



# **MEPRD Announces Record \$3.4M In Available Grant Funding For Recreation Development, Planning, And Events In Metro East**

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**MADISON AND ST. CLAIR COUNTIES** – The Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) today announced more than \$3.4 million in new grant funding through the (FY2023) Park and Trail Grant, Community Planning Grant, and Event Sponsorship Grant Programs. The programs support local parks and green spaces, recreation, and active transportation across the Metro East.

Since its inception in 2000, MEPRD has funded \$33.9M to support 220 projects in communities throughout the Illinois Metro East. From community-wide active transportation planning and park planning to trail building, park improvements, and sponsorships for outdoor recreation events, MEPRD's grant opportunities provide a

comprehensive approach to supporting the region's vast system of parks and trails and enable communities and other local and county agencies within MEPRD's jurisdiction to leverage their funds and make their locally-led projects a reality.

The newly announced FY2023 grant programs are funded by the Metro East Park and Recreation District Tax, a one-tenth (1/10) percent sales tax on tangible personal property sold at retail, that was approved by the voters of Madison and St. Clair Counties, IL in 2000. One-half of the generated tax revenue is retained by MEPRD and then redistributed in the form of grants to townships, cities, park districts, transit districts, and others within its jurisdiction in furtherance of its mission. The other half is returned to the respective counties.

For FY2023, MEPRD has approved record program budgets for the **Park and Trail Grant Program** (\$1M increase from the previous year) and the **Community Planning Grant Program** (\$100K increase). According to the District, this marked increase in program funding was made possible by an increase in tax revenues generated over the past year and will, as a result, allow MEPRD to award more grants to a greater number of applicants and projects throughout its jurisdiction.

“There is a lot to be excited about right now for the future of parks, trails, and outdoor recreation in the Metro East,” said MEPRD Grant Coordinator Cole Preston. “With the increase in available funds for this year's MEPRD grants—in combination with other new and/or expanded federal, state, and local funding opportunities—we are empowering communities across the Metro East to make impactful quality-of-life improvements, such as making local parks and regional trails more accessible, enhancing walkability, and modernizing outdoor and indoor recreation sites. The potential impact transcends recreation alone; so, too, can it bring impactful gains to key areas such as public health and transportation, let alone the potential economic impact.”

“MEPRD is actively encouraging all communities, agencies, and 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations that own and maintain public parks, trails, and recreational facilities within its jurisdiction to apply for funding,” Bryan Werner, Executive Director of Metro East Park and Recreation District said. For those that do not have an eligible project in the pipeline, MEPRD is prepared to help fund up to 40%, or up to \$40K, towards the development of a community-wide parks master plan and/or bicycle-pedestrian master plan. “MEPRD staff is available to assist agencies and departments through the application process—every step of the way, if necessary—and urges those with little to no experience preparing a grant application to not hesitate to reach out for help,” Werner added.

The district also offers event sponsorship funding for walking, running, biking, hiking, and related events held in Madison and/or St. Clair Counties that either make use or



promote public parks, trails, or other recreational sites within its jurisdiction. The program is open to both 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations and public agencies. “MEPRD is proud to play a part in the Metro East’s emergence as a recreation hub, an outdoor recreation destination for those living, working, or visiting the two-county area,” said Preston. “And as important as it is to develop new recreation experiences and to bring the latest improvements to existing recreation sites, it also comes down to increasing awareness, appreciation, and use of the incredible parks, trails, and recreation facilities already at our fingertips.” Earlier this spring, MEPRD launched [www.metroeastrecreation.com](http://www.metroeastrecreation.com), an online hub for public recreation in Madison and St. Clair Counties.

See below for a general overview of MEPRD’s FY2023 grant programs. Organizations interested in applying can learn more about each program and download the application at [www.meprd.org/funding](http://www.meprd.org/funding).

- The **MEPRD (FY2023) Park and Trail Grant Program** was approved with a program budget of \$3M. The grant is open to public agencies, counties, and nonprofit organizations with a development or improvement project for public parks, trails, or recreation-related facilities in Madison and St. Clair Counties, IL. Under the FY23 Program, eligible applicants with a qualifying project type can apply for a MEPRD award valued at 40% of total project costs (up to \$300K for regional trail development projects; or up to \$100K for park and recreation projects). MEPRD will begin accepting applications on a first-come, first-served basis at 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 13, 2022, for projects that qualify under Grant Round #1. For more information about the program and grant round eligibility, go to [meprd.org/park-trail-grant](http://meprd.org/park-trail-grant)
- The **MEPRD (FY2023) Community Planning Grant Program** was approved with a program budget of \$400,000. Eligible applicants with a qualifying project type—including community-wide park planning and/or community-wide bicycle and pedestrian planning—can apply for a MEPRD award valued at 40% of eligible project costs (up to \$40,000) beginning Wednesday, July 13, 2022, at 7:30 AM. For more information about the program or to download the grant application, visit [meprd.org/planning-grant](http://meprd.org/planning-grant)
- The **MEPRD (FY2023) Event Sponsorship Grant Program** has a total program budget of \$20,000 and can be applied for by public agencies and nonprofit organizations headquartered within 15 miles of MEPRD’s jurisdiction. The program supports both virtual and in-person walking, running, hiking, and/or biking events. Applicants with a qualifying event can receive a MEPRD award valued at 25% of event out-of-pocket expenses, up to a maximum award of \$1,000 for 501(c) 3 nonprofit organizations and up to \$2,500 for public agencies. MEPRD will begin

accepting applications for the FY2023 Event Sponsorship Grant Program at 7:30 a. m. on Wednesday, July 13, 2022. For more information, visit [meprd.org/event-sponsorship](https://meprd.org/event-sponsorship).