



Formation of this Program

Marin County Parks is proud to continue offering this community grant program supported by funding from Measure A (the Marin Parks, Open Space, and Farmland Preservation Transactions and Use Tax Ordinance of 2012). This grant program focuses on fostering partnerships with community organizations that expand visitor services and outreach regarding Marin County's parks and open space preserves, with a focus on underserved communities throughout Marin County. Marin County Parks and the Marin County Open Space District offer access to 16,000 acres of open space preserves, over 40 parks, and a system of paved multipurpose pathways which, considered together, serve approximately 6 million visitors per year. We want our lands and programs to serve everyone, be accessible to everyone, and we want every community member to feel welcome when they visit the places and participate in the programs we provide. Partnering with Marin's community organizations involved in important social equity and environmental work is a necessary component of serving Marin's communities. We want to support what is working in our community. **This grant program primarily seeks to support successful existing programs and projects to connect underserved communities in Marin with parks, preserves, recreational facilities, staff and programming managed by Marin County Parks.**

A [technical report](#) funded by the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy found that use of parks by some communities is limited by:

- Access to transportation resources or information on transportation options; cost of getting to and into a park, or having appropriate gear to comfortably experience a park; and safety concerns and fear around personal discomfort, harm to self, and risks associated with the unknown;
- Communications, in the form of language barriers and information sources (signs and brochures, for example) that either doesn't exist or are not comprehensible to people who do not read or speak English;
- Discrimination, cultural differences and perceived prejudice based on non-verbal encounters with other visitors, the experience of excessive rules and regulations, and brochures and marketing not reflecting one's own cultural context.¹

Community focus groups funded by Marin County Parks and feedback from community grant participants reinforced the technical report findings above and also identified additional barriers including timing of programs, lack of accessibility information and facilities, maintenance and cleanliness of the park environment, lack of facilities accommodating specific family or recreation activities, limited awareness of local park resources, limited types of programming, lack of restrooms, and lack of signage or directional markers.

Marin County Parks prioritizes equitable access to and enjoyment of the parks and open spaces we manage. Our mission states that "We are dedicated to educating, inspiring, and engaging the people of Marin in the shared commitment of preserving, protecting, and enriching the natural beauty of Marin's

¹ Roberts, N.S. (2007). "Visitor/Non-Visitor Use Constraints: Exploring Ethnic Minority Experiences and perspectives." General Technical Report, Golden Gate National Recreation Area, National Park Service. San Francisco, CA: San Francisco State University.

parks and open spaces, and providing recreational opportunities for the enjoyment of all generations.” Marin County Parks seeks to fulfill this mission through collaboration with other county departments, other governments, and non-governmental organizations implementing strategies to improve the health and wellbeing of Marin residents of all ages and backgrounds. Current partnerships include countywide equity initiatives; multi-agency partnerships including One Tam, Healthy Parks Healthy People, and Park Prescriptions; and a variety of co-sponsored events with community non-profits, libraries, senior housing communities and others. This grant program has enabled many partnerships with local community organizations to blossom and grow as we work together to serve communities across Marin. Grants to date have served communities including the Latino and Vietnamese communities, seniors, youth and young families, and hundreds of residents with high health needs and varying ability levels. Trips and activities have included taking transit to parks, youth field trips, hikes and mountain bike rides, picnics, photography lessons, nature hikes, lectures, and social media campaigns just to name a few. Our partners, supported with Measure A funding, have helped us to “augment our current visitor services via programming and partnerships to protect natural resources, support visitor safety and enjoyment, and support volunteerism and environmental education.” This language from the Measure A Expenditure Plan captures a department and voter priority.

We named this program BREATHE/RESPIRA! because we believe in the ability of outdoor recreation and connection with nature to reduce stress and improve health. [A guide for health care providers](#) released by the Institute at the Golden Gate reviewed research showing extensive health benefits resulting from exposure to outdoor or natural environments including increased physical activity and vigorous exercise in children, increased vitamin D, decreased blood sugars in diabetics, increased longevity, and mental health and stress reduction². The guide also reviewed barriers to outdoor activity, many of which are similar to those noted in the GGNRA study mentioned above. Initial results from the first community grant-funded Park Prescriptions Program in Marin City showed decreases in obesity and blood pressure and increased mental health resulting from regular outdoor activity. Parks are as vital to our wellness as the air we breathe, and we want to provide the means to help our entire community have access to these important resources. The Spanish translation of “breathe”, *respira*, is included in the grant title to underscore the importance of making Marin County Parks available to all Marin communities regardless of language or cultural background.

