

## **Application Information Conference Call Transcript**

### **Monday, November 25, 2019**

**Kirstyn Horan:** Hello! Welcome to the Application Information Conference Call for our Building Healthy Places Greenspace Improvement Projects Request for Proposals (RFP). My name is Kirstyn Horan and I'm your main contact for this project. Kathleen Jackinovich Community Health Supervisor at HDNW, Ashley Bradshaw from MDHHS, and Kari (Va-Wash-ick) from mParks are here with us to help answer your questions. We're excited about this project and looking forward to answering your questions about the RFP. We will post the Q&A discussed today on the RFP webpage for your reference.

Firstly, thank you all for submitting your Letters of Intent. We are happy to see a multitude of great ideas for greenspace improvement projects that promote physical activity – these projects have the potential to significantly improve the health of our communities. Additionally, I'd like to ask that you please do not put our call on hold. I'm sure that we have all had instances where hold music begins to play in the middle of a call.

We'd like to start by highlighting and clarifying some key parts of the RFP and then we'll open it up for questions. If you have the RFP in front of you, I'll point out the corresponding page number as we move through these key sections. One important change to the Building Healthy Places Greenspace Improvement Project this year is that 5 sites will be awarded funding for physical activity programming and 5 additional sites will be awarded funding for physical activity programming plus infrastructure changes.

**Overview:** Start on page 2. The funds for this opportunity originate at the Center for Disease Control and were granted to the Health Department of Northwest Michigan from MDHHS as part of an initiative to increase community access to safe and enjoyable sites for physical activity, especially walking and biking, and ultimately to reduce health disparities and increase positive health outcomes in Michigan. We have enough to fund at least 5 greenspace sites at up to \$10,000 each.

**Infrastructure:** The primary focus of this grant is to promote physical activity through enhancements to the infrastructure of public greenspaces, so the bulk of your work plan should involve infrastructure and environmental changes. Some examples include: installation of lighting sources to improve safe walking and biking conditions, renovating walking paths/trails or way-finding signage, installing bike racks, etc.

**We cannot fund playground structures or fitness equipment, but can fund the enhancement of playground landscaping, such as the installation of rubber flooring for injury prevention purposes.**

We know that interventions that combine multiple types of changes can create a larger impact on the health of communities. Because of this, we're looking for these projects to combine environmental enhancements with physical activity programming and possibly health-related policy changes as well.

**Physical Activity Programming:** Now we're on page 3. Although we expected each site to implement physical activity programming at their greenspace site following infrastructure enhancements, this year

we are requiring that it is done through Michigan Recreation & Park Association (mParks). We've sub-contracted with mParks whose role will be, not to directly implement programming, but to assist grantees with securing and training appropriate staff, interns, volunteers, or partnering organizations to implement Come Out and Play or Walk Michigan.

**Policy:** We are not requiring health-related policy changes, but we are encouraging them. This could mean you include the adoption or enforcement of health-related policy in your proposals. Some examples of health-related policy would be tobacco-free environment or complete streets policies

**Grant timeline:** Moving to page 4, we're expecting that all changes to greenspaces will be completed within the grant period, **January 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 through August 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020.**

**Submission:** Applications are due **Friday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2019** by 5pm to my email or via snail-mail, provided it's received by Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>. More details are provided on page 7 of the RFP.

**Application components:** On page 7, you'll see a list of items that should be including in your application.

- 1) Cover letter (giving an overview of your project, how it would increase physical activity, and your reasoning for the proposal)
- 2) Completed application form signed by greenspace manager (this is a representative from the agency or organization who owns the land)
- 3) Work plan for infrastructure changes
- 4) Budget and budget justification
- 5) Optional letters of support (especially from any partners that will be working with you on the project)

Your budget should reflect only the most necessary items to complete the project. We will prioritize applicants who secure or plan to secure additional or matching funds to expand their greenspace improvement project.

At this time, we'd like to open it up for questions

## **Q&A**

**Q1: Would it be possible please send an editable version of the RFP?**

**A1:** Yes! I am happy to email you the Microsoft Word version. If anybody is interested in also receiving it, please send me an email.

**Q2: Could you please speak a little more on how mParks can help implement the programming? We have an initiative already established, and we'd like some ideas on how not to be redundant of what we are already doing.**

**A2:** Come Out & Play is meant to build upon existing programming that runs for 8 weeks. We like to see it done at least 3 times per week for 8 weeks.

