



## Metro East Park and Recreation District

Proudly Serving Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois

### FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Program

— Information and Application —

Project Sponsor Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(List only one entity)*

Project Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Grant Request Type:     Non-Contingent     Contingent

Applications will be accepted on an ongoing basis between July 9, 2025, and May 29, 2026, or until 100% of the FY26 Grant Program funds are pledged, whichever date is sooner.

**Submit two (2) originals and one (1) electronic copy of this application to:**

Metro East Park and Recreation District  
Attention: Grant Coordinator  
104 United Drive  
Collinsville, IL 62234

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date and Time Received: \_\_\_\_\_

Submittal includes 2 Originals and 1 High-Resolution Electronic Copy:     Yes     No

<b>MEPRD FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Program Guidelines</b> .....	
<b>Section 1. Introduction to MEPRD and the Grant Program</b> .....	<b>3</b>
1.1. About Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD).....	3
1.2. Grant Program Overview.....	3
1.3. Important Changes to the Park and Trail Grant Program Guidelines.....	3
<b>Section 2. Eligibility Criteria</b> .....	<b>4</b>
2.1. Eligible Applicants.....	4
2.2. General Project Eligibility.....	4
2.3. Site Location and Control.....	4
2.4. Award Limitations.....	5
<b>Section 3. Funding Detail</b> .....	<b>5</b>
3.1. Grant Award Amounts.....	5
3.2. Request Types.....	5
3.3. Reimbursement Basis.....	6
3.4. Project Revenue Breakdown (Cost Share Requirements).....	6
3.5. Contingency Funds.....	7
3.6. Excess Project Revenues and Award Adjustments.....	7
<b>Section 4. Application Process</b> .....	<b>7</b>
4.1. Submission Window.....	7
4.2. Submission Deadline and Late Applications.....	7
4.3. Application Submission Requirements.....	7
4.4. Delivery and Review Process.....	7
<b>Section 5. Eligible and Ineligible Project Components</b> .....	<b>8</b>
5.1. Eligible Projects.....	8
5.2. Eligible Project Components.....	8
5.3. Ineligible Projects and Components.....	9
<b>Section 6. Post-Award Requirements and Project Management</b> .....	<b>10</b>
6.1. Project Agreement.....	10
6.2. Notice to Proceed and Cost Eligibility.....	10
6.3. Project Period.....	10
6.4. Project Scope and Budget.....	10
6.5. Reimbursement Process and Financial Records.....	10
6.6. Public Access.....	11
6.7. Compliance Requirements.....	11
6.8. Reports and Inspections.....	12
6.9. Publicity and Signage.....	12
6.10. Termination of Grant.....	12
6.11. Phased Projects.....	12
<b>Section 7. Definitions</b> .....	<b>12</b>
<b>Section 8. Application Checklist</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Section 9. Application Form</b> .....	<b>16</b>

## SECTION 1. INTRODUCTION TO MEPRD AND THE GRANT PROGRAM

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### 1.1. About Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD)

- **Organizational Information:** Metro East Park and Recreation District (MEPRD) was formed by voters in November 2000 and is responsible for the development of parks, trails, and recreational facilities in Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois. The District often supplements the efforts of local governments, special districts, and other jurisdictions already engaged in these efforts.
- **MEPRD Mission Statement:** MEPRD shall have as its primary duty the development of a public system of parks and interconnecting trails throughout Madison and St. Clair Counties in Illinois.

### 1.2. Grant Program Overview

- **Program Name:** MEPRD FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Program
- **Program Intent and Objectives:** This program supports the acquisition, development, and/or improvement of public parks, trails, and recreational facilities within Madison and St. Clair Counties.
- **MEPRD Total Program Funding:** MEPRD has committed \$3,000,000 for the FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Program.

### 1.3. Important Changes to the Park and Trail Grant Program Guidelines

In furtherance of the Metro East Park and Recreation District's mission and for the continued improvement of this program, some modifications were made to the program guidelines and requirements for FY 2026.

*The following are the most important changes you need to be aware of:*

- **Priority Path Grant Exclusion and Coordination:** Trail segments funded by MEPRD's Priority Path Grant Program are not eligible for additional funding under the Park and Trail Grant Program. If a Park and Trail Grant request is submitted for a segment within an MEPRD Priority Path Zone, MEPRD will coordinate with the relevant transit district (SCCTD or MCT) to check for overlaps with Priority Path alignments. MEPRD reserves the right to reduce or deny funding for overlapping segments. If MEPRD funds a segment that later becomes part of the Priority Path, the award amount will be deducted from the transit district's Priority Path Grant.
- **Applicant Types:** The FY26 program no longer distinguishes between applicant types (previously, applicants were categorized as Standard, Rural, or Economically Distressed). The Cost Sharing Requirement (described below) has been updated for FY26 and streamlines the requirements, negating the need for designated applicant types.
- **Cost Share Requirement:** For the FY26 program, cost-sharing requirements have been streamlined for consistency and broader applicability. All awarded project sponsors must now contribute a minimum of 60% of the total eligible project costs utilizing any funding source (federal, state, local, public, non-public, and/or a monetary contribution by the applicant). However, a new limitation applies: the total funding from all MEPRD tax revenue sources (specifically the awarded MEPRD grant combined with any Madison County PEP or St. Clair County Parks Grant funds) cannot exceed 80% of the total eligible project costs.
- **Eligible Components (Fitness Equipment):** Fitness Equipment was added to the list of eligible project components. To qualify, the proposed equipment must be permanently or semi-permanently fixed (e.g., bolted to the floor or required specialized installation that implies permanence, subject to MEPRD discretion); must be accessible to the public within a public park, trail, or related facility; and must either add new amenities that did not previously exist at that facility/site, or significantly enhances existing offerings that have exceeded their useful life (subject to MEPRD discretion), to qualify.

