



## SUSTAINABILITY IN PRACTICE COHORT PROGRAM

### Frequently Asked Questions

Learn more and [apply here](#).

For an overview of **NRPA's Sustainability in Practice program**, please click [here](#).

#### Timeline

Applications are open for 8 weeks and announced within one month of the application deadline. Candidates may be contacted via phone or email prior to selection with specific questions.

Timeline	Dates
Application Open	September 23, 2024
Application Closed	November 15, 2024
Selected Applicants Announced	January 9, 2025
First Cohort Session	January 22, 2025
Final Cohort Session	April 30, 2025

**Applications will close on November 15, 2024 at 11:59pm PST.**

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Am I eligible to participate in this program?**

The primary applicant must be a full-time staff member at a local government agency that manages parks and recreation services (e.g., municipal park and recreation department, tribal recreation department, public works department that manages parks and recreation etc.) or affiliated 501c(3) non-profit organization.

NRPA encourages membership to ensure that your agency has access to the full suite of education and resources available; however, you do not have to be a current member of NRPA or any other organization to be eligible to apply.



### **How do I know if this program is for me?**

This program was created for rural and suburban park agencies (agencies in areas with populations smaller than the [largest 100 US cities](#)) that are ready to implement environmental solutions but not sure how to proceed. Below are a few examples of ideal candidates for this program:

- Your park agency has been asked to meet your district's sustainability goals, and not given guidance on how to do so
- Your park agency has begun the process of moving towards sustainable solutions, but without organizational or proper planning
- Your park has potential to be a hub for equitable environmental resilience, but you are not sure what your constituents' interests are or how to engage them in the solutions process
- Your park agency has a great relationship with one or many environment-related community-based organizations, but you are not sure how to work together to create sustainability plans or practices

### **How is this program different from other sustainability planning programs?**

The Sustainability in Practice program comprises of eight live, interactive sessions hosted bi-weekly online with a small working group of 20 participants. While there may be programs with a similar format, there are two primary aspects of this program that set it apart from others:

- This program is meant to be completed by a park professional *and* a member of a community-based organization with whom they work closely or are seeking to develop their working relationship. Providing a space for both to collaborate and learn together, along with nine of their peers in similar situations, creates a unique opportunity to work through and devise actionable community-led solutions in real-time.
- While we will be sharing helpful tools, templates, frameworks, and other resources, this program focuses on empowering participants with the right questions to ask and perspectives to consider in order to anticipate obstacles, involve community members in a meaningful and mutually beneficial way, and consider existing strengths that already lie within their team

### **What can I expect my participation in this program to look like?**

Participants are required to attend eight, 3-hour live virtual sessions, hosted bi-weekly for four months. We also offer a one-on-one coaching session with each participating pair for more personalized technical assistance towards the agency's community-driven sustainability goals.

We ask that participants complete pre- and post-program evaluations to support our growth and iteration of future programming. NRPA will offer many resources including webinars,



articles, conferences, and tools that participants may optionally engage with outside of sessions, though this is not mandatory.

### **Session Dates (Wednesdays)**

January 22, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

February 5, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

February 19, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

March 5, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

March 19, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

April 2, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

April 16, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

April 30, 2025 - 1-4p.m. EDT

**Note:** Coaching sessions will be scheduled individually with park & CBO partners in March-April at the time of their choosing. A focus group will be hosted on May 1<sup>st</sup>.

### **Why do I have to apply with a CBO partner?**

NRPA believes that strong strategic partnerships with community-based organizations are a critical part of the process of creating and implementing successful community-driven sustainability plans. A supportive CBO partner can facilitate access to resources, engage park users, influence elected leaders, and secure funding for sustainability plans.

By participating in this program collaboratively, park professionals have an opportunity to deepen their connection to community partners, understanding their strengths and identifying opportunities to delegate or uplift tasks that benefit both parties, and the community at-large.

### **What is expected of the CBO partner?**

Community-based organization partners are expected to attend all eight live sessions of the cohort, as well as the one-on-one coaching session alongside their partner park agency.

### **Do I have to attend all sessions?**

**Yes.** If you are not able to attend all eight sessions of this program, please consider applying for a future cohort (one more will be offered in June 2025) when your schedule allows. We understand that emergencies happen and can discuss accommodations should the situation arise while you are in the program.

### **Is there a cost to participate in this program?**

No. This program is currently being offered free of charge to park agencies and CBOs selected to participate.

### **Why do CBO partners receive a stipend to participate, and what can they do with it?**

Participating community-based organizations each receive a stipend of \$10,000. This stipend is meant to cover the costs of member(s) of their team to participate fully in the program.



Additionally, we hope that any additional funds will be used to support the collaboration and further the capacity for the CBO and park agency to implement plans and practices outlined throughout the program.

**Can you apply with more than one CBO partner?**

No. While we encourage collaboration with multiple community-based organizations, please select only one to join you in this program.

**If my agency is not selected to participate in this program, will there be another opportunity to apply?**

Yes. We intend to have another cohort of the Sustainability in Practice program, beginning in June 2025. Please look out for the application to these future cohorts early next year.

**Who can I contact with additional questions about the Sustainability in Practice program?**

If you have more questions regarding this program, please email [resilience@nrpa.org](mailto:resilience@nrpa.org).