



2016 School Play Yard Initiative

Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO), in partnership with Colorado Parks and Wildlife (CPW), is requesting proposals for projects that seek to revitalize school playgrounds and outdoor learning environments across the state with an emphasis on opportunities for nature-based play and learning.

In addition to receiving GOCO funding for infrastructure improvements, schools selected for the 2016 School Play Yard Initiative (SPYI) will also become partner schools in CPW's Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments (SOLE) program. SOLE provides outdoor experiences and teacher training to help students and families connect with nature on-site, and through 4th grade field trips to nearby natural spaces.

GOCO's recently completed strategic planning process once again identified connecting youth with nature as one of Coloradan's greatest concerns. This sentiment was heard in communities across the state: from the plains' rural outposts, through the Front Range's urban centers, and up through the Western Slope's peaks, valleys, and high-desert plateaus. While the geography of these areas differs, the importance of nearby opportunities to access nature, especially for underserved communities, was a common theme. Though Colorado's outdoor assets are vast, youth focus group participants shared that their families often aren't able to access even relatively nearby outdoor places, and that their home communities frequently lack safe outdoor areas to play in and explore. By improving school grounds, GOCO aims to bring nature to the spaces youth and families access most often, and by partnering with the SOLE program, we hope to turn schools into trailheads for the great outdoor places beyond.

Applications for the 2016 SPYI will be a two-step process. Schools, in partnership with their local governments, will participate in a competitive grant process for:

1. **Professional design services:** Grantees are required to hire and work with a professional design consultant in order to help think through the technicalities of construction on school grounds, engage students in the design process, and think creatively about bringing nature to the school grounds. Five schools will be awarded up to \$7,000 to hire professional design consultants to help guide their SPYI projects.

Accordingly, the first application for design (included in this document) is focused on understanding each school's need for GOCO's assistance, and their initial vision for transforming school grounds into havens for nearby nature for youth and families.

2. **Funds for construction and SOLE status:** After completing the planning process, those five schools will complete a second application to compete for funds to construct their projects. Each school is eligible to receive a grant of up to \$100,000 for project implementation.

Applications for design are due on October 12, 2015. GOCO has moved to an online application system. Instructions are included at the end of this document regarding online submission.

Please contact Joe Davidson at jdavidson@goco.org or 303.226.4512 for more information or with any questions. We're here to help and are eager to answer any questions you may have about the grant cycle.

2016 School Play Yard Initiative Fact Sheet

Eligible Entities: School Play Yard projects must be proposed through a partnership between a local government and a school or school district as local governments are the only entities eligible to receive GOCO Local Government grants per the Constitutional Amendment that created GOCO (see page 3 for more information).

Eligible Project Types: Funding can be used to develop a new school play yard and/or to enhance or improve current school play yards. Projects can include natural playscapes, outdoor classrooms, learning gardens, walking paths, environmental education signage, shade, and age specific play equipment. All projects must be constructed on or adjacent to school grounds. Projects must include opportunities for outdoor education and recreation with an emphasis on natural components. The planning and design of all projects must involve the students.

Award and Grant Amount: Five schools will be awarded initial funds of up to \$7,000 toward hiring a professional design consultant to empower the students to design a compelling outdoor space for learning and recreation with an emphasis on natural components. Through a separate application process, those five schools will then apply for grants of up to \$100,000 for project construction.

Access: The proposed play yard must be open to the general public, daily, when school is not in session. The project budget must include funding for signage that informs the community of the days and hours the play yard is open to the public.

SOLE Program Partnership: As part of the 2016 SPYI, schools awarded construction funding will also become partner schools with Colorado Parks and Wildlife's Schools and Outdoor Learning Environments program. SOLE schools participate in field trips to nearby nature areas such as state parks, wildlife areas, or partner organizations such as nature centers and museums. SOLE also hosts Family Nature Nights on the school grounds and in-class presentations. Current SOLE programs provide 3 field trips to students in the 4th grade.

To encourage use of school grounds as outdoor learning environments, the SOLE program is piloting teacher training workshops to provide specific hands-on strategies and activities to inspire teachers from all subject areas to take learning outdoors. Schools will be asked to send several teacher and administrative representatives to a regional workshop, or to provide professional development time for SOLE to host an on-site teacher training.