- **Ineligible Projects (Art Installations):** The list of Ineligible Projects and Components was updated to clarify that art installations—including murals, plaques, sculptures, and other forms of public art—are ineligible.
- **Contingent Grant Request:** The FY26 program now allows contingent grant requests based on a single state/federal appropriation (previously, restricted to a single state/federal grant).
- **Trail/Shared-Use Path Striping Requirement:** For trail projects, a new requirement was added for striping on any newly constructed (or reconstructed) hard surface shared-use path / trail segments. This requirement is consistent with AASHTO recommendations and ensures consistency throughout the regional trail network.
- **Certification Statement:** Added language to the Certification Statement requiring applicants to attest that the items, quantities, and costs detailed in their application are accurate, to the best of their knowledge; and an acknowledgement that any component not specified will be ineligible for grant reimbursement.

## SECTION 2. ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

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### 2.1. Eligible Applicants

- Any government agency having statutory authority to acquire and develop lands for public parks, public trails, and/or public recreation purposes may apply for MEPRD grant funding.

Such agencies include:

- Municipalities
- Townships
- Counties
- Transportation Districts
- Park Districts
- Universities and 501(c)3 Organizations may be eligible to apply if their project acquires or develops lands for public parks, public trails, or for other eligible project types. Schools and school districts are not eligible applicants.

### 2.2. General Project Eligibility

- To qualify as an eligible project, the primary scope of work must be for the acquisition, development, or improvement of public parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
- Additionally, all projects must:
  - Be physically located within Madison and/or St. Clair Counties in Illinois.
  - Be open to the public.
  - Adhere to ADA requirements.
  - Shared-Use Paths and Bike Lanes must meet AASHTO standards (shared-use paths must be  $\geq 10'$  wide).
  - Newly constructed (or reconstructed) hard surface shared-use path / trail segments must be striped.

### 2.3. Site Location and Control

- Eligible development projects must be located on property that is either owned by the Project Sponsor or leased/controlled by the Project Sponsor.
- Property leased or controlled by the Project Sponsor may be publicly or privately owned, as long as the terms of such lease or control are irrevocable and meet the minimum timeline requirements specified in Section 6.6 "Public Access."

- Park Projects are limited to a single site (e.g., one park). Trail Projects must consist of contiguous segment(s) forming a continuous alignment; combining disjointed or unrelated trail segments into a single project scope is not permitted.
- Multiple submissions of applications within the same fiscal year for continued, adjacent, or contiguous segments of a project are not eligible, even if submitted by different Project Sponsors.

#### 2.4. Award Limitations

- **Limit per Project Sponsor:** Project Sponsors are limited to one (1) FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant award per fiscal year and no MEPRD awarded project may receive more than one (1) MEPRD Park and Trail Grant over the life of the project.
- **Active Projects Limit:** Project Sponsors are limited to a maximum of two (2) active park or other non-trail projects at a time. Project Sponsors that have two or more active, MEPRD-funded park projects are still eligible to apply for an FY26 Park and Trail Grant with a qualifying trail project. However, one or more of the active park projects must be completed and closed out by MEPRD before seeking additional park project funding.
- **Priority Path Grant Exclusion and Coordination:** Trail segments that have received funding through MEPRD’s Priority Path Grant Program are not eligible for additional funding under the Park and Trail Grant Program.

Additionally, if a Park and Trail Grant is submitted for a trail segment that is located within a MEPRD designated Priority Path Zone, MEPRD will coordinate with the applicable transit district—either the St. Clair County Transit District (SCCTD) or Madison County Transit (MCT)—to determine whether the proposed segment overlaps with a planned or preferred Priority Path alignment.

If overlap exists, MEPRD reserves the right to reduce or deny funding requests for trail segments that duplicate, overlap, or conflict with MEPRD’s Priority Paths. If MEPRD funds overlapped segments that ultimately become a part of MEPRD’s Priority Path, the MEPRD award amount towards the overlapped segment will then be deducted from the transit district’s Priority Path Grant award.

### SECTION 3. FUNDING DETAIL

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#### 3.1. Grant Award Amounts

- There is no minimum grant request or award.
- MEPRD FY26 Park and Trail Grants shall not exceed 40% of the total project cost, up to a maximum award of \$300,000 for qualifying trail projects (as defined in Section 7) and up to \$150,000 for all other eligible project types.

#### 3.2. Request Types

- Applications submitted to MEPRD are either 100% contingent or 100% non-contingent, as described in the definitions section at the end of this packet.
- For contingent grant requests: There are two outcomes following notification of the named grant or appropriation:
  - a) If the applicant is awarded the named grant/appropriation in whole, the project must begin within one (1) year and be completed as submitted to and approved by MEPRD within three (3) years of MEPRD’s grant award date.
  - b) If the applicant is not awarded or is only partially awarded the grant/appropriation, the applicant can either cancel MEPRD’s contingent award without penalty OR begin the project within one (1)

year as submitted to and approved by MEPRD and complete it within three (3) years of MEPRD's award.

- In both scenarios, the applicant must inform MEPRD within ninety (90) days from notification of the grant/appropriation award results; once MEPRD is informed, the project agreement will be fully executed and a notice to proceed given by MEPRD. Failure to notify MEPRD within 90 days may result in MEPRD's contingent award being rescinded with penalty, as described in the termination section of this application.
- If MEPRD receives notice from a project sponsor that a contingent award approved under the current cycle is being withdrawn, the value of the rescinded award will not be reallocated for the current cycle. Instead, the funds will be absorbed into the overall budget for the next grant cycle. MEPRD will not reopen the application process, accept new applications, or hold existing applications in anticipation of rescinded grant funds.

### **3.3. Reimbursement Basis**

- The MEPRD FY26 Park and Trail Grant Program is on a reimbursement basis. MEPRD grant funds are paid out only after the project is 100% complete (i.e., final payment has been made), the Project Sponsor has submitted a reimbursement request packet, and MEPRD verifies project completion.
- No early or partial payments will be made to the Project Sponsor.
- A request for reimbursement must be submitted within ninety (90) days of project completion unless extenuating factors, such as coordination of supporting documentation from other funding agencies, prevent it and are discussed with and approved by MEPRD. Failure to do so will result in Project Sponsor forfeiting all project reimbursements and relieving MEPRD from further payment obligations on the grant.

