



PENNSYLVANIA  
PARK MAINTENANCE  
— INSTITUTE —

**Request for Proposals**  
**Business to Business**  
**Start-up Sales & Marketing Campaign**  
October 22, 2019

**Organization Background**

The Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute is dedicated to building the capacity of park owners and stewards to maintain parks in a safe, clean, and ready-to-use manner. It advances education, advocacy and research for park and recreation maintenance through practical and implementable services.

The Institute operates under the auspices of the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, a nonprofit professional association providing leadership, advocacy, training and resources for those working and volunteering in the park and recreation industry.

The 2018 Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute Project Report includes a business plan to establish the Institute and achieve self-sufficiency within three to five years.

**Pertinent references**

Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute Report and Business Plan

[www.prps.org/ppmi2018](http://www.prps.org/ppmi2018)

Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute Plan Summary Findings, Conclusions, Recommendations

[www.prps.org/ppmisummary](http://www.prps.org/ppmisummary)

Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute one sheet overview

[www.prps.org/ppmioverview](http://www.prps.org/ppmioverview)

**Project Background**

A well-maintained park system is an economic asset—central to the health and vibrancy of a community. Attractive parks are a source of pride; poorly maintained parks are liabilities. Yet park owners and stewards seldom have the resources—people, funds and expertise—to do the job.

Capital for new parks and facilities tends to be available, but funding for maintenance is difficult to develop and secure. The tragic cycle of capital improvements without adequate ongoing maintenance harms community economic development, personal and social wellness, and environmental quality.

For too long, many municipalities have built and improved parks and facilities without commensurate support for adequate upkeep, causing backlogs of deferred maintenance. Over a park's lifetime, maintenance represents 75 percent of the total costs.

A 2018 study by the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation documented the maintenance inventory for Pennsylvania's 121 state parks at more than \$500 million, with another \$500,000 for its 2.2 million acres of state forests. This includes pavilions, playgrounds, buildings, campgrounds, roads and trails, historic preservation, water treatment facilities, bridges, dams and other recreational facilities.

In a 2017 Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society survey, PA park and recreation agencies reported capital rehab and major maintenance needs with a median of \$400K per agency. The assets of many of Pennsylvania's more than 6000 community parks are at risk from inadequate maintenance. Eighty-five percent of park and recreation providers believe maintenance is important or extremely important.

At the local level, park maintenance staff may struggle to complete the most basic tasks of trash removal, mowing, and athletic field maintenance. Municipalities under the Clean Water Act MS4 permitting process have further obligations to maintain parks, as plans rely heavily upon public lands as locations for rain gardens, stream stabilization and other infrastructure that manage stormwater and reduce pollutant loads into streams. The 2015 PA Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) report *Climate Change: Planning for the Future* emphasizes that public parkland is critical to mitigating stormwater runoff, extreme weather events, and adapting to long term trends.

## Institute Outcomes

Housed within the Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society (PRPS), the Institute will be a statewide resource to:

- **Build the capacity of park owners and stewards** to meet their maintenance needs with training and resources for the latest tools, techniques and strategies.
- **Improve the economic and social health of communities** by supporting and promoting safe, clean, and ready-to-use public parks that address the health and wellness of individuals.
- **Improve natural and built environments** and their interconnections with people through expanded and more effective park maintenance, increasing environmental health and sustainability.
- **Protect the major capital investments** in public parks that are at risk of falling into deterioration without sufficient resources for maintenance.
- **Provide technical information** to the right people at the right time to build methods and support necessary to maintain public parks and recreation facilities.
- **Serve as the only "go-to organization"** to which municipalities and community organizations can turn to develop systems, tools and strategies necessary for proper park maintenance.
- **Advocate and facilitate support** for the lifelong care of parks and why park maintenance is an essential public service worthy of investment.
- **Enlist public and private partners** as collaborators in the long-term success, use and value of the Institute to improve the quality of life in our communities.

## Three Year Financial Goals

1. Secure up to \$300,000 in start-up funding. (53% achieved by October 2019).
2. Achieve financial self-sufficiency through subscriptions and training fees.

## Target Audiences

PRPS Members, all 2,562 Pennsylvania municipalities, Public Works Departments, Park and Recreation Departments, state and national park managers, Township Supervisors, Borough and Township Managers, City Managers, civil engineers, urban planners, landscape architects, natural resource and land managers, watershed managers, Home Owner Association property managers, etc.