We know there are people throughout Marin County experiencing barriers to making use of parks and open space. We will be focusing our attention on geographically-situated communities identified in the lower quarter of [The Portrait of Marin Human Development Index](#) rating table.³ However, we will consider funding any project or program that supports an underserved community, as long as that community is adequately characterized and described in relation to this program. Marin County Parks will continue engaging partners to improve our knowledge of equity issues and barriers to enjoyment of the lands and programs we offer.

Thank you for your interest in applying. **Please review all of the following information** as you prepare to submit a Letter of Interest (LOI), and please do not hesitate to contact the Government and External Affairs Manager at the e-mail address listed below with additional questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

² Nooshin Razani and Kristin Wheeler. “Healthy Parks Healthy People San Francisco: A guide for health care providers.” Manual, Institute at the Golden Gate, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, National Parks Service. San Francisco, CA: Institute at the Golden Gate.

³ Burd-Sharps, Sarah and Kristen Lewis. “A Portrait of Marin: Marin County human development report 2012.” Report, Marin Community Foundation, American Human Development Project, Measure of America Series. Marin County, CA: Marin Community Foundation.

Available Grant Opportunities

Marin County Parks offers two tiers of grants in support of underserved communities, communities with high health needs, and communities that are not traditional visitors to our parks and preserves. A total of between \$100,000 and \$200,000 will be awarded under the following two tiers:

- Sprouts: Awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$8,000 will support smaller existing projects and programs.
- Wings: Awards from \$8,000 up to \$30,000 will support larger existing projects and programs.

An existing project/program is defined as any project, program, or service an organization has been successfully implementing for a minimum of the last six months that connects underserved communities with positive outdoor experiences or similar health and wellness activities that can be adapted to the outdoor environment. Proposals may include modification to existing applicant programs. Either tier may be used to match other funding sources. For Wings grants, there is an opportunity to propose multiple phases of a project over multiple years. However, grants will be awarded only one year at a time, with no promise of future funding. All grants must be spent out by grantee on an annual basis. Unspent funds will revert back to this program. An organization may be a sub-applicant on multiple proposal teams. However, an organization functioning as the lead applicant may apply for funding as the lead on only one proposal per grant cycle.

Qualifying Criteria

- An applicant organization (or fiscal agent) must be a city, county, non-profit organization (501(c)3), special district or Joint Powers Authority (JPA) formed pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500) of Division 7 of the Government code, community group, community-based organization, or emerging or existing coalition. Applicants that are not a city, county, non-profit organization (501(c)3), special district or JPA formed pursuant to Chapter 5 (commencing with Section 6500 of Division 7 of the Government code if at least one of the parties to the joint powers agreement qualifies as an eligible applicant), must work through a fiscal agent to apply.
- The applicant currently provides programs to underserved, high-risk or vulnerable populations in Marin.
- The applicant is committed to improving the health, wellness, and/or environmental awareness of populations in Marin.
- The proposal focuses on increasing access to and use of Marin County Parks or Marin County Open Space District lands, facilities, and/or staff and programs.
- The proposal focuses on one or more of the three program areas discussed in the Funding Areas section of this document, immediately below.
- The proposal seeks funds for an existing project or program.

Funding Areas

Grant proposals must apply to one or more of the following program areas:

- Visits to Parks: Organize and lead trips to our parks, open space preserves, and recreation facilities. These outings may be coordinated with planned or existing events and/or programs at Marin County parks or open space preserves in partnership with our ranger, volunteer and environmental education staff. <https://www.marincountyparks.org/marincountyparks/discoverlearn/events-calendar>.
- Outreach in Communities: Many people are introduced to new park outings through friends and family. Help Marin County Parks expand its reach into Marin's communities that are unfamiliar with county parks, open space preserves, and programs by working with us to market our lands and programs. Help us build community knowledge and use of our public lands by helping us to connect with the communities you are already connected to and working with.