### **3.4. Project Revenue Breakdown (Cost Share Requirements)**

- The MEPRD Park and Trail Grant program is designed to supplement, not replace or reduce, levels of funding set in a community's budget for park and recreation operations.
- **MEPRD Share:** No More Than 40% of the total project cost should be made up of the requested MEPRD FY26 Park and Trail Grant award (\$150,000 maximum; or \$300,000 maximum for qualifying trail projects).
- **Sponsor Share (Cost Share):** No Less Than 60% of the total project cost should be made up of any combination of the following project revenues and must be properly documented:
  - Monetary Contribution from Project Sponsor
  - The Value of the Applicant's Force Account Labor
  - Federal, State, County, or other Public Grants/Funds/Appropriations
  - Non-Public or 501(c)3 Grants/Funds/Donations
  - Madison County PEP Funds / St. Clair County Park Grants (may not exceed 40% of project costs)
- **Funding Limits with MEPRD Tax Revenue Funding Sources:** The total contribution from all MEPRD tax revenue sources (including this grant request, plus any Madison County PEP or St. Clair Parks Grant funds) cannot exceed 80% of the eligible project total.
- **Ineligible for Calculating Project Costs or Cost Share:**
  - The value of donated or owned land
  - The value of donated labor other than force account labor
  - The value of donated services, equipment, and goods
  - The value of funding incentives offered by manufacturers, vendors, etc. for single-sourced products

### 3.5. Contingency Funds

- **Allowance:** Applicants are permitted to include a line item in their project budget for contingency. The contingent amount cannot exceed ten percent (10%) of the project's eligible costs and must be shown as a standalone line item on the budget.
- **Use:** The contingent amount may only be used to cover unexpected cost increases for the eligible components and quantities identified in the approved grant application. No new items/quantities can be added later on to spend the grant amount in its entirety.

### 3.6. Excess Project Revenues and Award Adjustments

- MEPRD grant funds cannot be used to cover any portion of a project already fully funded by other outside funding sources; nor can the value of the fully funded project be incorporated into the project value specified within the MEPRD grant application.
- Combined funding from state/federal grants, MEPRD grant, and all other public/non-public grants, donations, or appropriations shall not exceed 100% of the total eligible project cost. In the event that state or federal dollars—or other grants/donations/appropriations from others—cover the full project cost, the MEPRD grant award will be reduced or rescinded to ensure no overpayment occurs.

## SECTION 4. APPLICATION PROCESS

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### 4.1. Submission Window

- Applications for the MEPRD FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Program will be accepted on an ongoing basis between 7:30 a.m. on July 9, 2025, and 3:00 p.m. on May 29, 2026, or until 100% of the FY26 Program Funds are pledged, whichever is sooner.

### 4.2. Submission Deadline and Late Applications

- Applications received after 3:00 p.m. on May 29, 2026, or after FY26 program funds have been fully depleted, will not be considered for FY26 funding and will not be retained for the following fiscal year.

### 4.3. Application Submission Requirements

Grant Applicants must submit:

- Two (2) original signed applications (use binder clips, not binding or staples).
- One (1) electronic copy. The electronic copy should be HIGH-RESOLUTION and in PDF format, submitted via email, CD, or flash drive. Any attachments should also be high-resolution. CDs and flash drives will not be returned to applicants.

### 4.4. Delivery and Review Process

- Complete applications, as determined by MEPRD, must be received at least one week prior to the desired board meeting for presentation.
- Deliver to MEPRD by UPS, USPS, FedEx, or hand delivery; faxed copies will not be accepted.
- MEPRD will review each application and provide notification within forty-five (45) days of board meeting via USPS of MEPRD's decision to approve or deny requested funding.
- **Grant Support:** Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the MEPRD Grant Coordinator at (618) 346-4905 or by email to discuss proposed projects prior to applying. The grant coordinator is also available to assist with any program questions, verifying project/component eligibility, or for preliminary application review. Check MEPRD's website for the current availability of program funds at [www.meprd.org/park-trail-grant](http://www.meprd.org/park-trail-grant).

## SECTION 5. ELIGIBLE AND INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES AND COMPONENTS

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### 5.1. Eligible Projects

Eligible types of acquisition, development, or improvement projects must be open to the public and can include, but are not limited to:

- Parks (active and passive)
- Public Greenways, Greenspace, Wildlife Areas, Nature Preserves, and Wetlands (active and passive)
- Recreation Centers
- Shared-Use Paths and Bike Lanes meeting AASHTO standards (shared-use paths must be  $\geq 10'$  in width)
- Trail Corridors (e.g., abandoned railways or utility corridors) and Trailheads (for eligible trail types)
- Trails and Paths for walking, hiking, jogging, biking, equestrian, mountain biking, BMX, and paddling

### 5.2. Eligible Project Components

The following components are eligible if they are directly related to and are completed in conjunction with an eligible project:

- ADA Improvements for publicly accessible recreation buildings, restrooms, and fishing piers (must be within a public park, municipally owned golf course or pool, public trail facility, or public body of water)
- Alternative Energy Projects (e.g., solar lights, wind turbines, geothermal) \*
- Amenities for parks, trails, and trailheads (excluding those in the ineligible section)
- Bike Racks, Bike Lockers, and Fix/Tune Stations for parks, trailheads, trails, and public facilities
- Boat Ramps and Docks for public use on public waters
- Bridges, Box Culverts, and Bike/Ped Intersection Improvements related to trails
- Concession Structure (related equipment, supplies, and inventory are ineligible)
- Demolition, Erosion Control, and related expenses \*
- Drinking Fountains for parks, trails, and trailheads
- Engineering/Architectural/Design Fees (must be  $\leq 15\%$  of eligible project cost)
- Fencing related to sports fields or swimming pools
- Fencing within a Park or along a Trail (not related to sports fields or swimming pools) \*
- Fitness Equipment (must be permanently/semi-permanently fixed; provide new/enhanced rec opportunity)
- Frisbee Golf Course and related amenities
- Hockey/skating rinks (ice or hard surface, indoor and outdoor)
- Improvements (other eligible improvements that do not provide new/enhanced rec opportunities) \*
- Lakes, Ponds, and Beaches (used for public recreation)
- Landscaping / Site Beautification (non-native plants are ineligible) \*
- Lighting for parks, trails, trailheads, and sports fields
- Nature Observation Towers and Overlooks
- Playgrounds, Fitness Stations, and ADA-compliant Playground Surfacing
- Pavilions, Gazebos, and Open-air Shelters
- Parking Lots for parks and trailheads
- Pools, Water Parks, Water Slides, and Splash Pads
- Restrooms for parks, trails, and trailheads (excluding those in the ineligible section)
- Roadways within a park or trailhead
- Safety Amenities for parks or trails (incl., surveillance systems and emergency call stations)
- Scoreboards within public parks or public sports facilities \*
- Sidewalks or Pedestrian Accommodations within a park or trailhead
- Signage and Kiosks for Wayfinding/Directional/Distance (incl., MEPRD Grant Acknowledgement Sign)
- Skate/MTB/BMX Parks and Pump Tracks
- Sports Fields/Courts, including Artificial Turf (must be open to the public)
- Striping, Markings, and Signage for bicycle trails and bicycle lanes (for new applications only)

- Utility/Sanitation Systems (installation of water, sewer, gas, and/or electric for eligible projects) \*
- Water Quality Improvement Projects related to an eligible project (ex., detention ponds, grass swales)
- \* **Support Items:** Eligible components marked with an asterisk (\*) are defined as "Support Items" by MEPRD and may not exceed 50% of the total project costs.

### 5.3. Ineligible Projects and Components

Ineligible types of acquisition, development, or improvement projects or components within a project include, but are not limited to:

- Acquisition of Land from another public agency
- Administrative Facilities/Buildings/Offices
- Announcer and Ticket Booths
- Archaeological and Environmental Surveys/Testing/Excavations
- Automated External Defibrillators (AED)
- Camp Sites and Camping Amenities
- Clubhouses
- Community Centers/Facilities
- Concession Equipment, Supplies, and Inventory
- Decorative Water Features/Fountains (not related to a public pool or splash pad)
- Dog Parks
- Educational and Safety Programs/Training/Travel
- Environmental Mitigation
- Gardens
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS)
- Golf Courses and Golf-related Amenities/Equipment (exception: see ADA section of previous page)
- Grant Application, Report, or Form Preparation and related work
- Historic Sites/Structures and Preservation
- Hunting Areas/Blinds
- Irrigation Systems
- Lakes, Ponds, and Beaches (not used for public recreation)
- Maintenance/Repair/Upkeep projects
- Maintenance and Storage Buildings (eligible projects may designate up to 25% of building for storage)
- Marketing Materials, Maps/Brochures, Temporary Signs/Banners
- Monuments, Murals, Plaques, Public Art, Sculptures, and Statues
- Mowing and Groundkeeper-related Equipment
- Museums and Conservatories
- Parking Lots (not within a park or trailhead)
- Plans and Planning for Pedestrian Amenities, Parks, Trails, Sidewalks, and Trailheads
- Professional Sports Facilities
- School District Playgrounds, Sports Fields/Courts, and related amenities
- Scenic/Historic Routes, Byways, Drives, and Easements
- Shooting Ranges
- Sidewalks or Pedestrian Accommodations (not within a park or trailhead)
- Streetscape Projects
- Striping and Markings for Bicycle Trails and Lanes (for repeat applications)
- Traffic Counts/Studies and Counting Devices
- Trails for All-Terrain Vehicles, Off-Highway Vehicles, and Snowmobiles
- Vehicles of any kind (e.g., mowers, service vehicles, golf carts)
- Welcome/Visitor Centers

## SECTION 6. POST-AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT

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### 6.1. Project Agreement

- FY26 Park and Trail Grant recipients must sign a Project Agreement with MEPRD upon notice of grant award. It is the recipient's responsibility to complete and submit all required documents pertaining to the Project Agreement. Missing or incomplete documents required in the Project Agreement will delay written notice to proceed from MEPRD.
- For contingent grants, agreements will be executed by MEPRD within thirty (30) days of Sponsor's notification of named grant award to MEPRD.

### 6.2. Notice to Proceed and Cost Eligibility

- MEPRD will send written notice to proceed along with the fully executed Project Agreement.
- Costs incurred by grantees prior to the receipt of a fully executed MEPRD Project Agreement AND notice to proceed will not be reimbursed by MEPRD.
- For Acquisition projects, costs are considered incurred when <sup>(1)</sup> purchase agreement is entered into; <sup>(2)</sup> property deed is accepted by the Project Sponsor; or <sup>(3)</sup> first payment is made on the project property or to an escrow account/agent for the property.
- For Development projects, costs are considered incurred on the date construction contracts are signed, actual physical work begins on the project site, or project materials are purchased/delivered.

### 6.3. Project Period

- The project period is defined as the date of notice to proceed to project closeout.
- Projects shall begin making significant progress within one (1) year of MEPRD's notice to proceed and must be completed within three (3) years of that date; valid progress will be considered at the discretion of MEPRD. Extensions must be requested within 30 days of expiration and are at MEPRD's discretion.
- MEPRD reserves the right to withdraw funding for projects that do not begin within one (1) year.
- With the exception of contingent projects, projects not completed, in whole or in part and regardless of reason, are ineligible for funding in future grant cycles.

