

**NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC
PRESERVATION**

**DORMITORY AUTHORITY OF THE
STATE OF NEW YORK**

**NEW YORK
PLACES FOR LEARNING, ACTIVITY, AND YOUTH SOCIALIZATION (NY PLAYS)
INITIATIVE**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Kathy Moser
Acting Commissioner
New York State Office of Parks,
Recreation, & Historic Preservation

Lisa Gomez
Chair
Dormitory Authority of
the State of New York

Robert Rodriguez
President & CEO
Dormitory Authority of
the State of New York

RFA Announcement: 1/06/2026

RFA Application Start Date: 5/4/2026

RFA Application Deadline: 6/15/2026

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Section One: INTRODUCTION.....	4
1.1 Background.....	4
1.2 Purpose of the Funding	4
1.3 Timetable of Key Events:.....	4
1.4 Inquiries	5
Section Two: DEFINITIONS	5
Section Three: EVALUATION AND SCORING OVERVIEW	8
Application Project Purpose Priority and Grant Funding Levels	8
Step One: Applicant and Project Eligibility	10
Step Two: Community Need and Project Planning	10
Step Three: Project Impact and Project Viability.....	10
Section Four: APPLICANT AND PROJECT ELIGIBILITY (STEP ONE).....	10
4.1 Eligible Applicants.....	11
4.2 Eligible Projects	11
4.3 Eligible Project Locations.....	11
4.4 Eligible Uses of Funds	13
4.5 Prequalification Requirement:.....	13
Section Five: COMMUNITY NEED AND PROJECT PLANNING (STEP TWO).....	14
Community Need Category – Worksheet 1:	14
Project Planning Category – Worksheet 2	15
Total Score of Community Need and Project Planning – Worksheet 3.....	15
Section Six: PROJECT IMPACT AND PROJECT VIABILITY (STEP THREE)	15
6.1 Project Impact - maximum score up to 20 points	15
6.2 Project Viability - maximum score up to 40 points	16
Section Seven: APPLICATION TIMELINE.....	17
7.1 Informational Webinar and Question Period	17
7.2 Application Submission.....	18
7.3 Important Notices for Application Submission.....	19
7.4 Issuance of Award Letters	20
7.5 Grant Disbursement Agreement (GDA)	20
Section Eight: RIGHTS RESERVED	20

APPENDICES:

Appendix 1	NY PLAYS Application (with “Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS” and “Using the ‘Grants Map for NY Unplug and Play Programs’ for FY 2026”)
Appendix 2	Certificate of Municipal Site Control
Appendix 3	Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)
Appendix 4	Sample Grant Disbursement Agreement (GDA)
Appendix 5	GDA Prerequisites and Instructions
Appendix 6	NY PLAYS Scoring Template

Section One: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Recognizing that Playgrounds promote physical activity, exercise, and building friendships – and that research shows outdoor play supports emotional well-being – Governor Hochul announced the New York Places for Learning, Activity, and Youth Socialization (NY PLAYS) Initiative. This new competitive grant program will support the design, construction, and renovation of Playgrounds that are open to the public in Communities across the State.

NY PLAYS is overseen by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (“NYS OPRHP”) and administered by the Dormitory Authority of the State of New York (“DASNY”).

Eligible Municipalities and Not-for-profit Entities are invited to apply for NY PLAYS Grants for Playground projects. For profit entities are ineligible for the NY PLAYS Initiative.

Capitalized terms used herein and not otherwise defined are defined in Section Two: Definitions.

1.2 Purpose of the Funding

NY PLAYS Grants can be used to fund the acquisition, design, construction, major renovation, and equipping of a Playground, along with other related Capital Costs necessary to effectuate the NY PLAYS Initiative.

The 2025-2026 New York State Budget includes \$67.5 million in capital funding for the NY PLAYS Initiative to be awarded to Municipalities and Not-for-profit Entities through a competitive grant program.

- Eligible Applicants may be awarded grants between \$100,000 and \$2,500,000 for Eligible Project Costs.
- The NY PLAYS Initiative will provide not less than \$35,000,000 in funding for Playgrounds in Underserved Communities.
- **Grantees must demonstrate a 20% match toward the Project.**

1.3 Timetable of Key Events:

RFA Announcement Date	1/06/2026
Open Application Question Period Begins	1/06/2026
Applicant Webinar.....	2/13/2026
Deadline to Submit Questions.....	2/23/2026
Answers Posted By	3/3/2026
Application Submission Period.....	5/4/2026-6/15/2026
Application Deadline.....	6/15/2026
Application Scoring	6/16/2026-7/31/2026
Awards Announced No Earlier Than	8/3/2026

1.4 Inquiries

In accordance with State Finance Law § 139-j and § 139-k, this RFA includes and imposes certain restrictions on communications between DASNY and NYS OPRHP personnel and an Applicant or any representative, agent, consultant or other third party representing the Applicant during the procurement process. Any questions regarding this RFA should be submitted via the NY PLAYS SurveyMonkey link: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NYPLAYS>.

