

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**THE NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S
OPEN OUTDOORS FOR KIDS GRANT PROGRAM****Grant Applications Due:** Thursday, June 15th, 2023 **Midnight**

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 2023-2024 Open Outdoors for Kids Grant Program. We welcome previous grantees, and strongly encourage new applicants to apply!

Overview:

The Open Outdoors for Kids (OOK) grant program seeks to aid National Parks and park partners in the delivery of onsite and online programs to fourth graders. Priority will be given to proposals that serve under resourced school districts, and Title I schools. This year's grant is also intended to strengthen relationships with teachers so they can more fully utilize the many education resources provided by NPS.

Guiding Principles:

1. **Inclusion:** Insights from the OOK program evaluation indicate that when students feel included in the park visit or educational program, they are more likely to report positive and memorable experiences. In addition to curriculum alignment, programs should support social and emotional learning, accessibility, ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) and other cultural relevance.
2. **Multidisciplinary Approach:** Programs that incorporate awareness of climate impacts, inclusive storytelling, and traditional knowledge will be prioritized for funding.
3. **Onsite and Online Activities:** Teacher feedback indicates a strong need for both onsite and online experiences. Proposals should address options for delivering both modalities.

Proposals should:

- Prioritize engaging under resourced school districts, Title I fourth grade classrooms.
- Describe what the program or project addresses, and how outcomes are defined and measured.
- Define how rollover funds from a prior grant will be used in support of this current proposal.
- Describe how relationships with teachers will be strengthened so that NPS education resources are more fully utilized in classrooms across the United States.

Informational Call: Optional informational calls to discuss this RFP will be held on the dates listed below. Participation is encouraged, but it is not a requirement.

Informational Call dates:

- Wednesday June 7th, 3pm-4pm (ET)
 - <https://nationalparks-org.zoom.us/j/89900195167>
- Thursday June 8th, 4pm-5pm (ET)
 - <https://nationalparks-org.zoom.us/j/89376502064>

Award Amount:

Will be commensurate with demonstrated need and number of Title I fourth graders served. First time applicants are strongly encouraged to apply.

NPF intends to invest \$3M+ in OOK programming for the 2023-24 school year, an increase over last year.

Notification: Applicants will be notified of award selections by the end of July 2023.

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.

Questions: Contact Nicole Rawlinson, Senior Manager Youth Programs at nrawlinson@nationalparks.org

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
- I. Scoring Rubric

A. Program Overview

This grant continues to complement the *Every Kid Outdoors* federal program/pass, amplifying the opportunity for 4th graders and their families to visit national parks/federal lands for free. Due to the impacts of COVID-19 on past years' programming, there may be opportunities to include fifth and sixth graders who missed their fourth-grade field trip opportunity upon request.

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

1. **Qualities of Onsite or Distance Learning Engagement:** Programs foster social and emotional well-being while delivering science, history, or humanities content, and help youth identify with parks as places that welcome them and their families. Staff recognize complexity of human experience, so when feasible, they incorporate bilingual elements, awareness of climate change impacts, inclusive storytelling, traditional knowledge, and are culturally relevant and affirmative. **Please describe how your program will increase access to the above.**
2. **Three-Touch Model:** A tenant of OOK grant program is 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, this may entail a series of learning modules to extend meaningful contact with program participants. **Please describe your 3-touch model.**
3. **Cost-Ratio Per Student:** Successful proposals will attempt to keep their cost to under \$25 per youth. Should your costs exceed this, please provide a compelling reason. In addition to providing a budget for 2023-2024 spending, account for unspent rollover funds from any prior OOK grants.
4. **Demonstrated Support:** You must submit a letter of support from your superintendent/site manager.
5. **Under-resourced:** Outreach must prioritize Title I schools. NPF OOK program evaluation over past few years shows decline in Title I school engagement. For the 2023-24, we're striving to reach 80% or higher under resourced communities.
6. **Teacher engagement-** To the extent possible, park staff should strive to engage teachers through professional development opportunities. Teachers have extraordinary reach and can make sizable, positive impacts for the many students they serve. Teacher professional development fosters relationship building, can increase school/school district engagement, and expands opportunities for co-creation. Proposals that include strategies to help teachers expand awareness and use of NPS resources in the classroom or that aid future field trip experiences will be prioritized.
7. **Curriculum Alignment-** In NPF's evaluation of the 2021-22 OOK program, we found that only 63% of programs were aligning to the grade curricula. This year, we are striving to bring curriculum alignment up to 75% so more field trips support classroom learning.