### 6.4. Project Scope and Budget

- Applicants should make every effort to obtain an accurate project scope and budget for their application.
- Project scope changes are highly discouraged and must be approved by MEPRD in writing. Additionally, unauthorized scope changes shall be ineligible for reimbursement by MEPRD.
- Copies of applicable land appraisal, bids, quotes, cut sheets, or vendor sheets must be provided.
- The Project Sponsor is solely responsible for entering into all contracts and agreements necessary for the successful completion and ongoing maintenance of the approved project scope. Any contractual arrangements for project work or long-term maintenance must be directly with the Project Sponsor. Furthermore, the Project Sponsor is solely responsible for all financial obligations, including the direct payment of all invoices and expenses related to the project, irrespective of anticipated reimbursements from MEPRD or any other funding entities.

### 6.5. Reimbursement Process and Financial Records

- **General Reimbursement:** The MEPRD FY26 Park and Trail Grant Program is on a reimbursement basis. Final inspection and acceptance of the completed project must be made by an MEPRD representative

for reimbursement to be issued. Actual payout is dependent upon documentation of final project costs for eligible items within the approved application and may be less than original grant award.

Only eligible items within the approved application will be reimbursed; changes to the project scope to "spend" the grant award in its entirety are prohibited. No early or partial payments will be made to the Project Sponsor.

- **Reimbursement Request Submission:** A request for reimbursement must be submitted within ninety (90) days of project completion unless extenuating factors, such as coordination of supporting documentation from other funding agencies, prevent it and are discussed with and approved by MEPRD. Failure to do so will result in Project Sponsor forfeiting all project reimbursements and relieving MEPRD from further payment obligations on the grant.
- **Financial Records:** All funds expended by the Project Sponsor in conjunction with the project must comply with Local, State, and Federal laws pertaining to the expenditure of public funds. Documentation in the form of cancelled checks, properly executed records, contracts, vouchers, orders, invoices, pay requests, timesheets, and any other accounting documents regarding the Project Sponsor's cost-share requirement and all project costs will be required for reimbursement.

Documentation for State/Federal Pass-Through Grants: For projects utilizing a state or federal pass-through grant structure (e.g., Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program – ITEP), the reimbursement request must include: <sup>[1]</sup> copies of the executed grant agreement between the Project Sponsor and the primary state/federal agency; <sup>[2]</sup> formal documentation from the primary agency detailing its mandatory direct-payment and contracting procedures; and <sup>[3]</sup> proof of payment demonstrating the Project Sponsor's local match was paid directly to the primary state/federal agency.

Records shall be sufficiently detailed that all documented costs may be verified by a third-party audit. All project records must be maintained for a period of no less than five (5) years, or longer if required by law. Additionally, documentation of payments (e.g., cancelled checks, etc.) must clearly demonstrate that funds originated directly from the Project Sponsor's accounts for project expenditures.

#### 6.6. Public Access

- Property acquired or developed with MEPRD grant assistance shall not be utilized or developed for any use other than public recreation use per the terms specified herein.
- Acquired/developed land shall be operated and maintained for a minimum of twenty (20) years for public recreation use.
- Development projects that receive \$50,000 or less in grant assistance from MEPRD shall be controlled, operated, and maintained by the Project Sponsor for a minimum of six (6) years, plus one (1) additional year for every \$25,000 in MEPRD grant assistance over \$50,000.
- Conversion of an acquisition project receiving MEPRD grant assistance shall result in the Project Sponsor being held liable for replacing the converted property with new property deemed comparable by MEPRD in terms of current fair market value, recreation value, usefulness, and location or for reimbursing MEPRD an amount equivalent to 1/20th or 5% of the original grant amount multiplied by the number of years remaining, as defined by this section.
- Conversion of a development project receiving MEPRD grant assistance shall result in the Project Sponsor being held liable for replacing the converted development with new development deemed comparable by MEPRD in terms of current fair market value, recreation value, usefulness, and location.
- Property acquired or developed with MEPRD assistance from this program must be open to the general public, to include at minimum any and all residents within MEPRD's jurisdiction, for the approved use specified herein and in the MEPRD Project Agreement without regard to race, color, sex, national origin, age, disability, or residence during the time period specified.

## 6.7. Compliance Requirements

- **American with Disabilities Act (ADA) and AASHTO Compliance:** Project Sponsor acknowledges that it has performed due diligence to assure its project complies with the requirements of the American with Disabilities Act of 1990 and, if applicable, the guidelines of AASHTO.
- **Permits:** The Project Sponsor is responsible for obtaining any and all necessary permits, licenses, and forms of consent regarding projects approved for MEPRD funding in this program prior to the construction, and thereafter subsequent operation and maintenance of the project.

## 6.8. Reports and Inspections

- Project Status Report forms shall be completed and submitted in a timely manner as requested by MEPRD, typically on a quarterly basis. Failure to submit progress reports could jeopardize your MEPRD grant award.
- MEPRD staff shall have full access to grant-assisted facilities and applicable financial records at all times for periodic inspections as construction progresses and throughout the life of the project.
- Final inspection and acceptance of the completed project must be made by an MEPRD representative prior to grant reimbursement.

## 6.9. Publicity and Signage

- **Publicity:** Acknowledgement to MEPRD should be given at appropriate times before, during, and after construction/acquisition, including, but not limited to, temporary signage displayed during construction/acquisition, permanent signage post-construction/acquisition, news articles, press releases, interviews, project websites, social media pages, ribbon cuttings, dedication ceremonies, etc.
- **Signage:** The Project Sponsor is responsible for designing, purchasing, and installing a permanent grant acknowledgement sign that is visible to intended users of the improvement at the MEPRD-assisted project site for the useful life of the project. The specifications must include MEPRD's Logo and Project Name (or Project Description), at minimum. One sign or plaque can be installed for multiple projects at a single location, provided it can be modified to name future projects using MEPRD assistance. Worn or damaged signs must be replaced in a timely manner at Project Sponsor's cost. Outdoor signs must be waterproof and UV protected. All signage permits are the responsibility of the Project Sponsor.