Contacts made to any DASNY, NYS OPRHP or other State personnel regarding this procurement between the RFA Announcement Date and Application Deadline, other than through the hyperlink above may disqualify the Applicant and affect future procurements with governmental entities in the State of New York. Please refer to DASNY's website (<https://www.dasny.org>) for policies and procedures regarding this law or the OGS website (<http://ogs.ny.gov/acpl/>) for more information about this law.

Section Two: DEFINITIONS

Ancillary Costs: Costs for improvements related to a Playground project but not included in the definition of a Playground for this RFA, and not eligible for funding under this Grant. Ancillary Costs may be counted toward the Grantee's required 20% matching contribution. Ancillary Costs may include, but are not limited to: athletic playing fields, athletic courts, splash pads, nature trails, bike paths, or parking lots and related architectural and engineering fees.

Applicant: A Municipality or a Not-for-profit Entity, both as hereafter defined, providing public Playgrounds in New York State.

Application: The documentation submitted that will be reviewed and scored for this funding opportunity, including all worksheets, attachments, and requested supplemental information. All information that the Applicant wishes to be reviewed and scored must be included as part of the Application. Applicants may submit multiple applications, but each application must be for a single project location.

Application Deadline: All Applications must be received by 3:00 p.m. on the date set forth in Section 1.3 above. Applications received after this time will not be accepted. Applicants are encouraged to apply promptly.

Authorized Officers: Individuals authorized to sign documents on behalf of the Applicant, including but not limited to contractual agreements. In the event there is only one Authorized Officer, a letter from the Applicant's attorney confirming that there is only one Authorized Officer must be submitted to DASNY and NYS OPRHP.

Awardee: Applicant that has been conditionally awarded a NY PLAYS Grant by NYS OPRHP and DASNY. Awardees must submit additional information to NYS OPRHP and DASNY before receiving a Grant Disbursement Agreement for execution.

Award Letter: The letter sent to Awardees as described in Section 7.4 of this RFA.

Capital Cost: For purposes of the NY PLAYS Initiative, a Capital Cost is defined as costs for a Capital Work or Purpose as defined in State Finance Law § 67-a (4).

Community: A common geographic area such as a neighborhood.

DASNY: The Dormitory Authority of the State of New York.

Eligible Applications: Applications which meet the eligibility requirements detailed in Section Four (Step One) **and** score 20 or more points in Community Need and Project Planning as explained in Section Five (Step Two) will be deemed Eligible Applications. Only Eligible Applications will proceed to Project Impact and Project Viability Scoring as described in Section Six (Step Three).

Eligible Project Costs: Costs incurred in connection with a Project that are to be reimbursed with the proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant. Eligible Project Costs shall be Capital Costs as defined above. Proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant may not be used to pay for non-Capital costs including but not limited to salaries, maintenance or repair costs, lease payments, utility costs, supplies, and debt repayment.

Grant Disbursement Agreement (GDA): The contract entered into between DASNY and the Grantee. A sample GDA is attached to this RFA as Appendix 4. Applicants are expected to review the GDA in its entirety prior to submitting an Application for the NY PLAYS Initiative. Grantees are required to comply with the terms of the GDA as set forth.

Grantee: An Applicant that has successfully passed the scoring and review phases, has been selected to receive a NY PLAYS Grant and has satisfied all conditions precedent required to enter into a Grant Disbursement Agreement.

Matching Funds: The Grant will cover no more than 80% of the Capital Costs for the proposed Project. The Grantee must provide at least 20% of the Capital Costs of the Project from other committed funding sources. Municipal Parks and Recreation grant awards (MPR) cannot be used as a match for NY PLAYS.

Municipality: For the purposes of this RFA, the term Municipality shall only mean a County, City, Town, Village, Public School District or Indian Nation.

NYS OPRHP: The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.

NY PLAYS Grant: Pursuant to this RFA, a capital grant awarded to a Grantee.

Not-for-profit Entity: A not-for-profit organization that is duly incorporated with the New York State Department of State or Chartered by the State of New York, including

Independent and Private Schools. Not-for-profit Entity Applicants must be Prequalified at the time of application.