- Bridges to Enjoying the Outdoors: Plan and lead programs that overcome existing barriers preventing communities from accessing and enjoying Marin County parks and open space preserves. Proposed strategies could address language, transportation, ability level, information access, and a wide range of other barriers.

Project Examples

Sprouts:

- Example: An organization caring for residents with developmental disabilities proposes to experiment with bringing their clients and programming outdoors to enjoy the parks and learn how the organization may offer and expand these types of trips in the future (grant application would request funding for transportation, development of program materials, food and activity materials, coordination with Marin County Parks staff, and limited purchase of first aid or other specialized materials needed for accommodating the safe and enjoyable experience of their clients).

Wings:

- Example: An organization proposes expanding a successful employee wellness model, encouraging increased use of Marin's public lands, to employers throughout Marin County. The application identifies a clear strategy for engaging the business community and formalizing a communications and outreach strategy to engage employees. The application includes clear objectives and metrics for assessing success of program development and partnership effectiveness. The application clearly identifies how the applicant will coordinate and work with Marin County Parks staff and integrate the use of parks and open spaces, and existing programs. The applicant demonstrated a background in effectively delivering similar programs.

Note: These are only examples. Please consider proposing any strategies related to the existing work of your organization that would connect Marin residents with the county parks and open spaces. We look forward to learning about your innovative ideas!

Funding Restrictions

Grant funds may be used to cover a wide range of expenses related to the implementation of proposed events or programs. However, the following activities and costs will not be covered by this funding:

- Conducting lobbying, carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation or political decision making;
- Influencing the outcome of any specific election through any means;
- Purposes other than those that are charitable, scientific, or educational;
- Fundraising purposes;
- Budget shortfalls or endowment funds;
- Administrative costs not related to the implementation of the program or event;
- Scholarships, fellowships, or grants to individuals; and
- Land acquisition or real estate purchases
- Trips or activities outside of Marin County

**A maximum of 15% of each Wings grant may be allocated to cover program or event-related administrative costs directly related to work performed under this grant. No administrative costs may be covered by the Sprouts grants.*

Application Process

The Breathe/Respira! Grant program will solicit letters of interest (LOIs) from qualified applicants at the beginning of each calendar year. Any grantees from previous years that demonstrated excellent funding implementation may be asked to re-apply. A sample LOI is attached to the end of this Overview

document. Please submit a 1-4 page LOI on official organizational letterhead signed by your organization's chief executive(s) using the template.

During the application period, interested applicants may direct questions about their LOI, applications, and this grant program to Marin County Parks' Government and External Affairs Manager, Kevin Wright, at kwright@marincounty.org. All proposals that require coordination with Marin County Parks staff and programs are encouraged to contact the Government and External Affairs Manager to ensure the feasibility of their proposal. **We ask that you align your plans with our existing quarterly calendar of free monthly programming on our website, or rely largely on your organization and programming when connecting people to our lands and facilities due to the time constraints of Marin County Parks staff.**

Application materials may be submitted in hard copy or electronically as a PDF. Please send all application materials to:

Kevin Wright (kwright@marincounty.org)
Government and External Affairs Manager
Marin County Parks
3501 Civic Center Drive, Suite 260
San Rafael, CA 94903

No application materials will be accepted after the deadline. See the timeline below for approximate deadlines during the application and award selection process.

