narrative should address the following prompts. Responses need not follow the formatting below but should answer all considerations put forth. Please limit narrative responses to 2 pages using 11 pt font or larger and 1-inch margins for formatting:

- Describe the proposed project and the community need it will address related to outdoor recreation and/or outdoor education. Discuss the multi-faceted benefits of this project and how it will enhance your community's quality of life.
- Reflect on the community-driven nature of this project and what that means for your community. Discuss efforts to date or any anticipated work to involve community members in project visioning and design and to elevate unheard voices in your community.
- Reflect on the intended outcomes of your project and the multiple benefits it will provide for your community and discuss the partnerships you have or will pursue to achieve those benefits. Discuss the nature of each partnership and what it will bring to the table.

## **Budget**

Please review the budget instructions and use the GOCO Budget Form provided on the [program page](#). The budget instructions outline the option to include a budget narrative if helpful to further provide context about your proposal.

## **Additional Attachments**

- Up to two maps (a context map and/or a detailed/schematic map; highly recommended to provide a sense of location, community assets, and scope of work)
- Up to two pages of photos

While not requested at the concept paper phase, those invited to application will be asked to provide the wildlife review form, resolution from the governing body of each applicant organization, and evidence of community support as part of the application packet.