Playground: For the purposes of the NY PLAYS Initiative, Playground shall mean a designated, improved outdoor space, either built or natural, that is designed, equipped, and set aside to provide opportunities for physical, social, and imaginative play for youth of all abilities. Additionally:

- Playgrounds should include traditional play structures, equipment and amenities, as well as adaptive and inclusive features that ensure accessibility for people with diverse physical, sensory, and cognitive needs.
- Playgrounds may be in urban, suburban, or rural settings and can incorporate natural elements like trees, rocks, water, and open grassy areas to enhance exploration and engagement with the environment.
- Playground projects must be open to the public without limitation, and must adhere to recognized safety and accessibility standards, such as those outlined by the Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure that the playground is safe and accessible to all.
- For the purposes of the NY PLAYS Initiative, a Playground is not intended for use as an athletic playing field or athletic court, nature trail, or bike path.
- Standalone restroom or pavilion facilities at the Project location may be included as part of the Playground project but must be open to the public.
- Playgrounds must be open to the public 7 days a week, year-round. Playgrounds must also be free of charge, accessible without additional assistance, and cannot be locked up behind a fence/gate.

Prequalification: Prequalification is a requirement of the State of New York. Not-for-profit organizations are required to provide information in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) that is used to assess organizational capacity, organizational compliance and organizational integrity. All Not-for-profit Entities must register, apply for, and obtain approved Prequalification status in SFS. Please note that the status must be showing as Prequalified. Any other status such as "In Review" will be treated as not prequalified.

Not-for-profit Entities must receive **approved Prequalification status** prior to submitting their Application and must remain Prequalified through the execution of the Grant Disbursement Agreement and payment of requisitions. The Prequalification process takes time, so Applicants are advised to start the process as soon as possible.

Applications from Not-for-profit Entities that are not Prequalified in SFS prior to Application submission will not be deemed to be an Eligible Application. No extensions will be provided to Applicants who are not Prequalified prior to the submission of their Application.

Project: The acquisition, design, construction, major renovation, and equipping of a Playground, along with other related Capital Costs necessary to effectuate the NY PLAYS Initiative. The NY PLAYS Initiative will fund Eligible Project Costs in furtherance of a Project.

Site Control: Evidence that the Applicant/Grantee has sufficient authorization and control to undertake the Project at the project location. Municipalities may submit a Certificate of Municipal Site Control provided as Appendix 2 to this RFA. Not-for-profit Entities must submit either a deed or lease to the proposed project location. Lease agreements must extend at least 10 years from the date the Application is submitted.

If the NY PLAYS Grant will be used to acquire real property for use as a playground, the Applicant must provide an executed contract of sale and an appraisal of the property undertaken in accordance with Uniform Standards for Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) standards.

Given the unique historical and legal parameters attendant to Indian Nation lands, Indian Nations should submit valid written documentation to satisfy the Site Control requirement.

State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQR) Review: The SEQR Act requires all state and local government agencies to consider environmental impacts equally with social and economic factors during discretionary decision-making. A SEQR review must be completed for each Project to be funded with the proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant.

Statewide Financial System (SFS): New York State grants management system for all organizations doing business with New York State. All Not-for-profit Entity Applicants must register, apply for, and obtain approved Prequalification status in SFS prior to the submission of their Application.

Underserved Communities: Applicants must complete the “Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS” pursuant to Section Five. For purposes of the NY PLAYS Initiative, Underserved Communities shall be those that score 20 points or more on the “Community Need” portion of the Application (Worksheet 1).

W-9 Form: Internal Revenue Service (IRS) document utilized to set up the Grantee as a vendor/payee in DASNY’s financial system. The Grantee’s Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN) is required to make payment. Note: The Grantee’s legal name and FEIN on the W-9 should match the legal name and FEIN on file with the IRS.

Section Three: EVALUATION AND SCORING OVERVIEW

Application Project Purpose Priority and Grant Funding Levels

The State’s priority is to provide funds to create and renovate Playgrounds statewide and achieve an overall allocation of at least \$35,000,000 in NY PLAYS awards to Underserved Communities as set forth in the NY PLAYS appropriation.

The NY PLAYS Initiative is expected to be a highly competitive grant program for which three Application Project Purpose Priority and Grant Funding Levels have been

established, as reflected in the following table. Applicants must first select which Priority Level they are applying for based on the Application Project Purpose.

Documentation must be provided with the NY PLAYS Application to support the total cost of the NY PLAYS Project. Please note that the Total Project Cost must be at least twenty percent higher than the amount of the NY PLAYS Grant award requested to comply with the 20% Match Requirement.

Priority	Application Project Purpose Priority	Targeted Funding for Grant Funding Level*
1	New Playground	\$30,000,000
2	Major Expansion of an existing Playground	\$20,000,000
3	Renovation of an existing Playground	\$15,000,000
	Sum of Priority Levels 1-3	\$65,000,000
	Base Pool amount allocable to grant applications across all levels after initial scoring	\$2,500,000
	Total	\$67,500,000

** Not less than \$35,000,000 of PLAYS funding shall be used for grants to Municipalities or Not-for-profit Entities in Underserved Communities.*

Once the highest scoring Applications at each Priority Level have been determined, any residual funds remaining under those Priority Levels shall be added to the Base Pool and used to make additional NY PLAYS grant awards.

