REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION’S
2022 Strong Parks, Strong Communities Capacity Building Grant Program
Open to all National Park Philanthropic Partner Organizations

Grant Application Open: February 16 – March 25, 2022

The National Park Foundation (NPF) is excited to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) to help build the organizational capacity of national park philanthropic organizations through its Strong Parks, Strong Communities (SPSC) initiative.

The goal of the SPSC Capacity Building Grant Program is to support park partners in their work to protect and preserve natural and cultural resources, reimagine the possibilities of interpretive and educational programming, and increase access to national parks for all people. Funding should help your organization explore its “big ideas” – the projects that will really help transform your work to be more impactful, innovative, or effective. We want to know what this investment could do to help you reach your mission goals with greater success, or how it has the potential to be catalytic or movement building for park philanthropy nationwide.

Partner organizations should apply to this program via NPF’s FLUXX online application system. Additional details on the application process may be found in “Section F: Proposal Instructions,” and a copy of the online application can be found in Appendix A for parties who are interested in reviewing the questions in advance of the formal application period.

Please note that only nonprofit organizations with an existing philanthropic and/or cooperative agreement with the National Park Service will be eligible for support. Organizations with agreements currently in development, as well as NPS Heritage Areas, may also be considered when accompanied by a letter of support from NPS.

Informational Conference Call: An optional, informative call to discuss this RFP and the proposal process will be held on February 24th at 4:00pm – 5:00 pm ET (Zoom link here). All parties interested in submitting a proposal are encouraged to attend the call, though it is not required.

Deadline: Applications are due no later than March 25, 2022 (midnight ET).

Award Amount: Grant requests should be $25,000 - $50,000*. Funding may be allocated at a lesser amount than requested based on availability, priority, and need. Please indicate whether your project is expected to span multiple years or if you anticipate all work to be completed in one year.

If completed in one year, payments will be dispersed in a single installment in May 2022. If this is a multi-year project, yearly installments will be dispersed throughout 2022 and 2023 and will be determined with grant recipients based on specific project needs.
We also ask that indirect costs be limited to a maximum of 15% of the total grant request and that only one grant request be submitted per organization.

*Please note: Project requests may exceed $50,000, though additional funds requested over the limit must include a 1:1 match by recipient organizations.*

**Notification:** Applicants will be notified of award selections by **May 6, 2022.**

**Selection Process:** All applications will be reviewed by a selection committee comprised of representatives from the National Park Foundation. Grantee selections will be based on the applicant’s ability to meet and exceed program requirements and outcomes.

**Questions:** Contact parkpartners@nationalparks.org with any questions about this RFP or program.

**RFP Contents:**
- A. Program Overview
- B. Program Criteria
- C. Program Timeline
- D. Program Details and Instructions
- E. Program Evaluation
- F. Proposal Instructions

*Appendix A: Example of Online Application*
*Appendix B: Logging Into Fluxx Cheat Sheet*
*Appendix C: Getting Started in Fluxx Cheat Sheet*
*Appendix D: NPF Fluxx Grantee FAQ’s*

**A. Program Overview**

The National Park Service (NPS) needs the support of its friends groups, cooperating associations, heritage areas, and other park partners now more than ever. With increasingly constrained budgets and visitation at all-time highs, national parks need private partners to help protect park resources, implement research and capital projects, educate park visitors, and enhance the visitor experience. The recipe for effective partner organizations includes engaged board leadership, resource management and development, a strong case for support, a clear constituency, and visibility to prospective supporters. It also calls for a close relationship with NPS colleagues and an understanding of the pressures and processes inherent in working to support a large, federal agency.

Since 2017, the [Strong Parks, Strong Communities](#) initiative has sought to enhance the capacity of local park partner organizations, offering peer-to-peer learning and pathways to collective action in the hope of bringing park philanthropy to an elevated level. In 2020, as the state of park partnership faced its newest challenge in the form of the COVID-19 pandemic, NPF empowered partners to design their own plans for building organizational capacity through this grant program’s inaugural round.

As we look towards the dawn of a new day, we hope again to make strategic investments in our park partner community. We want to understand where your organization is today and where it wants to go – whether that be driving change locally that others in the partner community could emulate, designing inclusive communication strategies to welcome more visitors, or any of the other countless opportunities
for park partnership growth. This is a chance to dream big, take risks, and reach towards organizational goals that have yet to be met.

