



U.S. Soccer Foundation  
Guide to Grants

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## **Introduction**

Thank you for your interest in the U.S. Soccer Foundation's annual grants cycle. Since 1995, the U.S. Soccer Foundation has awarded grants to more than 600 non-profit organizations in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Our grants support soccer programs and field-building initiatives in the U.S. that keep children in underserved communities active, healthy, and safe. This guide contains the necessary information you need to know as a potential applicant. While Foundation staff is always available to answer questions, we ask that you read through this guide before contacting the Foundation.

Please call 202.872.9277 or email [abard@ussoccerfoundation.org](mailto:abard@ussoccerfoundation.org) with any questions.

## Who We Fund

### Eligibility Requirements for All Grant Applicants:

- **Operate in the United States:** Funding may only go towards programming or projects located in the United States. Organizations that are based in the United States, but only offer programming abroad, are not eligible for the Annual Grants cycle. While the Foundation commends organizations that provide soccer programming abroad, we do not support such organizations financially through our Annual Grants cycle. International organizations may qualify for donations of soccer equipment through our *Passback* program. For more information on the *Passback* program, please visit our website ([www.passback.org](http://www.passback.org)).
- **Tax-exempt:** Application must be submitted by an organization with IRS approved tax-exempt status at the time of application.
  - Examples of tax-exempt organizations: any group with 501(c)(3) status, churches, individual schools or school districts, cities or municipalities, etc.
  - Individuals are not eligible to apply for funding.
- **Soccer programming:** Applicant must offer soccer-specific programming directly or through partnerships.

### Additional Requirements for *Safe Places to Play* Applicants:

#### **All *Safe Places to Play* Projects:**

- Applicant must own or have a minimum 10 year land lease/land use agreement for the land where the field is or will be built. No exceptions will be made to the 10 year minimum (10 years counted from the date of the grant application).
- Applicant must possess at least 50% of funding required to complete the project. *Safe Places to Play* grant funding levels are explained further in the What We Fund section on pages 5-6.

#### **Lighting Projects Only:**

- Applicant must have written authorization from the community where the lighting project will be installed. It is the applicant's responsibility to determine who in their community can authorize such a project (usually a mayor, city council, etc.). Authorization must be in the form of a letter stating that the community is aware and approves of the installation of lighting at the specified field location.

For an idea of the types of groups that the Foundation funds, please [click here](#) to see a list of past grantees.

## What We Fund

### **All grantees must meet the following insurance and grant agreement requirements**

- Provide Proof of Commercial General Liability insurance for at least \$2,000,000 in aggregate
- Provide Proof of Automotive Liability insurance for at least \$1,000,000 each accident
- Provide Proof of Workers Compensation insurance for at least \$1,000,000
- Provide Proof of Umbrella and/or Excess insurance for at least \$2,000,000
- If applicable, provide proof of Builder's Risk Property insurance during course of installation
- Add the U.S. Soccer Foundation as an "additional insured" to all insurance coverages prior to grant execution
- The field project must be able to include the U.S. Soccer Foundation logo, as well as other potential funder logos

### ***Safe Places to Play Grants***

*Safe Places to Play* grants are available in four categories: **Synthetic Turf, Lighting, Irrigation, and Sport Court**. Multi-sport field projects are eligible for funding, but such fields must be used a majority of the time for soccer. Multi-field projects are also eligible. Projects that must go through a bidding process are eligible. *All Safe Places to Play* grants (except for Irrigation) can be awarded for either indoor or outdoor field projects. *Safe Places to Play* grantees have between 12-18 months from the date of the award announcement to use their funding.

- **Synthetic Turf** – grants are awarded for the installation of a synthetic turf field from Hellas Construction, Inc. This funding can be applied toward new field construction or the refurbishment of existing turf fields.
  - **Grant Amount: up to 10% of the Hellas project quote.**
  - Hellas Construction, Inc. Requirement: Grants are disbursed as in-kind credit with Hellas. No cash is disbursed as part of this grant. Grantees must use Hellas Construction, Inc. as the supplier for their synthetic turf project, if awarded this grant.
  - Field Size: The Foundation understands that space issues dictate that full size fields are not always an option, so smaller fields *are* eligible. For fields under 25,000 square feet, applicants are encouraged to consider Sport Court as an alternative to synthetic turf.
  - Funding can **ONLY** be used toward base construction costs of playing area and synthetic turf product purchase
- **Lighting** – grants are awarded for the purchase of Musco Lighting products to light futsal, natural grass, or synthetic turf fields. Funding does NOT cover installation, and project must not be completed prior to submission of a grant application.

