

**People, Parks, and Power: A National Initiative for Green Space, Health Equity, and Racial Justice**  
**Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) on the Call for Proposals**  
**UPDATED 10/8/21**

*The following responses have been grouped by topic based on questions submitted.*

**1. What is the People, Parks, and Power initiative?**

People, Parks, and Power (P3) is a joint effort of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) and the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, led and managed by Prevention Institute. Even though there is broad consensus on the value of parks and green infrastructure, evidence shows that there are persistent inequities in access, availability, quality of facilities, and programming by race, place, and income. P3 will support community-based organizations and base-building groups working in urban, low-income communities of color across the U.S. to increase park equity through local policy and systems change. Park equity entails multiple strategies to ensure procedural, distributional, and structural equity. We encourage you to read Prevention Institute’s paper [Changing the Landscape: People, Parks, and Power](#) to learn more about park equity.

**2. Can you clarify what the term “parks and green spaces” includes?**

Parks are accessible to the general public and may include playgrounds, pocket parks, outdoor recreational facilities, sports fields, urban open space, and other features that promote physical activity, active recreation, and respite. Green spaces are also accessible to the public and can include lakes, streams, rivers, trails, greenways, community gardens, green alleys, and other constructed facilities that use nature-based processes to manage stormwater, flooding, and water quality and address other environmental issues such as air quality.

**3. Where can I find the recording of the optional applicant webinar held on September 29, 2021?**

You can find the webinar recording [here](#) and the slides [here](#).

**4. What is the geographic focus of the P3 initiative?**

The geographic focus of the P3 initiative is urban areas in the United States—with a particular interest in small and mid-sized cities (under 500,000 population). We are also open to funding distinct communities within larger cities that have suffered the consequences of historic disinvestment, including deficits in park space, park conditions, or programming, etc., compared to neighboring, more affluent neighborhoods.

**5. Is there minimum threshold for a city’s population size to be eligible for P3 funding?**

There is no minimum threshold for population size to be eligible for this funding opportunity. Please see above for more information on the geographic focus of the P3 initiative. As described in the Call for Proposals, P3 will fund community-based organizations and base-building groups working to

build community power and advance equity-focused policy/systems change at the local level (i.e., citywide, countywide, or districtwide).

**6. Will rural areas be considered for this funding opportunity?**

No. P3 will support community-based organizations and base-building groups working in urban, low-income communities of color across the U.S. to increase park equity through local policy and systems change. The P3 initiative is responsive to extensive research which demonstrates that urban neighborhoods with predominately African American and Latino residents have suffered the brunt of park inequities in the U.S. While we recognize that low-income rural areas also experience park inequities, the geographic focus of the P3 initiative is urban areas. There is no minimum threshold for population size to be eligible for this funding opportunity, however the focus of P3 initiative is on urban areas, not rural areas. We hope that with the success of the P3 initiative, parallel efforts will arise to address the unique conditions and park inequities experienced in rural communities.

**7. Does the community in our proposal need to be incorporated? Would a community that is an unincorporated area of a city be eligible?**

Organizations that are working in unincorporated areas are eligible to apply (assuming all other eligibility criteria are met). In your Letter of Intent (LOI), please describe the jurisdiction (e.g., county or district) where your proposed policy advocacy initiative will take place.

**8. Why is P3 focused on policy and systems change rather than building actual parks or green infrastructure projects in communities?**

The traditional approach to addressing park inequities has focused on building new parks, recreation facilities, and green infrastructure projects in communities, or on improving existing infrastructure. While “on-the-ground” project development is crucial, it is not the focus of this Call for Proposals (CFP). Instead, this CFP focuses on transforming the policies, institutional practices, power dynamics, and problematic narratives that produced large-scale inequities across populations and entire communities. The “north star” of the P3 initiative is upstream policy and system change, not planning, building, or operating individual, on-the-ground projects. Ultimately, equitable policy and systems change work will incentivize more project development in the communities hardest hit by park inequities. For additional background, please see our [Theory of Change](#) and [Changing the Landscape: People, Parks, and Power](#).