Those selected will include a range of organizational sizes and scales, geographic distribution, and a variety of capacity challenges and opportunities. Some will have relatively straightforward capacity-building needs that can be addressed quickly through short-term planning and action; others will have more complex challenges that will adopt a mindset of movement building and aspire to fundamentally and positively improve the work of park partner organizations. Fresh, innovative thinking will drive the strongest applications, as will an enthusiasm for sharing outcomes and lessons learned with others for how park partners can more effectively meet their mission.

B. Program Criteria
While NPF understands and respects that there are a broad diversity of challenges and needs in the NPS partner community – to which the SPSC Capacity Building Grant Program will endeavor to respond – the limited funding will be prioritized to those projects that most strongly meet the criteria below. In addition, NPF will seek to fund a broad diversity of projects across the country from NPS units that focus on different aspects of NPS’s mission, including those related to history and culture:

**Impactful and Innovative.** Projects will increase organizational impact and effectiveness for those participating and will be measurable in a way that is specific, achievable, and ideally relevant to a broader audience of park partners.

**Ability to Implement.** Capacity-building proposals will be thoughtful and precise, describing in detail the organizational advantages that will help applicants be successful, whether that be a highly motivated team with the skill set to follow through, an upcoming anniversary or commemoration, or an exciting capital project with the NPS’ participation.

**Potential to Leverage New Resources or Existing Efforts for Maximum Impact.** Participation in this capacity-building program should position your organization to garner additional resources or otherwise have a broader programmatic and/or organizational impact.

**Matching Funds:** Projects that leverage additional funds or match the NPF grant will be taken into high consideration.

C. Program Timeline

**Application Deadline.** March 25, 2022

**Review.** Nominations will be reviewed for minimum criteria and screened and narrowed by the National Park Foundation. Priority will be given to groups that are most likely to benefit and advance. Applicants will be notified of final decisions by May 6, 2022.

**Length of Engagement.** More straightforward engagements are anticipated to 6-12 months, while other projects may take place over a few years. Please indicate your anticipated project timeline in your proposal, or if the possibility of an annual grant renewal would serve your goals for growth.

D. Program Details and Instructions
1. Grant requests should be between $25,000 - $50,000 unless additional funding is matched 1:1 by the partner organization. Only one request may be submitted per organization.

2. Please include the following when submitting your application, as applicable:
   - **NPS Commitment**: Please attach a signed letter of support from your superintendent, NPS park leadership representative, or NPS Regional Partnership Coordinator, as well as a copy of your NPS philanthropic/cooperative partnership agreement. In the case that your organization’s agreement is still in development, please have your NPS colleagues indicate their intention to formalize a partnership in their letter of support.
   - **Leadership – Demonstrated Commitment to Participating**: Please attach a board or executive committee resolution to confirm your organization’s interest in participating in the SPSC Capacity Building Grant Program and your commitment to following through on all requirements.
   - **Matching Funds**: Projects with in-kind funding or a partner match available will be given high consideration, though this is not required. If complimentary funding is available, please describe how SPSC Capacity Building Grant support will bolster or leverage existing program capacity.

3. Final reports will be due as determined between NPF and participating organizations in finalized grant agreements. Interim reports may also be required, upon request from NPF.

4. Selected partners will be asked to collect project content (videos, photos, participant biographies, impact stories, etc.) and work with NPF to collaboratively amplify partnership activities through social media, media inquiries, and other opportunities as available.

**E. Program Evaluation**
Successful applicants will be required to detail their evaluation and reporting plan in a follow up conversation with NPF staff, guided by the standard NPF annual reporting template (to be shared in advance).

**F. Proposal Instructions:**

1. **Read the RFP**
   Please read this RFP carefully and then use the online application system to submit between February 16 – March 25, 2022. Please be as specific as possible when answering application questions to help reviewers fully understand the scope and expected impact of your proposed project. Please indicate if this grant will allow you to complete your project, begin a multi-phase project or finish something that was already started.

2. **Online Application**
   Partner organizations should apply to this program by accessing [NPF’s FLUXX online application system](#) and selecting “Strong Parks, Strong Communities Capacity Building Application.” A copy of the online application can be found in Appendix A for parties who are interested in reviewing the application prior to logging into the system; detailed instructions for navigating Fluxx may be found in Appendices B-D.

Here are some important tips below for completing the application:

**1. If you do not already have an account through Fluxx, you will have to register first (see instructions in Appendix D). Registration can take two to three days to receive approval prior to being able to access the online application, so please allow for this time during the application period.**
2. The system does not auto-save, therefore, be sure to periodically hit the “save” button to protect your work. We recommend completing the application in a word document first and then placing the responses into the Fluxx application to have a copy in the instance that your responses are not saved.

