



## RENO COUNTY SPECIAL PARKS & RECREATION FUND POLICY

**Effective Date:**

**Approved by:**

### **1. Purpose**

The Special Parks & Recreation Fund is established to provide financial support for the development, enhancement, and accessibility of parks and recreational opportunities throughout Reno County. This policy serves as a framework for the fair and effective allocation of funds. It ensures that all residents, regardless of location, can enjoy quality recreational spaces, environmental education, and wellness programs. The goal is to foster community health, engagement, and long-term well-being.

### **2. Funding Source & Background**

The Special Parks and Recreation Fund is supported by revenues derived from the Local Alcoholic Liquor Fund, created by Kansas statute [K.S.A. 79-41a04](#). Under this law, revenues from the state's alcoholic liquor tax are allocated to counties, and once received, a portion is credited to a designated special parks and recreation fund. These funds are strictly reserved for parks and recreation purposes, specifically for the purchase, establishment, maintenance, and expansion of park and recreational services, programs, and facilities.

The fund is budgeted annually to support recreational projects for Reno County residents. This policy establishes a clear framework for the appropriate use of these resources, to ensure they deliver meaningful and lasting recreational benefits to the community.

### **3. Objectives**

The County will direct Fund resources to:

- i. Expand equitable access to recreational amenities countywide.
- ii. Support innovative, inclusive, and culturally diverse programs.
- iii. Invest in projects that serve both urban and rural areas.
- iv. Promote environmental stewardship, active lifestyles, and youth engagement.
- v. Ensure timely use of funds to prevent excessive carryover balances.

### **4. Eligible Applicants**

Entities eligible to apply include:

- i. Incorporated cities within Reno County, except the City of Hutchinson, which is not eligible due to its substantial allocation from the State's Alcohol Liquor Fund (e.g., Buhler, Haven, Pretty Prairie, The Highlands).
- ii. Nonprofit organizations serving county residents.
- iii. Public and private schools, and school districts.
- iv. Community centers and youth-focused groups (e.g., 4-H, YMCA).
- v. Kansas Department of Wildlife & Parks (for eligible local partnerships).
- vi. Nature, cultural, and recreation-focused organizations (e.g., Dillon Nature Center, Hutch Rec).

## **5. Eligible Projects & Expenses**

Projects eligible for funding may include:

- i. Playground equipment and safety upgrades (ADA-compliant).
- ii. Park shelters, picnic facilities, and restroom installations or upgrades.
- iii. Nature trail development, resurfacing, or signage.
- iv. Sports field renovation, lighting, or equipment purchases.
- v. Youth, senior, and adaptive wellness programming.
- vi. Mobile/pop-up recreation services in underserved areas.
- vii. Community gardens or outdoor classrooms.
- viii. Public event infrastructure (e.g., pavilions, stages).

## **6. Ineligible Uses**

Funds may not be used for:

- i. Salaries or wages unrelated to approved recreational programming.
- ii. Routine operational or maintenance costs that are not linked to a funded project (e.g., general utility bills, regular landscaping, routine cleaning).
- iii. Projects that are located outside Reno County.
- iv. Political, religious, or for-profit activities.

## **7. Funding Process**

### **A. Application Cycle**

- i. Annual application period: January 1 – February 28.
- ii. Awards announced by March 31.
- iii. Projects must begin within six (6) months of award date.

### **B. Review & Selection**

Applications will be reviewed by a Special Parks Fund Review Committee composed of county staff, municipal representatives, and community members. Evaluation will be based on:

- i. Anticipated community impact.
- ii. Project feasibility and readiness to proceed.
- iii. Geographic distribution and equity.
- iv. Inclusivity and accessibility for all residents.
- v. Long-term sustainability and maintenance plan.

### **C. Disbursement & Monitoring**

- i. Funds will be released in phases tied to project milestones.
- ii. Recipients must submit progress updates to continue receiving funds.

### **D. Grant Limitations**

Recipients may not receive a grant if they have previously been awarded a grant through this program and have not successfully completed the funded project, including all required reporting and documentation.

### **E. Maximum Grant Amount**

A fixed maximum grant amount cannot be determined in advance, as available funding is contingent upon the amount Reno County receives from the State under the Local Alcoholic Liquor Fund allocation each year. Awards will be proportionate to available funds and the scale of the proposed project.

## **8. Priority Considerations**

Funding preference will be given to:

- i. Projects in smaller municipalities or unincorporated areas (e.g., Yoder, The Highlands).
- ii. Initiatives that improve access for underserved or special-needs populations.
- iii. Collaborative projects between municipalities and nonprofits/community groups.
- iv. Projects enhancing public access to Sand Hills State Park, Cheney State Park, or Quivira National Wildlife Refuge.

- v. Initiatives aligned with county or municipal recreation/master plans.

## **9. Oversight, Reporting & Accountability**

All funded entities must submit:

- i. A midpoint progress report detailing expenditures, work completed, and any adjustments to the project scope.
- ii. A final project and financial report within 60 days of completion. Submission of this report is required before the entity may be considered for any future grants.
- iii. Supporting documentation such as photos, attendance counts, and testimonials when applicable.

County staff will prepare an annual public report summarizing:

- i. Expenditures by project and location.
- ii. Remaining balances.
- iii. Overall community impact and outcomes.

## **10. Policy Review & Updates**

This policy will be reviewed every three (3) years by the Reno County Administrator's Office to ensure effectiveness, update funding priorities, and confirm alignment with community needs.

## **11. Effective Implementation**

Upon adoption, Reno County will:

- i. Publicize the fund and application process through the County website, social media, and outreach to municipalities and eligible organizations.
- ii. Provide application guidance materials and technical assistance to potential applicants.
- iii. Maintain transparent public records of awards and expenditures.