## 6.10. Termination of Grant

- Failure to timely complete a project, withdrawal of a project due to lack of performance or insufficient funds, unauthorized change in the nature of the project by the Project Sponsor, or any other violation of the approved grant application and executed project agreement may result in withdrawal of MEPRD funding and a penalty rendering the applicant ineligible for MEPRD grant assistance consideration for the next two (2) consecutive MEPRD annual park and trail grant programs. Furthermore, the project cannot be re-submitted for a grant award in any future MEPRD grant program.

## 6.11. Phased Projects

- Projects scheduled to be completed via more than one phase are eligible for MEPRD grant awards from multiple grant programs. However, one phase must be substantially complete before the next phase may begin, as determined by MEPRD, and each phase must have distinctly separate bid packages/dates. No two phases of the same project funded in part by MEPRD may start simultaneously.

## SECTION 7. DEFINITIONS

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- **Contingent Request/Award:** An MEPRD Grant Request that is contingent on the applicant's successful award of a single named round of a single named state/federal grant or a single documented

state/federal appropriation. Multiple attempts for grant awards or appropriations are not permitted. Additionally, the named grant must be an active (not presumed) federal or state grant and awarded within one (1) year of MEPRD's contingent award notification.

For appropriation attempts... the sponsor must be able to provide supporting documentation via a letter by the Legislator requesting the appropriation on behalf of the applicant. The supporting documentation must also include the following:

- Confirmation that the appropriation request has already been submitted legislatively
  - Monetary value of the appropriation and funding source
  - Anticipated award timeline
  - Project title and scope of work
  - The state/federal appropriation must be awarded within one (1) year of MEPRD's contingent-award notification. Contingent awards cover only one named grant or appropriation attempt.
- **Force Account Labor:** Labor provided by Project Sponsor's own staff. Project Sponsors should retain copies of timesheets as proof of force account work on a project. Reimbursement labor must relate directly to the approved project scope/description on file with MEPRD and applies only to physical work necessary to complete eligible components of the approved project—overtime and holiday pay are not reimbursable. Labor pertaining to application preparation and project planning/design or performed by volunteers is not eligible for reimbursement. An optional worksheet is available for download from MEPRD's website.

Force Account Equipment Rates: Force Account Equipment Rates are not reimbursable under the FY26 Program; however, any equipment rented for the purpose of Force Account Labor to complete an eligible component(s) of the project is eligible and therefore reimbursable. These costs may be documented alongside the Project Sponsor's Force Account Labor.

- **Funding Initiatives/Campaigns/Programs:** Funding incentives offered by manufacturers, vendors, etc. for single-sourced products are considered discounts per MEPRD, even if the initiative, campaign, or program is referred to as a "grant," "funding opportunity," or "matching funds program" by others. Any such discount must be deducted from the total project cost within MEPRD's FY26 application—i.e., do not enter the amount on the line for "non-public grants".
- **Non-Contingent Request/Award:** An MEPRD Grant Request that is not contingent on any other factors. Applicants utilizing this method have a funding authorization/resolution in place for their project and feel comfortable that it will begin within one (1) year and be completed within three (3) years of MEPRD's Grant Award without any contingencies. Recommended for most applicants.
- **Project Sponsor:** Applicant applying for MEPRD funding. The Project Sponsor must own and be responsible for maintaining the project (i.e., responsible for financial support, project management, maintenance, etc.) per the terms specified within the Public Access section of this application. If not the owner, Project Sponsor must have site control via irrevocable lease, agreement, or other formal documentation.

The Project Sponsor is the sole entity responsible for entering into all contracts and agreements for project development, acquisition, improvement, long-term maintenance, and for the direct payment of all related invoices and expenses, regardless of reimbursement status from MEPRD or other funding sources. While the Project Sponsor may utilize third-party contractors for services, the contractual relationship, ultimate accountability for the project's execution and maintenance, and primary financial responsibility rests with the Project Sponsor.

State/Federal Pass-Through Grant Compliance: When a project is also funded by a primary state or federal grant program (such as the Illinois Transportation Enhancement Program - ITEP) whose established and non-negotiable procedures require that agency to hold the primary project contracts

and make direct payments to contractors, MEPRD's direct contractual and payment requirements are met when the Project Sponsor fulfills all local match obligations by making its payments directly to that state or federal agency. The Project Sponsor must provide official documentation from the governing state/federal agency detailing these procedural requirements with their application. Notwithstanding this structure, ultimate accountability for the project's successful completion and long-term maintenance remains with the Project Sponsor.

The ownership and control obligations specified in this paragraph may not be transferred or assigned to others. If transferred or assigned to others, see the conversion details contained within the Public Access section on page 9.

- **Public Grants/Funds:** Dollars from federal, state, local, or other public funding sources, excluding funding from a 501(c)3 organization.
- **Trail Project:** A project involving the development, acquisition, and/or improvement of a hard-surfaced, non-motorized, shared-use path (e.g., bike trail, greenway) at least 10 feet wide, striped, and compliant with AASHTO standards. To qualify, the primary component of the project's scope of work must fall into one of the following categories, with eligible costs directly related to that component comprising at least 75% of the total eligible project cost:
  - Regional Trail Segment: A segment of a non-motorized, shared-use path/trail identified in either MEPRD's Long Range Development Plan or a plan adopted by a public entity within MEPRD's jurisdiction, or any shared-use path/trail segment with an existing or planned connection to the regional trail system.
  - Local Trail Connection: Typically, shorter trail segments that, upon completion, provide accessible connections between residential areas and/or key community destinations (e.g., public parks, schools, transit, businesses).
  - Dedicated Regional Trail Facility: The development of a new standalone restroom facility and/or parking facility (along with related amenities) which will be located adjacent and connected to an existing regional trail segment, or a regional trail segment that has broken ground, or one that will be built in unison with the dedicated regional trail facility. The primary use of the facility must be purposefully and exclusively designed to enhance the overall experience of regional trail segment users. Parking and restroom facilities built within parks, transit facilities, etc., even if adjacent and connected to a regional trail segment, are not defined as dedicated regional trail facilities.
- \* **Important Note:** Any proposed non-motorized, shared-use path segment intended for incorporation into the regional trail network, even if located entirely within a public park, must be at least 10' wide, hard-surfaced, striped, and adhere to AASHTO design guidelines to be eligible for MEPRD funding.

