



Community Outdoor Outreach Program

CO-OP Priorities

CO-OP provides funding to tax-exempt organizations for programming that engages under-represented populations in TPWD mission-oriented outdoor recreation, conservation, and environmental education activities. This program builds relationships with non-traditional constituencies who have been under-represented in Texas Parks & Wildlife Department activities and programs. CO-OP priorities are derived from TPWD's Land and Water Resources Conservation and Recreation Plan and include:

1. Increase access and participation in the outdoors
 - a. Encourage people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities to experience the outdoors
 - b. Provide high quality outdoor recreation opportunities
 - c. Increase and facilitate access to Texas' natural and cultural resources for recreation
 - d. Encourage nature and heritage tourism to Texas Parks & Wildlife Department operated sites
2. Educate and engage Texans in support of conservation and recreation
 - a. Develop life-long behaviors consistent with TPWD mission
 - b. Cultivate support for the conservation of natural and cultural resources
 - c. Experience hands-on science education outdoors to actively support the understanding of natural ecosystems
 - d. Integrate TPWD personnel, programs & places into outdoor recreation and conservation education
 - e. Nurture appreciation and understanding of the outdoors
3. Enable science based stewardship of natural and cultural resources
 - a. Promote citizen participation in hands-on conservation
 - b. Encourage citizen participants to maintain, restore and protect natural and cultural resources
 - c. Develop the next generation of leadership to promote and protect healthy ecosystems
 - d. Inspire and nurture partnerships that result in tangible conservation benefits

CO-OP Scoring Criteria

Grant amount requests *must* range between \$5,000 - \$50,000 to be eligible and no sponsor contribution is required. A committee of TPWD personnel will score each project against the scoring criteria approved by TPWD commission and outlined below. Scores are based on applicants' responses to the questions required in the application. Grant funds will be distributed to those projects who score the highest based on this criteria until the funds have been exhausted. CO-OP prefers grant funded programs to be free or low cost to participants.

CO-OP Priorities (15 points)

- The quality and efficacy of proposed project outcomes relative to CO-OP Priorities.
- The quality of the proposed project's involvement of participants in sustained direct connections to the department, including department sites, programs and personnel.

Under-served Populations (30 points)

- The extent to which the proposed project includes target populations, including female, ethnic minority, low income, and physically or mentally challenged populations.
- A clearly articulated plan demonstrating a reasonable probability that the proposed project will reach the target demographic.
- A feasible plan to track and report demographic information.

Expected Impact (30 points)

- A project narrative illustrating goals that are feasible, fully developed, specific, measurable, attainable, relevant and present a high potential for success.
- The extent to which the project will develop life-long behaviors consistent with program mission, with preference for projects that engage participants in multiple experiences over an extended period of time.
- The extent to which the proposed project will contribute to the development of successive generations of natural resource and outdoor recreation leaders or professionals.
- Activities utilize a hands-on, active engagement approach to skill development.
- The quality of the tangible environmental benefits resulting from the activities conducted by participants.

Timeline and Budget (20 points)

- The project has an acceptable timeline including a detailed timeline that accounts for all project phases, is achievable and correlates with the project narrative.
- The identified budget items are allowable under the administrative guidelines, are reasonable, and clearly support the proposed activities.
- The budget reflects consciousness of cost effectiveness and provides a reasonable return on investment with respect to participant impact.

Organizational Capacity (5 points)

- The proposed project is within the scope of the applicant's mission.
- The applicant demonstrates to the department's satisfaction that qualified staff and resources are in place to manage the grant from inception to completion, or, alternatively, evidence that the applicant is partnered with an entity to provide staff and/or resources necessary to manage the grant from inception to completion.
- The organization plans to continue similar activities and will maintain grant supported supplies and equipment after the grant period ends.

Past Performance (20 point max deduction)

A scoring deduction will be imposed if the applicant is not in compliance with the conditions of previously-funded grants awarded by the Recreation Grants Department that were closed within two years from the current application deadline. Non-compliance includes:

- Failure to spend CO-OP funds.
- Unfulfilled project elements or grant agreement requirements.
- Unresponsiveness to department requests for information.
- Consistently missing, late or incomplete reports required by agreement with the department.