The Weston Family Parks Challenge
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The Weston Family Parks Challenge is an initiative of The W. Garfield Weston Foundation in collaboration with the Ontario Trillium Foundation and administered by Toronto Park People.

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation initiated the Weston Family Parks Challenge in 2012 announcing $5 million, in aggregate over three years, to enhance Toronto’s green spaces while encouraging private-public partnership for the long-term sustainability of Toronto’s parks.

Accomplishments to date are notable with over $2.4 million in funding being allocated to innovative park projects across the City.

Building on this success, the Ontario Trillium Foundation is contributing $1.25 million in funding for projects as part of the Weston Family Parks Challenge and to strengthen the capacity of Toronto Park People. Ontario Trillium Foundation’s support will be available over two years to provide greater incentive for communities to revitalize their connection to each other and nature.

The program seeks to support projects whose successes will inspire further creative approaches from city leaders, residents, the private and the philanthropic sectors in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada. They will encourage greater private-public partnerships to benefit the long-term sustainability of urban green spaces.
Core Elements

The program is built around the following core elements:

- **Nature focus** – Enhances the natural elements of green spaces.
- **Connection to community** – Enables communities and organizations to come together to support their local park, encouraging stewardship at a personal and community level and revitalizing their relationships with nature.
- **Sustainability** – Contributes to high-quality maintenance and management of parks for the long term through community engagement, strong partnerships and diverse funding streams.
- **Innovation** – Generates new park solutions, designs and partnerships that can be replicated elsewhere in Toronto and Canada.

Members from Toronto Park People, Ontario Trillium Foundation and The W. Garfield Weston Foundation will review proposals. Funding decisions will rest with The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Who is Eligible to Apply?

Only registered Canadian charitable organizations and other qualified donees as defined by the Canadian Revenue Agency can apply. Partnership applications are preferred as long as one of the applicants is a charity or a qualified donee (e.g. City of Toronto, Business Improvement Areas (BIAs), TRCA). The charitable partner must be actively involved in the project as a partner and not just a “flow through” funding body. Applications are welcome from the City of Toronto or its agencies as well as the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority but these applications should be submitted in conjunction with a community group or outside partner.
Eligible Funding

Only projects involving a publicly-accessible greenspace or open space within the City of Toronto are eligible.

Grants can cover:

- Green infrastructure. For example: habitat restoration, urban agriculture, or landscaping improvements.
- Operating costs directly related to the long-term sustainability of a vibrant community green space. For example: staff costs to develop governance, funding models, business development, enhancing partnerships, or engaging the local community and coalescing volunteers around an active and animated park.
- Planning, public consultation and design work for park projects.

The program will not fund:

- The purchase of land for a new park or adding land to an existing park.
- Hard landscaping such as paving stones, fencing and urban furniture.
- Fabricated play structures.
- Activities or projects that duplicate work already being undertaken by the City of Toronto.
- Projects that are strictly planning-related and do not include actual improvements in a park.
- Annual maintenance costs.
- Contributions to a general fundraising campaign.
- Advocacy or research.
- The program will not fund park-based programming unrelated to the enhancement of the park’s natural elements, or its stewardship or long-term sustainability.
Requests for multi-year funding will be considered. The minimum grant amount is $25,000. No maximum grant amount has been set and the Weston Family Parks Challenge is open to supporting large projects.

The Application Process

Fall 2015 is the final application cycle for the Weston Family Parks Challenge. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Toronto Park People Director Dave Harvey (dharvey@parkpeople.ca) in advance to discuss their proposal. Applying to the fund is a two-step process.

Step One – Letter of Interest

Interested organizations must first submit a Letter of Interest to Toronto Park People. The letter must be no more than two pages plus a draft budget and the application cover page. Any additional materials (including maps and illustrations) over the two pages and budget will be discarded before they go to the selection committee.

The letter needs to be succinct and include the following elements:

- **Nature Focus** – How will the project enhance natural elements and what impact will this achieve?

- **Connection to community** – How will this project engage the community? What will be the impact and long term benefit of improved engagement – for both the community and the park?

- **Sustainability** – What is the business plan to ensure long-term sustainability of the initiative? Does the initiative have strong partnerships and diverse funding streams?

- **Innovation** – How will this project push current practice? How does it add value and build on, rather than replicate, city contributions? Is it a model that could be replicated elsewhere?
- **Community need** – Brief overview of the project and how it is important to the city.

- **Draft budget** – One page maximum outlining cost centres and sources of funding specific to the project.

Please provide two paper copies of the letter and submit an electronic version to dharvey@parkpeople.ca.

Please note that we are unable to consider late or incomplete applications for funding. Submissions must be received by Toronto Park People by 5:00 pm on the deadline date.

Letters of Interest will be jointly reviewed by Toronto Park People, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation with the Foundations making final decisions on proposals meriting further consideration.

The Foundations reserve the right to accept or decline any or all proposals based upon this review.

**Step Two – Full Application**

Organizations that clearly meet the eligibility criteria and are successfully chosen in the first round will be invited to submit a full application. This is not a guarantee of funding. Those organizations asked to submit a full application should prepare a document that must be no more than 4 pages in length plus a budget. Any maps or illustrations must be included in the 4 pages. Additional materials over the four pages and budget will be discarded before they go to the selection committee.