**Q3: Could you provide an example of where and how Come Out & Play has been used in sites previously? How is it set up?**

**A3:** The latest program was held in Alanson within their schools. It was included in their physical activity programming. Because they already work with kids, it was very easy to implement.

**Q4: I have a question about the Walk Michigan program. Can we throw out a community challenge? I'm thinking of having "xx" number of miles completed by the end of the programming.**

**A4:** That is an excellent use of Walk Michigan.

**Q5: Can I get more information specifically on the letters of support? What would be appropriate sources and about how many are needed?**

**A5:** We view the letters of support as an enhancement to your proposal. It really paints the picture to show the reviewers the demonstrated need within your community. Any agency that you will be partnering with or may benefit from your work would be appropriate. There is not a limit as to the number of letters of support to get. Last year we received proposals with one letter and proposals with over ten letters of support. Some of the letters were from private citizens, and some were from companies or agencies. I would encourage you to look for the champions in your community who may be able to help with this project.

**Q6: What are examples of projects that have been funded in the past?**

**A6:** We have funded resurfacing of pickleball courts, basketball courts, tennis courts, establishing a new walking or bike path, giving a needed face lift to an existing trail, signage and wayfinding for trails, rubber flooring for play areas.

**Q7: We have several different projects that we had in mind to be funded by this project. If we change our mind to send a proposal in for a different project than what was stated in our letter of intent, is that okay?**

**A7:** Yes. As long as your proposal reflects the actual project that you would like to be funded, I think that is okay.

**Q8: What was the thinking behind adding the requirement for mParks programming to this grant? We have worked with other organizations that were successful in getting this grant that did not have the requirement of the mParks programming.**

**A8:** Last year was the first time that we required the programming to be done through mParks. In years prior, there was difficulty in establishing a structured program. So before issuing the RFP last year we had many conversations about what the physical activity component might look like. We ultimately chose to require each funded site to implement either Come Out & Play or Walk Michigan. We view it almost as a cherry on top because it would normally cost a site to offer this program, but HDNW is completely covering the cost to each site. Additionally, we looked at shared metrics, and in the end,

mParks programming was selected. mParks & I both work to make sure that the sites feel supported and offer any help as far as marketing to make sure that it is successful.

**Q9: How would you like us to integrate the physical activity programming into our proposal?**

**A9:** I think that if you show a demonstrated need for the program that you select, and the more information that you can give us the better. Include a specific target population, a logical explanation for the programming you selected, and how you will effectively draw community members to the greenspace.

**Q10: How far in the process should we be with contractors as it relates to cost and estimates?**

**A10:** The reality is that we live in Northern Michigan. It is hard to get a contractor. With that said, you won't need to secure the contractors until the project is funded and is a go. It's best to have a very good estimate on how much the project will cost on the budget justification sheet.

**Please contact Kirstyn Horan at 231-347-5362 or at [k.horan@nwhealth.org](mailto:k.horan@nwhealth.org) with any other questions.**

**Questions from the 2018-2019 Building Health Communities Applicant Information Conference Call.**

**Q1: The RFP states that the projects must be completed by the end of August, is there any leeway there?**

**A1:** We will certainly work with sites and timelines. We built in a buffer time because we found that we needed it last year. We are hoping that the ultimate goal is that it is done in August, but if there are issues that come up that are outside of our control, we can absolutely look at altering that timeline.

**Q2: Do benches and/or picnic tables qualify to be funded?**

**A2:** We have funded them in the past. However, as long as the benches or picnic tables are paired with physical activity programming, I think that would be fundable. So, maybe the picnic table serves as a meeting spot for walking groups, or is a place to cool down and discuss the walking program rather than a table to eat. There needs to be a direct correlation.

**Q3: Is there the possibility to utilize these funds as part of a multi-million-dollar trail?**

**A3:** As long as the project breaks ground and you're using our funds for that specific portion of the project. When the review committee is looking at the completion of this specific component, it is great to provide the context that it is part of a larger project, but we want to see the impact these funds are making. Please highlight what would be accomplished and have a timeline to communicate how these specific funds would be used.

**Q4:** Can you please expand on the scoring goals?

**A4:** We have a review committee made up of 6 people from around the 11-county region. They will be assigned proposals that are within the area in which they live or work, so they would have a better understanding and be familiar with the location. Each proposal is given to two reviewers and an average is made from the two reviewers' score. The scoring sheet is broken up to look at each question and for the reviewer to score based on how well the question was answered and if there was a demonstrated need evident. We also hold a lengthy conference call with all of the committee members to go over each proposal once they've submitted their scores to me. Additionally, we look at the county health rankings to ensure that these funds would be put in a place that can serve its community best.

