



## Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program Guidelines

### Introduced: February 2025

## Introduction

### Program Background

The Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program connects New York's school age children with nature, outdoor recreation, and history by reimbursing eligible costs for field trips to eligible locations. This is a reimbursement grant program funded through the Environmental Protection Fund and administered by The New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP) since 2016. In Fiscal Year 2025, \$3 million was appropriated to Connect Kids.

### Purpose of Funding

The Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program connects New York's school age children (pre-K through grade 12) with nature, outdoor recreation, and history by reimbursing qualifying transportation costs incurred by eligible entities for travel to eligible field trip locations in New York State. For the purpose of these guidelines, the terms "qualifying transportation costs" and "eligible costs" have the same meaning.

Eligible field trip locations for this program are facilities in New York State that are operated by New York State agencies as described herein or by the National Park Service. Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis in the order they are received, while funding is available.

## Eligibility

### Eligible Applicants

To be eligible to apply for a Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant

**Applicant must be:**

- a public school (including public charter school), BOCES, non-public school (including non-public charter school), municipality, public library, or a not-for-profit organization that serves underserved, environmental justice, and/or inner-city communities in New York State, and
- physically located within a New York State school district that receives Title I funds

### Ineligible entities include:

- any entity that does not meet the eligibility criteria for Applicants
- for profit entities
- Federal or State agencies
- Individual persons

**Note: you must answer all required application questions to be considered for this funding opportunity.**

	➤ Lodging, including camping and cabin reservations
	➤ Equipment purchases, pavilion rentals and/or fees
	➤ Cost of emergency and/or first aid support
	➤ Food
	➤ Any costs not described on the submitted Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant application, even if it would otherwise be eligible

### Eligible Trip Locations

Eligible field trip locations in New York State include:

- Public lands and historic sites owned by State agencies (that may be operated by a partner)
  - [OPRHP](#) facilities including but not limited to state parks, historic sites, nature centers, and marinas
  - [Department of Environmental Conservation](#) facilities including but not limited to day use areas, education centers, recreation areas, fish hatcheries
  - [New York Power Authority](#) recreation areas
  - [Canal Corporation](#) recreation sites at Canal Locks
  - [Olympic Regional Development Authority](#) venues
    - [Whiteface Mountain](#)
    - [Olympic Center](#)
    - [Olympic Museum](#)
    - [Olympic Jumping Complex](#)
    - [Mt Van Hoevenberg](#)
    - [Gore Mountain](#)
    - [Belleayre Mountain](#)
  - State-owned waterbodies, even if the access point is in a non-eligible location.
    - [National Park Service](#) facilities including parks, historic sites, and monuments in New York State
  - Please see appendix document '[Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program- Potential Destinations](#)' for more information.

### Application Process

#### The Statewide Financial System (SFS)

Effective January 16, 2024, all not-for-profit organizations seeking State grants, including the Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant, must prequalify in SFS, unless explicitly exempted by the Division of the Budget (DOB), by submitting a Prequalification Application. Not-for-profit

- Applicants should be aware that transportation companies and eligible field trip destinations may have their own governing policies and rules that are separate from and additional to these grant program guidelines.
- Applications will be reviewed on a rolling basis in the order they are received, while funding is available.

**You must answer all application questions to be considered for this funding opportunity.**

Please be prepared to answer the application questions below:

**Applicant Information**

- Title I status of the school district wherein the applicant is physically located.
- Applicant Name and physical address.
- NYS Vendor ID Number (VIDN).
- Applicant Chief Financial Officer name and email.
- Applicant's authorized representative and contact information.

**Field Trip Information**

- Number of school age children to attend the field trip.
- Class Grade
- Name and address of eligible field trip location.
  - Including the site's URL
  - Point of contact staff member at the field trip location (name, email, phone number)
- Field Trip Date(s), if applicable, provide total number of days for transportation to and/or from field trip location (i.e., round trip).
- Fees charged by OPRHP for entry and/or tours at OPRHP sites.