**9. Can you provide some examples of park equity policy and systems change goals?**

Prevention Institute’s paper [Changing the Landscape: People, Parks, and Power](#) includes examples of equitable park and green space policies that jurisdictions across the U.S. have adopted. Applicants are encouraged to consider these broad categories and envision other relevant policy innovations:

- Public finance measures for parks or green infrastructure that include equity-focused criteria and funding programs

- Public agency policies that prioritize equity in internal processes and practices (e.g., budget allocations, staff diversity, etc.)
- Policy directives for a comprehensive assessment that quantifies park/green space needs and inequities
- Joint use policies for school yards to serve as park space
- Land use policies that facilitate equitable access to parks and green space
- Establishment of community engagement units within agencies
- Anti-displacement provisions in park equity policies

The “right” policy and systems change goal will depend on your local context—historical, cultural, ecological, financial, and political—as well as the specific inequities and salient solutions your community has identified.

**10. Does my organization need to have a specific policy goal identified already? Or could we use this grant to organize community residents to identify the policy change(s) that are needed?**

As described in the Call for Proposals, applicants are not required to explain your policy goals in detail in the LOI. Instead, LOIs should tell us about your vision, your community, and how your track record qualifies you to do this work. Power building and policy and systems change work are long-term in nature. Therefore, we do not necessarily anticipate that policy change will occur in the 24-month funding period. At a minimum, we do expect all P3 grantees to make significant and measurable progress *toward* policy and/or systems change outcomes. Depending on the local context, progress toward policy and systems change can include working alongside residents, community organizations, public agencies, and other stakeholders to, for example:

- Organize residents and allies around park equity issues, conduct research on current park and green space deficit conditions and develop corresponding policy solutions.
- Build the leadership, skills, and expertise of residents to engage in policy and systems change solutions for park equity.
- Develop and implement a communications plan and materials that frame parks and green spaces as essential community infrastructure that should benefit all people and neighborhoods equitably and point toward equitable policy and systems change solutions.
- Develop and implement a comprehensive strategy for a local, community-driven policy initiative, identifying, for example, goals, organizational considerations, constituencies, power dynamics, decision-makers, and tactics.

**11. Is my organization/institution/agency eligible to apply for a P3 grant?**

Groups that are eligible to apply for a P3 grant include the following:

- Nonprofit organizations or public entities that are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code are eligible. Applicant organizations must be based in the United States or its territories. Organizations that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) entity that meet all other eligibility criteria are eligible.

- Coalitions are eligible if the lead applicant organization meets all other eligibility criteria. In the case of a coalition, one organization must be the lead applicant and will be responsible for administrative oversight of the grant.

Groups that are not eligible to apply for a P3 grant include the following:

- Universities or academic institutions are not eligible to be the lead applicant, but they may serve as a coalition partner to the lead applicant.
- Government agencies are not eligible to be the lead applicant, but they may serve as a coalition partner or ally to the lead applicant.
- Individuals are not eligible. Awards will be made to organizations, not to individuals.

**12. What types of organizations are a good fit for the P3 initiative?**

We strongly encourage applications from community-based organizations that are led by people of color and focus on building community power and equity-focused local policy advocacy. This includes groups that are already working on local, equity-focused park policy, as well as groups that may be new to this issue but have a history of advancing equity-focused policy on related issues (e.g., built environment, civil rights, climate change, community development, environmental justice, racial justice, water equity).

**13. My organization does not have a track record of at least three years’ experience organizing and advocating for equity-focused policies. Should we still apply?**

As stated in the P3 Call for Proposals, one of the selection criteria that proposal reviewers will consider is whether an applicant has a “demonstrable track record (at least three years) of proactively organizing and advocating for equity-focused public, administrative, or agency policies in the low-income community of color where the proposed initiative will take place.” However, this is not the only selection criterion, and it is not an *eligibility* criterion. In your LOI, please tell us about the work you have done, and please make your best case for how your work aligns with the intent of the P3 initiative. Reviewers will consider each applicant’s experience on a case-by-case basis, including experience advancing equitable policy on issues other than parks and green space. We are interested in funding a spectrum of eligible organizations, including those that are early in their park equity policy advocacy work as well as more experienced groups that already have campaigns underway.

**14. My organization has a fiscal sponsor. Can we apply for a P3 grant?**

Yes. Organizations that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) entity that meet all other eligibility criteria are eligible. Please see the P3 Call for Proposals for complete eligibility criteria.