3. “Primary Contact” & “Primary Signatory”: Please be sure to select the correct person based on the following. If you do not see the correct person’s name, reach out to parkpartners@nationalparks.org and provide us with their name, email address, and title to have them added to the system.
   a. Primary Contact will receive automated emails and reminders from the system, all reports will be added to this individual’s account, as well as our staff may reach out directly as needed.
   b. Primary Signatory will automatically receive any potential grant agreements or documents that may need signature.

3. “Superintendent Certification”: If you are a partner without access to Superintendent, please provide a letter from your organization’s Executive Director or Board President.

4. “Organization Documents”: If you believe you have not received funding from us before or have had any changes to your organization’s address, account information, etc., please upload a W9 Form and Vendor Profile Form found on the Fluxx grantee portal.

For more information on this program and other support from the National Park Foundation, please contact parkpartners@nationalparks.org.
APPENDIX A

SPSC Capacity Building Application: Partner organizations should apply to this program via NPF’s FLUXX online application system from February 16 – March 25, 2022. The example below has been made available for parties who are interested in reviewing the application prior to logging into Fluxx.

Organization Information
- Organization:
- Primary Contact:
- Primary Signatory:
  Primary Signatory is the name of the person who will be signing the Grant Agreement. This is typically the partner organization’s Executive Director.

Program/Project Information
- Project Title:
- Project Abstract (Please provide a 3-5 sentence description of your project here):
- Program/Project Summary (Please provide a full summary of your project here):
- Program/Project Timeline:
- Program/Project Partners
  Note: Applicable Program/Project information may be uploaded as separate documents.

National Park Partner Information:
- Affiliated National Park Service unit(s):
- Select which naming designation your affiliated unit is considered:
- Affiliated NPS Region?
- Does your organization have a current philanthropic agreement in place with the National Park Service?
- Annual Operating Budget:
- Number of Staff at Organization:
- How much philanthropic support does your organization provide your NPS unit(s) on an annual basis?
- Does your organization provide other types of partnership support (interpretation, volunteer program, concessions, etc.)? If so, please describe.
- How would you describe your relationship with your NPS partner?

Program/Project Criteria
- How will your proposed project increase your organizational impact and/or address your greatest organizational need? Please include here how your project will help your organization to innovate or have the potential to be relevant to a broader audience of park partners.
- Describe your organization’s ability to implement this project if you were to receive this funding. What organizational advantages do you have that will help this project be a success? Please also describe who from your team will serve as project manager, his/her/their ability to lead this
work, and how your organizational leadership (if different from PM) will support this person and the project.

- Will participating in this program position your organization to leverage new or existing resources?
- Does your organization have in-kind funding or a partner match available to support this project? If so, please indicate the value of matching support.
- Has your organization received capacity building support from NPF before?
  - If yes, please select all that apply: SPSC Capacity Building Grant 2020; Friends Leadership Institute; Strategic Growth Initiative; Love Your Park; Additional Support
  - Does the proposed project build upon any of these prior capacity building support? If so, please describe.

**Expected Outputs**

- Please list the outputs (measurable results) you hope to achieve with this project.
- How many people will directly participate in your program? (Please do not include fulltime NPS paid staff or volunteers in this number.)

**Amount Requested and Budget**

- Amount Requested:
- Project Budget Description:
- Checks Made Payable To:

  *Note: Applicable budget information may be uploaded as separate documents.*

**Superintendent Certification**

- Name of Superintendent:
  *Name of Superintendent/Site Manager of NPS Unit or Executive Director of the partner organization submitting this application.*
- Title:
- I certify that the Executive Director of the partner organization submitting this application has approved this submission. Please note that this certifies that the project conforms with any other existing plans an NPS unit or office has in place.

**Grant Terms Information**

- Expected project start date:
- Expected project end date:

**Document Upload**

*Required: Letters of Support from Affiliated Park Superintendent and Organization’s Board of Directors*
APPENDIX B

GRANTEE CHEAT SHEET: LOGGING INTO FLUXX

These instructions will guide you through how to access the National Park Foundation’s Fluxx Grantmaker system. Note: You must first register with NPF. If you have not yet registered, click Create an account now at https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/.

