

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S OPEN OUTDOORS FOR KIDS GRANT PROGRAM

Grant Applications Due: Friday, July 30, 2021

The National Park Foundation (NPF) is pleased to announce that it is accepting applications from ALL National Park Service units and affiliated units officially administered by the National Park Service to participate in the 2021-2022 Open Outdoors for Kids Grant Program.

Overview:

As we continue to understand how school districts are emerging from disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic—especially the capacity to resume in-park field trips—the Open Outdoors for Kids (OOK) grant program strives to aid national parks and partners in the discovery of learning modules that work best to connect fourth graders of Title I schools to your special places. Therefore, this year's grant is intended to support a wider range of OOK program needs, including temporary staff/interns, new content development, equipment, and program marketing for both onsite and synchronous and asynchronous distance learning fourth grade classroom engagement.

Guiding Principles:

Together, we endeavor to reconnect schools, students, families, and parks with the following considerations for this unique 2021-2022 school year:

1. **Adaptation:** Test and implement onsite and distance learning approaches to engage audiences. What do teachers, students, and families need now, and how do parks and partners help achieve or meet those needs? What innovations or modifications were developed in response to COVID challenges?
2. **Inclusion:** Parks are encouraged to envision education impacts beyond curriculum alignment by addressing social and emotional learning as paramount to children's development. Accessibility, both as it applied to in-person, digital, and distance learning engagement, is fundamental and results in a more robust experience for all.
3. **Shared Learning:** NPF wants to continue to listen and learn. Grantee cohort calls 2-3 times per year will facilitate sharing of ideas.

Proposals should:

- Outline how outcomes are defined and measured.
- Describe the community this grant will support.
- Identify prior efforts to adapt to COVID that this new grant may leverage and that could be improved or scaled with additional funding. *If your park received a 2021 Hybrid OOK grant, please indicate that in your proposal along with how you will incorporate remaining funding.*

- Identify commitments to reflection and learning. Is a combination of onsite and distance learning programming the future for your park? NPF wants to understand what it will take to sustain a module-based program if your park envisions this.

Informational Call: Optional informational calls to discuss this RFP and changes in scope of grant-funded activities (onsite & distance learning) will be held at the dates listed below. NPF would like to hear from you as your input is essential in helping us continue to adapt grant criteria to support your OOK needs in the year ahead and understand pandemic impacts to park programming. Participation is encouraged, but it is not a requirement.

Informational Call dates:

- **Tuesday, July 20: 4:00-5:00 pm ET**
Link to join Zoom Call: <https://nationalparks-org.zoom.us/j/88012584541>
Meeting ID: 880 1258 4541
- **Wednesday, July 28: 3:00-4:00 pm ET**
Link to join Zoom Call: <https://nationalparks-org.zoom.us/j/83676974571>
Meeting ID: 836 7697 4571

Award Amount:

Commensurate with demonstrated need, use of multiple modules (onsite & synchronous and asynchronous distance learning), number of Title 1 fourth graders served and ability to scale 2022 activities as schools hopefully continue to increase activities with parks.

Notification: Applicants will be notified of award selections by end of August 2021.

Selection Process: Applications will be reviewed by a committee comprised of representatives from the National Park Foundation and National Park Service. Selections will be based on the applicant's ability to meet and exceed program requirements and outcomes.

Questions: Contact Karen Lee, klee@nationalparks.org or Chaska Hansen Chansen@nationalparks.org of NPF Programs & Partnerships Team, with questions.

RFP Contents:

- A. Program Overview
- B. Program Requirements
- C. Program Goal and Outcomes
- D. Program Timeline
- E. Program Evaluation
- F. Proposal Instructions
- G. Proposal Template
- H. Checklist

A. Program Overview

Prior to the pandemic, one of the greatest barriers preventing our youth from experiencing public lands was lack of transportation. However, following disruptions to classroom education in 2020-2021, additional challenges may emerge that need to be addressed as school capacity to resume activities with parks will be based on local circumstances. In seeking to understand individual park and community needs and opportunities, this program will continue to provide funding for a range of activities, including a hybrid and module approach to onsite and distance learning programming.

Over the past year, parks have provided meaningful distance learning engagement, for local schools and those farther away, in some cases giving students in distant urban areas the chance of a lifetime to visit a landscape, ecosystem, historic or cultural site they'd not otherwise be able to visit.

In the spirit of learning, reflection, and continued adaptation, the Open Outdoors 2021-2022 program seeks to foster a lifelong relationship for youth with their national parks and develop an appreciation for nature, history, and culture.

The grant will continue to complement the *Every Kid Outdoors* federal program, amplifying the opportunity for 4th graders and their families to visit national parks and other federal lands for free.

The National Park Foundation Open Outdoors for Kids Grant Program has five main eligibility requirements to be considered for a grant:

1. **Onsite or distance learning Engagement:** Whether your program has elements of recreation, science, history, or humanities, we've learned how valuable it is to foster social and emotional well-being, and to help youth identify with parks as places that welcome them to visit or return with their families.
2. **Three-Touch Model:** A tenet of the OOK grant program is the prolonged engagement of students through a three-touch activity model. For onsite field trips, this may include a pre-visit, field day, and post-visit activity. For distance learning engagement, the three-touch

model may entail a series of nonsequential digital/virtual and non-digital activities or touchpoints that extend meaningful contact with program participants.