- **Grant Amount: Typically in the range of 15%-30% of project total, with a maximum of \$25,000 per grant for single fields and \$50,000 for multi-field projects.**
- Musco Lighting Requirement: Grants are disbursed as in-kind credit with Musco Lighting. No cash is disbursed as part of this grant. Grantees must use Musco Lighting as the supplier for their field project, if awarded this grant.
- Musco products come with a 25-year warranty.
- Funding can ONLY be used toward approved Musco product purchase.
- **Irrigation** – grants are awarded for the purchase of Hunter Irrigation products to irrigate natural grass or synthetic turf fields (while irrigation is not required for synthetic turf, it is recommended for cleaning and cooling purposes). Funding does not cover installation.
  - **Grant Amount: Typically in the range of \$4,000 - \$15,000, with a maximum of \$15,000 per grant**
  - Hunter Irrigation Requirement: Grants are disbursed as in-kind credit with Hunter Irrigation. No cash is disbursed as part of this grant. Grantees must use Hunter Irrigation as the supplier for their field project, if awarded this grant.
  - Irrigation funding can ONLY be used for sprinklers, valves, and/or controllers; funding does NOT cover pipes, wires, fittings, electrical splices, etc.
- **Sport Court** – grants are awarded for the installation of Sport Court, which is an innovative, modular sport surface (non-turf) that delivers superior playability, speed, safety, shock absorption, and traction. It is perfect for small-sided soccer or futsal. With its engineering-grade polypropylene surface, a Sport Court is quick to install and can be easily customized to fit the needs of your soccer project.
  - **Grant Amount: Typically in the range of 15% - 50% of project total, with a maximum of \$30,000 per grant.**
  - Sport Court Requirement: Grants are disbursed as in-kind credit with Sport Court. No cash is disbursed as part of this grant. Grantees must use Sport Court as the supplier for their field project, if awarded this grant.
  - Sport Court funding can ONLY be used toward approved Sport Court tile product purchase.

## Program Grants

Program grants are awarded to grantees to purchase soccer equipment and/or cover operating expenses, and to attend the annual Urban Soccer Symposium held by the U.S. Soccer Foundation in Washington, D.C. Program grantees have 12 months from the date of the award announcement to use their funding.

- Grant Amount: Up to \$50,000 (total for equipment + cash)
  - **Equipment** – all equipment grants are awarded as credit with [www.soccer.com](http://www.soccer.com) and/or [www.kwikgoal.com](http://www.kwikgoal.com); no cash is distributed for equipment. Grantees work with a Soccer.com or Kwik Goal representative to put together an equipment order, which is then sent to the Foundation for approval; once approved, the order is shipped to the grantee and billed to the Foundation.
    - Eligible equipment expenses include: jerseys, shorts, socks, shin guards, cleats, balls, goals (pop-up or permanent), cones, ball bags, first aid kits, scrimmage vests, etc.
  - **Cash** – cash for operating expenses is disbursed in one check after the grant agreement and all paperwork have been completed.
    - **Eligible operating expenses:** stipends for coaches and program managers, transportation, healthy snacks, award banquets for players, field or facility rental fees, referee fees, background checks, family engagement events, etc.
    - **Urban Soccer Symposium** – all grantees receiving a cash grant award will also receive a \$1,000 Urban Soccer Symposium stipend. This stipend will cover expenses related to the Urban Soccer Symposium held by the U.S. Soccer Foundation in Washington, D.C. including: Symposium transportation to and from Washington, D.C., lodging , and meals. Grantees will also receive complimentary registration for the Symposium. Attendance at the Urban Soccer Symposium is mandatory for one (1) representative from each grantee. Other attendees are welcome to attend the Symposium at their own expense.
  - **Reporting** – Grantees must submit two reports (one in July and one in December), accounting for how their grant money was spent and noting specific outcomes related to the use of the grant money. The U.S. Soccer Foundation will provide the report forms to each grantee.

## What We Do Not Fund

### ***Safe Places to Play Grants***

- Natural grass fields (however, organizations that have or are building grass fields are eligible for lighting and irrigation grants).
- Any structures/amenities that are not part of the field itself, including:
  - Bleachers
  - Bathrooms
  - Concession stands
  - Fencing
  - Parking lots
- Projects without at least 50% of the funding necessary to complete the project at the time of application.
- Already completed projects seeking retroactive financial support.