After submitting a completed LOI and if qualified to receive funding and invited to apply, Wings applicants will be asked to respond to some or all of the following clarifying questions:

- Describe how the proposed project, program, or initiative will address one or more Funding Area(s).
- Describe the history of the project or program, if any, and how this funding request will enhance the effectiveness of that project or program.
- Describe how the project or program will serve one or more unmet needs or address one or more barriers to enjoying and benefiting from Marin County parks and preserves. Include any specifics about increasing access to Marin County parks, open space preserves, and programs.
- Describe how the project will result in success by considering the needs of the target population (i.e. childcare, transportation, need for interpreters, etc.). Include clear, measurable outcomes.
- Describe how the project or program will lead to ongoing relationships with, and use of, parks and open space preserves, or reduce barriers for one or more unserved or underserved communities in the short and long-term.
- Describe the applicant's ability to successfully engage the target audience based on the history of the project or program, or other work performed by your organization; especially regarding connecting those communities with environmental programming, parks, and open space preserves.
- Specify the use of any existing Marin County Parks programs and other resources listed in the Beyond The Money section (i.e. participation in regularly scheduled interpretive walks or volunteer days).
- Explain how funds will be used to achieve stated outcomes **by attaching a detailed budget.**
- Describe any history of partnering with Marin County Parks.
- Describe any ways in which other funds or in-kind contributions will be leveraged to achieve outcomes (There are no matching requirements for the Marin County Parks Community Grant Program. However, we encourage you to look for creative ways to combine funds to create a more complete or effective program).

Selection Process

A review team comprised of Marin County Parks environmental education, volunteer, equity team, and executive staff will review all LOIs and ensure applicants qualify for program funding according to the Qualifying Criteria. Sprout-level applicants must simply submit an LOI to be considered for funding. Wings LOIs will be reviewed and staff will issue requests to complete full applications for those determined to possess the most promise of achieving this program's goals. The Government and External Affairs Manager may contact applicants to discuss small changes to better align proposals with Marin County Parks operations, programming, and staff availability.

A committee of the Parks and Open Space Commission (POSC), in partnership with staff, will be responsible for recommending successful Sprouts and Wings proposals. Staff will prepare a summary of all proposals and provide all application materials for review during the decision-making process. Committee members will review staff recommendations and form recommendations for winning proposals and funding allocation. The Government and External Affairs Manager may contact an applicant with questions from the committee prior to the committee forming a recommendation for an award. The POSC will review recommendations of the committee at a regularly scheduled public meeting, and will vote to recommend successful proposals and award amounts to the Marin County Board of Supervisors (BOS).

Staff will prepare grant agreements and send to each successful applicant for signature. Staff will work with each successful applicant to include specific performance objectives within each grant agreement. Grant agreements will ultimately be approved by the BOS, based on a recommendation by the full POSC. All applicants are invited to attend POSC and BOS meetings. Successful Sprouts and Wings proposals may not receive the full amount requested in their applications. Sprouts grantees will receive the full grant amount upon approval of a grant agreement by the BOS. Wings grantees are required to submit an invoice for each grant disbursement. Additional information regarding disbursements and other grant requirements are itemized in the grant agreement. Samples of the LOI and full grant application will be made available on the Marin County Parks Measure A webpage. Please note that all proposals become public documents.

Timeline

- Application Period Announced: January 16, 2020
- LOIs Due: February 24, 2020
- Requests for Wings Applications Sent: Early March, 2020
- Applications Due: March 20, 2020
- POSC Votes to Recommend Proposals: May 21, 2020
- Grant Agreements Sent to Successful Applicants: Late May, 2020
- Board of Supervisors Executes Grant Agreements: July, 2020
- Grant Period: July 1, 2020 through June 30, 2021
- Mid-year Report: December/January 2020,
- Grant Reporting Due: 30 days after the end of the grant period

Timeline is approximate.

Reporting Requirements

Mid-year reports will include a brief summary of progress to date, examples of success meeting grant objectives to date, and future planned trips and activities.

Upon completion of a project, or at the end of the funding period each grantee will be required to complete a final report. Sprouts grantees will be asked to provide a summary of expenditures and

provide receipts and payroll summaries to verify expenses. All grantees will be asked to provide detailed information about the program's or project's beneficiaries, whether the program or project was successful based on initial goals identified in the application, and performance objectives listed in grant agreements, lessons learned, feedback on the grant program, and photos from events and activities. Grantees are required to give a final presentation of grant work and accomplishments during a regularly scheduled public meeting of the POSC.

During events and activities grantees may be asked to post signs or use Measure A logos on program materials recognizing the contribution of Measure A tax dollars.

