

CUMBERLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

CUMBERLAND COUNTY MUNICIPAL PARKS & RECREATION GRANTS AND SPONSORSHIPS

GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION

FOR

CALENDAR YEAR JANUARY 1, 2026 – DECEMBER 31, 2026



CUMBERLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION
ATTN: MELISSA HEMPLE, PARKS COORDINATOR & RECREATION COMMISSION COORDINATOR
291 MORTON AVENUE
MILLVILLE, NJ 08332
(856) 453-2175-PHONE (856) 451-4206-FAX
melissahe@CumberlandCountyNJ.gov
www.exploreumberlandnj.com

THIS APPLICATION IS AVAILABLE IN MICROSOFT WORD AND EXCEL FORMATS VIA THE
COMMISSION'S WEBSITE AND BY REQUEST.

*NOTE: Applications must be delivered to Melissa Hemple, Parks Coordinator/Recreation
Commission Coordinator, Cumberland County Recreation Commission on or before April 30, 2026.
Only the original with all support material needs to be submitted.*

CUMBERLAND COUNTY RECREATION COMMISSION

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MATTHEW E. PISARSKI, AICP, PP, *Planning Department Director*
MELISSA HEMPLE, CPRP, M.ED. *Parks Coordinator & Recreation Commission Coordinator*
MATTHEW HOROWITZ, *Administrative Assistant*

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INTRODUCTION

Thank you for your interest in the Cumberland County Recreation Commission's funding opportunities. This commission is clearly defined in its name: it is the organization charged by the county to recommend and administer programs to increase the visibility and impact of local and county parks and recreation programming. It serves as an advisory agency to the Board of County Commissioners and aids the Commissioners in seeking available State and Federal funds to develop and support parks and recreation programs.

A significant part of the Recreation Commission's work each year is the development and administration of the municipal grants and sponsorships provided by the Cumberland County Board of County Commissioners. Funding is derived from a single line item in the Cumberland County budget to fund the projects and/or expenses of several organizations. Cumberland County Recreation Commission reviews the submissions based on a set of criteria, and based on the perceived quality of the proposed project and the anticipated value to the community, they allocate funds from their annual budget to individual local non-profits or municipalities, depending on the funding program.

As you are working on this application, should you have any questions, contact Melissa Hemple at the Cumberland County Department of Planning, Tourism & Community Affairs, (856) 453-2175, melissahe@CumberlandCountyNJ.gov

It is important to keep in mind that applications submitted to the Recreation Commission must comply with guidelines established by all funding entities. It is therefore imperative that all information requested be supplied. Failure to do so will result in disqualification.

RECREATION FUNDING ELIGIBILITY

Sponsorships: Any parks and/or recreation nonprofit group is eligible if they are: open to the general public for participation, market publicly and occur exclusively in Cumberland County. Civic organizations, Y's, and non-profit groups in all disciplines of community recreation or parks are eligible. Any proposal that does not clearly support community parks/recreation programming, no matter how well prepared, will be denied funding. Parks and Recreation categories as used in these guidelines include: Passive recreation (walking clubs, bird watching, nature trails, etc.) and active recreation (sports clubs, instructional sports classes, martial arts, etc.). Passive Recreation is defined as activity that does not require a facility and that will not have a significant impact on the environment. The Commission is open to other kinds of parks and recreation programming but strongly recommends that you discuss the suitability of your project with the Coordinator of the Recreation Commission before beginning work on a proposal.

Municipal parks and recreation grants: Any local government commission with a parks or recreation focus within Cumberland County may apply for funding for itself. The project for which support is sought must be in some way related to Cumberland County community recreation.

Recipients of grant funding must comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended, and with the Americans with Disabilities Act. The organization must clearly explain its mission relating to community recreation.

Post program/project accounting and photos are required to be sent as a final report for both funding sources.

CATEGORIES OF FUNDING:

There are two categories of funding under the Commission's municipal grant program.

Community Project: Funding is for any municipality in Cumberland County to supplement a capital project specifically related to community recreation on public property.

Special Project: Funding is for any municipality in Cumberland County to sponsor a special community based park/recreation related project. This special project funding is intended to allow, for example, a recreation commission to give free swim lessons to their residents; to help fund a sports team to travel to a national event.

Municipalities may apply for one funding source per year.

There are two categories of funding under the Recreation Commission's sponsorship program.

Direct Equipment Support (DES): Funding is for any parks and/or recreation nonprofit group to offset the expense of equipment that is directly related to an on-going park/recreation program or activity, preferably those that are available to the entire community.