During the review and scoring process NYS OPRHP and DASNY will use best efforts to achieve regional diversity across the State.

Grants from the Base Pool shall be awarded to those Applications receiving the next highest scores across all Application Priority Levels, provided that sufficient funds exist to fully fund the requested grant amount. Awards will be made in this manner until all available funding has been allocated.

No partial grants will be awarded. Not all Eligible Projects will receive a NY PLAYS Grant.

In the event of equally scored applications, NYS OPRHP and DASNY reserve the right to further evaluate the applications with increased weight and scrutiny given to Project Viability.

NYS OPRHP and DASNY reserve the right to reject any or all Applications received in response to this RFA.

Step One: Applicant and Project Eligibility

NYS OPRHP and DASNY will determine if the Applicant and the Project meet the minimum eligibility requirements set forth in Section Four. If the Applicant or the Project does not satisfy the eligibility requirements set forth in Section Four, the Applicant shall be deemed ineligible and shall not advance for further scoring or review. If both the Applicant and the Project fully satisfy the eligibility requirements in Section Four, the Applicant and the Project shall be deemed an Eligible Applicant and an Eligible Project, and the Application shall proceed to Step Two below.

Step Two: Community Need and Project Planning

NYS OPRHP and DASNY will review the “[Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS](#)” ([Appendix 1](#)). All Applicants must complete all three Worksheets in their entirety. Instructions for completing the Worksheets are set forth in Section Five.

- Applications with a total score of 19 or below in Community Need and Project Planning ([Worksheet 3](#)) shall be deemed ineligible and shall not be scored further.
- Applications satisfying the requirements of Step One and that earn a total score of 20 or more on Community Need and Project Planning ([Worksheet 3](#)) will be deemed an Eligible Application and will proceed to Project Impact and Project Viability Scoring in Step Three.
- In addition, Applicants who scored 20 or more points in Community Need ([Worksheet 1](#)) will be deemed “Underserved Communities.”

All Applications deemed an Eligible Application following Step Two shall proceed to Step Three.

Step Three: Project Impact and Project Viability

- NYS OPRHP and DASNY shall review and score all Eligible Applications for Project Impact and Project Viability as set forth in Section Six.
- Each reviewer will assign a score of up to 60 additional points in Step Three, for a total of 100 available points.
- The minimum total score to be considered for a NY PLAYS Grant award is 70.

Section Four: APPLICANT AND PROJECT ELIGIBILITY (STEP ONE)

All of the provisions of this Section Four must be satisfied for an application to continue to Steps Two and Three. Applications that fail to satisfy all provisions will be disqualified from further review and scoring.

4.1 Eligible Applicants

This RFA is limited to Municipalities and Prequalified Not-for-profit Entities providing Playgrounds. At least \$35,000,000 shall be awarded to Eligible Applicants in Underserved Communities.

4.2 Eligible Projects

To be eligible to receive a NY PLAYS Grant, the Project must be for the acquisition, design, construction, major renovation, and equipping of a Playground, along with other related Capital Costs necessary to effectuate the NY PLAYS Initiative. The NY PLAYS Initiative will fund Eligible Project Costs in furtherance of a Project.

Applicants may submit multiple applications; however, each application must be for a single project location. Applications will be reviewed and scored individually.

In order to be eligible to receive proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant, the following also apply:

- The provisions of the GDA as set forth in **Appendix 4** must be complied with. Please review the GDA before applying.
- All contracts for the work to be performed in connection with the Project are required to be entered into by the Grantee (as opposed to a third party on behalf of the Grantee) and signed by an Authorized Officer of the Grantee.
- Eligible Project Costs are required to be paid directly by the Grantee.
- Eligible Projects must be in compliance with all State and local laws and regulations at all times.

4.3 Eligible Project Locations

Site Control is required to prove that the Applicant has sufficient authorization and control to undertake the Project at the Project location.

- Municipalities may submit a Certificate of Municipal Site Control, provided as **Appendix 2** to this RFA, to demonstrate ownership or authority that allows the Municipality to construct and maintain the Project on the Project location.
- Not-for-profit Entities that own their project location must provide a deed, in the name of the Applicant organization, for the proposed project location.
 - If the name of the property owner reflected in the deed differs from the Applicant (if the Applicant's name or d/b/a changed, for example), a satisfactory explanation is required. **If the name is different and no satisfactory explanation is provided, the Application will not be deemed an Eligible Application.**

