



NATIONAL
RECREATION AND PARK
ASSOCIATION

22377 Belmont Ridge Road
Ashburn, VA 20148
1 800 626 NRPA (6772)
P 703 858 0784
F 703 858 0794
nrpa.org

May 13, 2024

Senator Patty Murray
Chair, Senate Appropriations Committee
154 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Tom Cole
Chair, House Appropriations Committee
2207 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Senator Susan Collins
Vice Chair, Senate Appropriations
Committee
413 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

Representative Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member, House Appropriations
Committee
2413 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Murray, Chair Cole, Vice Chair Collins and Ranking Member DeLauro,

I write to thank you for your continued support of public parks, recreation and conservation efforts in communities across the country on behalf of more than 60,000 members of the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) – the leading not-for-profit organization dedicated to building strong, healthy and resilient communities through the power of parks and recreation.

As you consider FY2025 appropriations legislation, I urge you to consider the requests outlined below for funding to critical programs for local park and recreation agencies, which collectively represent more than 165,000 park and recreation professionals working full time in this field and the millions of people, from young adults to seniors, who support our efforts through part-time, seasonal and volunteer service. Our research has found that nearly nine in 10 people agree that it is important to fund local park and recreation agencies.¹ The funding requests included in this letter would ultimately benefit the over 280 million people in the United States who visited a local park or recreation facility at least once during the past year.

U.S. Department of the Interior

The Department of the Interior provides important funding that directly supports NRPA's mission of advancing recreation efforts for all through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). This program supports a nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation and conservation areas in every state. Most importantly, we request that:

- Within the mandatory \$900 million appropriation to LWCF, you appropriate **\$200 million for State Conservation Grants, including a 7% set-aside for state administration funding. We also request that you allocate \$125 million to the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership (ORLP) program within LWCF.** The need for parks and close-to-home recreation has never been greater, and funding the ORLP program at this level will provide critical resources to cities for creating new, and renovating existing, parks, trails and recreation spaces for under-invested communities that lack access.

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)

The USDA is a leading provider of nutrition services across the United States – both to children as a part of out-of-school time (OST) care, and to seniors – NRPA asks that you:

- **Fund the SNAP, WIC and CNP programs administered by the USDA at robust levels** to ensure that food-insecure individuals receive the community nutrition services they need to thrive. NRPA believes that healthy, accessible nutrition services are a fundamental building block for strong and vibrant communities.
- In addition to providing increased funding for the primary USDA nutrition programs, **NRPA asks that you fund the agency's Farmers Market Nutrition Program at \$26 million in FY25.**

U.S. Department of Education

The Department of Education funding is integral to further support NRPA's mission of granting quality educational programming to children during OST care. We ask that you fund the **Nita M. Lowey 21st Century Community Learning Centers Program at \$2.9 billion in FY25.**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

NRPA also supports full funding of the CDC **Chronic Disease Prevention and Health Promotion (CDPHP) Programs of \$11 billion.** Chronic diseases often occur within disadvantaged communities at higher-than-average rates, and funding each of these programs within CDPHP programming will help address this issue by targeting care through local, community-based solutions:

- **The Social Determinants of Health Programs at \$8 million**
- **The Nutrition, Physical Activity, and Obesity Program at \$58.4 million**
- **The Arthritis Program at \$60 million**

U.S. Department of Justice

NRPA members also provide leading community-based youth development and mentoring services to ensure that young people have the resources they need to support their mental and physical health. To these ends, we ask that you **fully fund the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Youth Mentoring Grant Program at \$130 million.**

- Within OJJDP's Youth Mentoring Program, we ask that the set-aside for **initiatives for youth impacted by substance abuse is funded at the requested level of \$12.5 million.** OJJDP's youth mentoring programs significantly improve outcomes in communities, particularly as the opioid epidemic continues to profoundly impact our country. Many NRPA members are proud to help administer these enriching and potentially life-saving programs.

U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development

The Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program provides resources to states and localities to support stronger and more resilient communities for low- and moderate-income people. Park and recreation agencies use CDBG funds to provide parks, recreational opportunities and critical programming to low-income communities.

- **We ask that you provide at least \$4.2 billion for the CDBG Program.** More than \$100 million in CDBG dollars go toward parks and recreation every year, with every \$1 spent leveraging \$3.65 in private and public local funding. These funds are often used to rehabilitate outdated facilities and improve recreation accessibility in communities across the country.

U.S. Department of Defense (DOD)

NRPA has an active network of members providing service members and their families with high-quality recreation opportunities on military installations through the DOD Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) Directorate.

- **We ask that you provide at least \$1.8 billion for MWR programs across service branches in FY25 appropriations**, as requested in the FY25 DOD Budget Request. This funding, paired with funds generated through user fees and other non-appropriated funds, will ensure access to high-quality recreation opportunities for military families.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

Finally, local parks benefit their communities by helping them become more resilient to the serious effects of climate change through the implementation of green infrastructure solutions. Properly implemented green infrastructure solutions can support improved human health, increase economic development, and reduce energy use.

- We ask that you **fully fund the EPA's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF)**, the primary federal-financing mechanism for green infrastructure, **at the authorized level of \$3.25 billion in FY2025**. Green infrastructure is essential infrastructure that can provide environmental benefits to a community – from reducing flood risk to reducing urban heat island effects.

Parks and local green spaces serve as catalysts for positive change in service of equity, climate-readiness and overall health and well-being. Park and recreation agencies are a crucial part of a healthy, happy and productive society. We look forward to working with you and your colleagues to ensure that Congress leverages the power of parks and recreation in FY2025 appropriations legislation.

Sincerely,



Kristine Stratton,
President and Chief Executive Officer
National Recreation and Park Association

ⁱ <https://www.nrpa.org/publications-research/research-papers/Engagement/>