

Know Before You GOCO

COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM GUIDANCE

Welcome! We're so glad you're here. Please read the following information carefully to learn everything you need to know to submit a competitive grant proposal. Contact your [GOCO program officer](#) with any questions.

The Community Impact Program supports projects that enhance a community's quality of life and outdoor access. This includes planning, building, or upgrading parks, trails, natural areas, and other publicly accessible outdoor recreation amenities. Projects may focus on addressing critical stewardship needs in parks, trails, and open spaces.

Priority will be given to projects that clearly reflect community needs and priorities, support a broad base of users, and will be a significant asset for your community, the region and/or state.

Grant Awards

\$100,000 - \$2,000,000 per project; GOCO may suggest a revised request amount, as needed.

Contact your program officer for more information about large investment proposals up to \$5,000,000.

Timeline

1-3 years for project completion, with flexibility based on deliverables

Grant Process

- 1) Explore grant programs and requirements.
- 2) Contact your program officer and develop a concept. (3+ months)
- 3) Submit a concept paper.
- 4) If invited, submit an application.
- 5) If awarded, complete your project.
- 6) Submit final documentation for funding reimbursement.

Note that some projects may experience several rounds of feedback from GOCO staff prior to and during concept paper submission. Once a concept paper is submitted, award decisions are announced six months later at a GOCO board meeting.

Eligibility

Eligible Organizations

- Colorado cities, towns, and counties
- Title 32 special districts eligible to receive Conservation Trust Fund distributions
- Land conservation organizations that support open space and natural area acquisitions
- Political subdivisions of the State of Colorado whose missions are to identify, manage, or acquire open space and natural areas
- Colorado Parks and Wildlife

Eligible Grant Expenses

- Construction and other project implementation costs
- Land acquisitions for parks or recreation access
- Master plans, regional recreation plans, and site plans
- Staff and/or volunteer training or positions, consultants, or other professional services
- Transportation expenses for mileage, fuel, rental, etc.
- Equipment rental (discuss equipment purchase eligibility with GOCO)
- Community engagement, planning, and design processes
- Project communications and celebrations

The following expenses **will not** be covered:

- Enclosed structures, except for environmental education facilities and restrooms
- Amphitheaters, entertainment stages, or similar
- Costs associated with public art installations
- Programs associated with projects
- Project contingency

This list is not exhaustive. Contact your GOCO program officer to confirm eligible expenses.

Match Requirements

GOCO does not have a set match requirement for our funding opportunities, though competitive proposals often reflect strategic project partnerships, resources, and complementary funding sources. Your program officer can also provide guidance.

Payment & Reimbursement

GOCO prefers to reimburse partners for the grant award amount as a single payment after project completion. If this reimbursement approach creates a barrier to completing your project, contact staff to discuss alternatives, including advanced and partial payments.

Property Ownership

For capital development projects, the eligible entity should own or have a legal property interest in the property on which the project will take place. GOCO cannot fund recreation development on property condemned specifically for that development. However, GOCO may consider funding recreation development on lands previously condemned for non-recreation purposes.

Public Access and Maintenance

The public must have reasonable access to any GOCO-funded project. Grantees must commit to maintaining the project in a reasonable state of repair for the purposes specified in the proposal and for the life of the project (or a minimum of 15 years).

Wildlife Review

Applicants will work with their GOCO regional program officer and the local Colorado Parks & Wildlife Area Wildlife Manager (AWM) to understand, document, and mitigate any impacts to wildlife habitat. Concept papers invited to the application will be required to submit the wildlife review form. Please contact the AWM well in advance of the application deadline.

How Proposals Are Assessed

Alignment with GOCO's Program Values

- *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.

Additional Considerations

- *Urgency* – Priority goes to projects ready to be implemented and/or projects that address time-sensitive issues.
- *Need* – Priority goes to projects that will benefit most from GOCO funding, whether there are few other funding options or GOCO's contribution will help leverage a match from another organization or the community. We aim to equitably distribute funding throughout the state. We also consider the scale of impact relative to GOCO's investment.

- *Community-centered approaches* – Priority goes to projects where residents and partners are represented and meaningfully involved in design, implementation, and/or maintenance.
- *Outcomes* – We consider the project’s ability to offer or improve diverse recreation, expand access for disproportionately impacted communities, advance collaborative stewardship opportunities, sustain recreation or natural resources, and utilize climate resilient and environmentally conscious approaches.
- *Advancing relevant plans and resources* – We consider how projects align with local, regional, or statewide efforts, such as the goals, objectives, and collective strategies identified in Colorado’s Outdoors Strategy.

Submitting a Proposal

Concept Paper

Applicants should work with their GOCO program officer to develop a concept paper. Drafts are accepted on a rolling basis. Program officers ask follow-up questions as needed and provide feedback. GOCO staff collectively reviews concepts and identifies the most competitive proposals to invite to the full application. All applicants receive feedback from their program officer.

Site Visits

GOCO staff may request a project site visit. Any requests will be made to project leads identified in the concept paper or application.