- For all leased project locations, the term of the lease must be in the name of the Applicant, and it must meet the requirements set forth below:
 - The full lease or rental agreement must be provided, including any exhibits, amendments or riders. **If not provided, the Application will not be deemed an Eligible Application.**
 - The lease or rental agreement **must show** that it is in effect for at least ten (10) years from the date the Application is submitted. The lease term will be verified at the time of the execution of the Grant Disbursement Agreement to ensure that a significant period of time remains on the lease term. **If the term of the lease or rental agreement does not meet this requirement, the Application will not be deemed an Eligible Application.**
 - Documentation of support of the property owner for the Project must be submitted with the Application **or the Application will not be deemed an Eligible Application.**
 - Include a letter on the landlord or lease agency's letterhead granting permission to complete the Project at the project location.
 - The letter must be dated and signed by an Authorized Officer of the landlord or leasing agency.
- If the NY PLAYS Grant will be used to acquire real property to be used as a Project, the Applicant must provide an executed contract of sale and an appraisal of the property undertaken in accordance with USPAP standards. Property purchases must also include plan(s) for a Playground.
- Indian Nations should submit documentation to demonstrate Site Control over the project location and authorization to construct and maintain the Project at the project location.
- For all Project locations where Tax Credits may be utilized:
 - Projects located in facilities to be funded by any tax credit structure (New Market Tax Credits, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits, Brownfield Tax Credits, etc.) should review the criteria set forth below. In addition, Applicants should refer to the FAQs included with this RFA for additional information and requirements regarding tax credit structures.
 - Applicants involved in a tax credit structure should verify that their Project will be segregated from the overall development or redevelopment of the facility to be funded with tax credits and demonstrate that all of the requirements set forth below are satisfied:
 - Site Control must be in the legal name of the Applicant (not an affiliated entity).
 - All requirements applicable to owned, leased or to-be-acquired properties as set forth above must be satisfied.
 - The Applicant must be the entity entering into contracts with contractors for capital costs incurred in furtherance of the Project.
 - The Applicant must be the entity incurring and paying for the capital costs in the first instance.

- The Grant funds may not be deposited into the tax credit corpus.

4.4 Eligible Uses of Funds

- Only Eligible Project Costs will be authorized for reimbursement with the proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant.
- Ineligible uses of NY PLAYS funds include, but are not limited to:
 - Working capital, including funds required to operate a facility, such as staff, rent, utilities, internal labor, and supplies.
 - Preliminary planning, market studies, and similar activities.
 - Grant writing, administration, legal, insurance and other fees.
 - Minor repairs or routine maintenance projects.
 - Long term debt, including financing of machinery or equipment.
 - Support of any Project that is part of an existing or proposed tax credit structure or other similarly structured financing arrangement.
 - Shredded Playground Mulch
 - Costs for spectator facilities such as stadiums, stadium-like seating, and portable bleachers.
 - Sidewalks and publicly maintained roads.
- Proceeds of NY PLAYS Grants cannot be used to reimburse costs incurred on or before April 1, 2025.

4.5 Prequalification Requirement:

- Not-for-profit Entities must receive approved Prequalification status prior to the submission of their Application and remain Prequalified through the execution of the Grant Disbursement Agreement and payment of all requisitions. Any other status will be treated as not Prequalified.
- Not-for-profit Entities must first register as a “vendor” in SFS prior to applying for Prequalification.
- Not-for-profit Entities that are not in Prequalified status will be ineligible for a NY PLAYS grant and will not be reviewed or scored.
- Please note that once **any** Prequalification Application is opened, it should be completed and submitted as quickly as possible. Otherwise, the status may be reflected as “In Review” or “Application in Progress” and will not be considered Prequalified for purposes of this Funding Opportunity, EVEN IF the organization had previously been in Prequalified status.
- Prequalification in the Statewide Financial System (SFS) may take several weeks to complete. Applicants are advised to start the process as soon as possible to allow ample time to complete the Prequalification process prior to submitting the NY PLAYS Application, including all follow up inquiries from the prequalifying State Agency.
- Required documentation to be filed with SFS to obtain Prequalification status includes:
 - the organization’s IRS Determination Letter
 - Incorporation or Charter Documentation

- IRS 990
- NYS CHAR 500
- Organization Bylaws
- Organization Board of Directors Profile
- Organization Executive leadership Resumes
- Organization Financial Statements
- Organization Chart.
- Applicants with questions regarding the SFS Prequalification or registration should review the recorded prequalification webinar linked here: [SFS Recorded Training Sessions](#).
- Applicants should also visit the [Grants Management Homepage](#) and review the resources available to assist with Prequalification.
 - If the Applicant requires assistance with the Registration or Prequalification process, questions should be directed to the SFS Desk at Helpdesk@sfs.ny.gov.

Section Five: COMMUNITY NEED AND PROJECT PLANNING (STEP TWO)

NYS OPRHP will then review the “[Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS](#).”

All Applicants must complete the “[Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS](#),” ([Appendix 1](#)). Only a maximum of 40 points may be awarded based upon the responses to these Worksheets.