**Q5:** As it pertains to the physical activity programming how often do you see groups meeting?

**A5:** We have seen groups that meet three times a week to meet and walk together. We encourage you to get together as a group 3 times a week, but also for individuals to walk alone if need be.

**Q6:** What is the best way to get established with the mParks walking program?

**A6:** When a site is awarded the funds, Kirstyn will connect mParks with the site to develop a game plan for the physical activity programming.

***Questions from the 2018-2019 Building Health Communities Applicant Information Conference Call.***

**Q1: Is this a reimbursed project that should be completed prior to receiving funds from the Health Department of Northwest Michigan (HDNWM)?**

**A1:** Correct. The HDNWM traditionally completes a contract process and then submit a FSR to our finance department that will reimburse for expenses. However, if that would be a barrier for you, we can certainly discuss and explore other options.

**Q2: Will there be a fillable PDF of the RFP application? Is there a word count limit?**

**A2:** Yes. The PDF is fillable in both Internet Explorer and Chrome. Unfortunately, if you use Firefox as a browser, the PDF will not be fillable as it does not support fillable PDF forms anymore. We do not have a word limit; however, we are looking for thoughtful and well-constructed responses.

**Q3: What is the award date?**

**A3:** We are planning to announce the awarded recipients on January 28, 2018.

**Q4: Can you please explain what is required in the cover letter?**

**A4:** In looking at your cover letter, we are expecting an overview of your project, how it will increase physical activity, and your reasoning for the proposal. We are really looking for what you want us to know right off the bat, and why you feel that there is a demonstrated need for it in your community. The cover letter itself is not scored, but we are requiring it as part of the application.

**Q5: Will applicants with a financial match receive a higher score than those without a match?**

**A5:** That is not a specific part of the scoring process. We look to see that the budget is reasonable, justifiable, and demonstrates fiscal responsibility. Match itself is not an item that is being scored.

**Q6: Upon completion of the project, will a staff person from your organization come out to verify that the project is complete?**

**A6:** I will be visiting the site several times.

**Q7: As it pertains to staffing for the physical activity programming, can funds be used for staffing?**

**A7:** Funds can be used for staffing, but we want to reiterate that the majority of your budget should go toward infrastructure changes.

**Q8: Can you please explain the options for physical activity programming?**

**A8:** Kari (from mParks) I wonder if you could speak to this?

**Kari:** Yes, There are two different educational programs that mParks will be contracting with the Health Department for on this grant. One program is **Come out and Play** and that's an evidence-based program designed to engage youth ages 4 – 14 yrs. old to be physically active in greenspaces. So, it's a set curriculum that we train your staff or volunteers that engages kids to use the greenspace. It's a series of activities that kids do. There are 50 different types of activities and they do 3 different activities minimum which translates to 60 minutes a day. So that's a set-program, with a set-curriculum. mParks provides all of the training and materials you need to do it. It works well to include in summer camps, if you have an hour you can fit in or possibly an hour and a half. Or you can possibly build a summer camp around it, using Come out and Play as the program that gets kids up and active in the great outdoors.

The other program is a walking program – **Walk Michigan**. And this is more for the adults and seniors. It can also be used with families and is not just exclusively for adults. This is a set walking program that engages adults to get up and go walk outside. You can use it in many different ways where there's a set walking group at one greenspace. Or maybe there's a community walking group that visits different parks. You can use the greenspace that you are improving in this grant exclusively or you can use other parks throughout your community as well, kind of like a traveling walking program. It's similar to Come out and Play as it's going to be a program where you do 30-45 minutes long (or it can be longer), but its set with different walking rates so with that you will be doing a warm up and then a walk and then a cool down, and you would be tracking steps the entire time. There's also a series of exercises that we'll be teaching the walk leader that will provide different assessments. So it will improve strength, flexibility,

etc. so you can measure progress throughout the program. The program can be anywhere from an 8 wk. long program to a 10 wk. long program. It can be multiple walking groups at one time. So these programs are geared to different audiences, one for older adults and seniors with Walk Michigan and then younger kids with Come out and Play.

**Q9: Can you utilize the grant funds to enhance existing features such as expansions to or upgrades to increase usage of restrooms on site or water fountains?**

**A9:** In looking at the RFP, I would make sure to highlight how those demonstrate increasing health equity and increasing access as well as how that project would relate to increasing physical activity at the greenspace.