\*\* Continue to Next Page \*\*

**SECTION 8. APPLICATION CHECKLIST**

A complete application should contain all the following required components, in this order:

<p>FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Application Form</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Two (2) signed, original hardcopies required.</li> <li>* One (1) electronic copy required.</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment A — Detailed Written Project Scope</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment B — Estimates/Bids</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment C — Site Development Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* Please refer to “Section VI. Supporting Documents/Attachments” on page 20 for a detailed description of each required Attachment.</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment D — Project Schedule</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment E — General Maintenance Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* All required components/attachments must be included in each copy of the application.</li> </ul>
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment F — Resolution / Letter</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment G — Other Grants/Donations</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Attachment H — Future Plans</p>	
<p><input type="checkbox"/> Certification Statement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>* An original, signed copy must be included in both hardcopy applications.</li> </ul>

**Grant Application Submittal Instructions**

**Submit two (2) original hard copies** of the completed FY 2026 Park and Trail Grant Application and all attachments to MEPRD by mailing or dropping off to the following address:

Metro East Park and Recreation District  
*Attn: Grant Coordinator*  
 104 United Drive  
 Collinsville, IL 62234

**Submit one (1) electronic copy** of the completed application (and all required attachments) to MEPRD. Applicants are welcome to submit a flash drive or CD alongside the hardcopy application or may submit the electronic copy via email to [info@meprd.org](mailto:info@meprd.org).

**As a reminder, no applications will be accepted before 7:30 a.m. on Wednesday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2025.**

For grant support/questions, contact MEPRD Grant Coordinator Cole Preston at (618) 346-4905 or by email, at [cpreston@meprd.org](mailto:cpreston@meprd.org).

*\*\* Continue to Application Form on Next Page \*\**

SECTION 9. APPLICATION FORM

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Please fill out this form in its entirety. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. Applications must be typed.

**Project Sponsor Information**

- 1. Project Sponsor: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(list only one entity)*
  
- 2. Project Sponsor Address:  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 3. Project Sponsor FEIN: \_\_\_\_\_

**Project Contact Information**

Tell us about the Project Contact (P.C.), or project manager, assigned to the project. This person will be required to complete status reports on a quarterly basis and will need to know detailed information about the project.

- 4. P.C. Name: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 5. P.C. Title: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 6. P.C. Mailing Address:  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 7. P.C. Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ P.C. Cell: \_\_\_\_\_
  
- 8. P.C. Email: \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Details and Related Information

9. Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_
10. Project Site Address/Location:  
Street Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City, State, Zip: \_\_\_\_\_
11. Is the proposed project identified in a municipal, county, regional, state trail, or recreation plan or MEPRD's Long Range Development Plan?  
 Yes | Which Plan? \_\_\_\_\_  
 No
12. Will the Project Sponsor own/control and maintain the completed project?  
 Yes (Required)  
 No
13. Is the project site protected in perpetuity for public recreation?  
 Yes  
 No | How many years is the site protected? (*must be ≥ 20 years*) \_\_\_\_\_ years
14. Project Type: Select the project type(s) that best depicts the primary scope of your project.  
(*Check all that apply*)  
 Acquisition  
 Improvement  
 Development
15. Project Site/Location: Select the location/facility type that best depicts your project.  
 Park  Recreation Center  
 Trail  Pool/Splash Pad  
 Trailhead
16. If "trail" was selected above, please respond to the following questions. Otherwise, you may skip to the next question on Line 17.  
What Trail Surface Material will be used: \_\_\_\_\_  
Width of Trail (≥10' required for paved bike trails\*): \_\_\_\_\_ feet Length of Trail: \_\_\_\_\_ miles  
*\*Lesser widths may be considered sidewalks and become ineligible for reimbursement*
17. Grant Request Type: See definitions at end of packet.  
 Non-Contingent Request (skip to Line 18)  
 Contingent Request (must thoroughly document Contingent Grant in Attachment G)

Name of Contingent Grant or Appropriation: \_\_\_\_\_

Contingent Grant was published on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contingent Grant is expected to be awarded on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Grant award results must be provided to MEPRD within 90 days of notification to complete the award process and receive notice to proceed.*

Contingent Appropriation was requested on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

Contingent Appropriation is expected to be awarded on this date: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*Appropriation results must be provided to MEPRD within 90 days of notification to complete the award process and receive notice to proceed.*

18. Estimated Project Completion Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
(Month and Year Required)

**Project Budget and Breakdown of Eligible Costs**

19. Total Estimated Project Cost: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

20. Requested MEPRD Grant: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ which is \_\_\_\_\_ % of line 19.  
(must be less than or equal to 40% of the total project cost listed on line 19)

21. Combined Total of Estimated Cost Sharing and Other Grants:  
(must be greater than or equal to 60% of the total project cost listed on line 19)

A. Monetary Contribution by Project Sponsor (excluding funding by others) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

B. Value of Force Account Labor by Project Sponsor \$ \_\_\_\_\_

C. Non-Public Grant(s), Funds, and/or Monetary Donation(s) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

D. Total of all Federal, State, or Local Government Grants (excluding MEPRD) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

E. Local Public Grants/Funds (e.g., PEP, St. Clair County Parks Grant) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

F. **Cost Share Subtotal** (A + B + C + D + E) which is \_\_\_\_\_ % of Line 19. \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
*\* Line 20 + Line 21F should equal Line 19 if filled out correctly.*

\*\* Section Continued on Next Page \*\*

22. General Expense Categories:

<u>Category</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Estimated Total</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Acquisition Costs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ %
A/E Fees ( <i>NTE ≤15% of Eligible Project Total</i> ):	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ %
• Phase 1 - Preliminary Design/Engineering:		\$ _____	
• Phase 2 - Construction Engineering:		\$ _____	
Development Costs:	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ %
Contingency ( <i>NTE ≤10% of Eligible Development Costs</i> ):	<input type="checkbox"/>	\$ _____	_____ %
<b>Total Estimated Project Cost</b> ( <i>should equal line 19</i> ):		<b>\$ _____</b>	<b>100 %</b>

23. Itemized Development / Acquisition Data:

Using the space provided below, list the individual components or parts of your project, along with the quantity (if applicable) and estimated cost for each.