Community Need Category – Worksheet 1:

- A minimum of 20 points in this category is needed to be considered an Underserved Community. **Up to 30 points are available in the Community Need category as described below.**
- Follow the instructions labeled “Using the ‘Grants Map for NY Unplug and Play Programs’ for FY 2026” to identify the project location and assign points for Community Need.
- NYS OPRHP will score based on the following:
 - 0-10 points to assess the Percent Below Poverty Level associated with the project location.
 - Using the ‘Poverty by ZCTA 2023’ layer on the “Grants Map for NY Unplug and Play Programs for FY26”, identify the Percent Below Poverty Level for your project location. Enter that information into the “Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS,” then use the Point Breakdown for Poverty Level Chart to assign points associated with the designated Percent Poverty to determine the “Score for ZCTA.”
 - 0-10 points to assess the level of need for Playground Facilities at the project location.

- Enter the County where the Project is located on the Worksheet, then using the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan Relative Index of Needs (RIN) Table, list the value for the **Park** category associated with that county to determine the “Score for RIN.”
- 5 additional points may be added if the project location is designated as a Disadvantaged Community (DAC).
 - Using the Census Tracts—Disadvantaged Communities (DAC) layer on the map, identify the 11-digit Census Tract code and enter on the Worksheet. If the project location is designated as a DAC, enter “5” on the Worksheet.
- Up to 5 additional points may be added if the project location is designated as an ESD Distressed Community.
 - The ESD Distressed Communities (2025) layer on the map, will identify the location’s “StressDescription”, enter the value associated with the designation on the Worksheet.

Project Planning Category – Worksheet 2

- NYS OPRHP will score based on the following:
 - Applications may earn either 0 or 20 points depending on whether the Applicant can demonstrate evidence of planning for the Project, which may include, but is not limited to a Master Plan, a Strategic Plan, a Needs Assessment, a Facilities Assessment/Condition Report, a Space Utilization Study, a Feasibility Study, a Capital Campaign Plan, a report of Community Engagement Findings, a Business or Operations Plan, Board Resolutions, etc.

Total Score of Community Need and Project Planning – Worksheet 3

- Applications satisfying the requirements of Step One and with a combined total score of 20 or more for Community Need and Project Planning (**Worksheet 3**) will be deemed an Eligible Application and will proceed to Project Impact and Project Viability Scoring in Step Three.
- In addition, Applicants who scored 20 or more points on Community Need (**Worksheet 1**) will be deemed “Underserved Communities.”
- Only a maximum of 40 points may be awarded based upon the total Score found in **Worksheet 3**. Eligible Applications with a total score of Community Need and Project Planning of more than 40 points will be capped at the maximum score of 40 points.

Section Six: PROJECT IMPACT AND PROJECT VIABILITY (STEP THREE)

6.1 Project Impact - maximum score up to 20 points

NYS OPRHP will review and score all Eligible Applications based upon the qualitative aspects of the Project.

- Reviewers will score the Applications and award 0-20 points based upon Applicant-submitted responses and supporting documentation describing the impact for the community to be served by the proposed Project.
- A score of 0 or 5 shall be awarded based upon the response to each project impact question set forth in the Application attached to this RFA as Appendix 1. There are 4 questions.

6.2 Project Viability - maximum score up to 40 points

DASNY will review and score all Eligible Applications based upon evidence of construction readiness and the evidence of committed funding sources in an amount sufficient to complete the Project as described.

Construction Readiness (0-10 points)

- Reviewers will score the Eligible Applications and award 0-10 points based upon the level of preparation and planning that has taken place to create the Project, as well as sufficiency of Site Control.
- Applicants should provide a description or evidence of steps taken to in furtherance of the Project, including obtaining permits, undertaking the State Environmental Quality Review process, retaining a design professional, obtaining zoning or planning board approval, or possessing architectural/engineering plans, construction documents or other indicia of shovel-readiness.

Financial Review (0-30 points):

Reviewers will score the Eligible Applications and award 0-30 points based upon the degree to which the Eligible Applicant has prepared a Project budget and secured the funds necessary to complete the Eligible Project. The most competitive Eligible Applications will demonstrate committed funding in the amount necessary to fully fund the Eligible Project.

• Project Budget (0-10 points)

- Provide quotes, proposals, estimates, and/or budget for the Project setting forth the Project components, cost information, and other pertinent details.
- The most competitive Applications will provide a budget prepared by a design professional within the past six months.
- Reminder: Project Costs cannot be financed through long-term debt, bonds, or other long-term financial instruments, or from a tax credit structure or other similarly structured financing arrangement. Please review Section 4.3 above, and the FAQs included with this RFA, for important information regarding tax credit structures.

