TEXAS MUNICIPAL, COUNTY, ISD & NONPROFIT EDITION

Texas Park Funding & Grant Playbook

How Texas communities combine TPWD state grants, CDBG/LWCF federal pass-through dollars, regional health foundations, BuyBoard/TIPS cooperative contracts, and in-kind community match to build destination parks without straining the general fund.

THE CORE STRATEGY

Every Funded Texas Park Pulls Two or Three Levers Together

LEVER 01 · OUTSIDE GRANTS

State, Federal & Foundation

Multiplies local dollars 2× or covers 100% in qualifying census tracts.

- **TPWD Local Park Grants:** Up to $150K (small towns) to $750K–$1.5M (50% match).
- **HUD CDBG / TDA:** Up to 100% in LMI neighborhoods.
- **Texas Health & Civic Foundations:** $25K–$250K+ regional awards.

LEVER 02 · PUBLIC CAPITAL & CO-OPS

Bonds, Tax Notes & Co-Ops

Speeds procurement and stretches capital improvement budgets.

- **BuyBoard & TIPS Contracts:** Skip the 90-day formal bid cost & delay.
- **EDC Type 4B (Sales Tax):** Quality-of-life & park development funds.
- **Parkland Dedication / Impact Fees:** Developer fee-in-lieu reserves.

LEVER 03 · LOCAL & IN-KIND MATCH

Force Account & Sponsors

Satisfies grant match requirements without new cash outlays.

- **City Force-Account Labor:** Public works grading, demo & haul-off.
- **Corporate Naming Rights:** Pavilion, splash pad & tower sponsors.
- **Volunteer Build Days & Bricks:** Documented in-kind hourly credit.

SAMPLE CAPITAL STACK SCENARIO	TOTAL TURNKEY PARK COST	OUTSIDE GRANT / FOUNDATION	LOCAL CAPITAL / EDC / BOND	IN-KIND LABOR / SPONSORS
Scenario A: Small Texas Town (<20k pop.) Shaded Playground + PIP Surfacing	**$220,000**	$110,000 *(TPWD Small Community 50%)*	$75,000 *(Type 4B EDC / General Fund)*	$35,000 *(City crew demo/grading + sponsors)*
Scenario B: Mid-Size City Destination Park Inclusive Tower + Splash Pad + Pavilion	**$600,000**	$300,000 *(TPWD Outdoor Rec Grant)*	$225,000 *(Park Bond / Capital Fund)*	$75,000 *(Regional Health Foundation + In-Kind)*
Scenario C: LMI Neighborhood / Colonia Park Turnkey Playground + Shade + Walk Trail	**$185,000**	$165,000 *(HUD CDBG / TDA Allocation)*	$20,000 *(Precinct / City Engineering)*	$0 required *(Optional amenity sponsors)*

RULE #1 OF TEXAS PARK FUNDING: LINE UP THE CONCEPT BEFORE THE DEADLINE

Grant reviewers and city councils fund concrete plans, not vague ideas. Having a scaled 3D layout and a 6-line turnkey cost estimate 60 days before a grant window opens is the single biggest predictor of award success.

DIRECTORY OF PROGRAMS

Texas State, Federal & Foundation Park Grants

Use this comparison matrix to identify which funding streams match your entity type, population size, and construction timeline.

