

# Bring Youth Outdoors

Grant Opportunity for Municipalities in Southwestern Pennsylvania

**Application Deadline: August 3, 2015 at 9 a.m.**

The Heinz Endowments Summer 2015 Youth Philanthropy Internship Program  
In Partnership with Sustainable Pittsburgh and the Local Government Academy

## **Introduction**

The Kaiser Family Foundation reports that children spend more than seven hours a day using entertainment media. With a nationwide obesity rate that has more than doubled in the past 30 years, youth are choosing screen time over being active outdoors. Research shows spending more time outside promotes creativity, encourages positive behavior and increases concentration in youth.

Connecting youth volunteers with opportunities to improve their community will sustain values of healthy living, giving back and developing leadership. The volunteers will also build skills in stewardship and gain knowledge of local biodiversity and natural resources. Additionally, creating a positive outdoor experience will allow youth to enjoy and appreciate spending time outside.

## **Funding Opportunity**

The Heinz Endowments Summer Youth Philanthropy Internship Program, in collaboration with Sustainable Pittsburgh and Local Government Academy, aims to fund youth involvement and community engagement through the ongoing stewardship of underutilized public green space such as community parks and gardens.

The youth volunteers will serve as stewards while receiving positive incentives such as educational workshops, recreational activities or possibly a stipend. The stewardship of the green space should consist of environmentally friendly practices such as increasing native plants, eliminating invasive species or creating wildlife habitats. Furthermore, the project should involve volunteers beyond the grant period. This grant provides an opportunity for youth to better utilize an existing green space while spending valuable time outdoors.

The Heinz Endowments Summer Youth Philanthropy interns, in partnership with Sustainable Pittsburgh and Local Government Academy, invite local municipalities to apply for this funding opportunity. A total of \$25,000 in grant funding is available to municipalities that aim to meet our project goals.

## **Project Goals**

### **Stewardship**

To engage young people in the stewardship of green space so that they gain appreciation of and a connection to the outdoors.

*Suggested activities:*

- Educate and engage youth in environmentally friendly practices that promote biodiversity and healthy spaces.
- Develop volunteer tasks that could include: weeding, planting flowers, promoting litter control, removing invasive species, adding interpretive signage, promoting habitat improvements, creating rain gardens and butterfly gardens, serving as youth docents, and participating in general upkeep and beautification.

### **Engagement**

To engage community members, particularly youth, in learning and promoting stewardship and use of public green space.

Note: Special attention will be given to proposals that show commitment to ensuring participation of underserved youth.

*Suggested activities:*

- Inform a wide range of people about the initiative to ensure diversity in volunteers as well as in community members who plan to use the green space.
- Develop partnerships between municipalities and local schools or organizations to recruit volunteers. For suggestions about organizations that may be able to partner on this RFP, please contact the interns.
- Provide short-term and long-term incentives for youth volunteers to participate, such as educational workshops, certification of volunteer hours, field trips and stipends.

## **Quality of Life**

To promote the health and well-being of community members through outdoor recreation.

*Suggested activities:*

- Expose community members to the work the volunteers are doing and celebrate the power of volunteering.
- Promote space as a place to exercise, play and meet.
- Provide a welcoming space for all community members.

## **Who May Apply**

Any municipality within the southwestern Pennsylvania 10-county region may apply that is interested in promoting and improving the strategic use of public and recreational space. Applications are favored that include municipal partnerships with community-based organizations such as nonprofit organizations, schools and community centers. However, the proposal must be on behalf of the municipality.

## **Application Prerequisites**

To be eligible to be considered for this grant, municipalities must have earned or be pledged and actively working on the certification through the Sustainable Pennsylvania Community Certification program. This program can be found online at <http://www.sustainablepacommunitycertification.org>.

Municipalities can earn various levels of recognition based on their sustainability-aligned performance. To begin the process of becoming certified or pledging to become certified, the municipality may obtain the initial entry password by calling Court Gould at Sustainable Pittsburgh, (412) 258-6643. Municipalities must be registered to pledge and begin actively working toward the certification or already be certified by the due date of this application.

## **Application Questions**

1. How and why would your municipality best benefit from the grant? Why is this grant important to your municipality specifically?
2. How will the municipality leverage the grant funds?

3. Describe the space to be improved (location, acreage, the space's current use, etc.).
4. If the municipality plans to work in collaboration with other community-based organizations, who are they, and what goals/plans do they have for the initiative? What role will they play?
5. How would the community use the green space?
6. How will the municipality be involved in the stewardship of the space?
7. How will the municipality recruit youth volunteers and continue to recruit beyond the grant period?
8. How will youth volunteers be trained? How will they be supervised?
9. How many volunteers are expected to be in the project? How many hours will these volunteers work over what duration? What is the age range of the volunteers?
10. What kind of recreational and educational incentives will be offered during the initiative? How often will they be given to the youth volunteers?
11. How will results be tracked?
12. Who will be responsible for the project?

Please refer all questions to team members: Emanule Cargile, Anna Fireman, Paige Golden, Marcus McGinniss and Liz Vargo.

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