- **Matching Funds Requirement (0-10 points)**
 - The proceeds of a NY PLAYS Grant will cover no more than 80% of the Capital Costs for the proposed Project. Matching Funds must be utilized to pay for Capital Costs incurred in connection with the Project. The Applicant must provide evidence of committed funding sources in an amount sufficient to pay at least 20% of the Capital Costs of the Project.
 - Expenditures already made by the Applicant may be counted as Matching Funds so long as such expenditures occurred after April 1, 2025 and would otherwise be Eligible Project Costs.
 - Matching Funds must satisfy the requirements set forth below for Additional Committed Funding Sources.
 - Municipal Parks and Recreation grant awards (MPR) cannot be used as a match for NY PLAYS
 - There is no requirement that Matching Funds be fully secured by the date of Application, but Applications will be scored based upon the amount of funds secured and/or the timing of additional funds expected.
 - Matching Funds must be documented to the satisfaction of NYS OPRHP and DASNY.
- **Additional Committed Funding Sources (0-10 points)**
 - All committed funds must meet the requirements set forth below.
 - Documentation for the financial review may include, but is not limited to, any or all of the following:
 - Bank account and investment account statements.
 - Donor pledges, agreements and receipts.
 - Grant award letters, agreements and contracts.
 - Loan agreements, commitment letters, terms and conditions.
 - Bond documents.
 - Personal service contracts.
 - Bills of sale and paid invoices evidencing payment by the Applicant after April 1, 2025 for an Eligible Project Cost.
 - Pledges or award letters with unsatisfied contingencies, pending loan applications, and other non-final commitments **will not** be considered “secured” in the evaluation process.
 - If all funds required to complete the Project have not been secured at the time of application, the committed funding to date should be provided along with the details on how the additional funding will be obtained.
 - A Municipal Parks and Recreation grant (MPR) and a NY PLAYS grant cannot fund the same project scope.

Section Seven: APPLICATION TIMELINE

7.1 Informational Webinar and Question Period

- A Webinar video will be posted on the NYS OPRHP and DASNY NY PLAYS Websites by 2/13/2026. This video will address questions and clarify specific elements of the RFA announcement.
- Prior to the Webinar date, ensure thorough review of this RFA and all Appendices for all requirements.
- To maintain a fair and open process, NYS OPRHP and DASNY will only accept questions regarding this RFA received via SurveyMonkey. The SurveyMonkey form can be accessed here: <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/NYPLAYS>. Please send all questions no later than 3:00 p.m. on 2/23/2026.
- Questions of a substantive nature submitted prior to 2/13/2026 will be addressed on the Applicant Webinar Video, where applicable.
- Questions received after the Webinar Video has been posted and prior to 3:00 p.m. on 2/23/2026 will be addressed on the [NYS OPRHP website](#) and DASNY ([Grant Administration | DASNY](#)) websites on 3/03/2026.

7.2 Application Submission

Applicants should review the following steps to submit their application:

1. Carefully review the RFA (with all Appendices) in its entirety.
2. The Application and all requisite forms and Worksheets can be found attached as **Appendix 1**. Confirm all have been completed and all other supporting documentation is provided.
3. Confirm the Application directly addresses the requirements described in Section Three and Section Four, including:
 - a. Confirm the correct Application Project Purpose Priority and Grant Funding Level has been selected.
 - b. Eligible Applicants (and supporting documentation).
 - c. Eligible Projects (and supporting documentation).
 - d. Eligible Project Locations (and supporting documentation including Site Control documentation)
 - e. Eligible Use of Funds (and supporting documentation).
 - f. Prequalification Requirements for Not-for-profit Entities.
4. Confirm the Application directly addresses the requirements of Step Two: Community Need and Project Planning as described in Section Five.
 - a. This includes completing each of the three Worksheets included in the **Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS**.
5. Confirm the Application directly addresses the requirements described in Section Six, including all supporting documentation.
6. The Application is a fillable PDF. Be certain to save the document prior to submitting it and name the Application and any additional PDFs clearly with the Applicant's name. Number relevant attachments as needed for clarity and to ensure that all relevant information and documentation is submitted.

7. The Applicant may submit one comprehensive PDF of the Application with all related backup documentation or submit an email with multiple attachments. However, all relevant documents must be contained in **one email** per application. Subsequent emails with additional information will not be considered.
8. If submitting multiple applications, each should be in its own email.
9. The file size should not exceed 112 MB for messages outside Microsoft datacenters, and 150 MB between Microsoft users. If you prefer to submit a zip file, please find assistance here: [Zip and unzip files - Microsoft Support](#).
10. Applicants must include “NY PLAYS Application” in the subject line of the email and name all attachments with the Applicant’s name.
11. Submit Applications by email to NYPLAYS@DASNY.org **no later than 3:00 p.m.** on the Application Deadline. Applications submitted after the Application Deadline will not be considered. Neither DASNY nor NYS OPRHP assumes responsibility for technical or submission issues on the part of the Applicant, incompatibility between the Applicant’s and DASNY’s operating systems, or otherwise late applications. **Any Applications received via another email, postal delivery, or facsimile will not be accepted, and no notification will be provided to the Applicant.**
12. After submission of the Application, please check your email to verify that you have received an email confirmation that your Application has been received by DASNY. If you do not receive a notification, please email NYPLAYS@DASNY.org with a copy to grants@DASNY.org.