General Support (GS): This funding is for any organization that would like funds to provide general support for groups to increase exposure of athletic activities or recreational programs in the community (ie funds for printing brochures, banners/ads for fundraising, etc.)

Organizations may apply for one sponsorship per year.

FUNDING LEVEL

The amount of funding for municipal grants is currently limited to \$10,000 each year.

Sponsorships cap at \$750 and are reviewed based on outreach, number of persons served, etc.. Sponsorship recipients can apply for sponsorships the following year after an award.

It is important to understand that funding requests are competitive, and the final awards are based on multiple factors, including recreational merit, first time applicant, financial and administrative capability, and the quality of the project. The completeness and correctness of the application submitted to the Recreation Commission will also be a factor in award considerations.

We ask, therefore, that applicants use good judgment when completing the budget information. Although the Commission always has more requests than funds, every effort will be made to award appropriate funding.

ELIGIBLE/INELIGIBLE EXPENSES

There are limits on what is acceptable for funding. Funding will favor capital park/recreation expenses or park/recreation equipment needs. Any material with a three year or longer life expectancy are considered capital expenses for the purposes of this grant or sponsorship.

Funds may **NOT** include general equipment or capital expenses (i.e. photocopier, fax machine, a/v equipment, equipment leases, real estate, etc.)

Funds may **NOT** be used for deficit reduction, fundraising activities/events or for the replacement of funds normally budgeted for the agencies activities.

Funds may **NOT** be used for entertaining, such as costs for food or beverages.

Funds may **NOT** be used for educational institutions.

Projects must commence no sooner than January 1, 2026 and must be completed on or before December 31, 2026. Projects that do not fit within this time frame must be individually evaluated by the Recreation Commission.

Proposals and Sponsorships must be for projects that take place within Cumberland County.

MATCHING REQUIREMENTS

For the 2026 funding round, there are no match requirements. However, match shown reflects positively in the application and will influence competitive scoring in the review process.

MUNICIPAL & DISCIPLINE CODES

The following codes must be specified on the signature page of your application. The Municipal Code that applies is the one that the project and/or program will be taking place. If the program itself is targeted to more than one locality, that should be noted in the narrative.

<i>Municipal Codes:</i>	B	Bridgeton	C	Commercial Township
	De	Deerfield Township	Do	Downe Township
	F	Fairfield Township	G	Greenwich Township
	H	Hopewell Township	L	Lawrence Township
	MR	Maurice River Township	Mi	Millville
	Sh	Shiloh	SC	Stow Creek Township
	UD	Upper Deerfield Township	V	Vineland
<i>Discipline Codes:</i>	01	Active Recreation		
	02	Passive Recreation		

REVIEW PROCESS

At the beginning of each grant cycle, the recreation commission will provide applicant organizations with the opportunity to meet with Commission staff, review the requirements for the proposal, and ask questions and explore ideas for qualifying projects at a monthly recreation commission meeting. All organizations planning to submit a proposal are encouraged to send a representative to the meeting, preferably the person responsible for organizing the proposal and writing the narrative.

Once the final submittal is made, the Commission's coordinator checks to determine that all required information is included, then prepares review packets for the review panel. All applications are carefully reviewed by this panel. The proposals are evaluated for merit, the manner in which the proposals address the needs of the community, compliance with local, state and federal law, the applicant's administrative capabilities and prior program and funding history, where available.

The panel will make recommendations and provide scores to the Commission based on the following criteria:

1. Quality of Life or Experience: Does the project, program or institution have a system or plan to ensure the highest quality to the work being conducted?
2. Community Engagement: the community seeks experiences that are active, immersive and even social. Is the activity participatory or have a participatory component? Is there a learning component? Is the experience more than a singular event and include ways of continuing interaction and impact?
3. Attendance/Quantitative Impact: How many individuals will be touched by this project in some way? Is the marketing inclusive (i.e. are there efforts to reach a diverse audience)?
4. Funding Equality & Compliance: Has this organization had funding in prior years? Is this project the first application done for funding? Is the organization in good standing with funding compliance factors? (ie. final report on file) Has this applicant repeatedly applied for funding for more than 3 years consecutively?
5. Budget: Does the organization seem to have a realistic grasp of the project/program costs? Is the organization working to diversify funding sources across government, foundation, business and audience/member giving? Is efficiency a consideration in programming goals?

Photographs of previous equipment or current site should be included as a part of the grant application. In addition, sponsorship applicants will need to provide any previously used marketing materials. These materials will be used get a sense of the success of past programming.

The Panel's recommendations are then submitted to the Recreation Commission, which makes award recommendations to be considered by the Commissioner Board.

