

# **Gov. Pritzker Announces Nearly \$60 Million In Grants For 118 Local Park And Recreation Projects Throughout Illinois**

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SPRINGFIELD — Governor JB Pritzker along with state and local leaders and the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (DNR) today announced nearly \$60 million in state grants are being awarded for 118 local park projects throughout Illinois to help

communities acquire land and develop recreational opportunities. The grants represent the largest round of Open Space Land Acquisition and Development (OSLAD) grants in the 36-year history of the program, which was designed to help communities fund land acquisition and development for parks and outdoor recreation projects.

In addition, for the first time in the history of the program, funding will cover 100% of eligible projects located in economically distressed communities, resulting in 22 underserved locations receiving OSLAD grants.

“Today, I couldn’t be prouder to announce that IDNR’s OSLAD program is offering the largest round of grants in the history of the program — nearly \$60 million,” said Governor JB Pritzker. “The health and wellbeing of Illinoisans sits at the heart of the OSLAD program, and for the first time ever, we’ve been able to provide 100% of funding assistance to qualifying distressed recipients.”

Established by the Illinois General Assembly in 1986, [OSLAD](#) is a cost-sharing program between state and local governments that has become one of the most popular grant programs in Illinois. Since it was established, OSLAD has awarded more than \$530 million for park projects throughout Illinois (including the awards announced today).

“I appreciate Governor Pritzker’s push to increase state funding for the OSLAD program and also set aside money to ensure traditionally underserved communities are able to build and improve their parks,” said DNR Director Natalie Phelps Finnie. “An investment in the outdoors is an investment in the health and well-being of the people of Illinois. We know that 83% of Illinoisans consider access to outdoor recreational opportunities important for them and their families. We also know that getting outside leads to better overall health.”

An economically distressed community, calculated using data from the Illinois Census and the Illinois Department of Revenue, considers an area’s poverty level and equalized assessed valuation (EAV). In FY 2023, as a result of the Department’s efforts, DNR awarded 25.5% of the OSLAD funding to distressed communities, up from 4.7% in FY 2022.

The Springfield Park District will receive a \$600,000 OSLAD grant for a project at Gietl Park that includes demolishing an existing outdoor pool and bathhouse, and construction of a large, modern splash pad designed for multiple age groups. The park district will also add fencing, gates, concrete plazas, walkways, park shelters, LED lighting, landscaping, seating, picnic tables and more.

“Improving Gietl Park is one of my top priorities,” said Leslie Sgro, president of the Springfield Park District Board. “Thanks to Governor Pritzker and the OSLAD grant, the Springfield Park District will be able to renovate a beloved neighborhood park in a distressed part of our community with exciting new facilities that can be enjoyed by all.”

Examples of other distressed communities that will receive OSLAD grants for park projects include:

- The City of Benld, in Macoupin County, will build a park on the site of former Benld Elementary School, which was destroyed by underground mine subsidence in 2009. The city will receive a \$600,000 OSLAD grant to develop that park.
- The Peoria Park District will use a \$255,000 OSLAD grant to acquire 40 acres along the Illinois River Bluff for extending the 9.1-mile Illinois River Bluff hiking trail, including conservation of fragile and unique bluff land and interpretive uses. Separately, the park district will receive a \$600,000 grant for replacing an outdoor swimming pool at Lakeview Park with a splash pad and spray park, playground improvements, and building a public restroom for the park.
- The Chicago Heights Park District will receive a \$600,000 OSLAD grant for expansion of Commissioners Park, including three soccer fields, lighting to accommodate extended evening play, and spectator seating. The expansion is needed to accommodate increasing interest in soccer programs for youth and adults and other factors.

To help facilitate the timely award of OSLAD grants for fiscal year 2023, IDNR contracted with the Northern Illinois University Institute for the Study of Environment, Sustainability and Energy. Fifteen graduate and undergraduate NIU students served as supervised grant reviewers for OSLAD in a first-of-its-kind partnership.

“Our students are really excited about the impact this program will have on neighborhoods, communities and counties,” said Thomas Skuzinski, director of the institute. “They remember the impact that parks and open spaces had on the communities where they grew up, and they want others to be able to share in those experiences. The students are not only putting their expertise in environmental studies to good use but also are learning to work at a high level of professionalism with a state agency.”

OSLAD grants typically provide up to 50% of funding for a project – excluding economically distressed communities where 100% of project costs have been covered. The other 50% are supplied by matching funds from the project’s local government agency.

“The Illinois Association of Park Districts and its members are extremely grateful to Governor Pritzker for ensuring that these dedicated matching grant funds are awarded for much needed park improvement projects benefiting communities throughout Illinois,” said Peter Murphy, President & CEO of the Illinois Association of Park Districts. “For more than three decades, OSLAD-funded projects have provided Illinoisans with access to local parks, including those who are disadvantaged and underserved, persons with disabilities and special needs, seniors, and families. OSLAD capital improvements projects create jobs, support small businesses and labor, promote physical and mental health, help educate and provide jobs to youth, and improve the environment. As IDNR staff can attest, there is an overwhelming demand for these projects, and today’s grants will once again enable local parks to make Illinois a better place to live, work, and play.”

“Investments into our local parks build up our community and neighborhoods, especially in disadvantaged areas,” said State Senator Doris Turner (D-Springfield). “As a lifelong resident of Springfield, we are fortunate enough to have a variety of parks here and across the 48th District. I have seen the benefits residents get from our parks and I look forward to seeing Gietl Park’s redevelopment through for all to enjoy.”