7.3 Important Notices for Application Submission

- It is the Applicant’s responsibility to submit a complete Application with all supporting documentation to be considered during the evaluation process. **Only the materials submitted with the Application will be evaluated and there will not be an opportunity to amend the submitted Application after submission.**
- Neither DASNY nor NYS OPRHP will contact the Applicant for any reason during the review process, including but not limited to:
 - requesting additional or explanatory information;
 - inform an Applicant that the Application is incomplete; nor
 - inform an Applicant that incorrect documentation has been provided.
- Only Applications meeting the Eligible Application requirements will proceed to be scored further. Therefore, if one or more of the requested eligibility items is not included, there will be no opportunity to provide the items at a later time, and the Application will not be deemed Eligible.
- Applications will be scored solely based upon information submitted. If documentation required for a scoring category is not provided, the Application will receive no points in that category.

- Neither DASNY nor NYS OPRHP assumes responsibility for technical or submission issues on the part of the Applicant, incompatibility between the Applicant's and DASNY's operating systems, or otherwise late applications.

Other Resources:

- "Using the 'Grants Map for NY Unplug and Play Programs' for FY2026" Instructions, included with the "Applicant Worksheets to Calculate Community Need and Project Planning for NY PLAYS" (Appendix 1).
- "Grants Map for NY Unplug and Play Programs" for FY 2026
- NYS Disadvantaged Communities – Climate Act Website
- NYS GIS Clearinghouse Data Website

7.4 Issuance of Award Letters

- NY PLAYS Awards will be announced after all Eligible Applications have been scored by NYS OPRHP and DASNY.
- Awards will be announced no earlier than August 3, 2026.
- After the announcement, DASNY will issue an Award Letter to the Awardees and manage the award process.
- The Award Letter is not a commitment to provide funds but shall constitute a commitment on the part of DASNY to enter into a Grant Disbursement Agreement (GDA) in the form attached hereto, subject to compliance with the conditions precedent set forth in this RFA, the Award Letter and the GDA.

7.5 Grant Disbursement Agreement (GDA)

- A sample GDA is set forth as **Appendix 4** to this RFA. Note that the following apply:
 - All contracts for the work to be performed in connection with the Project are required to be entered into by the Grantee and signed by an Authorized Officer of the Grantee.
 - Eligible Projects must be in compliance with all State and local laws and regulations at all times.
 - Eligible Project Costs are required to be paid directly by the Grantee.
- All conditions precedent must be satisfied before DASNY will enter into a GDA with the Grantee.
- The GDA is not effective until fully executed by the Grantee and DASNY.
- No NY PLAYS Grant funds will be disbursed until the GDA is fully executed.
 - Applicants should review **Appendix 5: "GDA Prerequisites and Instructions"** to confirm they will be able to meet these requirements should they be awarded a NY PLAYS Grant.
 - GDA terms and conditions are non-negotiable.

Section Eight: RIGHTS RESERVED

NYS OPRHP and DASNY reserve the right to:

- Amend this RFA if necessary and post updated information to the NYS OPRHP and DASNY websites;
- Reject any or all Applications received in response to this RFA;
- Any Applicant or Awardee may be disqualified at any time for not meeting all eligibility requirements;
- Withdraw the RFA at any time in the sole discretion of NYS OPRHP and DASNY;
- Withdraw the award if: (i) the grant administration process is delayed in excess of twelve (12) months due to non-responsiveness; (ii) inability of the Awardee to provide the documentation required for the successful administration of the NY PLAYS Grant award (e.g., site control documentation, financial documentation); and/or (iii) Awardee fails to provide documentation required to prepare a Grant Disbursement Agreement or fails to execute a Grant Disbursement Agreement within twelve (12) months from date of award. No Applicant will have any rights against NYS OPRHP or DASNY arising from such actions;
- Exclude ineligible expenses from the NY PLAYS Grant amount requested and adjust the grant award as necessary;
- In the event of NY PLAYS award forfeiture(s), NYS OPRHP and DASNY reserve the right to consider Applications submitted in response to this RFA that were not initially funded. Updated information may be requested as deemed necessary by NYS OPRHP or DASNY;
- Request additional information from the Applicants as required prior to entering into a GDA; and
- NYS OPRHP and DASNY also reserve the right to solicit and accept new Applications if additional NY PLAYS funding becomes available.