**Transportation Information**

- Starting location physical address.
- Destination (eligible field trip location) physical address.
- Round trip mileage between departure location and eligible field trip location.
- Whether the carrier of passengers by motor vehicle is owned by Applicant or retained by contract or charter
- Mode of carrier of passengers by motor vehicle to be used, i.e., public school bus, private/charter, multi-passenger van.
- Cost estimate(s) for mode of transportation to be used. *See section below "How to Estimate Costs in the Application"* for details about when written cost estimates are required.
- Whether the transportation company includes staffing (e.g., driver), fuel, and toll costs in the price for services.
- Estimated costs for vehicle use fees and/or parking.

**payment within ninety (90) days after the last day of eligible travel to avoid forfeiture of the grant award.** Reimbursement of eligible expenses only occurs after proof of payment and the Reimbursement Request Form are submitted via email to [parksbustrant@parks.ny.gov](mailto:parksbustrant@parks.ny.gov).

OPRHP shall reimburse the Applicant for the actual cost of eligible expenses up to the maximum value for reimbursement amount stated in the grant notification letter/email. For example, if the Applicant was notified in the award letter/email that a maximum value for reimbursement was \$5,000, but the actual cost of eligible expenses as evidenced by submitted receipts and paid invoices was \$4,000, OPRHP shall reimburse the Applicant in the amount of \$4,000.

The reimbursement will be transferred electronically to the Applicant's account via their approved NYS VIDN. OPRHP does not send paper checks. Reimbursement payments cannot be divided and sent as partial payments to multiple NYS VIDNs; there are no split payments. Reimbursement for expenses for a grant occurs one time; after reimbursement is processed, the associated grant is considered closed.

Information required to complete the Reimbursement Request Form:

- The maximum value for reimbursement indicated on grant approval letter
- Date on approval letter
- Applicant Name
- NYS VIDN
- Application ID # indicated on approval letter
- Field Trip Date
- Destination Name

Additional documents required to process reimbursement include:

- Valid proof of payment for eligible costs incurred by the Applicant, including but not limited to paid invoices, dated receipts, cancelled checks, wire transfers. In the case of wire transfer, a screenshot of the transfer can be submitted and must include: "To" (name and account number), "From" (name and account number), date, and amount.
- Three (3) "Request for Quote" forms from different transportation companies if the Applicant is not using their own or previously contracted transportation resources.

Applicants should retain original receipts and/or paid invoices for all eligible expenses.

The Applicant's authorized representative shall certify the validity, truth, and accuracy of all submitted documents and details of the eligible travel.

## **General Terms and Conditions**

The Applicant and its field trip participants shall comply with the Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program Guidelines including the general terms and conditions below:

- Failure to comply with these program guidelines may result in the denial of an application, full or partial withholding of the reimbursement, and other legal penalties or consequences.



## 2025 Connect Kids to Parks Field Trip Grant Program Updates

Please read the new program guidelines carefully, as many things have changed:

[ParksFieldTripGrantProgramGuidelines.pdf](#)

### Major guidelines changes to be aware of include:

- This grant program reimburses qualifying transportation costs incurred by eligible entities for travel to eligible field trip locations. Unfortunately, many programming fees are no longer considered eligible costs (this includes: camping and cabin reservations, equipment and pavilion rentals or fees.) Only tour/entry fees listed in the [Eligible Fees List \(February 2025\) resource document](#) qualify for reimbursement.
- Applications must be submitted six (6) weeks before the field trip is planned to occur, and no earlier than six (6) months prior to the field trip.
  - **However, applications received before April 11, 2025 may be submitted four (4) weeks before the field trip is planned to occur. After April 11, 2025, applications must be submitted six (6) weeks prior to the date of the field trip.**
- Maximum value for reimbursement is **no longer based on cost per child**, but the applicants' estimated transportation cost breakdown provided in the application (ie. # of vehicles, mileage, fuel, etc.) For guidance on this process, please refer to this resource [EstimatingTransportationCosts.pdf](#)
- If an Applicant seeks to newly retain a transportation company exclusively for the field trip, the Applicant must submit **three (3) written price estimates** (i.e., price quotes) for the service, in the application. For guidance, please refer to this resource [GrantProgramRequestforQuote.pdf](#)
- Reimbursement requests must be submitted within **ninety (90) days after the last day of eligible travel to avoid forfeiture of the grant award.**

Additional Resources: Visit the Connect Kids webpage for resources to help you through the application process. The appendix documents will also provide valuable assistance.

[Connect Kids - NYS Parks, Recreation & Historic Preservation](#)