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, provide a detailed budget, account for roll over spending.
5. Participate in evaluation and provide materials as requested for reports to donors, including mandatory interim and final reports
6. Align with school curricula, seek to strengthen relationship with teachers
7. Provide NPF with photos (released for publication), blogs, videos/podcasts, and media that will help tell the story to various audiences including donors. Grantees are required to use the NPS photo permission form. A copy of the NPS photo permission form will be provided once grantees are notified.

C. Program Goal and Outcomes

The program goal is to expand opportunities for all students to directly experience national parks, where natural, cultural, and historic settings inspire powerful memory building and a sense of belonging.

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, included, represented and inspired
3. Participants express interest in parks, and enhance their knowledge of the NPS sites

Partner (Teachers and Group Leaders) Outcomes

4. Partners develop awareness or understanding of NPS as a robust resource for learning

National Park Service Outcomes

5. Help build the next generation of NPS stewards by engaging classrooms nationwide
6. Support teachers by delivering social-emotional wellness and serving local and distant classrooms through live and online activities.

D. Program Timeline

May 18, 2023: RFP opens

June 15, 2023: RFP submission closes *Reminder to submit Fluxx registrations three-days prior

End of July 2023: Applicants notified of grant status

August- September 2023: Grant Agreement process

January 2024: Mid-Year Report/Data Request

June 30, 2024: Activities completed

July 31, 2024: Final Report due to NPF

E. Program Evaluation

The National Park Foundation will conduct an interim report in Fluxx (January 2024). NPF also contracts the services of professional evaluators to assess grant activities. NPF will provide each grantee with a written report on activity outcomes.

In the 2023-24 evaluation, we will track:

- Title I/classroom participants
- Onsite and online programs delivered
- Teacher feedback
- Partner participation

We will also access social/emotional indicators of engagement, expansion of accessibility including language, and incorporation of climate impacts, inclusive storytelling, traditional knowledge and other inclusive practices in interpretation/education.

F. Proposal Instructions:

All NEW users to Fluxx must 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. If you are a new user to Fluxx, begin your application at least 3 days prior to when you intend to submit your application as the registration process takes time. If you already have an account, access the application using your Fluxx credentials.

Fluxx Registration

- If you do not already have an account through Fluxx, you will have to register first .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:** 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. Please register for Fluxx at least **three 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.
- “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 applications@nationalparks.org and provide us with their name, email address, and title to have them added to the system.
- 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.
- Primary Signatory will automatically receive any potential grant agreements or documents that may need signature.
- “Letter of Support”: If you are a partner without access to Superintendent, please provide a letter of support from your organization’s Executive Director or Board President.
- “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.

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

Proposals are due no later than 11:59pm (ET) Thursday June 15th

G. Application Template

See below

H. Checklist

See page 10

NATIONAL PARK FOUNDATION'S PROPOSAL APPLICATION
2023-2024 OPEN OUTDOORS FOR KIDS GRANT PROGRAM

• **PARK/PARTNER CONTACT INFORMATION**

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

I. PROGRAM/PROJECT INFORMATION

- Program Title
Please provide a concise, descriptive title that captures your project.
- a. Program Type *[drop down]*
 - i. Field Trip (in-person only)
 - ii. Distance Learning (online/live-virtual)
 - iii. Multiple Modalities (in-person and online combination)
- b. Program Abstract
One paragraph overview that describes the program.
- c. 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? Does your program help teachers and students revive and experience the healing power of parks to restore a sense of well-being? Have you refreshed the scope of your program to deliver more inclusive storytelling? Please include what audience need the program is addressing, curriculum standards it is connected to, and if the program is informed by educator input or co-created.
 - i. New or existing program:
 - a. New program
 - b. Existing program
 - c. Combination of both
 - ii. Have you received an OOK grant previously?
Have you received an OOK grant in the last **1-3 years**?
Yes
No

Have you received an OOK grant in the last **4-5 years**?

