



**GRASSROOTS**  
Field Grant Program in partnership with LISC

**LISC**  
*Sports & Recreation*

## **NFL FOUNDATION GRASSROOTS PROGRAM**

*A Community Football Fields Program*

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

#### **Overview**

The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program is a partnership of the National Football League Foundation, 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 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 Foundation Grassroots Program provides grants of up to \$250,000 for capital improvement projects.

In order to be eligible for a grant under the 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 (e.g., USA Football, Parks and Recreation Departments, YMCA branches, etc.) to promote youth sports safety and community programming on the fields; (5) provide for continuing maintenance and field safety; and (6) involve youth football programs that are currently registered and compliant with USA Football's Heads Up Football player safety program. As noted above, grants are given only for capital expenditures. Applicants may request a maximum of \$250,000 from the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program to be used for capital improvements. Please see "Availability of Funding" for stipulations involved with a \$250,000 maximum grant request.

**Proposals are due by January 31, 2019.**

**Please read the complete RFP before submitting a proposal.**

**EMAIL SUBMISSIONS TO  
SportsAndRec@lisc.org**

**PLEASE SEND THE PROPOSAL AS A PDF ATTACHMENT AND INCLUDE ALL  
REQUIRED DOCUMENTS AS PER THE RFP.**

**DO NOT SEND THE PROPOSAL IN THE BODY OF THE EMAIL.**

**Please title the attachment with Organization and Project name.**

## **The NFL Foundation 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 Foundation 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 Foundation 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.

In an effort to incorporate and improve health and safety on community football fields, the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program collaborates with USA Football, a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee and the sport's national governing body. USA Football's Heads UP Football program is supported by three of the largest sports medicine organizations in the United States: the American College of Sports Medicine, the American Medical Society for Sports Medicine and the National Athletic Trainers' Association. Nationwide, more than 10,000 high school and youth football programs combined enrolled in Heads UP Football in 2018.

**NFL Foundation Grassroots applicants are strongly encouraged** to reach USA Football's Zane Winger, Coordinator, Service and Experience in Member Experience and Service. You may reach him at 317-489-4435 or [zwinger@usafootball.com](mailto:zwinger@usafootball.com) to establish a relationship, gain information about USA Football and learn which of its programs may best suit your needs.

### **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 \$250,000 are available to help finance the resurfacing of a community, middle school or high school football field. Matching grants of up to \$250,000 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.

### **Organizational Eligibility Criteria**

To be eligible for the NFL Foundation 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. Please note:
  - Schools must demonstrate the ability of the community to also utilize the field;
  - Universities and college campuses are not eligible to apply for NFL Foundation Grassroots grants and will not be considered for funding.
- 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;
- Have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status/school status; and
- Be located in an NFL Target Market (Please see the list of eligible Target Markets in Attachment A).

Additionally, the facility should recommend that all youth organizations require all youth football coaches earn USA Football Coach Certification for tackle or flag.

If an NFL Foundation Grassroots field grant is awarded – for the benefit of its student-athletes and coaches – the youth and high school football organization scheduled to utilize that field should enroll in USA Football’s Heads Up Football program.

### **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 Foundation Grassroots Program improvements. Support letters from other neighborhood and partner organizations and joint use agreements (where applicable) must be included as well as contact information for the youth football organizations and high school football programs scheduled to use the field.

**4. Match funding.** The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program requires a minimum local match of one dollar for every NFL Foundation Grassroots Program dollar (1:1). For example, if the proposal requests \$250,000 from the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, it must demonstrate sources and commitments for at least \$250,000 in local funds, however should demonstrate total funding sources to cover the costs of the entire project. 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. As a reminder, NFL Foundation Grassroots funds may not be used to maintain field surfaces, as all grant funds must be used for capital expenditures.

**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 Foundation 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 (e.g. 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 through joint use agreements.

## **Application Procedures**

To apply for funding under the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, please email a scanned copy 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

***Please note that use of the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program, NFL, NFL Foundation or LISC logos are expressly prohibited.***

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, timeline for completion of the project, community support for project, and agreements with partner organizations.
- *Impact of the project and future sustainability:* planned or anticipated programming in field space including youth and high school football programs, plans for continued maintenance and safety of field (including long-term maintenance budget and timeline), and how project fits into community plans for neighborhood;
- Please indicate how you learned about the NFL Foundation Grassroots Program.