- i. **Activity I:** You might host a virtual pre-site visit or introduce a family-based activity or send a ranger in-person to the school if feasible in your area.
 - ii. **Activity II:** May be onsite or online, based on local requirements and how teachers seek to engage with your park.
 - iii. **Activity III:** Extend the tie between your site and youth. Consider activities that encourage kids to bring their families to visit.
3. **Cost-Ratio Per Student:** The goal is to increase, year-over-year, the number of Title I youth that engage with this program. Successful grant applications will keep their cost ratio around \$15 per youth. Should your costs exceed this parameter, please provide a compelling explanation.
 4. **Demonstrated Support:** You must submit a letter of support from your superintendent/site manager and a letter of support from your school or youth-serving partner.
 5. **Under-resourced:** Preference given to Title I school engagement, but we recognize other considerations that factor into school participation. Please explain if not bringing majority of students from under-resourced communities.

B. Program Requirements

1. Engage under-resourced/Title I students
2. Get youth outdoors for some portion of their on-site or distance learning program
3. Actively engage participants in a “three-touch” activity model
4. Be mindful of cost ratio per youth.
5. Participate in evaluation and provide materials as requested for reports to donors, including mandatory final report
6. Provide NPF with photos (released for publication), blogs, vod/podcasts, and media that will help tell the story to various audiences including donors

C. Program Goal and Outcomes

The Program Goal is to expand opportunities for new students to directly experience national parks, where natural, cultural, and historic settings inspire powerful learning.

The program **Outcomes** defined below are designed to provide a platform through which grantees can:

- Create or deepen connections between national parks, youth, and local schools.
- Diversify the next generation of national park visitors and inspire their support.

Participant (Student) Outcomes

1. Participants visit NPS sites in-person or online, for the first time.
2. Participants feel welcome and inspired, enhancing their knowledge of the NPS site.
3. Participants express interest in parks or to visit with families.

Partner (Teachers and Group Leaders) Outcomes

4. Partners develop awareness or understanding of NPS sites as a resource for youth engagement and learning.

National Park Service Outcomes

5. Engagement with new audiences and partners through inclusive programming creates the next generation of NPS visitors.
6. Sites enhance their ability to meet changing needs of teachers, including social-emotional wellness and serving local and distant audiences through live and online activities.

D. Program Timeline

Approx. June 30, 2021: RFP open

July 30, 2021: RFP submission closes *Reminder to submit Fluxx registrations two-days prior

August 2021: Applicants notified of final decision

September 2021: Grant Agreement process

February 2022: Mid-Year Report/Data Request

June 30, 2022: Activities completed

July 31, 2022: Final Report due to NPF

E. Program Evaluation

The National Park Foundation contracts the services of professional evaluators to assess the adaptation and effectiveness of this program. NPF staff seeks to be reflective and learn with parks and partners through the evaluation process and use annual findings to improve the program. NPF will analyze all the data and provide each grantee with a written report on activity outcomes.

Evaluation will include:

- Tracking primary school program participants
- Demographics of population your project worked with
- Project summary
- Leveraged contributions
- Assessing changes to your program model for onsite and online activities

In addition to providing program data and tracking participant information (to be further discussed on the information calls) grantees will be asked to provide anecdotal information, quotes, photos and samples of any materials developed through the program.

F. Proposal Instructions:

Please note changes in what this Grant Supports: Distance Learning and Onsite Engagement

NPF transitioned to a new grants management system, Fluxx, in late-2020. All users new to Fluxx are required to create an account, which can be used to apply for future grants and complete final reports for NPF. Fluxx registration is a two-step process, as new accounts must be approved before grantees gain access to the portal. Please submit Fluxx registration requests by Wednesday, July 20, at the latest, to ensure ample time to finalize and submit grant proposals.

Fluxx Registration

- To register for an account in Fluxx, please go to NPF's Grantee Portal and click on "Create an Account Now" to fill out the form: <https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/>
 - **Reminder:** Please register for Fluxx at least **two-days in advance** to avoid technical delays and ensure timely submission of all grant proposals.
- Once NPF has reviewed and approved a registration request, grantees will receive an email and link to set up an account password. *The registration email will come from Do-not-reply.grants07-us-east-1@fluxx.io (please check your junk/spam folders).
- Please log into the grantee portal, navigate to the left-hand menu, and click on "Apply for Funding". On this webpage, select "**Open OutDoors for Kids Application**" to get started.
 - **Reminder:** Fluxx **does not** automatically save. **Click on the "Save" button** frequently to ensure that no information is lost. You may save applications to continue working on it later. We recommend you complete your application in Word first to ensure you don't lose any information.

For assistance using Fluxx, please contact: applications@nationalparks.org

Proposals are due no later than midnight (ET) Friday, July 30, 2021.