For more information, see: <http://cpwsole.com/>

Match Requirements: There are no match requirements associated with this initial application for design services. However, if your school is one of the five invited to apply for funds for construction; you will have to come up with matching funds. GOCO will not fund more than 75% of the proposed project's eligible costs up to \$100,000. At least 25% of the total project cost must come from sources other than GOCO. Of the 25%, a minimum of 10% of the total project costs must be a cash match from the applicant and/or partners. Matching funds can come from the school or district, the local government's Conservation Trust Fund dollars, grants from other organizations, fundraisers, donations, etc.

Additional funds spent on planning and design services, beyond GOCO's initial contribution, can be applied as match to the final grant for construction funds.

Timeline: If an applicant is awarded funds for construction, work on the proposed project may not begin until after the grant has been awarded (June 2016) and a contract is signed with GOCO. Grantees are allowed

up to two years for construction. GOCO will make all efforts to support construction plans aimed for summer 2016, though school districts and local governments will need to take an aggressive stance toward reviewing documents and proactively involving all necessary parties in the planning and design process to meet that goal. Considering bidding processes for final design services and contractors, it may be necessary to plan for construction in 2017. Schools may also consider completing some or all phases of construction while school is in session in order to involve students, families and volunteers directly in compatible roles such as planting and or site prep.

Property Ownership: All property on which GOCO funded projects are located must be owned by or under control of the applicant for the useful life of the project. Considering these projects will be constructed on school grounds and therefore owned by the school/school district, an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA) between the local government and the school district will be required if grant funding for construction is awarded.

School Play Yard Initiative Grant Cycle Calendar:

Oct. 12, 2015	Applications for design services due at GOCO
Nov. 12, 2015	Schools notified of recommendation of funding for planning
Nov. 19, 2015	Committee recommends projects to Board
Dec. 10, 2015	GOCO Board awards five projects funding for professional design services
Dec. 14, 2016	Those five projects receive an application to compete for up to \$500,000 in funds for construction. Grants for construction will not exceed \$100,000.
Mar. 20 - Apr. 8	Student-led site visits for GOCO board and staff
April 13, 2016	Applications for project construction due at GOCO
May 12, 2016	Schools notified of recommendation of funding for construction
June 9, 2016	Board decisions on projects, construction funds awarded

Local Government / School Partnership

School Play Yard projects must be proposed through a partnership between a local government and school district or school. Article XXVII of the Colorado Constitution establishes that the only entities eligible to receive grants through this initiative are municipalities, counties, and title 32 special park and recreation districts. Those eligible entities may sponsor projects on behalf of entities that are not eligible for GOCO funding; allowing schools the opportunity to construct projects on school grounds. For the purposes of this initiative, the local government will serve as the applicant, and the school will serve as the partner. If a grant is awarded, the local government – as GOCO’s grantee – will be responsible for grant administration. This means that they will sign the GOCO grant agreement, and will receive GOCO grant payments (to then be passed on to the school).

To bind the school as a third party, to the terms and obligations set forth in GOCO’s Grant Agreement, the two parties must enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement (IGA), Memo of Understanding, Special Use Agreement or other contract. That contract must be in place if a school is selected to compete for funds for

construction. Please contact GOCO to get a sample IGA, which includes particular language GOCO needs to see in these contracts.

Minimum Local Government Role as Grantee:

- Designate a primary contact for the initiative
- Sign applications for design and construction, if selected.
- Pass a resolution supporting the project
- Work with school district to establish and execute IGA/MOU regarding school grounds
- Sign GOCO Grant Agreement
- Participate in grant award orientation call
- Serve as fiscal agent:
 - Accounting/financial department approves and signs progress and or final reports
 - receive grant funds from GOCO
 - distribute funds to school

Letter of Support from Local Government

GOCO requires a letter of support from the local government to be signed by a member of its governing body (a city/town council member, a county commissioner, or member of a special district board) to ensure the applicant's ultimate decision-makers are aware of and support the application and recognize the financial and other obligations the grant creates. The letter must:

- Confirm support for the project and the application to GOCO.
- Recognize the need to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the school to bind it to the terms and obligations of any grant awarded.

A formal resolution is not needed until the application for construction phase.