APPEAL PROCEDURE

Applicants may appeal the decision of the Recreation Commission upon receipt of the Panel's determination letter. **Please note: Appeals can be made only on the grounds that the application was misinterpreted or misunderstood. No appeal will be heard based solely on disagreements with the recommended funding level.** No new information will be accepted for consideration, and additional segments cannot be added to increase the funding. **Applicants will have two weeks from receipt of the determination letter to file an appeal with the Commission.**

AWARDS

Awards will be made by letter in June. Groups should not begin projects dependent on funding until they have received official notification of the award amount. Every effort will be made to determine the likelihood of funding based on the best information available at the time, but no guarantee of funding can be made until the results are officially announced.

FUNDING

Municipal Grants and Sponsorships will be funded 100% after award is given and when the paperwork needed for processing is completed.

Future funding will be dependent on a few factors:

- 1) Project must have be completed and funds utilized in compliance with the plans outlined in the proposal, unless previously agreed upon by the Commission staff.
- 2) A final report must be on file at the Commission office.
- 3) The Board of Commissioners and the Recreation Commission must have been credited in all advertising and published programs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Cumberland County Board of Commissioners through the Cumberland County Recreation Commission must be credited in promotional literature (posters, flyers, programs, etc.) and press releases for their support.

Use the following language in crediting the agencies for municipal grant and sponsorship funding:
“Funding has been made possible in part by the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners through the Cumberland County Recreation Commission.”

Additionally, the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners logo and the logo of the Cumberland County Recreation Commission must be placed on all promotional materials for programs being funded through grant awards or sponsorships where appropriate. Logos will be emailed to you upon award of funds.

FINAL REPORT

There will be a requirement to provide a final report to the Recreation Commission prior to the close of the year. If selected for funding, guidelines will be provided. The report will include items like project logistics, number of people served, itemized expenses and requests for photos from public relations.

Cumberland County Recreation Commission Municipal Grant Application Checklist

This checklist (completed, signed and dated) must accompany the original copy of the application (no additional copies are required). The checklist items represent the order in which the application should be packaged.

- ☐ Application Checklist
- ☐ Signature Page
- ☐ Narrative (1-2 pages, 1.5 spaced, no smaller than 12 point font): The narrative should detail the history of your organization and be updated annually to include goals and results in the preceding calendar year.
- ☐ Budget Narrative (1-2 pages, 1.5 spaced, no smaller than 12 font): Please detail the budget line items for the project requesting funding. Include where the municipal grant would be contributed. Entire municipal budget is not needed.
- ☐ Expenses (Form A)
- ☐ Social Media and Marketing (Form B)
- ☐ Resumes of Key Staff: This item may include biographies or resumes of key personnel that will be affiliated with the funding application and follow-through.
- ☐ Acknowledge the commitment of a final report due by December 1st, 2026, unless told otherwise.
 - Copies of project photos & publicity (press clippings, programs, flyers, etc. – limit of 10)
 - Logistics of final project
 - Project Accounting
 - Details on number of people served

Signature _____ Date _____
Organization _____ Phone _____

**Cumberland County Recreation Commission
Municipal Grant Application**

Signature Page

Complete the attached forms in a clear and concise manner.

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS IS: **Thursday, April 30th, 2026**

Applicant Municipality/Commission: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contact Person and Phone Number: _____

Federal ID No. _____ Tax Exemption No. _____

Municipal Code: _____ Discipline: _____

(for Cultural Code and Discipline Code, see page 6)

Applicant's Mission Statement: _____

ADA Compliance will be supported in regards to venue, equipment and marketing. _____ (initial)

Acknowledgement of the final report commitment due no later than December 31st, 2026. _____ (initial)

Choose one of the following funding categories:

Community Project Amount Requested \$ _____

Special Project Amount Requested \$ _____

Authorizing Signature and Title for Applicant Organization

Date

Cumberland County Recreation Commission

Sponsorship

Application Checklist

This checklist (completed, signed and dated) must accompany the original copy of the application (no additional copies are required). The checklist items represent the order in which the application should be packaged.

- ☐ Application Checklist
- ☐ Signature Page
- ☐ Narrative (1-2 pages, 1.5 spaced, no smaller than 12 point font): The narrative should detail the history of your organization and be updated annually to include goals and results in the preceding calendar year.
- ☐ Budget Narrative: The details on the budget that the sponsorship will be going towards.
- ☐ Expenses (Form A)
- ☐ Social Media and Marketing (Form B)
- ☐ Acknowledge the commitment of a final report due by December 1st, 2026, unless told otherwise.
 - Copies of program photos publicity (press clippings, programs, flyers, etc. – limit of 10)
 - Detailed logistics of program
 - Sponsorship Accounting
 - Number of people served

Signature _____ Date _____
Organization _____ Phone _____

Cumberland County Recreation Commission
Sponsorship Application

Signature Page

Complete the attached forms in a clear and concise manner.

