



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 lead to a more diverse community of visitors to 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 engaging 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 and provided 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

Marin County Parks' staff engaged community organizations and individuals in dozens of conversations over several months regarding their knowledge of community health and wellness, outreach and organizing, and grant making. From these conversations, staff sought to design a community-based grant program that would meet grant objectives, comply with the Measure A [Expenditure Plan](#), complement the existing grant environment, and have an important impact in connecting Marin's communities with their parks and preserves.

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

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.

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. 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 because we feel it is important to make Marin County Parks available to all Marin communities regardless of language or cultural background.

This grant program is largely intended to support existing projects and programs that are already connecting local communities with the natural environment. However, we will also consider new initiatives arising from the [Healthy Eating Active Living Strategic Framework \(HEAL\) focused on active living](#). HEAL is an initiative led by the Marin County Department of Health and Human Services that has engaged diverse communities to embrace healthy eating and active living choices. Their approach recognizes “that promoting healthy eating and active living in Marin cannot be achieved through the efforts of one organization” and that “together, we will strengthen our impact...”³ Marin County Parks participates in ongoing meetings focused on encouraging active living in Marin County. These meetings, functioning as dynamic group discussions, continue to result in innovative and relevant strategies that encourage all Marin communities to get outside and get active.

We know there are people throughout Marin County experiencing perceived and real 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.⁴ 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.

This grant program continues to evolve over time. We listened to feedback during the first year and made several changes:

1. The total amount available is larger due to funds carried over from the previous year.
2. The maximum amount of a Wings grant is now limited to \$30,000.
3. Descriptions of Funding Areas are re-written to improve clarity.
4. Applicants are asked to largely rely on their own organizations’ staff and programs to connect people to our lands and facilities due to the limited availability of our own staff. In other words, we are asking applicants to integrate target populations and communities into existing programs, activities, and events offered by Marin County Parks to minimize this program’s impact on staff’s work load.
5. Applications arising from HEAL teams are limited to Sprouts grants.
6. More detail has been added to the Application Process and Selection Process sections.
7. More detail has been added to the Reporting Requirements section.

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 “Marin Countywide Healthy Eating Active Living Strategic Framework.” Marin County, CA: Department of Health and Human Services.

⁴ 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.

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 External Affairs Coordinator at the e-mail address listed below with additional questions. We look forward to hearing from you!

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:

- Sprouts: (\$26,400 available) Awards ranging from \$1,000 to \$8,000 will support smaller existing projects and programs, or new initiatives developed through one of the HEAL implementation teams.
- Wings: (\$90,000 available) Awards from \$8,000 up to \$30,000 will support larger existing projects and programs.

An existing project is defined as any program, project or service an organization has been successfully implementing for a minimum of the last six months that connects underserved communities with positive outdoor experiences. 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 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; or a new project or program originating from a HEAL Implementation Team (Sprouts grants only).

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. <http://www.marincountyparks.org/depts/pk/calendar>.
- Outreach in Communities: 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 1: An organization proposes cultural sensitivity training to instruct those working in Marin County recreation programs on how to better serve the Marin County Hispanic community in the design and implementation of outdoor education, volunteer and recreation programming (grant application would include request for meeting room expenses, advertising and program materials expenses, and cost of instructor(s)).
- Example 2: An organization proposes a “Park Challenge” where an underserved community is challenged to engage in a Parks environmental education or volunteer event through a supported experience (grant application would request funding for transportation, interpreters, development of program materials, coordination with Marin County Parks staff, and outreach for one event)

Wings:

- Example 1: 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.
- Example 2: An organization wants to expand its efforts to connect local communities to parks using transit. They propose a schedule of outings throughout the year to introduce isolated communities to new experiences and familiarize them with existing transit resources and navigation of the existing public transit system. Applicant reviews the Marin County Parks events calendar, speaks with the External Affairs Coordinator and selects a few outdoor education and volunteer opportunities to include in their schedule of outings. The applicant makes recommendations on how Marin County Parks staff could enhance scheduled outings by planning for the group scheduled for that outing. In addition, the applicant feels strongly that increased on-line information regarding transit and parks is critical to overcoming a community barrier and includes staff time to assist with the initial steps to develop a strategy to link transit information to park and preserve locations.

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

**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, if they are interested. 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' External Affairs Coordinator, Kevin Wright, at kwright@marincounty.org. All proposals that require coordination with Marin County Parks staff and programs are encouraged to contact the External Affairs Coordinator to ensure the feasibility of their proposal. Again, we ask that you largely rely 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)
 External Affairs Coordinator
 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 the following items:

- 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, measureable 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 (**Attach an estimated 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, 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 External Affairs Coordinator may contact applicants to discuss small changes to better align proposals with Marin County Parks operations, programming, and staff availability.

An ad-hoc 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. For Sprouts LOIs, committee members will review staff recommendations and form recommendations for winning proposals and funding allocation. For Wings grant awards, committee members will consult the ranking tool with each Wings proposal and form recommendations for winning proposals and funding allocation. The External Affairs Coordinator 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 ad hoc 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, full grant application, and grant funding decision-making tool will be made available on the Marin County Parks Measure A webpage. Please note that all proposals become public documents.

Timeline

- Applications Open: January 15, 2015
- LOIs Due: February 27, 2015
- Requests for Wings Proposals Announced: Mid-March, 2015
- Applications Due: April 10, 2015
- POSC Votes to Recommend Proposals: Third Thursday in May, 2015
- Grant Agreements Sent to Successful Applicants: Late May, 2015
- Board of Supervisors Executes Grant Agreements: June 16, 2015

- Grant Period: date of grant execution through June 30, 2016
- Mid-year Report: December 18, 2015
- 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, details of success meeting grant objectives to date, and photos of all events, outings and other grant activities to date.

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. All 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 External Affairs Coordinator to discuss the entire suite of resources that can be shared to support funded proposals. The discussion will include appropriate strategies for coordinating with staffs of 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 will be invited to attend a tour of our parks, open spaces and programs. Also, annual idea-sharing and grantee educational opportunities will 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 External Affairs Coordinator 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 Coordinator will act as a liaison between Marin County Parks staff, Parks and Open Space Commissioners, and grantees. The Coordinator 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 Coordinator 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 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 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; <http://assessment.communitycommons.org/KP>
- Institute at the Golden Gate
- Marin County Parks Community Outreach Plan
- 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 27, 2015

<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 above 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. If funding support for a new projects is proposed for a Sprout grant, describe how the project or program idea arose through one of the HEAL implementation teams and discuss the partners who supported the idea.)

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