Letter of Support from School and School District

GOCO requires a letter of support from the partnering school and school district to demonstrate support for the project and solidify their partnership with the local government. The letter must be co-signed by the district superintendent, the school principal, and the school's facilities and risk department or comparable representative. The letter must:

- Confirm support for the project and the application to GOCO.
- Confirm district ownership of the project site for the project's useful life.
- Confirm that the play yard will be open to the general public, daily, when school is not in session.
- Recognize the need to enter into an Intergovernmental Agreement with the local government to bind the school to the terms and obligations of any grant awarded.
- Recognize the need to provide matching funds for project completion.
- Confirm that the school's facilities and risk department or comparable representative will participate in the design process to ensure the viability of the proposed components.
- Recognize the need to maintain the project in a high quality condition for its useful life.
- Administration will provide time for teachers to participate in teacher training and support SOLE efforts at their school.

Planning and Design Process

First Steps: For the sake of timeliness, we ask that schools work with their building and facilities departments to secure as many of the following documents as possible by the time of the initial application for design. (Complete the attached Pre-Design Documents Checklist to accompany your application.)

- Architectural floor plan
- Site plan for school
- Irrigation system information
- Architectural additions plans
- Site engineered survey*
- Soils report*
- Aerial photo

*It is not necessary to have these documents for the initial application for design, though it is probable that they will be required for schools that move forward to producing final construction documents.

Student Participation: Youth engagement is one of the driving principles of the SPYI, and GOCO's overall work to connect Colorado's next generation to the outdoors. Grantees are required to meaningfully engage youth in the planning and design process by forming a youth taskforce. The youth taskforce takes a leadership role interacting with the design consultant, and by engaging other students through activities such as photo-surveys of desired project components, collecting student ideas and drawings of potential project components, and fundraising matching funds. The task force also plays a public speaking role by sharing project plans and progress with stakeholders such as town councils, school boards, and at community meetings. This emphasis on youth engagement is not only meant to ensure that project components are relevant to students, but to provide empowering experiences with civic engagement and leadership.

As the school year begins, we ask that you assemble your initial Youth Task Force (YTF) and find ways to integrate their ideas into your application question responses. As a very general guideline, the YTF should be comprised of 8-12 students of various ages and represent your student body. We have included a Youth Task Force Assignment in the Application Questions to be submitted with your application. Please feel free to engage your YTF in any other ways you feel are meaningful, and fit your school's schedule and needs. We encourage you to take photos throughout the process and save youth drawings or letters as these create rich records to include with the final application for construction, or fund-raising materials.

Community Engagement: Throughout the planning and design process, project teams should work to provide opportunities for community feedback and participation. While students may be seen as the school ground's primary users, members of the surrounding community are important stakeholders for your project. One of the ultimate goals of requiring open public access to project sites outside of school hours is leveraging school grounds as nearby park space for communities. At a minimum, some form of outreach efforts, such as mailings or an open-house to share design plans, should be made to the community-at-large, beyond school families, in order to engage them in the process. For many projects, these efforts have led to significant financial support from the surrounding business community and individuals that see the greater value of improving school grounds.

Design Consultant Guidelines: The GOCO Board continues to find great value in providing technical assistance to help schools think creatively about connecting their students with nature, and move those visions toward construction ready documents. In the previous SPYI cycle, GOCO contracted directly with a single design consultant team to provide planning services to all awarded schools. Based on grantee feedback regarding the time-constraints of this approach, and challenges moving toward complete construction documents, we are shifting to the model of providing schools with up to \$7,000 toward hiring their own consultants directly, in order to provide master-planning and assist with community engagement. This level

of design services is intended to support schools in completing the second phase application for construction. Schools should expect \$20,000-\$30,000 of additional expenses to move from the initial conceptual master plan to construction ready documents. These expenses qualify to be applied toward matching funds required for the construction grant, and may be minimized by contracting with a single entity for master plans and construction documents in the event of being awarded construction funds.

While this structure is meant to allow schools to best meet the needs of their district and local government processes by contracting with designers directly, GOCO will provide a few qualifying guidelines for schools to use when hiring and working with their design consultants, to ensure that projects meet the SPYT's goals and programmatic requirements.

Design consultants will be required to provide:

- **Participatory design:** Consultant engages youth and community with multiple opportunities for feedback and project refinement
- **Communication with partners:** Consultant actively communicates and interacts with relevant school and local government departments necessary to meet project requirements
- **Eligible Designs:** Proposed project components must meet GOCO eligibility standards
- **Timeliness:** Site plans and a GOCO formatted project budget must be provided to schools and local governments with ample time for review, and to be integrated into the application for construction grant funding.