PROGRAM & AGENCY	ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	AWARD CEILING	MATCH REQUIREMENT	TYPICAL CYCLE & KEY FOCUS
TPWD Outdoor Recreation Grants *Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.*	Cities, Counties, River Authorities, Special Districts (<500k pop.)	Up to **$750,000**	50% Local Match *(Cash, land, or in-kind)*	Annual (Fall deadline). Playgrounds, splash pads, trails, pavilions, sports courts, inclusive parks.
TPWD Small Community Grants *Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.*	Texas Cities & Towns under **20,000 population**	Up to **$150,000**	50% Local Match *(In-kind labor friendly)*	Annual (Fall deadline). Streamlined application for rural and small-town playground & shade upgrades.
TPWD Urban Outdoor Rec Grants *Texas Parks & Wildlife Dept.*	Major Texas Cities & Counties (>500,000 pop.)	Up to **$1,500,000**	50% Local Match	Annual. Large regional destination parks, inclusive hubs, and signature aquatic/recreation centers.
LWCF Federal Pass-Through *NPS / Administered by TPWD*	Cities, Counties, State/Local Public Agencies	Up to **$750,000+**	50% Non-Federal Match	Annual. Requires permanent 6(f) outdoor recreation parkland protection; pairs well with large park builds.
HUD CDBG (Community Dev. Block Grant) *HUD Entitlement Cities & TDA*	Entitlement Cities, Urban Counties & Non-Entitlement Towns	**$100,000 – $500,000+**	Often **0% – 10%** in LMI Census Tracts	Annual Action Plan (Spring/Summer). Ideal for RGV & Texas neighborhoods with ≥51% Low-to-Moderate Income residents.
USDA Community Facilities *USDA Rural Development*	Rural Towns (<20k pop.), Counties & Nonprofits	Grants + Low-Interest Direct Loans	Sliding scale by population & MHI	Rolling year-round via Texas USDA Area Offices. Supports rural community parks, shade, and early childhood play.
T-Mobile Hometown Grants *T-Mobile & Main Street America*	Towns under 50,000 pop. (Local Gov't or 501c3)	Up to **$50,000**	No strict match required	**Quarterly** (Mar, Jun, Sep, Dec). Fast-moving shovel-ready pocket parks, shade pavilions, and inclusive upgrades.
South Texas & RGV Health Foundations *VBLF, Knapp, MHM, St. David's, Kronkosky*	501(c)(3) Nonprofits, Cities & School Districts (by region)	**$25,000 – $250,000+**	Varies (prefers leveraged partnerships)	Biannual/Rolling. Focuses on childhood obesity prevention, outdoor fitness, heat/UV shade safety, and inclusive play.

DON'T OVERLOOK TYPE 4B ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (EDC)

Under the Texas Development Corporation Act (Local Gov't Code Ch. 505), Type B sales tax revenue can legally fund municipal parks, playgrounds, splash pads, athletic facilities, and tourism-driving recreation spaces after a public hearing.

WINNING COMPETITIVE AWARDS

How to Score High on Texas Grants & Build Your 50% Match

Competitive park grants are scored on objective rubrics. Designing your scope around the scoring criteria—and documenting non-cash local match—dramatically increases award probability.

6 Design Moves That Boost Grant Scores

- **1. Current Parks Master Plan Alignment:** Cite the exact page of your adopted Parks Master Plan (or regional plan) listing playground/splash pad/shade as a top citizen priority.
- **2. Inclusive Play Beyond ADA Minimums:** Replace wood mulch with unitary PIP rubber or flush synthetic turf and include ground-level sensory, motion, and ramped play events.
- **3. Multi-Generational Health Impact:** Pair a 2–12 playground with an adult outdoor fitness station cluster, shaded walking loop benches, or family pavilion.
- **4. Heat, UV & Water Conservation:** Specify integrated UV shade canopies and low-flow/recirculating or controller-timed splash pad activators with rain/wind shutoffs.
- **5. School-Park Joint Use Agreement:** Partner between a City and local ISD so the park serves students during school hours and families after hours (doubles beneficiary count).
- **6. Native Landscaping & Nature Play:** Incorporate native Texas shade trees, pollinator beds, or outdoor classroom seating boulders.

How to Assemble a 50% Match Without All Cash

Most state/federal grants allow your 50% local match to combine cash with documented **in-kind contributions** incurred *after* grant execution:

- **City / County Force-Account Labor:** Tracked hourly wages of Public Works crews performing demolition, site clearing, grading, drainage trenching, and sidewalk pours.
- **City-Owned Heavy Equipment Hours:** FEMA/TxDOT hourly equipment rates for city backhoes, dump trucks, rollers, and skid-steers used on the park site.
- **Donated Materials & Professional Services:** Donated crushed limestone base, ready-mix concrete, survey work, or civil engineering hours.
- **Documented Volunteer Build Labor:** Community volunteer hours (landscaping, site prep, amenity assembly) logged on official sign-in sheets at the approved state volunteer hourly rate.
- **Corporate & Foundation Cash Partners:** Local bank, hospital, civic club, or EDC Type 4B contributions pooled into the project fund.