### **FY2023 OSLAD grant awards**

#### **Alexander County**

City of Cairo – \$599,500\*

#### **Bond County**

Kingsbury Park District – \$600,000\*

#### **Bureau County**

Village of Neponset – \$596,821\*

Village of Tiskilwa – \$600,000\*

#### **Calhoun County**

Village of Hardin – \$600,000

#### **Carroll County**

City of Mount Carroll – \$371,000

## **Champaign County**

Champaign County Forest Preserve District – \$400,000

Urbana Park District – \$550,000

## **Clay County**

Flora – \$299,557

Louisville – \$581,881

## **Cook County**

Arlington Heights Park District – \$600,000

Chicago Heights Park District – \$600,000\*

City of Calumet City – \$600,000

City of Chicago – \$407,269

Forest Preserve District of Cook County – \$428,750

Mount Prospect Park District – \$600,000

Norridge Park District – \$600,000

Palatine Park District – \$499,900

Park District of Forest Park – \$424,200

Streamwood Park District – \$467,081

Worth Park District – \$325,000

Village of Brookfield – \$600,000

Hickory Hills Park District – \$241,700

Skokie Park District – \$357,000

Northbrook Park District – \$600,000

Westchester Park District – \$600,000

Niles Park District – \$600,000

City of Palos Heights – \$600,000

Morton Grove Park District – \$398,000

Oak Lawn Park District – \$600,000

Rolling Meadows Park District – \$600,000

Lemont Park District – \$600,000

McCook Park District – \$231,628

Park Ridge Park District – \$600,000

### **Crawford County**

Oblong – \$598,480.90

### **DeKalb County**

DeKalb Park District – \$507,000

Genoa Park District – \$102,800

### **DuPage County**

Elmhurst Park District – \$340,300

Woodridge Park District – \$600,000

Wood Dale Park District – \$600,000

Carol Stream Park District – \$400,000

Bloomington Park District – \$300,000

Addison Park District – \$600,000

Lombard Park District – \$600,000

Downers Grove Park District – \$425,000

Itasca Park District – \$600,000

Winfield Park District – \$600,000

Hanover Park Park District – \$600,000

Fox Valley Park District – \$600,000

Darien Park District – \$600,000

St. Charles Park District – \$600,000

### **Effingham County**

Village of Montrose – \$600,000\*

### **Greene County**

City of White Hall – \$242,500

### **Grundy County**

City of Morris – \$600,000

### **Hancock County**

Village of Plymouth – \$600,000\*

### **Henry County**

City of Kewanee – \$600,000\*

### **Jasper County**

Willow Hill – \$372,195.20

## **Jefferson County**

City of Mount Vernon – \$429,189\*

## **Jersey County**

City of Jerseyville – \$600,000

## **Kane County**

Batavia Park District – \$600,000

Forest Preserve District of Kane County – \$600,000

Hampshire Township Park District – \$600,000

Village of South Elgin – \$600,000

Geneva Park District – \$600,000

## **Kankakee County**

City of Kankakee – \$600,000\*

Kankakee River Valley Forest Preserve District – \$207,750

## **Kendall County**

Kendall County Forest Preserve District – \$600

## **Knox County**

City of Galesburg – \$224,825

## **Lake County**

Lake County Forest Preserve District – \$600,000

Mundelein Park and Recreation District – \$400,000

Park District of Highland Park – \$600,000

Wauconda Park District – \$473,500

Zion – \$600,000

Township of Antioch – \$599,822.50

Village of Libertyville – \$469,000

Deerfield Park District – \$600,000

Vernon Hills Park District – \$566,465

Village of Round Lake Beach – \$580,915

Buffalo Grove Park District – \$600,000

Grant Township Highway – \$600,000

### **LaSalle County**

City of Marseilles – \$600,000\*

City of Ottawa – \$506,000

### **Macon County**

Macon County Conservation District – \$300,000

### **Macoupin County**

City of Benld – \$600,000\*

Village of Palmyra – \$600,000

### **Madison County**

Madison County Mass Transit District – \$388,000

### **Mason County**

Havana Park District – \$544,121\*

## **McDonough County**

Village of Industry – \$600,000\*

## **McHenry County**

McHenry County Conservation District – \$200,000

City of Woodstock – \$600,000

Crystal Lake Park District – \$600,000

Village of Richmond – \$137,390

Village of Algonquin – \$600,000

## **Menard County**

City of Petersburg – \$173,355

## **Mercer County**

City of Aledo – \$600,000

## **Monroe County**

City of Columbia – \$600,000

## **Ogle County**

Village of Davis Junction – \$600,000

## **Peoria County**

Pleasure Driveway Park District of Peoria – \$255,000\*

Pleasure Driveway Park District of Peoria – \$600,000\*

Chillicothe Park District – \$600,000

## **Perry County**

City of Pinckneyville – \$222,600\*

## **Pike County**

Village of Milton – \$599,000\*

## **Pulaski County**

Village of Olmsted – \$600,000\*

## **Rock Island County**

City of Rock Island – \$347,500\*

## **Sangamon County**

Springfield Park District – \$600,000\*

## **Scott County**

Village of Bluffs – \$600,000\*

## **St. Clair County**

City of O’Fallon – \$600,000

## **Will County**

Village of Monee – \$600,000

Plainfield Township Park District – \$377,500

Village of Plainfield – \$284,500

Village of University Park – \$200,000

New Lenox Community Park District – \$600,000

Village of Shorewood – \$600,000

Channahon Park District – \$300,000

Oswegoland Park District – \$600,000

## **Winnebago County**

Village of New Milford – \$600,000\*

Village of Machesney Park – \$506,150

## **Woodford County**

City of Eureka – \$600,000