## **Marketing Challenges**

To our knowledge, an ongoing statewide Institute dedicated to increasing park owners' and stewards' capacities to maintain their parks and public spaces has not been attempted before. With no prior example, the Pennsylvania Park Maintenance Institute is the pioneer. When it succeeds, it will also become the national model.

Overall funding for maintenance is extremely lacking. Municipal capital budgets for maintenance likewise suffer from unmanageable backlogs. The need for maintenance competes with more visible and traditionally higher priorities like fire, police, housing, education, transportation, etc.

Political willpower for long-term solutions is scarce; elected decision makers tend to be more concerned with results that generate favorable media impressions and popular opinion, like ribbon cuttings and new facilities. Maintenance is perhaps the most publicly boring, least attractive responsibility that park stewards must tackle.

Raising public and legislative attention, priority and funding is an advocacy challenge; the development of capacity, community leadership, and technical expertise of the owners, stewards and caretakers is the education challenge.

## **Marketing Support**

As with other business start-ups, staffing must be concerned with all present and future operations at once. Fortunately, the existing PRPS organization and office staff are a built-in support system for the fledgling Maintenance Institute and its Director, as its sole employee. The PRPS departments of professional development, partnership development, and communications are able to assist in most of the Institute's program development.

The Institute is aided by a volunteer Advisory Board of experts in maintenance, finance, technology, collaboration, and business development.

PRPS administers a statewide branding and marketing campaign for parks and recreation called Good for You, Good for All, [www.goodforpa.com](http://www.goodforpa.com) that is able to help promote the Institute and its services.

## **Scope of Work**

This Scope of Work is intentionally expressed very broadly to encourage creativity in creating a sales and marketing campaign to help grow the Institute in its first three years. It includes:

1. Developing a three-year Marketing and Promotion Plan, and assisting in implementing the deliverables of the Plan to sell annual subscriptions, and to promote Institute services, programs, trainings and news.
2. Monthly/as needed phone conference reports, reviews and updates.
3. Annually renegotiable as Institute capacity grows.

## **Budget**

While the budget is flexible, and may allow for more at the start of the campaign than at its conclusion, it is currently set at \$20K per year.

## **Selection Timeline**

Request for Proposals release: October 22, 2019  
Contract Awarded: December 10, 2019

Proposals Due: November 18, 2019  
Project Start: January 1, 2020

## **Proposal Requirements**

1. Company background
2. Project approach and timing
3. Relevant experience and qualifications
4. Scope of Work recommendations
5. Responses to specific questions, if any
6. Project management
7. Pricing

## **Questions**

Questions arising during the proposal period must be directed via email to Tim Herd at [herd@prps.org](mailto:herd@prps.org).

## **Submit to**

Tim Herd, CEO, Pennsylvania Recreation and Park Society, 2131 Sandy Drive, State College, PA 16803  
[herd@prps.org](mailto:herd@prps.org) 814-234-4272 [www.prps.org](http://www.prps.org)

## **General Terms and Conditions**

This is an invitation for proposals only.

PRPS shall not be obligated in any manner to any vendor until a written agreement has been duly executed.

PRPS may reject the lowest proposal, or any and all proposals.

PRPS shall not be liable for any costs of preparation or presentation of proposals.

The proposals, accompanying documentation, samples, etc, submitted by the suppliers automatically become the property of PRPS and will not be returned.

Proposals submitted shall be final and not be altered by subsequent offerings, discussions or commitments unless the vendor is requested to do so by PRPS.

PRPS reserves the right to accept any functional sub-set or super-set of the proposal, and to adjust the price proposal accordingly.

While sub-contracting any phase of the work may be considered, the vendor submitting the proposal must assume full responsibility of the end-to-end process.

A vendor, if any, with whom PRPS chooses to pursue a contractual relationship, shall not make any reference to PRPS in any literature, electronic media, promotional brochures or sales presentations without the express written consent of PRPS.

Any and all verbal discussions and responses are not binding on either party.

PRPS may issue addenda during the proposal period by the designated official. All addenda become part of the RFP documents and must be submitted with the proposal. It is the responsibility of the vendor to establish whether or not PRPS has issued any addenda.

PRPS reserves the right to accept or reject any and all responses at its complete discretion, and to negotiate the terms of any subsequent agreements.

The pricing for services received by the vendor should be valid for 90 days from the date of submission to PRPS.