Please feel free to contact GOCO for a list of professional design consultants interested in serving your school.

Sample SPYI Timeline for planning:

Task Name	Start Date	End Date	Q3			Q4			Q1			Q2			Q3		
			Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep
Sample SPYI Timeline																	
Application for design	07/08/15	10/12/15	Application for design														
Engage local government to partner	07/08/15	07/15/15	█														
Secure letters of support	07/16/15	07/30/15	█														
Create youth and adult taskforces	08/10/15	08/28/15		█													
Complete youth engagement activities	08/31/15	09/24/15			█												
Finalize application for design	09/24/15	10/12/15				█											
Application for construction	11/19/15	04/13/16	Application for construction														
Hire design consultant	11/19/15	01/13/16						█									
Consultant meets with taskforces	01/13/16	01/20/16							█								
Initial community meeting	01/22/16	01/29/16								█							
Students engaged in design process	01/13/16	04/08/16									█						
Draft site plan presented at community meeting	02/22/16	02/29/16										█					
Final master plans, GOCD budget, circulated	03/07/16	03/16/16											█				
GOCD site visits	03/20/16	04/08/16												█			
Finalize construction grant application	03/16/16	04/13/16													█		
Local Gov't and School establish IGA	12/14/15	04/13/16								█							
Local Gov't reviews Grant Agreement	12/14/15	04/13/16								█							
Construction documents through construction process begins→	04/14/16	04/13/18													█		

ABOUT THE APPLICANT/ LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Name of Local Government:		
Mailing Address:		
Applicant Contact Name:		Title:
Telephone:	Email:	Are you the primary contact for this grant: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

ABOUT THE PARTNER / SCHOOL

Name of School:		
Mailing Address:		
Partner Contact Name:		Title:
Telephone:	Email:	Are you the primary contact for this grant: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

ABOUT THE PROJECT

Project Title:

APPLICATION CHECKLIST

Verify that this application contains all of the following required documents:

- Signed Letter of Support from Local Government
- Signed Letter of Support from School District, School, and Facilities and Risk Department
- Responses to Questions (a narrative provided on your own paper)
- Attachments:
 - Map(s) identifying the project location (Using Google Earth or Google Maps)
 - Photos of existing amenities to be replaced, if applicable
 - Pre-Design Documents Checklist
 - Youth Task Force Assignment

Authorized Local Government Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

By signing below, the School District certifies that it owns, leases, or otherwise has control over the property on which this project will be completed (collectively, "Control") and will do so for the useful life of the project. School District has on file documentation evidencing its Control of the property and will provide such documentation to GOCO on request.

Authorized School Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Printed Name and Title: _____

Application Questions

All applicants must respond to the following questions in up to six pages. The six page limit does not include attachments, photographs, maps, letters, youth assignment, etc. Please answer every question and start by paraphrasing the question that you are answering.

1. Describe the school the project will serve. Where in the state is it located? Include school enrollment numbers, and the percent of students that qualify for the free or reduced lunch program. What is unique about the student body? Also, describe the greater community/neighborhood the project will serve. Include population and income data. What role does the school play in providing outdoor education and recreation opportunities for the community/neighborhood?
2. Describe how users travel to and access the school play yard from their homes. Discuss non-motorized access via trails and/or sidewalks and describe associated crosswalks. What is the distance between the school and the neighborhoods/communities it will serve? Are there obstacles to getting to the project site; if so, how do you intend to overcome them? (Provide a map detailing where the project is located and what surrounds it.)
3. Why does this school need a new / improved play yard that includes opportunities for outdoor learning and free play? Is there currently an opportunity for outdoor learning at the school? If so, please describe the current outdoor learning space. Describe the current play yard experience for kids. If the project is intended to enhance or replace existing facilities, describe the state of the existing facilities including their age, why the facilities are no longer acceptable or usable, and how they got into the condition they're in. Include photographs of amenities to be replaced or improved.
4. Describe the initial vision for your school grounds and explain how this specific vision was inspired?
5. What, if any, steps has the school and/or community taken to begin the process of improving the school grounds? Steps could include planning, fundraising, student engagement, community mobilization, etc.
6. What is compelling about your school and community's need for GOCO funds, and partnership with the CPW SOLE program?
7. Youth Task Force Assignment -

Ask your student task force to respond to the following question in any format they choose (narrative, video, art, etc): If you had a magic wand and could transform your school yard into the best place to learn and play in the outdoors – what would you do?