If any of these components classify as “support items” as defined and identified on Page 10 of this application (i.e., the eligible project components marked with a red asterisk), please check the ‘support’ box located beside it. Continue on a separate sheet of paper, if needed.

<u>Item Name</u>	<u>Support</u>	<u>Quantity/Unit</u>	<u>Estimated Cost</u>
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	_____	\$ _____

Total cost of all *non-support items* listed above: \$ \_\_\_\_\_ %

Total cost of *support items* listed above (*must be ≤ 50% of line 19*): \$ \_\_\_\_\_ %

**Total Estimated Project Cost** (*should equal line 19*): **\$ \_\_\_\_\_ 100 %**

**Discussion**

24. Indicate to what degree the project will meet the needs of people with disabilities:

25. Describe the need/demand for the project and its impact to the community and/or the region.  
*\* Please note that the project scope should be included in Attachment A, not repeated here.*

## Supporting Documents/Attachments

Attach the following supporting documents to your application in the order specified below. If any attachment(s) do not apply to your grant request, please include a statement explaining so rather than excluding the attachment.

Attachment A **Detailed Written Project Scope.** This should be a written narrative (i.e., not cut sheets) describing the project, including details to answer “what”, “where”, “how many”, etc. The detail and components listed/described in this section should coincide with what is illustrated in Attachment C.

Attachment B **Copies of Land Appraisals, Engineer Estimates, Bids, Quotes, Cut Sheets, or Vendor Sheets** to support the estimated project costs identified in the application. Note that the attachment(s) must be sufficiently detailed (i.e., itemized).

Attachment C **Detailed Site Development Plan.** This should be a visual of the project identifying the exact location of every major project component. This could be in the form of a detailed CAD drawing, a detailed conceptual drawing, or detailed aerial photography with labels.

Attachment D **Construction/Acquisition Schedule.** Provide a copy of the project’s current construction and/or acquisition schedule, to include the estimated completion date.  
*\* Estimated completion date should match the date entered on Line #18*

Attachment E **General Operation Plan.** Describe the plan for maintenance\* and operation of the project, including general schedule, funding sources, and other relevant details.  
*\* If a project scope includes installation of loose-fill playground surfaces—e.g., engineered wood fiber, rubber—the General Operation Plan must acknowledge a plan for regular maintenance of the surface materials to ensure it meets ADA standards.*

Attachment F **Resolution or Letter\* from the Applicant** indicating support for the project and corresponding application to MEPRD, dated no more than six (6) months prior to the submittal of this application.  
*\* Support letter must be on official letterhead of the Applicant, bearing a signature by the Mayor, Board President, or Chief Executive of the organization or department.*

Attachment G **Documentation of Other Grants, Donations.** Provide a description of all grants and cash donations contained in Lines 21(c) and 21(d). Include grant/donor name(s), a copy of the public grant announcement, funding award date, funding expiration date, and a copy of the award letter, if applicable. Certain restrictions apply; read funding and eligibility requirements carefully.

Attachment H **Description of Future Plans.** Describe any future plans for bike/ped trails, parks, or recreation facilities for your community or jurisdiction. Plans can be hardcopy or electronic (e.g., email, CD, or flash drive). If available, KML or GIS files would also be appreciated. If you have submitted this information to MEPRD within the past three years and no updates or changes have been made, a statement explaining this will suffice.

**Certification Statement**

In WITNESS WHEREOF, the undersigned parties have caused this grant application to be executed by their duly designated and authorized representatives.

I do hereby certify that I have the legal authority to represent the Project Sponsor and submit this grant application on behalf of the Project Sponsor (i.e., "Grantee") and that the information presented in this grant application and the referenced attachments are true and correct, that the Project Sponsor will be the direct contractual party for all project work and long-term maintenance, and is solely responsible for the direct payment of all associated costs prior to any reimbursement from MEPRD or other sources. I do further certify that the project will be completed in accordance with the provisions set forth in this grant application and the MEPRD project agreement and that the Grantee has the financial resources to initially fund one hundred percent (100%) of the proposed project costs (or will have if this is a contingent award).

It is understood that the project must be completed within the timeframe established in this application and the project agreement, and the reimbursement request must be submitted within ninety (90) days of project completion, unless extenuating circumstances prevent it and are discussed with and approved by MEPRD. Failure to do so will result in the Project Sponsor forfeiting all project reimbursements and relieving MEPRD from further payment obligations on the grant.

I also certify that only the project components and items listed in this application and subsequently approved by MEPRD constitute the eligible project scope for grant reimbursement. I acknowledge that costs associated with any components or item falling outside this MEPRD-approved scope are ineligible for reimbursement in accordance with FY26 program guidelines.

*\* Signee must be Mayor, Board President, or Chief Executive of organization or department.*

**Name of Grantee:** \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature\* and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(date)*

Attested By: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(date)*

**Name of Grantor:** Metro East Park and Recreation District \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: Bryan Werner \_\_\_\_\_

Print Title: MEPRD Executive Director \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(date)*

Attested By: Cole Preston, MEPRD Grant Coordinator \_\_\_\_\_

Signature and Date: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(date)*