Organizational Attachments: Please attach the following items:

- IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter
- Two most recent audited financial statements (preferably annual statements for 2016 and 2017)
- Most recent IRS 990 form (preferably 2017)
- Current List of organizations' Board of Directors (contact information)
- Current list of youth football league organizations utilizing (or will use) the field including league contact information.
- Current list of other youth sports organizations/activities utilizing the fields
- IRS W-9 Form

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

- Project budget for the renovations/construction of football field
- 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 and joint use agreements from field users and other community organizations
- Contact information for the youth football organizations and high school football programs scheduled to utilize the field

Proposals should be emailed to [SportsandRec@LISC.org](mailto:SportsandRec@LISC.org)

**Proposals are due by January 31, 2019. 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](mailto:bsmith@lisc.org).

<b>NFL Foundation Grassroots Program – Attachment A</b>	
<b>Note: Only organizations located in low-moderate income areas within the following Target Markets are eligible to apply.</b>	
<b>NFL Team</b>	<b>Target Market</b>
Arizona Cardinals	Phoenix, Glendale, Tempe, Flagstaff, Sacaton, Tucson, AZ
Atlanta Falcons	Fulton, Cobb, Gwinnett, Clayton, DeKalb and Hall Counties, GA
Baltimore Ravens	Baltimore, MD
Buffalo Bills	Buffalo, Lackawanna, Niagara Falls, Rochester, Tonawanda, Cheektowaga, Lockport, Alden, Akron, Gowanda, NY
Carolina Panthers	North and South Carolina
Chicago Bears	Chicago, Brookfield, Chicago Heights, Riverdale, Blue Island, North Chicago, Waukegan, Aurora, Peoria, IL
Cincinnati Bengals	Cincinnati, Hamilton County, Montgomery County (Dayton), Clermont, Butler, Warren, OH; Northern Kentucky (Boone County, Campbell County, Kenton County)
Cleveland Browns	Cleveland, Akron, Canton, Garfield Heights, Parma Heights, Toledo, Youngstown, Lorain County, OH
Dallas Cowboys	Dallas, Arlington, Fort Worth, Irving, Frisco, TX
Denver Broncos	Denver, Aurora, Colorado Springs, Commerce City, Pueblo, Fort Collins, Grand Junction, Eastern Plains (Sedgwick, Logan, Phillips, Morgan, Washington, Yuma, Lincoln, Kit Carson, Cheyenne, Kiowa, Crowley, Otero, Bent, Prowers, & Baca counties), CO

Detroit Lions	Detroit, Highland Park, Allen Park, Dearborn, Flint, MI
Houston Texans	Houston, TX
Green Bay Packers	Green Bay, Eau Claire, Lacrosse, Madison, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, Racine, Sheboygan, Menasha, WI
Indianapolis Colts	Indianapolis, IN
Jacksonville Jaguars	Jacksonville; Nassau, Clay, St. John's, Baker, Putnam and Flagler Counties, FL; Camden and Glynn Counties, GA
Kansas City Chiefs	Kansas City, Independence, MO; Kansas City, KS
Los Angeles Chargers	Los Angeles County, CA; Orange County, CA; San Diego, CA
Los Angeles Rams	Los Angeles County, CA San Fernando Valley, CA
Miami Dolphins	Miami- Dade, Broward, Palm Beach, Collier, Lee, Monroe, Martin and Port St. Lucie Counties, FL
Minnesota Vikings	Minneapolis, Duluth, St. Cloud, St. Paul, Rochester, MN
New England Patriots	Boston, Springfield, Foxborough, Attleboro, MA; Nashua, NH; Providence, Central Falls, RI
New Orleans Saints	Acadia, Ascension, Assumption, Avoyelles, Baton Rouge, Bienville, Bossier, Caddo, Caldwell, Claiborne, Grant, Iberia, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafourche, La Salle, Lincoln, Livingston, Madison, Orleans, Ouachita, Plaquemines, Sabine, St. Bernard, St. James, St. Martin, St. Mary, St. Tammany, St. John, St. Charles, Tangipahoa, Terrebonne, Vermillion, Vernon, and Washington Parishes. New Orleans, LA Southern Mississippi
New York Giants	Englewood, Hackensack, Jersey City, Newark, Irvington, Paterson, Hoboken, NJ; Mount Vernon, Yonkers, Peekskill, NY; Bridgeport, Hartford, New Haven, Stamford, CT
New York Jets	Morris County (Dover, Morris Township), NJ; Hempstead, NYC, Roosevelt, Uniondale, NY
Oakland Raiders	Oakland, Alameda, Berkeley, Castro Valley, Hayward, San Leandro, San Lorenzo, Richmond, Union City, Walnut Creek, CA Henderson, Las Vegas, North Las Vegas, NV
Philadelphia Eagles	Philadelphia, PA; Camden, NJ; Wilmington, DE
Pittsburgh Steelers	Pittsburgh and Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Blair County, Butler, Cambria County, Clinton County, Fayette, Green, Indiana, Lawrence, Somerset, Washington, & Westmoreland counties, PA; Fairmont, Weirton, WV
San Francisco 49ers	San Francisco, South San Francisco, East Palo Alto, Pájaro, Salinas, San José, Watsonville, Santa Clara, CA
Seattle Seahawks	Washington State

Tampa Bay Buccaneers	Hernando, Hillsborough, Orange, Osceola, Pinellas, Seminole, Manatee, Polk, Pasco, and Sarasota Counties, FL
Tennessee Titans	Chattanooga, Jackson, Knoxville, Memphis and Davidson, Cheatham, Dickson, Sumner, Rutherford, Williamson, Wilson, Robertson, Cannon, Hickman, Macon, Maury, Smith, and Trousdale counties, TN
Washington Redskins	Washington, DC; Prince George's County, MD; Silver Spring, MD; Richmond, Virginia Beach, Henrico County, VA