G. Application Template

See below

H. Checklist

See page 10

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S PROPOSAL APPLICATION
2021-2022 OPEN OUTDOORS FOR KIDS GRANT PROGRAM

I. PARK/PARTNER CONTACT INFORMATION

- a. National Park Site or Organization Name
- b. NPS Project Contact
- c. Partner Project Contact (if applicable)

II. PROGRAM/PROJECT INFORMATION

- a. Program Title
Please provide a concise descriptive title that captures your project.
- b. Program Type *[drop down]*
 - i. Field Trip (in-person only)
 - ii. Distance Learning (online/live-virtual/non-virtual)
 - iii. Multiple Modules (in-person and distance learning combination)
- c. Program Abstract
One paragraph overview that describes the program.
- d. Program Description
Please provide a detailed description of the program, including your intention to conduct live, online, in-person or a combination of programming. Are you creating a new program, continuing an existing one, or thinking differently about the upcoming school year?
- e. Program Audience
Is your target audience onsite, reached through a variety of modules? If you plan to conduct, multiple-module programming, will you market to schools beyond local communities? Please estimate number of students, teachers, and schools you hope to reach. Include partners who will help you conduct outreach.
- f. Inclusion
Title 1 schools are the primary audience for this grant. What's your team strategy for expanding Title 1 school engagement, as compared with previous years? If you plan to conduct live online programming, will you market programs to schools in other states? If not, why? Do teachers, students, and/or partners have a mechanism to provide feedback about your programming that could enhance their participation?

g. Adaptation

When do you anticipate schools will be ready to fully return to in-park field trips? If you are not currently conducting distance learning programming, what prevents you from doing so? If you are conducting online programming, do you plan to continue once in-park field trips resume? Do you anticipate changes that could be beneficial to make your programs more accessible, either online, non-virtual or onsite?

h. Desired Program Outcomes

Given the unknowns of the year ahead, what three things do you most wish to accomplish through your organization's Open OutDoors for Kids engagement? For example, if your park would like to engage in both onsite and distance engagement, how could this grant help strengthen capacity to achieve those goals? Is your park interested in including new interpretation, such as contemporary women's history, to your existing narratives? Please describe areas of interpretation you'd like to explore.

i. Project/Program Timeline

What are your major milestones? Please specify when activities will take place if you plan to run on-site, online programs, or both. You may attach your schedule as a Word or Excel document to the online application.

j. Supporting Multiple Modules

Please describe the staffing and logistical needs to implement your program; what will staff roles be? How are you thinking of engaging seasonal staff, volunteers, interns, teacher corps, and other broader community engagement, to build capacity and conduct program activities (in-person, online, or modules).

- How many staff, interns, volunteers, etc. will be needed to conduct your activities (in-person, distance learning, or modules)? *[text field]*
- How many fourth-grade students do you anticipate the program to serve? *[text field]*
- How many elementary school students (excluding fourth graders) do you anticipate the program will serve? *[text field]*

III. BUDGET INFORMATION

a. Request Amount

Please identify the total amount being requested

b. Project Budget Narrative

A budget may also be attached at the end of the application. Distinguish between costs for online and onsite programming.

- c. Checks Made Payable To
Please indicate amounts and whom grant funds should be made payable (including the NPS unit, if applicable). You may indicate whether EFT or check payment is preferred, and please include mailing address for check. For each third party, NPF needs a W9 with the organization(s) (upload in attachments section).

IV. SUPERINTENDENT CERTIFICATION

All programs/projects that will occur at an NPS site MUST have Superintendent/Site Manager approval before submitting. By providing the information below & uploading a letter of support from the Superintendent/Site Manager, you are certifying that they approve of this application. If this does not apply to your program/project, please put N/A for the following questions.

Letters can be addressed to “National Park Foundation Programs & Partnerships team.”

- a. Park or NPS Office
- b. Name of Superintendent/Site Manager or Executive Director of the NPS Unit connected with this application
- c. Title (i.e. Superintendent, Site Manager, Division Chief, etc.)
- d. Email (i.e. Superintendent, Site Manager, Division Chief, etc.)

V. DOCUMENT UPLOADS

- Superintendent Letter (required)
- Budget
- Timeline
- W-9 Form
- Open-ended upload

H. CHECKLIST

Prior to submitting your online application, please use the following checklist to ensure that you have completed all elements of the proposal requirements:

- Budget (PDF). Sample template included below for convenience.
- A letter of support from Superintendent, Executive Director or equivalent.
- A letter of support from school partner or youth-serving organization.
- W-9 Form if directing funds to a partner organization/vendor.

Sample Budget Template <i>(Please round up to nearest \$)</i>				
Category/Line Item	Amount	Partner Contribution	Total NPF Ask	Comments
Staff /Interns (non FTE)				
Transportation				
Materials				
Other				
Totals				

Questions: Contact Karen Lee, Klee@nationalparks.org and Chaska Hansen, chansen@nationalparks.org.

An electronic copy of this RFP will be posted at www.nationalparks.org/grant-applications