Application Review

Invited applications are reviewed by peer reviewers from relevant conservation and recreation organizations. Reviewers assess the merit of each application, including any supplemental information provided by the applicant, based on various factors (listed under ‘How proposals are assessed’ above). Peer reviewers and GOCO staff then meet to discuss their reflections. GOCO staff recommend projects to GOCO’s board of trustees for consideration during the Programs Committee Meeting. The board approves final grant awards at the following board meeting. All applicants receive feedback from their program officer.

Committee Presentation and Board Acknowledgment

Representatives from projects recommended for funding may have the opportunity to speak briefly at GOCO’s Programs Committee meeting. Projects and partners will also be recognized at the following board meeting where final awards are made. Dates will be confirmed with your program officer.

COMMUNITY IMPACT PROGRAM CONCEPT PAPER

Submit materials through the website form by no later than 5 pm on the concept paper deadline. Text documents should use 11 pt font or larger and have 1-inch margins. Please submit materials in plain text (no letterhead or logos). Submit individual documents for each category; for example, the narrative should be submitted as a single document and the maps can be compiled and submitted as a single document. Each individual document submitted must be 30 MB or less.

- Narrative – *submit file in doc or docx*
- Budget – *available on Community Impact web page; submit file in xls or xlsx*
- [Optional] Budget narrative
- Project Maps
- Project Photos

Project Summary

Be prepared to provide the following information when submitting your concept paper through the form on the webpage:

- Project name
- Your name and contact information
- Applicant organization(s)
- Applicant name(s)
- Partner organization and name (if applicable)
- County/Counties/Statewide
- Grant request amount
- Total project amount (this should match the total source of funds field in your budget)
- Grant time period
- Brief project description (50 words or less; 3-4 sentences)

Concept Narrative

Write a short narrative (up to 2 pages; 11 pt font or larger; 1-inch margins) in response to the following prompts. Responses do not need to follow the formatting below.

- Describe your project and explain how it will address a community need related to outdoor recreation or stewardship.
- Discuss the various benefits of this project and how it will enhance your community's quality of life.

- Explain who your partners will be on this project, what each partner will contribute, and how these partnerships will help achieve your goals.
- Outline community participation in this project. This may include:
 - Community engagement in project visioning, design, or planned implementation, including any efforts to involve traditionally underrepresented community members.
 - Collaboration with public, private, and/or community-based organizations.
 - How this project aligns with existing plans and strategies for your city/town, county, region, and/or statewide efforts.

If your project has a **stewardship focus**, describe what needs it will address, including:

- A detailed explanation of how you will coordinate and implement the project, what partners are involved, and what roles each partner will play.
- How your collaborative approach will lead to long-term, sustainable outcomes for both the natural and recreational resources and the organizations involved.

Budget Form

In the form, a high-level budget should provide sufficient details that reflect project readiness, partnerships, and matching resources. Consider how your budget reflects areas outlined in the ‘How proposals are assessed’ section above. Round figures to the nearest dollar. If a grant is awarded, the budget will be included in the final grant agreement as the budget and match funding committed to the project and used to track project outcomes and expenses for reimbursement. You will be asked to provide the following:

- *Scope of Work* – Identifies the project elements outlined in the Concept Narrative.
- *[Optional] Leveraged Resources* – Includes any recent investments beyond those outlined in the Scope of Work that will support, or have already supported, this project.
 - Example: You acquired land for a new park or completed other project elements in anticipation of your proposal.
 - You may also use this space to reflect time or resources that have been used as match in other grant applications to avoid allocating donated time or other resources to more than one grant (also known as “double-dipping”). Instances of time or resources may only be counted once in the budget, whether they’re included in the Scope of Work or Leveraged Resources.

[Optional] Budget Narrative

If you feel it will be helpful to proposal reviewers, explain estimated costs or matching funds in one page or less. Narratives should be written so that a reader who is not familiar with the project can understand what expenses are anticipated and why. Do not write a narrative for every expense; rather, provide higher-level budget categories and how they will help accomplish objectives. Do not include information already included in the Concept Narrative.

Examples:

- Personnel (\$85,000 GOCO/\$95,000 match) – These funds will be used to hire 1 project manager and 1 coordinator to facilitate all aspects of the project and provide support.
- Training (\$6,000 GOCO) – Training will support up to 10 staff members and an additional 10 volunteers to advance project goals.
- Pending Match Funding (\$200,000) – An application was submitted to <insert source> and we expect an award decision by May 6th. If not awarded, our back up plan is to <insert funding sources>.

Additional Attachments

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

Looking Ahead: Final Application

Those invited to complete the application will have approximately one month to develop the following application materials. Please plan accordingly.

- Responses to Proposal Narrative prompts (up to five pages)
- Budget and Optional Budget Narrative
- Maps or diagrams (up to two pages)
- Photos (up to two pages of photos of the current site, renderings of planned improvements, or photos from community engagement events)
- Resolution from the applicant's governing body (your resolution must meet GOCO's resolution requirements)
- Wildlife review and completed Wildlife Review Form
- Indication of support (up to five; may include letters of support from partners, and community members; a summary of media articles, broadcasts, testimonials, etc.)
- [Optional] Planning documents (up to two pages; examples include infographics, process outlines, comments, data)
- [Optional] Timeline