

Urban Outdoor Fellow Program

DCNR has been charged with creating new partnerships with recreation providers (both municipal and non-profit) who work in underrepresented, underserved/urban communities, by providing training and support to Program Leaders. Our goal is to improve connections to the Outdoors for children, youth and young adults, through existing, active programming, the expansion of programming opportunities, as well as, the incorporation of varying levels of outdoor experiences that engage local, county and state outdoor facilities and amenities. In conjunction with the creation of these enhanced outdoor connections, we will endeavor to build and develop a much needed stewardship ethic toward the outdoors and local environs in which they live and grow.

The Urban Outdoor Fellow Program is being developed and created as a model program, in the anticipation that we can build upon and expand this program and its benefits to other underrepresented, underserved/urban areas across the Commonwealth. The Urban Outdoor Fellow will help deliver programs, train municipal and non-profit recreation providers, strategically engage and analyze community opportunities and ultimately improve capacity of urban recreation providers. This Program is expected to involve hands-on community outreach and engagement by a trained Environmental Educator and/or Recreational Professional.

Background:

Park and recreation directors across the commonwealth recognize the need to better utilize connections with community groups to attract youth to local facilities and programs. In a recent survey, conducted by Penn State for Pennsylvania's Outdoor Recreation Plan, more than three-quarters of recreation directors indicated their organization offered programs that connect children with nature and recreation. Although DCNR works with public and private partners to create and deliver these programs, socioeconomic and environmental barriers create disparities in access for residents of low-income neighborhoods and some racial and ethnic minority groups, particularly in urban settings. As part of its strategic initiative planning, the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) would like to work with partners to enhance the capacities of local urban recreation departments, nonprofit organizations and other service providers and partners, to deliver programs that address and work to eliminate these equity issues.

Position Summary:

The Urban Outdoor Fellow will work in an urban community for a 24-month time period. The Fellow will be engaged in identifying the specific challenges faced by the local recreation providers in delivering programming to underrepresented/underserved populations. The Fellow will establish stakeholder connections through meetings with appropriate partners, identifying expertise in outdoor programming and opportunities while promoting and encouraging the sharing of resources to facilitate underrepresented, underserved urban children, youth and young adults.

Another aspect of the Fellow's community outreach may include conducting focus groups and/or other avenues to engage with children, youth and young adults to determine their interests, needs and issues related to engaging with the outdoors, participation in existing programs, etc. Based on the results of this information gathering, the Fellow will work with the City and their partners to develop a strategic plan for the community and surrounding county. It is expected that gaps, roles and expansion of services related to the delivery of outdoor recreation programming and engagement will be defined.

The Urban Outdoor Fellow will also be responsible for training internal and external staff members on outdoor programming in a "train-the-trainer" structure. It is expected that there may be times when the Fellow will provide direct programming for children, youth and young adults in the community, but a primary focus will be on trainer-level education.

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What are we looking for in the Urban Outdoor Fellow Position:

1. Must have a minimum of a Bachelor's degree with 3 years' work experience in providing environmental education, conservation and/or outdoor recreation programming and/or other related field
2. Must have experience with community partnership building and engagement
3. Must have experience with speaking in large group settings and facilitating work-groups, focus groups and conducting meetings
4. Must be an effective communicator, both written and orally
5. Must make a two-year contractual commitment
6. Must have knowledge of Microsoft Office products and other computer software
7. Must be a self-motivated and able to work independently with limited supervision
8. Must be engaging, organized and systematic
9. Must have lived or is living in an urban area with knowledge of issues related to outdoor connectivity and issues.
10. English/Spanish bi-lingual abilities are preferred; based on setting

***NOTE: DCNR grant funds will be used to cover the cost of the Urban Outdoor Fellow's two-year salary.**

What will be required from the Community/City- Lancaster Recreation Commission (LRC):

1. **(LRC):** is the Grantee and will work with DCNR throughout this 2 year period
2. **(LRC):** pays the salary from the allocated Grant Funds
3. **(LRC):** commits to paying for the Benefit Package for the Fellow, for two years
4. **(LRC):** provides the Office Space and all related office services & supplies for staff
5. **(LRC):** is willing to engage and work with local, county and regional (municipal and non-profit) recreation providers/partners throughout the life of the Program

As a Pilot Program, receiving DCNR grant funds, DCNR will play an active role in the oversight and management of the Urban Outdoor Fellow.

1. A member of the Bureau of Recreation & Conservation (BRC) Central Office will be assigned Project Management responsibilities and provide grant oversight to the **City- Lancaster Recreation Commission**.
2. Additionally, a (BRC) Central Office staff will be assigned to provide regular oversight and engagement with the **Urban Outdoor Fellow, once hired**. This will include monitoring the advancement of the Program, modifying the job description based on current needs, as deemed prudent, throughout the life of the Program.
3. On-site visits and meetings should be expected, with DCNR, the **City- Lancaster Recreation Commission** and the Fellow. Coordination and communication with all parties will be essential to success.
4. Metrics will be established to measure the success of the Program. And additional information gathering and reporting may be instituted to ensure that we are collecting essential data and information as we develop our Urban Outdoor Fellow Program Model, for future use across the Commonwealth.