Logging In/ Resetting your Password:

### Logging In

1. For optimum functionality, please use Chrome as your browser. To install Chrome, please download here: https://www.google.com/chrome/
2. Please go to: https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/ and enter your user ID and password.
   - Under Login Now, type User ID (your email address)
   - Type Password (this field is case sensitive)
   - Click Sign in
3. When accessing the site for the first time, click “Reset or create password” link on the left side of the login page, then follow the steps in the next box below.

   The next time you log in, you will follow the steps outlined in #2 above.

### Reset or Create Password

1. Type in your email address. Your email address is your user ID.
2. Click Submit
3. You will receive an email from the Foundation with a link to reset your password. If you do not receive it after a few minutes, please check your junk/spam folder.

   For security reasons, NPF requires strong passwords. Requirements will be included in the email you receive.
GRANTEE CHEAT SHEET: GETTING AROUND (GENERAL NAVIGATION)

These instructions will guide you through how to navigate the main components of Fluxx (NPF’s Grant Application System).

YOUR GRANTEE PORTAL

This “cheat sheet” covers basic terminology and navigation once you have logged into the system. Once you log in, you will arrive at the Grantee Portal. The grantee portal is where you will submit applications, upload supporting documents and check the status of applications and grant.

LANDING PAGE

When you first log into the National Park Foundation’s grantee portal you will be presented with the landing page (see below) with two main sections, the “left bar” and the general information section. The general information also contains download links for additional resources you can use.
Use the left bar to access information regarding your grant applications.

1. **Information**—Click on the Grantee Portal link any time to get back to this main page.

   Click on Apply for Funding to access NPF’s grant applications. There are two main applications: General and Accept and Administer. If you are withdrawing funds from an Accept & Administer account, please use the Accept & Administer application. For all other applicants, you should have received an email from your NPF program contact with instructions for which application to submit. If you did not receive this email, please contact applications@nationalparks.org.

2. **Organizations** - The Organizations folder contains information about your organization profile. Go here to view and update/request updates to your organizational information.

3. **People** – This section lists information about all contacts you’ve linked to your organization. Go here to update contact information.

4. **Requests** – All grant application requests can be found here, whether still in draft or in review:
   - **Pending Requests** - these are your draft applications being developed. They will remain here until you formally submit them to the NPF. These applications have not yet been submitted to NPF.
   - **Requests to Edit** – During review, if NPF staff have questions or require additional information, they will send the application back to you for edits and you will find them here. You will also receive an email notification if your application has been sent back to you for edits.
   - **Submitted Requests** - All requests that are being considered for funding are located here.

5. **Grants** – Active and closed grant applications are listed here.

6. **Reports** – This section provides information on upcoming reports due, previous reports submitted and reports for which NPF has requested additional information.

7. This last section, “the gear” allows you to change your password and to logout.
APPENDIX D

National Park Foundation Grant Application FAQ

Welcome to the National Park Foundation’s Online Grants Application System, built on the Fluxx platform.

1. *How does an organization create a Fluxx account?*

We have sent credentials for all current grantees, and for applicants who have pending requests submitted to NPF. An account will be established for the primary contact affiliated with the current grant or pending request. All organizations, including current grantees wishing to submit a new grant request must go through a registration process to access the system (below).

For new applicants wishing to apply for funding with NPF – To begin the registration process or to add additional organization contacts, access the login page (https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/), click on “Create an Account Now” on the lower right side of the page.

When you have completed the registration form, click “Submit”. If approved, applicants will receive an email with login instructions to complete the process. We will complete the review process within 5-7 business days, so please consider this as you prepare to apply.

Existing applicants should have received an email with login instructions. If you did not receive this, please contact applications@nationalparks.org.

2. *Can we have one account shared across our organization, or does each user need their own account?*

For security and audit reasons, the NPF requests that all users of the system have individual accounts. We have simplified the process for adding new users and for resetting passwords through our portal.

3. *How does an organization access their registered Fluxx account?*

If you have completed the registration process, you can access the system by logging into https://nationalparks.fluxx.io/ with the email address of the existing user and click “Reset or create password” to establish individual credentials in the grants management system. A link will be sent to the email address to establish a new password. If the email address is not linked to a previously you must use the “Create an Account Now” to register your account.

4. *What is my account User-ID?*

When you first register you will receive an email notification with your User ID. This is set to the email in which you provided when you registered.

5. *What are the requirements for passwords?*

To ensure strong security practices, NPF requires the following when setting up your password:

   a. Must be at least 8 characters or greater
   b. It cannot be the same as your user ID (your email address)