COMMON GRANT DISQUALIFIER	WHY IT HAPPENS	HOW PLAY RGV HELPS YOU AVOID IT
Breaking Ground Before Grant Contract Execution	City crews clear the lot or pour concrete before the official Notice to Proceed (NTP).	We flag pre-award vs. post-award eligible costs so you never lose match credit for premature site work.
Under-Budgeting Surfacing & ADA Paths	Application budgets equipment only, leaving a 40% gap when construction bids arrive.	We provide a complete 6-line turnkey estimate (equipment, PIP/turf, shade, freight, civil, install) for the grant budget table.
Missing Environmental / SHPO / Floodplain Clearance	Site sits in a 100-year floodplain or lacks Texas Historical Commission review.	During our free site walk, we help screen site constraints and position structures on high, accessible ground.

COMPLIANT PUBLIC PROCUREMENT

BuyBoard, TIPS & Texas HUB Fast-Track Guide

Once funding is approved, formal sealed bidding (RFPs) can consume 60 to 120 days and result in low-bid contractors cutting corners on surfacing thickness or installation quality. Cooperative purchasing solves both problems legally.

LEGAL AUTHORITY

100% Bid-Law Compliant

Under **Texas Local Gov't Code Ch. 271 (Subchapter F)** and **Texas Education Code §44.031**, purchases made through an approved purchasing cooperative satisfy all competitive bidding requirements.

TEXAS HUB CREDIT

Certified Texas HUB Vendor

Play RGV LLC is a state-certified **Historically Underutilized Business (HUB)**. Every purchase counts directly toward your agency's good-faith HUB participation reporting under **Texas Gov't Code Ch. 2161**.

SCHEDULE SAVINGS

Save 60–90 Days on Delivery

Go from council/board approval to factory order in days instead of months—critical when spending fiscal-year-end funds, bond tranches, or expiring grant awards.

PROCUREMENT PATH	TYPICAL TIMELINE TO PO	ADMINISTRATIVE BURDEN	CONTROL OVER EQUIPMENT QUALITY & DESIGN
BuyBoard / TIPS Cooperative Contract via Play RGV	**5 – 14 Days**	Low (Use existing membership; no newspaper ads or bid opening)	**100% Control** — You get the exact custom 3D layout, color palette, shade spec, and CPSI crew you selected.
Quick-Ship In-Stock Program (Under Co-Op or Threshold)	**3 – 7 Days** (Ships in days)	Minimal	**High** — Pre-configured commercial structures in stock for rapid fiscal-year-end or school-break installation.
Traditional Sealed RFP / Invitation to Bid	**60 – 120 Days**	High (Drafting specs, legal notice, pre-bid walk, addendum, scoring)	**Medium–Low** — "Or equal" substitutions often dilute deck size, post gauge, or EPDM rubber quality.

Sample Board Agenda / Purchasing Memo Language (Copy & Paste Ready)

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"Consider and take action to approve the turnkey purchase and installation of commercial playground, shade, and safety surfacing improvements for [Park / Campus Name] from Play RGV LLC (a certified Texas HUB vendor) in the amount of $[Amount] utilizing [BuyBoard / TIPS] Cooperative Purchasing Contract #[Contract Number], in accordance with Texas Local Government Code Chapter 271 / Texas Education Code §44.031."
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NEED THREE QUOTES OR FORMAL RFP SPECIFICATIONS?

If your local policy or federal grant requires formal sealed bids or multiple quotes, Play RGV provides CSI MasterFormat (Division 11 & Division 32) technical specifications, CAD blocks, and compliant bid responses.

COMMUNITY CAPITAL & PHASING

Sponsorship Tiers, Donor Bricks & Phased Master Plans

Local businesses, hospital systems, car dealerships, banks, and civic clubs love funding visible family infrastructure—especially when offered clear recognition tiers and permanent park signage.