Yes

No

a. Program Audience

Please estimate number of Title I fourth grade students, teachers, and schools you hope to reach. Include partners who will help you engage audiences. Specify in person, distance or a hybrid modules approach to your 2023-24 program.

d. Inclusion

What's your strategy for expanding Title I fourth grade engagement, as compared with previous years? If you plan to conduct distance programming, will you market to schools nationally? If not, why? How will you expand accessibility, both in person and via distance modules, for students who have experienced social disenfranchisement, physical or language barriers? Do you plan to include inclusive storytelling, traditional knowledge or other inclusive narratives? If not, why?

e. Adaptation

How will your team monitor school participation in your OOK program and make changes to increase school engagement if you note lack of enrollment?

f. Desired Program Outcomes

If this is your first OOK grant request, what do you hope to achieve? If you have received prior grants, what changes to your program will you make this year, based on what you learned last year?

g. Project/Program Timeline

What are your major milestones? Please specify when activities will take place and what kinds of activities they are (in person, distance, hybrid modules). Feel free to attach your schedule as a Word or Excel document to the online application.

h. Logistics

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

- **How many staff, interns, volunteers, etc. will be needed to conduct your activities (if hiring was hampered last year, please explain how you may be able to work around that this year) [text field]**

- How many fourth-grade students do you anticipate the program to serve? Please specify the number of students you will engage in person and virtually (if applicable). *[text field]*
- How many elementary school students (excluding fourth graders) do you anticipate the program will serve? Please specify the number of students you will engage in person and virtually (if applicable). *[text field]*

II. AMOUNT REQUESTED AND BUDGET

. Request Amount

*Please identify the total amount being requested and **how you will spend any roll over funds from last year.***

a. Project Budget Narrative

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

b. Grant Made Payable To

Please indicate amounts and to 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).

III. LETTER OF SUPPORT

All programs/projects that will occur at an NPS site MUST have Superintendent/Site Manager approval. By providing the information below & uploading a letter of support from the Superintendent/Site Manager, you are certifying that they approve of this application.

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

- .
- Name of NPS Superintendent or Program Manager Associated with this Application
 - Title (i.e. Superintendent, Site Manager, Division Chief, etc.)
 - Email of Superintendent/Program Manager

IV. 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.
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- 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 (including position/grade)/Interns, Volunteers (non FTE)				
Transportation				
Materials				
Other (ex: (teacher stipend for PD)_				
Totals				

I. SCORING RUBERIC

Review Categories	General Considerations
Engagement (5 points max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program uses three-touch model? Evidence of curriculum alignment. • Program leverages the uniqueness of park site, intentionally sparks curiosity? • Program exposes students to other ways to explore the world (Traditional Knowledge, Night Skies, Inclusive Storytelling) • In-person or online, program encourages participatory exploration.
Outdoors (5 points max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Connects kids to the outdoors, in person or online. • Welcoming students to nature, historic or cultural sites. Increases comfort in these places. • Guides students to care about the outdoors, historic & cultural sites. • Helps students experience outdoors differently (breathing, meditation, smells, sounds) on site or online
Inclusion (5 points max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title 1 primary audience? • Culturally responsive teaching? • Accessible programming on site and online? • Program exposes students to other perspectives?
Implementation & Logistics (5 points max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Program staff have strategies to engage more Title 1 schools, students in different communities. • Maintain active situational awareness of partner engagement in program delivery • If park engages seasonal staff and interns, have recruitment strategies to mitigate hiring challenges.
Budget (5 points max)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is cost proportional to impact? • Budget includes DEI approaches to recruitment? • Seasonal staff and interns hired through grant spend most of their time on OOK program delivery?

Questions: Contact Nicole Rawlinson at nrawlinson@nationalparks.org
 An electronic copy of this RFP will be posted at www.nationalparks.org/grant-applications