THE DEADLINE FOR ALL APPLICATIONS IS: **Thursday, April 30th, 2026**

Program Applicant : _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____ Email: _____

Contact Person and Phone Number: _____

Federal ID No. _____ Tax Exemption No. _____

Municipal Code: _____ Discipline: _____

(for Cultural Code and Discipline Code, see page 6)

Non-Profit Mission Statement:

ADA Compliance will be supported in regards to venue, equipment and marketing. _____ (initial)

Acknowledgement of a final report due no later than December 31st, 2026. _____ (initial)

Choose one of the following funding categories:

Direct Equipment Support (DES) amount requested \$ _____

General Support (GS) amount requested \$ _____

Authorizing Signature and Title for Applicant Organization

Date

Narrative

NOTE: The Cumberland County Recreation Commission Review Panel will use the information provided herein to form its opinion of the value of the project and the appropriate funding level. Please provide enough specific information to allow the panel to make a valid decision and prepare a sound grant proposal. (See the attached checklist for help in organizing your narrative.) Narrative should be 1-3 typed pages, 1.5 spaced with 1" margins and font no smaller than 12 point.

Municipal Grants Applicants: Provide a complete description of your proposed project/program. Include the title, program/project location, and dates of the program. Give a *brief* history of your organization and explain how this project helps community recreation. Please put the organization's name at the top of each sheet of the narrative, and number them sequentially if more than one page is submitted.

Sponsorship Applicants: Provide a complete description of your proposed sponsorship request. Include the title, program locations and dates of the program. Give a brief history of your organization and explain how this sponsorship will provide recreational enrichment. Please put the organization's name at the top of each sheet of the narrative, and number them sequentially if more than one page is submitted.

Budget Narrative

Please describe in detail, but no more than one page, how the municipal grant or sponsorship will be used, focusing only on the expenses that will be supported by these funds, not your organization's overall budget, unless applicable. Be as clear and specific as possible, outlining the purpose of each expense and how they will help achieve the project's goals.

Narrative Checklist

The following checklist has been prepared to help you develop a complete narrative. In general, be sure your proposal answers the standard questions: who, what, when, where, why and how.

Your narrative should strive to answer these questions:

- Did you tell us what your project is, where the program will take place, and when the program/project is scheduled?
- Did you tell us who your audience is? How many people will this project/program effect? How many participate? What the demographic distribution of your targeted audience is? Include the elderly, children under 12, minorities, and persons with disabilities. **NOTE: A detailed breakdown will be required as part of your final report. Please tell us here how you will gather the data required.**
- Did you tell us why the project is important? How will it benefit the community?
- Did you explain your organization's mission? How will this program help you meet your stated goals?
- Did you tell us what about your organization, activities or programs are unique or exciting?

Photography and Public Relations Material

Be sure to collect before and after photographs of the equipment, land/proposed venue or from activities done as they are required as a part of this application's final reporting. In addition, please provide any previously used public relations material in the initial application for the review panel.

**PROJECT FINANCE CHART - EXPENSES
(FORM A)**

Applicant Organization:

Please round to the nearest dollar. **ALL ORGANIZATIONS MUST COMPLETE THIS FORM.**

It is strongly encouraged that the figures presented herein are explained in a budget narrative as part of your narrative component to this application. Blue for Sponsorship, Green for Municipal grants.

	2026 (1/26-12/26)		
	Funding Request	Matching Funds if any	Total
A. Capital Expenditures			
Acquisitions			
Other			
SUBTOTAL CAPITAL EXPENDITURES			
B. Outside Fees & Services			
Travel & Transportation			
Other (contracted services)			
SUBTOTAL OUTSIDE FEES AND SERVICES			
C. Sponsorship Operating Expenses			
Marketing (advertising, PR, etc.)			
Recreation equipment			
Supplies & Materials (includes printing)			
SUBTOTAL SPONSORSHIP OPERATING EXPENSES			
D. TOTAL EXPENSES			

Municipal Grant or Sponsorship Expenses

Form B – Social Media and Marketing

Please list all active social media accounts used by your organization

Website:

Facebook:

Instagram:

YouTube:

TikTok:

X:

Vimeo:

LinkedIn:

Other: