

TOYOTA

2022 Driving Mobility and Accessibility on Public Lands Grant

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With support from Toyota Motor North America, the National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF) is pleased to announce \$300,000 in grant funding to make public lands more accessible and enjoyable for Americans of all abilities.

BACKGROUND

When the system of public lands in the United States was first created, its mission was to “preserve unimpaired the natural and cultural resources and beauty...for the enjoyment, education, and inspiration of this and future generations.” Today, land management agencies are tasked with the ongoing challenge of preserving ecologically and historically important sites—while making sure that they remain accessible to all segments of the population, including people with disabilities (From NEEF’s Public Land Engagement Guide: <https://www.neefusa.org/conservation/public-lands-engagement/activity-guides/focus-on-accessibility-guide>).

According to the Centers for Disease Control (<https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/infographic-disability-impacts-all.html>), 61 million Americans are living with a disability and 26% of adults in the US have some type of disability. The National Park Service conservatively estimates that a minimum of 28 million visitors with disabilities from all over the world visit national parks annually. Making sure that everyone truly has access to our shared public lands and waters is an ongoing challenge, supported by activists, outdoors organizations, and land management agencies themselves. NEEF, among other organizations, is committed to making the environment more accessible, relatable, relevant, and connected to people’s daily lives.

OVERVIEW

With a funding contribution from Toyota in connection with the launch of the RAV4 Hybrid Woodland Edition, NEEF is seeking projects that will help make public lands more accessible and enjoyable for Americans of all abilities together with their families and friends. Through the *2022 Driving Mobility and Accessibility on Public Lands* grant, NEEF aims to:

- Increase the capacity of local organizations to address mobility and accessibility considerations on public lands and waterways; and
- Improve the level of access, comfort, and enjoyment experienced by public lands visitors of all abilities together with their families and friends.

Eligibility

- Open to nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, state or federal government agencies, and federally recognized tribes and local governments.
 - Nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations must provide a partnership letter from the public land site.
- Projects must take place in one of the following 14 states to be eligible for the grant:
 - Alabama; Arizona; California; Georgia; Indiana; Kentucky; Michigan; Mississippi; Missouri; Nevada; North Carolina; Tennessee; Texas; West Virginia.
- Must have been in existence for at least two (2) years.
- Private, for-profit firms and individuals **are not eligible** to apply.
- Grant funding **may not be used** to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- Must meet the funding criteria (see below).

Award Timeline

- Application open: June 6, 2022
- Application deadline: July 8, 2022
- Awards made: September 2022
- Period of performance: October 2022 - October 2023
- Reporting deadlines:
 - Interim Report – April 2023
 - Final Report - November 2023

Application Criteria

- Applicants can request up to \$20,000 for mobility and accessibility projects that will be completed in 12 months.
- Describe how requested funds will support projects that address mobility and accessibility on public lands*, including:
 - Assessment of physical space accessibility barriers and/or barriers to access accessibility information (on-site or digital);
 - Physical improvement projects that remove accessibility barriers;
 - Improvements to accessibility information provided on-site or through websites; and
 - Design or implementation of assistive technology that will enhance mobility and accessibility on the public lands site, for example the Action Track Chair (all terrain hiking mobility device) or the EZ Launch (a universally accessible kayak launch).
- Describe how people with disabilities will be included in project planning.

- Applicants should use Inclusive Universal Design (definition below) in design and implementation of accessibility improvements and describe how the project goes above and beyond the minimum design guidelines of the Americans with Disabilities Act.
- Provide a detailed timeline of when programming/activities will take place during the grant year.
- Provide a detailed list of the project team including partners and accessibility experts/advocates who will be responsible for implementing grant activities.
 - *Optional: provide a Project Team Letter(s) of Support from those listed under the project team section of the application who will be responsible for implementing grant activities. Letter should include the nature, structure, history, and/or current activities of your partnership, as well as accessibility knowledge and expertise the team member/organization will be providing to the project.*
- Provide a plan for how the project will be marketed to the community and specifically to individuals with disabilities, as well as service and advocacy organizations that serve people with disabilities (for example, through outreach or an event).
- Provide a plan for how activities/improvements will be maintained/sustained after the grant period has ended.

NOTE: Applicants will need to review and approve a disclaimer in the application related to in-person volunteer activities.

Public lands are any federal, state, local, county or regional land or waterway held in the public trust. Examples of public lands can include (but are not limited to) national forests, national parks and monuments, national wildlife refuges, and state/local lands that are accessible to the public, such as state parks and forests, community gardens, and urban green spaces. For this grant, NEEF's public land work is focused on lands that are **owned by the public and/or supported by tax dollars, not just open for public use.*

EXPECTATIONS IF FUNDED

If selected, grantees must be able to collect and report on relevant key performance indicators (KPIs), including:

- Acres of land impacted by the project
- Miles of Trails Enhanced or Restored
- Miles of Waterways Enhanced or Restored
- Number of accessibility enhancements (sidewalks, ramps, boat launches, etc.)
- Number of accessibility programs created
- Number of participant events hosted
- Number of participants engaged

Final Report Questions

- What benefit did this project give to the community and specifically to individuals with disabilities and their families
- How were people with disabilities included in the project planning? Who were the key partners involved in the project?
- Why was this project important? What was the specific 'need' that this project addressed?

DEFINITIONS

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

The Americans with Disabilities Act or ADA is a civil rights law that prohibits discrimination based on disability. It affords similar protections against discrimination to Americans with disabilities as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, which made discrimination based on race, religion, sex, national origin, and other characteristics illegal. In addition, unlike the Civil Rights Act, the ADA also requires covered employers to provide reasonable accommodations to employees with disabilities and imposes accessibility requirements on public accommodations. Anyone who has pushed a stroller or pulled a suitcase has benefited from the ramps required by the ADA. Learn more about the ADA and find additional resources at [ADA.gov](https://www.ada.gov).

Inclusive Universal Design

In addition to the legal requirements (ADA compliance), public lands sites of all types and sizes can embrace and incorporate accessible and inclusive universal design principles when developing facilities and programs.

The most common definition of universal design comes from Ron Mace (1985): "The design of products and environments to be usable by all people, to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaptation or specialized design." The focus is on design that allows for human diversity, social inclusion, and equality for all who might come to the public land. This takes some dialogue with individuals of varying abilities to be sure that designs meet the needs of all who would use the park, its facilities, and programs. Universally designed sites and facilities that are accessible and inclusive provide equal opportunity not only for persons with disabilities, but also a parent pushing a stroller, a child using crutches, or a person who has arthritis. Inclusive universal designs makes our public lands accessible to people of all abilities together with family and friends!

Digital Information

Public lands agencies and non-profits that are responsible for managing public lands should ensure that online and print content is reviewed for accessibility—the same way that trails, sidewalks, and ramps are reviewed. This review should look at things like including alternative

text, captions, transcripts, and color contrasts that work for everyone. Using these components can help make content accessible to people with a wide range of abilities, disabilities, ethnic backgrounds, language skills, and learning styles.

Poorly designed websites and printed materials can create unnecessary barriers for people with disabilities, just as poorly designed buildings prevent some people with disabilities from entering. Access problems often occur because website designers mistakenly assume that everyone sees and accesses a webpage in the same way. This oversight can frustrate assistive technologies and their users. Accessible website design recognizes these differences and does not require people to see, hear, or use a standard mouse to access the information and services provided.

- Resource: <https://www.ada.gov/pcatoolkit/chap5toolkit.htm>

People First Language

People-first language is used to communicate appropriately and respectfully with and about an individual with a disability. People-first language emphasizes the person first, not the disability. For example, when referring to a person with a disability, refer to the person first, by using phrases such as, “a person who ...”, “a person with ...” or, “person who has ...”

- Resource: <https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/disabilityandhealth/materials/factsheets/fs-communicating-with-people.html>

RESOURCES

Inclusive Universally Accessible and ADA Compliant Water Trail Launch Site Features
(https://www.neefusa.org/sites/default/files/assets/grants/2021/REVISED_Inclusive%20Universal%20Access%20ADA%20Launch%20Site%20Features%20Formatted.pdf)

Inclusive Universally Accessible Recreation Design Elements
(https://www.neefusa.org/sites/default/files/assets/grants/2021/REVISED_Inclusive%20Universal%20Accessible%20Recreation%20Design%20Elements%20Formatted.pdf)

Following are examples of public land sites who have executed mobility and accessibility projects:

- Friends of Sleeping Bear Dunes:
<https://friendsofsleepingbear.org/programs/accessibility/> (Assessment, information, assistive technology)
- Watertown Riverfront Park and Braille Trail: <https://nextcity.org/daily/entry/boston-park-braille-trail-multisensory-experience-for-all> (Physical space, assistive technology)

- Crystal Cave: <https://www.neefusa.org/nature/land/breaking-silence-crystal-cave> (Information, assistive technology)
- Accessibility in National Parks: <https://www.nps.gov/subjects/accessibility/plan-your-visit.htm> (Various)

Following are videos of public land sites who have executed mobility and accessibility projects:

- EZ Launch, Universally Accessible Kayak/Canoe Launch: <https://youtu.be/MH401D-FWx0>
- Ocqueoc Falls Universally Accessible Waterfalls: <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=ocqueoc+falls+universally+accessign+michigan&docid=607997825398951473&mid=AED1DE55A24E2824DC20AED1DE55A24E2824DC20&view=detail&FORM=VIRE>
- Inclusive Recreation in Michigan: <https://youtu.be/zGZmKEAnfcs>
- Sleeping Bear Dunes Track Chair program: <https://youtu.be/EVI5YU6Ym1E> and <https://youtu.be/CZeXVP4B3q0>
- Accessible hunting blinds: https://youtu.be/39m0hC2_nGs

Following are organizations serving and/or advocating for people with disabilities:

- US Access Board: <https://www.access-board.gov>
- National Council on Independent Living: <https://ncil.org>
- American Association of People with Disabilities: <https://www.aapd.com>
- National Federation of the Blind: <https://nfb.org>
- National Association of the Deaf: <https://www.nad.org>
- Easter Seals: <https://www.easterseals.com>
- The Arc: <https://thearc.org>
- Span Parent Advocacy Network: <https://spanadvocacy.org>
- Autistic Self Advocacy Network: <https://autisticadvocacy.org>

Questions?

All applications must be submitted through our online system. If you have any questions related to the fund, please consult our FAQ (<https://www.neefusa.org/resource/2022-driving-mobility-and-accessibility-public-lands-grant-faq>)

For all other questions or problems, please contact us at grantsadmin@neefusa.org. **Please avoid calling the main line or the Grants Director if you have a question.**

Apply Now! (<https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=neef>)