Beyond the Money

Marin County Parks offers a wide range of resources and programs to local communities. Every successful applicant will have an initial discussion with MCP's Government and External Affairs Manager to discuss the entire suite of resources that can be shared to support funded proposals. The discussion will include appropriate strategies for coordinating with our Environmental Education and Volunteer Programs. Aside from the parks and preserves themselves, a brief list of the resources offered by Marin County Parks includes:

- Maps and other informational materials
- Limited printing and similar services
- Scheduled Marin County Parks programs led by environmental education, ranger, and volunteer staffs
- Meeting rooms
- Connections with other community partners and resources
- Technical materials covering environmental education, recreation, and volunteer management
- Program and event outreach support
- Limited administrative staff support

All grantees may have the opportunity to attend a tour of our parks, open spaces, and programs. Also, annual idea-sharing and grantee educational opportunities may be planned to grow capacity and increase grantee and staff effectiveness.

Staff Roles

In addition to the roles mentioned above, staff will fulfill the following roles:

The Government and External Affairs Manager will work closely with grant applicants and grantees to assist with the application process and realize the full potential of their project or program when funding is awarded. The Manager will act as a liaison between Marin County Parks staff, Parks and Open Space Commissioners, and grantees. The Manager will work with the Marin County Parks and Open Space Commission during the grant selection process each year and with the Measure A Community Oversight Committee during the annual reporting process. Finally, the Manager will seek to connect grantees with other relevant community groups and members, and will reach out to Marin-based organizations working with underserved communities to continue refining this program and Marin County Parks' approach to effectively working with communities it wishes to better serve.

Environmental Education, Equity Team, and Volunteer Program staff will work directly with grantees when applicable once grant agreements have been signed.

Organizations and Resources

The following organizations and informational resources were instrumental in constructing this grant program:

- Marin County Parks Visitor Study; <https://www.marincountyparks.org/projectsplans/guiding-documents>

- Viva Marin; <https://www.marincounty.org/-/media/files/departments/hh/vivamarin.pdf>
- Marin Community Foundation
- Marin County Health and Human Services
- HEAL implementation teams
- Marin Grassroots' DRAFT *Marin County Equity and Social Justice Report 2013*
- *Grant Making with a Racial Equity Lens (2007)* GrantCraft; <http://www.grantcraft.org/index.cfm?fuseaction=Page.ViewPage&pageId=1280>
- *Grant Making with a Gender Lens (2004)* GrantCraft; <http://www.grantcraft.org/?pageid=1328>
- Kaiser Permanente CHNA Data Platform; <https://about.kaiserpermanente.org/community-health/about-community-health/community-health-needs-assessments>
- Institute at the Golden Gate
- Ongoing feedback by grantees
- Many other partners and resources!

<Official Applicant Letterhead>

Letter of Interest

Breathe/Respira! Marin County Parks Community Grant Program

Marin County Parks
C/O: Kevin Wright
3501 Civic Center Drive
Suite 260
San Rafael, CA 94903
Fax: 415-473-3795

February 24, 2020

<Title of the proposed project>

Applying: (Lead applicant and any team members if applicable)

Type of Organization: (Please include any information necessary to allow staff to determine you are a qualified applicant according to the Qualifying Criteria section of the Program Overview document.)

Fiscal Sponsor (if applicable):

Primary contact for applicant: <Name and contact information>

Applying for a Sprout or Wing grant:

Requested funding amount: \$

(Please refer to the sections in the Grant Program Overview titled “Available Grant Opportunities” and “Funding Areas” when determining an appropriate funding amount to request.)

Project Description and Budget: (Identify the Funding Area(s) the proposed project falls under and describe the proposal in detail (attach a preliminary project budget). Explain the history, past successes, and how the effort will grow with this funding to connect underserved communities with Marin County Parks lands and programs.)

Alignment with Funding Priorities: (Describe how the intended outcomes will support the grant funding priorities.)

Organization mission, overview and annual budget: (Emphasize work with underserved communities.)

Signed,

<Title>

Attach a simple budget itemizing expenses