

2026 Recreation and Cultural Opportunities

County of Santa Cruz Parks Grant Program - Guidelines



Each fiscal year, County of Santa Cruz allocates funds for community partners to provide cultural and recreational services. In 2026-27, a portion of these funds will be provided for a small grant to reach communities that historically County Parks has not been able to reach and serve.

County Parks Mission Statement

The County of Santa Cruz Department of Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services mission is to provide safe, well-designed, and maintained parks, and a wide variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for our diverse community.

County Parks Vision Statement

We envision a healthy and vibrant county where everyone can be active, explore, learn, play and connect, and where our diverse natural and cultural resources are celebrated and protected for generations to come.

Strategic and Operational Plan

[County Parks Strategic Plan \(parks.santacruzcountyca.gov\)](https://parks.santacruzcountyca.gov)

[Operational Plan \(santacruzcountyca.gov\)](https://santacruzcountyca.gov)

Eligible Recipients

To be an eligible recipient, the organization needs to be located within County of Santa Cruz and registered or be willing to register as a Vendor with the County. (Registration only necessary if awarded)

[How to Register as a Vendor \(santacruzcountyca.gov\)](https://santacruzcountyca.gov)

Eligible Projects

The proposed program should fulfill County Parks' Mission and Vision statements and align with County Parks' Strategic Plan. Additionally, they should serve areas within the unincorporated part of the County of Santa Cruz that County Parks is not currently providing programming in. Lastly, the programming should serve a community that is not currently being served by a County program.

Selection

As part of the effort, County Parks developed project selection criteria that incorporates:

- Need for the program
- Benefit to communities underserved by County Parks
- Community engagement
- Volunteer opportunities

Application Deadline

- Proposals are open September 1st 2026 and due by September 30th 2026, for programs that take place in the 2026-27 fiscal year (July, 1 2026-June 30, 2027). If

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funding allows, proposals submitted after this date will continue to be considered on a rolling basis after the first batch of submissions is reviewed.

- Proposals can be submitted via email to ParksFiscal@parks.santacruzcountycalifornia.gov with "2026 New Recreation Opportunities – <Organization Name>" in Subject line.

Funding and Timeline

- Funding for this grant program is available in the Cultural Services budget. This year's budget is substantially lower than previous years, amount awarded will be based on available funding and number of applications.
- Awards are expected to be announced in October 2026.
- The project must take place, and funds shall be spent by June 30, 2027.

Funds disbursement and Reporting requirements

If awarded, County Parks will provide funds in two installment payments, forty percent(40%) within thirty (30) days of receiving a Payment Request #1 after proposal is approved and the contract is fully executed, and the remaining sixty percent (60%) upon the acceptance of a Final Project Report and Payment Request #2.

- Funds should be used solely for the designated purposes as described in the executed Agreement and subject to Grantee's performance of all requirements under the Agreement.
- Final Program Report shall include the following materials: documentation of activities offered (e.g., activity calendar, program flyers, photographs, etc.) and attendance figures.
- In addition, recipient shall acknowledge in all reports and literature, as well as on the agency website, that the County of Santa Cruz Parks, Open Space and Cultural Services have provided funding for proposed program.

Any questions can be submitted to ParksFiscal@parks.santacruzcountycalifornia.gov

Scoring Rubric

- Grants will be scored on the following criteria:
- Location (required): in an underserved area of within an unincorporated part of Santa Cruz County
- Need for the Program: Scores 0-5 points
- Benefit to Communities underserved by County Parks: Scores 0-5 points
- Community Engagement: Scores 0-5 points
- Volunteer Opportunities: Scores 0-5 points