SPONSORSHIP TIER	SUGGESTED CONTRIBUTION	TARGET # OF SPONSORS	RECOGNITION & WHAT IT FUNDS	SUBTOTAL RAISED
Presenting Park / Pavilion Partner	$25,000 – $50,000	1 – 2	Custom archway header on main Shade Pavilion or Inclusive Tower + ribbon-cutting headline recognition.	$25,000 – $100,000
Zone Sponsor (Tot Lot, Splash Zone, Fitness, Dog Park)	$10,000 – $15,000	2 – 4	Dedicated aluminum zone plaque at entry + logo on park welcome sign.	$20,000 – $60,000
Shade & Seating Sponsor (Benches / Tables)	$2,500 – $5,000	6 – 10	Permanent cast plaque or laser-cut backrest recognition on commercial park bench or picnic table.	$15,000 – $50,000
Community Legacy Bricks (Families & Alumni)	$100 – $250 / brick	100 – 300	Engraved 4"×8" or 8"×8" paver installed along the ADA entry plaza or flagship flagpole border.	$10,000 – $50,000

HOW TO PHASE A LARGE PARK ACROSS TWO FISCAL YEARS

Design Once as a Master Plan — Build in Fundable Phases Without Tearing Up New Work

PHASE 1 (YEAR 1 BUDGET / QUICK WIN)

Core Structure + Sub-Base + Primary Shade

- Master-grade the entire site & install underground drainage sleeves for future phases now (saves 80% on future trenching).
- Install primary 2–12 Play Structure, hip shade posts, and safety surfacing in Zone A.
- Host a high-visibility community ribbon cutting to build momentum for Phase 2.

PHASE 2 (YEAR 2 GRANT / BOND / SPONSORS)

Toddlers, Swings, Splash Pad or Fitness

- Connect directly to the pre-stubbed drainage/water sleeves without disturbing Phase 1 surfacing.
- Add the 2–5 Tot Lot, inclusive spinner/sensory bay, outdoor fitness cluster, or splash pad.
- Install sponsor benches, picnic pavilion, and donor brick entry plaza.

FREE 3D SPONSORSHIP RENDERINGS FROM PLAY RGV

Donors give when they can see the vision. Play RGV creates photorealistic 3D park renderings and aerial site boards your committee can bring directly to bank presidents, hospital boards, and civic donors.

THE TEXAS FUNDING YEAR & ACTION WORKSHEET

12-Month Texas Park Funding Calendar

Align your site walk and 3D concept design with municipal budget workshops and state grant deadlines so your project is shovel-ready when funds release.

Q1 · JAN – MAR

Concept & CDBG Window

- Schedule Play RGV site walk & 3D concept.
- Submit HUD CDBG / TDA project requests.
- T-Mobile Q1 grant window (March 31).
- ISD bond / summer build PO lock-in.

Q2 · APR – JUN

City / ISD Budget Prep

- Deliver 6-line turnkey estimate to City Manager / CFO for FY budget draft.
- Host public input meeting for TPWD grant scoring.
- T-Mobile Q2 grant window (June 30).

Q3 · JUL – SEP

TPWD & Fiscal Year-End

- Pass Council Resolution for TPWD Local Park Grant.
- Deploy expiring FY funds via Quick-Ship / BuyBoard.
- T-Mobile Q3 grant window (Sept 30).

Q4 · OCT – DEC

New FY & Fall Grants

- New Oct 1 Municipal FY capital funds unlock.
- Submit TPWD Local Park Grant application.
- Order winter equipment for Spring Break opening!

FUNDING STRATEGY INTAKE · EMAIL TO PARTNERS@PLAYRGV.US OR CALL 956-321-3151

Request a Custom Funding & Co-Op Strategy Session for Your Project

CONTACT NAME & TITLE

CITY / COUNTY / ISD / NONPROFIT NAME

WORK EMAIL & PHONE

TARGET TOTAL BUDGET & AVAILABLE LOCAL MATCH

WHICH FUNDING & PROCUREMENT PATHS ARE YOU EXPLORING?

- ☐ TPWD Local Park Grant ($150K–$750K)
- ☐ HUD CDBG / TDA Neighborhood Funds
- ☐ BuyBoard / TIPS Cooperative Contract
- ☐ City / County Capital or Type 4B EDC
- ☐ ISD Bond / Campus Safety & Wellness
- ☐ Health Foundation / T-Mobile / Sponsors

Play RGV LLC — Your Texas Park Planning, Funding & Turnkey Build Partner
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