The full application should include:

- **Community need**: Brief overview of the project. What is the community need and how is it addressed by your project?

- **Project team**: Details of professional expertise available, both in terms of staff and volunteers, as well as any existing programs that would help implement your project. Please provide information relating to previous successfully implemented projects to demonstrate your ability to deliver the project from conception through implementation.
• **Nature focus:** How will the project enhance natural elements and what impact will this achieve?

• **Connection to community:** How will this project engage the community? What will be the impact and long term benefit of improved engagement – for both the community and the park?

• **Sustainability:** What is the business plan to ensure long term, investment in the park, including; How is the project going to develop community partnerships with public and private supporters for the long-term sustainability of the project and natural elements in the park?

• **Innovation:** How will this project push current practice? How does it add-value and build on, rather than replicate, City contributions? Is it a model that could be replicated elsewhere?

• **Project work plan:** Key timeframes, milestones and deliverables.

• **Measures of Success:** Metrics you will use to evaluate the success and impact of the project.

• **Budget:** Including other partnership and in kind funding as well as a break down for each year of the project. Matching funding included should apply to the scope and timeframe of the requested project.

• **Recognition:** Opportunities for The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and Ontario Trillium Foundation.

In support of the applications, all applicants must also submit:

• The Application Cover Page

• A copy of the organization’s most recent audited financial statement
Please provide two paper copies of the application and submit an electronic version to dharvey@parkpeople.ca.

Please note that we are unable to consider late or incomplete applications for funding. Submissions must be received by Toronto Park People by 5:00 pm on the deadline date.

Applications will be evaluated on the extent to which the project meets the above criteria. They will be jointly reviewed by Toronto Park People, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation and the Ontario Trillium Foundation with the Foundations making final decisions.

The Foundations reserve the right to accept or decline any or all proposals based upon this review.

**Monitoring Progress**

Successful applicants will set measurable indicators of success for their projects and Toronto Park People staff will work with them to monitor progress and results.
# Application Deadlines for Fall 2015

**APPLICATION STEPS** | **FALL ROUND**
---|---
Letter of Interest | September 18
Invitations extended to submit a full application | October 9
Full Application Deadline | October 30
Final Decision | November / December

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Dave Harvey, Director, Toronto Park People in advance, to discuss their proposals – [dharvey@parkpeople.ca](mailto:dharvey@parkpeople.ca)

Please submit your application by mail to:

Dave Harvey, Director  
Toronto Park People  
401 Richmond Street West, Suite 119  
Toronto, Ontario M5V 3A8

And by email to: [dharvey@parkpeople.ca](mailto:dharvey@parkpeople.ca)

Please note that we are unable to consider late or incomplete applications for funding; both hard and electronic copies must be received at the Foundation by 5:00pm on the deadline date.
Toronto Park People

Park People is the catalyst for better parks across Toronto. We know that when residents get involved, parks get better. That’s why we are working with more than 100 park friends groups, city workers and other partners to plant more trees and gardens, fix broken infrastructure and get more people out celebrating their communities through parks.

We develop tools and resources that help park volunteers become better stewards for their local parks. We also bring park friends together to share what they know and to collaborate on projects and issues that improve parks for all. Together, we recommend policies and practices that recognize how parks contribute to the social and economic health of cities.

Toronto Park People works for better parks for all communities by:

- facilitating neighbourhood engagement in their park
- building partnerships between community, the city and others to find shared solutions for better parks
- building a network of local community park groups
- advocating on issues affecting parks
- highlighting the importance of good parks to the social, health, environmental and economic well being of all residents of Toronto
The W. Garfield Weston Foundation

THE W. GARFIELD WESTON FOUNDATION

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation is a private Canadian family foundation. The Foundation was first established in the 1950’s by Willard Garfield Weston and his wife Reta, with their shares in the family company, George Weston Limited. Today this business includes not only the original baking company, but also Loblaw Companies Limited, a group of food retailing, processing and distribution companies. It is the success of these companies, the dedication of their employees and the loyalty of their customers that ultimately enables the Foundation to fulfill its charitable mandate.

Donations from the Foundation are directed to specific organizations in the fields of neuroscience, education, land conservation, and science in Canada’s North. In addition to its ongoing commitments, the Foundation makes a number of unsolicited, Trustee Initiated Grants each year.

The Founders believed that as the funds were generated through the hard work and success of Canadian businesses, the grants should be given in Canada for the benefit of Canadians.

For three generations, The W. Garfield Weston Foundation has maintained a family tradition of helping charitable organizations to make a difference and enhance the quality of life for all Canadians.

Ontario Trillium Foundation

The Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) is an agency of the Government of Ontario, and Canada’s largest grant making foundation. OTF has been building healthy and vibrant communities in Ontario for 30 years, across four sectors: sports and recreation, environment, human and social services, and arts and culture. OTF focuses on promoting and supporting social change at the community level, with an investment of over 1.7Billion since 1982. One of OTF’s current funding priorities is to support innovative initiatives that protect and build green infrastructure.