**15. Are government agencies or public universities eligible to apply for a P3 grant?**

No. Notwithstanding the language included in the Call for Proposals, public entities such as government agencies and public universities are not eligible to apply as lead applicants. P3 grants

will only be awarded to community-based organizations or base-building groups that are tax exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code or that are fiscally sponsored by a 501(c)(3) entity. One of the P3 objectives is to build social infrastructure among community-based organizations working in or with communities most impacted by park inequities because they have typically been excluded from involvement with park and green space issues in the past. In addition, given that this is a policy advocacy initiative, we also took into account the limitations of many universities and government agencies of all kinds to work on or lead policy advocacy efforts. Coalitions that include government, academic, or foundation partners/allies are eligible to apply, but the lead applicant must be a community-based organization.

**16. My organization is part of a coalition working to advance park and green space equity. Can we apply for a P3 grant as a coalition?**

Yes. As described above, coalitions are eligible if the lead applicant organization meets all other eligibility criteria described in the P3 Call for Proposals. In the case of a coalition, one organization must be the lead applicant and will be responsible for administrative oversight of the grant.

If, following the LOI phase your coalition is invited to submit a full proposal, we encourage you to propose a budget that adequately supports policy advocacy best practices (e.g., community organizing, policy research, strategic communications, etc.) and focuses less on spreading funding across numerous individual organizations. The budget focus should strategically fund the coalition's policy advocacy work.

**17. When you refer to a coalition applying, could that be a group of organizations that have come together just to apply for this grant, or does it need to be an existing coalition?**

In our experience, policy and systems change work requires alliances that have been developed over time. While we are open to funding coalitions that have been formed in recent years, P3 is not intended to fund the formation of a new coalition that has come together just for the purposes of this grant. In your LOI, please tell us about the work that your coalition has done, how you came together, and what impact you have had in your collective work.

**18. My organization is a national nonprofit that partners with community-based organizations on the ground. Is P3 a good fit for us?**

It depends on your partnership structure and approach. We strongly encourage applications from community-based organizations that focus on building community power. National organizations may serve as coalition partners to the lead applicant, and in the spirit of building community power and organizational capacity, we encourage P3 applications in which the lead applicant is a community-based organization or base-building group. We would also expect to see evidence of a partnership structure and, eventually, a budget proposal that centers one or more community-based organization(s).

**19. My organization has not been funded to work on parks before, but we do equity-focused policy advocacy on related issues of concern in our community. Is P3 a good fit for us?**

Yes. We strongly encourage applications from community-based organizations that focus on building community power and advocating for equity-focused local policy change. This includes groups that are already working on local, equity-focused park policy, as well as groups that may be new to this issue but have a history of advancing equity-focused policy on related issues (e.g., built environment, civil rights, climate change, community development, environmental justice, racial justice, water equity).

**20. My organization works on federal and/or state level policy to advance park and green space equity. Is P3 a good fit for us?**

P3 will fund community-based organizations that build community power and are working to advance equity-focused policy and systems change at the citywide, countywide, or districtwide level. We recognize the importance of state and federal policy action, and generally see that as a complement to P3 rather than the focus of the initiative, which is community-driven policy advocacy at the local level. We encourage you to read Prevention Institute's paper [Changing the Landscape: People, Parks, and Power](#) to learn more about the advantages of local policy action.

**21. Are proposals that focus on several cities (instead of one city) eligible? Can nonprofit organizations from multiple communities combine as one application?**

Although such an application would be "eligible," provided the lead applicant is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization and meets all the other eligibility criteria, P3 seeks to fund community-driven policy initiatives in a particular jurisdiction (i.e., a citywide, countywide, or districtwide policy).

**22. My organization is organizing community residents to build a new park in our neighborhood. Is our work a good fit for the P3 initiative?**

No, although we greatly appreciate the work you are doing. P3 is focused on supporting policy advocacy at the local level. P3 will not fund applications focused on planning, building, operating, programming, or revitalizing "on-the-ground" park or green infrastructure projects.

**23. My organization works on affordable housing policy to prevent gentrification and displacement. We also want to see more parks in our community. Is my work a good fit for the P3 initiative?**

It depends on your goals and approach. The purpose of the P3 initiative is to increase participation of urban communities most impacted by park and green space inequities in policy advocacy and system change efforts to advance park equity. If your work is focused on advancing innovative policies that meld park equity and anti-displacement, such as strengthening anti-displacement provisions within park-specific policies or public finance measures, P3 is a good fit. If your primary objectives are to increase the quality or supply of affordable housing or your campaign is not community led or building community power, P3 is not a good fit. In your LOI, you should articulate

your vision for addressing the root causes of existing park and green space inequities in your community, as well as what kinds of policy changes seem relevant to your community's context.