Pre-Design Documents Checklist

Document:	Status: <i>(secured, date anticipated to be secured, will secure when necessary, unavailable, etc)</i>
Architectural floor plan	
Site plan for school	
Irrigation system information	
Architectural additions plans	
Site engineered survey*	
Soils report*	
Aerial photo	

*It is not necessary to have these documents for the initial application for design, though it is probable that they will be required for schools that move forward to producing final construction documents.

Online Application Instructions for School Play Yard Initiative Grants:

GOCO now accepts all grant applications online only. When taking into account all GOCO grant programs, we estimate this could save up to 100,000 pieces of paper each year...that's a lot of trees! We hope you'll find this method of applying for GOCO grants to be easy and efficient. You'll still complete the application you've become accustomed to, but instead of printing it out several times and mailing it in, you'll simply answer a few questions online and upload the finished product.



Here's how submitting online applications will work:

1. As in the past, download the application form and other relevant documents from the "[Apply for a Grant](#)" section of the GOCO website.
2. Complete the application and gather all supporting materials. Compile your entire application...Summary Form, answers to Selection Criteria questions, Budget, letters of support, map, and photos...into one Word or .pdf document.
3. Register for the GOCO Grantee Portal. To register, [go to this page](#)¹ and click on the Register button.
 - When registering be sure to include an Organization Name, your first and last names, and a valid e-mail address. If you already receive e-mails from GOCO, use the same e-mail address in the portal registration process.
 - To submit an application, your portal profile must be linked to the applicant organization in our database, so it's important that you enter an Organization at the time you register. (Don't worry about entering an exact match for what might be in our database; we'll make sure your portal registration entry gets attached to the right organization.)
 - The Organization with which you're affiliated will be editable only by GOCO staff. If you change organizations...or if you need to submit an application on behalf of a different organization than the one you designated when you registered...please contact portal@goco.org and we'll make the needed changes.
4. When you log in, you'll be at your "portal dashboard". At first it will be empty, but once you create an application, it'll show up here.
5. Above the portal dashboard, you will find a link to the page where you'll start a new grant application.
6. Complete the portal application:
 - Fill in all fields in the "Details" tab. (This is general information like contact information, the project title, amount requested, etc.) All fields are required.
 - Upload your application in the "Attachments" tab.
 - i. The document must be smaller than 25MB.
 - ii. To upload, click the "Select" button to locate the document. You'll need to then click "Upload" to attach it to the application.
 - When you're all done and ready to submit, go to the "Review & Submit" tab and click the Submit button.
7. You can save and come back to your application at any time. But once you've *submitted* your application, you will not be able to edit it. (Once submitted, you can still view the application. If GOCO staff finds something you need to change in the application, they'll give you instructions on how to do that.)

¹ <http://tinyurl.com/GOCOGraanteePortal> or

<https://goco.foundationconnect.org/grantsmanager/Pages/V3/Portal/login/login.aspx?OrgID=00Do0000000Y65x&lang=en>

Other useful information:

- You can register for the portal and start your application at any time during the process.
- You can save your application and return to it at any time. The only field you need to complete to save your application is the Project Title.
- You may have noticed there are two ways to enter the portal: one takes you directly to [your dashboard](#); the other takes you directly to [a new application](#). If you re-enter the portal using the “start a new application link” after having started one already, you’ll be reminded that you already have an application in process. To start another new application, click “Continue”; to return to your already-started application, click “Go To Dashboard”.
- To edit an in-process application, click the icon in the “Edit” column of the portal dashboard. It looks like this: 
- To see a read-only version of your application, click the icon in the “View” column. It looks like this: 
- When working on or viewing an application, you can return to the portal dashboard by clicking the “My Submissions” link. (Just be sure to Save your application first!)
- If you forget your portal username or password, please don’t create a new portal account. Instead:
 - To recover your username, send an e-mail from the address you used during registration to portal@goco.org. Include the first name, last name, and organization you used when you registered for the portal.
 - If you forget your password, re-set it using the “Can’t access your account?” link on the portal registration page.
- A grant application started on or submitted through the portal is visible only to the individual who created it; no one else at your organization will be able to access it without being granted permission to do so. If someone else needs to be able to access the online application, have them establish a portal account. Then, you can e-mail portal@goco.org and ask that the application be shared with the other person.