



NFL GRASSROOTS PROGRAM

A Community Football Fields Program

2007 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Overview

The NFL Youth Football Fund Grassroots Program (the “NFL Grassroots Program”) is a partnership of the National Football League Youth Football Fund (NFL YFF), which provides funding for the Program, and the Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), which provides technical assistance and manages the Program. The goal of the NFL Grassroots Program is to provide non-profit, neighborhood-based organizations with financial and technical assistance to improve the quality, safety, and accessibility of local football fields. The NFL Grassroots Program provides matching grants of up to \$200,000 for capital improvement projects.

In order to be eligible for a grant under the NFL Grassroots Program, projects must be sponsored by non-profit community-based organizations registered as exempt from Federal Income Tax under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501 (c)(3) or middle or high schools. In addition, **all organizations applying for funds must be located specifically and exclusively within NFL Target Markets, listed in Attachment A and serve low to moderate income areas within those markets.**

Strong preference will be given to those proposals that (1) seek to upgrade existing facilities that are in poor condition or otherwise underutilized; (2) demonstrate active use of the fields; (3) attract matching funding that exceeds the minimum required match of 1:1; (4) involve local partnerships with non-profit community partners (i.e. Parks and Recreational Departments, YMCA branches) to promote youth and community programming on the fields; and (5) provide for continuing maintenance and field safety. As noted above, grants are given only for capital expenditures. Applicants may request a maximum of \$200,000 from the NFL Grassroots Program to be used for capital improvements. Please see “Availability of Funding” for stipulations involved with a \$200,000 maximum grant request.

Proposals are due on November 30, 2007. Please read the complete RFP before submitting a proposal.

The NFL Grassroots Program Objectives

Athletic fields can serve as tremendous community assets by offering opportunities for recreation, education, and relaxation that contribute to the local quality of life. The NFL Grassroots Program seeks to redress the shortage of clean, safe, and accessible football fields in low- and moderate-income neighborhoods.

Non-profit neighborhood-based organizations can play a leading role in the improvement of existing or creation of new athletic playing fields. With experience in both real estate development and community building, many of these organizations possess the capacity to address both the capital aspects of playing fields development and the program elements (i.e. youth football leagues, sports tournaments, science fairs, summer festivals, community celebrations, and after-school events). Equally important to this experience, neighborhood-based organizations have connections to their community that legitimize their operations and draw resident support for their work. If local residents have a sense of ownership and see themselves as stakeholders in the creation and maintenance of playing fields, these community assets are more likely to be protected and preserved for long-term use. The NFL Grassroots Program is intended not only to respond to the immediate shortage of playing fields, but also to build an infrastructure through partnerships and resident involvement that will sustain these open spaces for community use.

Availability of Funding

There are two levels of funding available: 1) general field support (e.g. irrigation, bleachers, lights, etc.) and, 2) field surface grants.

General Field Support: applicants may submit requests of up to \$50,000 for capital projects not associated with the actual field surface. This support includes the installation/refurbishment of bleachers, concession stands, lights, irrigation systems, etc.

Field Surface Grants: Matching grants of up to \$200,000 are available to help finance the resurfacing of a community, middle school or high school football field. Matching grants of up to \$200,000 will be available to applicants seeking to install new synthetic sports turf surfaces. The ability of these new surfaces to withstand constant use and require little ongoing maintenance costs makes this an attractive option for communities, schools and youth groups to consider.

A smaller number of matching grants of up to \$100,000 will be available to help finance the resurfacing of a community, middle school or high school football field utilizing natural grass/ sod surfaces. If applicants choose to utilize natural grass/sod surfaces as opposed to the synthetic sports surfaces, a minimum five-year maintenance plan and corresponding financial budget must be provided in order to demonstrate that the applying organization will maintain the field despite projected wear and tear and potential overuse by youth sports participants. Funds from the Program may not be used to maintain field surfaces, as all grant funds must be used for capital expenditures. In addition, please note that favorable consideration will be given to applicants who

demonstrate that they have chosen a synthetic turf sports surface that is appropriate for their needs.

Organizational Eligibility Criteria

To be eligible for the NFL Grassroots Program, organizations applying for grant funds must meet **all** of the criteria listed below:

- Be a community-based organization, middle school or high school serving a neighborhood consisting primarily of low- and moderate-income families and individuals (schools must demonstrate the ability of the community to also utilize the field);
- Have at least one full-time staff person (all-volunteer organizations will not be considered);
- Be in existence for at least three years;
- Have a proven track record in real estate development and/or parks programming;
- 501(c)(3) tax exempt status/school status; and
- Be located in an NFL Target Market (Please see the list of Target Markets in Attachment A).