**24. Will P3 fund parks and recreation programming or educational activities?**

While we acknowledge the desperate need for programming as well as operations and maintenance for existing parks in disinvested communities, the P3 initiative will not fund agencies or others to provide such services. P3 is intended to support local policy and systems change work. For example, P3 would be a good fit for a community-driven effort that seeks to create new or prioritize existing agency funding for increased programming in high need communities.

**25. Will P3 fund strategic plans or master plans for parks or green infrastructure?**

P3 will support community power building and local policy advocacy efforts, not plans. We understand that planning may be part of a park and green space equity policy change strategy, but we do not envision that P3 grants will be awarded to groups that propose working on a plan as the sole or primary outcome of their efforts. P3 is not intended to fund the creation, updating, or implementation of plans—including park master plans, green infrastructure master plans, climate adaptation plans, sustainability plans, community plans, comprehensive plans, strategic plans, etc.

**26. Will P3 fund a health impact assessment (HIA) for a new park development?**

It depends. If the HIA is of a proposed park or green space related policy as part of a broader policy advocacy effort, that is something the P3 initiative could support. If this applies to your work, we encourage you to articulate this in your LOI. If, however, the HIA is specific to the development of a park or green infrastructure project, P3 is not a good fit because this initiative is intended to support community-driven local policy advocacy.

**27. Will P3 fund a community outreach/engagement effort related to parks or green infrastructure?**

It depends on your goals and approach. The P3 initiative is intended to build community power to advance park equity through policy advocacy and system change. If your work is focused on community outreach or community engagement—rather than community power building—then P3 is not a good fit. In your LOI, you will need to describe the power building strategies and tactics used in your day-to-day work, and the connection between these strategies and your policy advocacy experience.

**28. My organization increases equitable access to parks and green space by bringing young people who live in “park poor” areas to nearby parks and wilderness areas and inspire the next generation of diverse park stewards. Is P3 a good fit for us?**

It depends on your goals and approach. If your work is focused on providing educational programs, recreation programs, or transportation to parks or wilderness areas, P3 is not a good fit. If your work

is about organizing youth and building their skills and capacity to change the policies, systems, and decision-making practices that have contributed to local park inequities, P3 is a good fit.

**29. What specifically can the grant funds be used for?**

Grant funds may be used for project staff salaries, consultant fees, data collection and analysis, meetings, supplies, project-related travel, and other direct project expenses, including a limited amount of equipment essential to the project, and indirect costs (up to 20 percent) to support the general operations of the applicant organization. In keeping with RWJF policy, grant funds may *not* be used to support clinical trials of unapproved drugs or devices, to construct or renovate facilities, for lobbying, for political activities, or as a substitute for funds currently being used to support similar activities. Additional budget guidelines will be provided at the full proposal stage.

**30. Can P3 grant funds be used for lobbying?**

No. Funds provided by a private foundation are not permitted to be used for lobbying purposes under federal law. For more information as to what activities constitute lobbying and what do not, see [RWJF's Lobbying Guidelines](#). As a general matter, activities that involve advocacy, base building/community organizing, coalition building, community engagement, data collection, education of key stakeholders and decision-makers, and leadership development can be conducted in ways that do NOT constitute lobbying.

**31. Are applicants expected to provide a total budget amount at the Letter of Intent (LOI) stage?**

Yes. The online application system will ask you to provide a total amount of RWJF funding requested when you submit your LOI. If your organization is invited to submit a full proposal, at that time you will be able to change the total amount of RWJF funding requested if you wish to do so. We expect to award grants of up to \$500,000 each.

**32. In our Letter of Intent (LOI), where can we put references/citations from our narrative?**

Applicants are not expected to cite extensive sources in your LOI. If you would like to include references/citations, please embed them as hyperlinks in the text of your narrative or include them as footnotes or endnotes. There is no separate section in RWJF's online application system where you can provide a list of references/citations.

**33. Is there a limit to the number of Letters of Intent (LOIs) that a single organization can submit?**

While there is no limit to the number of LOIs a single organization can submit, we encourage applicants to only submit one LOI.

**34. Is there a limit to the number of Letters of Intent (LOIs) an individual person can participate in?**

There are no restrictions on the number of applications that an individual person such as an



independent researcher or consultant can participate in.

**35. Is this a one-time funding opportunity or will there be future rounds of P3 funding available?**

It is undetermined at this moment whether there will be future rounds of P3 funding. We are not planning any additional rounds for the next two years.