



## Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management

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## GOV. MCKEE, DEM ANNOUNCE AWARDEES OF OVER \$2 MILLION IN GRANTS FOR LOCAL RECREATION PROJECTS ACROSS RI

PROVIDENCE, RI – Governor Dan McKee and the Department of Environmental Management (DEM) today announced the awarding of \$2 million in matching grants to 11 municipalities to develop or renovate local outdoor recreational facilities in their communities.

Perennially, the “rec grant” program is DEM’s most popular grant program, with applications this grant cycle seeking nearly five times the available funding. The grant awards will fund 11 projects across the state including new playgrounds, pickleball courts, dog park, splashpads, walking trails, revitalized ballfields and basketball courts, shade pavilions, outdoor performance areas, and various site improvements.



*Tiverton’s Town Farm Recreation Area received a \$375,000 outdoor recreation grant in 2020 for improvements.*

Since the inception of DEM’s community recreation grant program in 1988, there have been over 568 recreational grants awarded and more than \$91 million invested in improvements in all 39 Rhode Island communities. These projects are funded by green bonds, which are submitted to the Rhode Island General Assembly as part of the Governor’s proposed budget, and if included in the enacted budget, put to the voters as a referendum question on the ballot every two years. Historically, these measures pass overwhelmingly, with the [2022 Green Bond](#) approved by Rhode Island voters by almost 70 percent.

“Increasing opportunities for Rhode Islanders to get outdoors and recreate improves mental well-being, public health, and quality of life,” said Governor Dan McKee. “Green spaces, playgrounds, sports fields, and other recreational assets anchor communities and give them a sense of identity. I am grateful for DEM’s stewardship of this very popular matching grants program.”

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“While we celebrate the projects that received grants, this is a highly popular grant program and we acknowledge that not every applicant is able to receive funding,” said DEM Director Terry Gray. “DEM is grateful that Governor McKee has proposed a Green Bond in his budget that would include increased funding for these valuable investments in our communities. This funding will help us meet the demand for this very popular program in the future. We encourage communities to keep an eye out for future program announcements and join DEM for grant application workshops and other opportunities to sharpen the descriptions of their terrific projects.”

Applications were evaluated and scored by the Rhode Island Recreation Resources Review Committee, consisting of government and non-profit members using the Open Project Selection Process developed under the 2019 [State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#). The grants, which require a community match and range from \$60,000 to \$400,000, are funded through \$50 Million [2022 Green Bond](#). The grants will be matched by local funding to generate over \$ 2.5 million in recreational project improvements throughout Rhode Island. The program offers funding in three categories: small development grants with funding awards up to \$100,000, large development grants with awards up to \$400,000, and acquisition funds that support property acquisition for permanent outdoor recreation with awards up to \$400,000.

Small grants were awarded to the following projects:

- Coventry: Harris Playground Renovation, \$100,000. New ADA playground with wood fiber surfacing, accessible paths, tables, and landscaping.
- East Greenwich: Scalloptown Park Renovation and Dog Park, \$100,000. New dog park, fencing, shade pavilion, solar powered composting toilet, pathways, tables, benches, signage, and landscaping.
- Johnston: War Memorial Park Walking Trail Renovations, \$100,000. Renovation of existing walking trail with wooden guardrails, ADA compliant benches, lighting, signage, and landscaping.
- Lincoln: Old Fairlawn Park Pickleball Courts, \$100,000. New pickleball courts, fencing, benches, lighting, shade trees, parking lot repair, and stormwater control.
- Portsmouth: Community Playground, \$60,000. New playground with fence, tables, benches, walkways, and landscaping.
- Warren: Community Garden, \$72,445. Raised beds, fencing, well, storage shed, rain barrels, compost binds, tables, benches, bike rack, parking area, and signage.
- West Greenwich, Playground Expansion, \$80,000. Expansion of existing playground area, new playground equipment and fencing.

Large grants were awarded to the following projects:

- Central Falls: Historic Jenks Park Restoration, \$400,000. Open Air Performance Stage, open lawn and seating area, new concrete pathways, site furnishings and signage.
- East Providence: Providence Avenue Park Splash Pad, \$400,000. New splashpad with fencing, bike racks and trees.

- Pawtucket: John Street Splash Pad and Playground Improvements, \$400,000. Renovate existing playground with inclusive features, new splash pad, performance area, lighting for basketball court and parking, walking loop, new parking area, benches, signage, stormwater control, and landscaping.
- Providence: Cabral Park Playground and Waterpark Revitalization, \$400,000. Revitalize existing splash pad, ballfield and basketball courts, new play equipment, site furnishings, outdoor classroom, green infrastructure, signage, and landscaping.

DEM's Green Space programs – which include Outdoor Recreation, Local Open Space, and Recreational Trail grants – fund land conservation, recreational land acquisition and development, and recreational trail development and improvements statewide. Rhode Island's outdoor recreation industry is an important part of our state's economy, generating \$1.7 billion in consumer spending and supporting over 18,000 local jobs, [according to the Outdoor Industry Association](#). As part of a larger network of recreational opportunities in the state, municipal facilities play an important role in beautifying communities, supporting public health, strengthening climate resilience, and promoting a cleaner environment.

For more information on DEM programs and initiatives, visit [www.dem.ri.gov](http://www.dem.ri.gov). Follow [DEM on Facebook](#), Twitter (@RhodeIslandDEM), or Instagram (@rhodeisland.dem) for timely updates.

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