Selection Criteria

Organizations and their projects will be selected for funding based upon the following criteria:

1. Feasibility of the proposed project. The project budget must be based upon realistic costs, preferably written contractor's estimates.

2. Project readiness. Sources of funding for the entire budget should be identified. Plans for field renovation should take into account the schedule of recreation activities over the course of the year. A project timeline should be specified in the proposal.

3. Impact upon neighborhood and support from the community. Only proposals that locate projects in low- and moderate-income communities will be considered. The proposal should clearly state how the field improvements would benefit the community. It also must clearly detail how many youth and adults make use of the field for football and for other activities. Moreover, the proposal must also include a projected increase in the number of people that will use the facility as a result of the NFL Grassroots Program improvements. Support letters from other neighborhood and partner organizations must be included.

4. Match funding. The NFL Grassroots Program requires a minimum local match of one dollar for every NFL Grassroots Program dollar (1:1). For example, if the proposal requests \$200,000 from the NFL Grassroots Program, it must demonstrate sources and commitments for \$200,000 in local funds. Match funding at a higher ratio will strengthen the proposal.

5. Security of future field maintenance and safety. Proposals must have written commitments of maintenance funding for a minimum of five years and a detailed five-year maintenance plan in order to demonstrate that the applicant will maintain the field despite projected wear and tear and potential overuse by youth sports participants.

6. Capacity of organization and its partners to carry out project. The applicant organization must demonstrate, through its current management team and previous experience, the ability to manage a project of this size and nature.

Other Terms & Definitions:

Capital improvements refer to the physical development of the field and its surrounding amenities. Such projects may include, but are not limited to, new or renovated irrigation systems, topsoil, sod or seeding, lights, bleachers, public address systems, fences, restroom or locker room facilities, goalposts, and scoreboards.

Public agencies (other than public schools) may not apply for grants from the NFL Grassroots Program. However, community-based non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) designation, middle schools and high schools meeting all other organizational criteria, and private schools with 501(c)(3) designation may apply to make improvements on fields owned and managed by public sector entities (i.e. City, Parks and Recreation Departments, etc.). In those cases, the applicant must show evidence that (1) the public entity supports the proposal; (2) the public entity authorizes the applicant to carry out the proposed capital improvements (this authorization must take into account relevant labor/union regulations and liability issues); (3) the public entity demonstrates its financial commitment to field maintenance; and (4) the field is open to and used by the community for organized athletics and other events.

Application Procedures

To apply for funding under the NFL Grassroots Program, please submit an original plus three (3) copies of each of the following:

Cover Sheet: A one-page cover sheet including the following information:

- Name, address, e-mail address, telephone and facsimile numbers of the organization
- Executive director and contact person (if different) for this application
- Brief description of proposed project
- Amount of funding requested

Narrative: In no more than five (5) typed pages, address the following:

Description of the organization: mission, history, and accomplishments, with a focus on capacity to develop the proposed project.

Description of the neighborhood: boundaries of the catchment area, income levels and ethnicity of the population served, condition of housing stock and main

commercial areas, existence and conditions of local parks and open spaces (including community facilities).

Description of the project: location, current condition, plans for site use, progress on this plan (including status on site control, zoning, environmental review, and physical improvements), project budget and match funding; community support for project, and agreements with partner organizations.

Impact of the project and future sustainability: planned or anticipated programming in field space, plans for continued maintenance and safety of field (including long-term maintenance budget and timeline), and how project fits into community plans for neighborhood.

Organizational Attachments: Please attach the following items:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Two most recent audited financial statements (preferably annual statements for 2005 and 2006)
- Most recent IRS 990 form (preferably 2006)
- Current List of organizations' Board of Directors (contact information)

Project Attachments: Please include a copy of the following items:

- Project budget
- Financing commitment letters from match funding sources
- Financial commitment letters and detailed maintenance plan from organizations responsible for field maintenance.
- Landscaping or park design plans
- Environmental reports (if necessary)
- Agreements and budgets for field programming (i.e. youth football)
- Letters of support from field users and other community organizations
- Letter of support from local NFL team.

Please submit three (3) copies of the completed application, including the relevant attachments to Beverly Smith and one (1) copy to Tim Schroeder.

Attn: NFL Grassroots Program
Beverly Smith, Senior Program Director
Local Initiatives Support Corporation
501 Seventh Avenue – 7th Floor
New York, NY 10018

Tim Schroeder
Community Outreach Coordinator
1265 Lombardi Ave.
P.O. Box 10628
Green Bay, WI 54307-0628

Proposals must be received by November 30, 2007. No exceptions.

If you have questions regarding this RFP, please contact Beverly Smith at LISC in New York at (212) 455-9881 or by e-mail at bsmith@lisc.org.