### **Program Grants**

- Scholarships/sponsorships/registration fees for individual players
- Tickets or transportation to professional sporting events
- One-time camps or clinics
- Equipment for coaches
- Items to be used for auctions or fundraising (i.e. professional team jerseys or other collectable items)

## Application Process

### Safe Places to Play Grant Applicants:

I. Applying for a **Safe Places to Play** grant is a two-step process. First, you will need to submit a **Letter of Interest (LOI)** to the U.S. Soccer Foundation via an [online portal available on the U.S. Soccer Foundation website](#). Second, if the Foundation approves the LOI, your organization will be invited to complete an official application also completed through an online portal provided by the Foundation.

*Safe Places to Play* LOIs are accepted on a rolling basis throughout the year. LOIs submitted according to the following schedule will be considered during each Grant Cycle:

- **2016 Spring Grant Cycle** (February 5 Application Deadline): **LOIs due by 1/29/16**
- **2016 Summer Grant Cycle** (June 3 Application Deadline): **LOIs due by 5/27/16**
- **2016 Fall Grant Cycle** (October 7 Application Deadline): **LOIs due by 9/30/16**

II. As part of your LOI submission, you must obtain and submit an **official project quote** from the appropriate **U.S. Soccer Foundation Corporate Partner(s)** relating to your project. Before submitting your LOI, please contact the appropriate Partner(s) for your project from the list below. Your request to the appropriate Partner(s) should contain specifics of your project such as field measurements (including square footage), timeline, your organization's financial capacity and plans for covering the project's cost beyond the assistance of the Foundation's grant funding. **Please allow a minimum of 15 business days for each corporate partner to return a completed project quote to you. Organizations contacting a corporate partner less than 15 days prior to an LOI deadline may not be accepted for that particular grant cycle.**

- **Synthetic Turf:** Hellas Construction, Inc. (Sara Gutierrez: [Sarag@hellasconstruction.com](mailto:Sarag@hellasconstruction.com))
    - ([Click here to download project info to send your request to Hellas Construction](#))
  - **Lighting:** Musco Lighting (Visit <http://www.musco.com/soccergrant/> and complete the form)
  - **Irrigation:** Hunter Industries (Lynda Wightman: [lynda.wightman@hunterindustries.com](mailto:lynda.wightman@hunterindustries.com))
  - **Sport Court:** Sport Court (Joel McCausland: [jmccausland@sportcourt.com](mailto:jmccausland@sportcourt.com))
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The ***Safe Places to Play LOI*** may be submitted online and consists of the following items:

1. Organization name and location.
2. Documentation of tax-exempt status.
3. Indicate what type(s) of funding your organization is requesting (Synthetic Turf, Lighting, Irrigation, Sport Court) as well as the level of funding requested. You may request funding in multiple categories in a single grant cycle.
4. Project budget from appropriate Foundation partner:
  - **Synthetic Turf:** Hellas Construction, Inc. (Sara Gutierrez: [Sarag@hellasconstruction.com](mailto:Sarag@hellasconstruction.com) - ([Click here to download project info to send your request to Hellas Construction](#)))
  - **Lighting:** Musco Lighting (Visit <http://www.musco.com/soccergrant/> and complete the form)
  - **Irrigation:** Hunter Industries (Lynda Wightman: [lynda.wightman@hunterindustries.com](mailto:lynda.wightman@hunterindustries.com))
  - **Sport Court:** Sport Court (Joel McCausland: [jmccausland@sportcourt.com](mailto:jmccausland@sportcourt.com))
5. Funding capacity for project completion (must possess at least 50% of project total).
6. Construction timeline including completion date.
7. Description of your project, including who the project will serve, why the community needs the project, and the current funding and planning status of the project.

## Timeline

Within three weeks of submitting a LOI, organizations will receive one of two responses:

(1) An invitation to complete a full application for a *Safe Places to Play* grant, which will be completed online.

(2) A brief explanation of why an organization was not invited to formally apply (i.e. – eligibility issues, does not match the Foundation’s mission, etc.).

***\*It is highly recommended you submit your LOI at least one week before the deadline so that if there are issues that must be addressed you can resubmit for review before the deadline. There are no exceptions to the LOI or Application deadline.***

### **Safe Places to Play Grant Awards**

- *Safe Places to Play* grants are mostly in-kind grants and function as a credit with the respective vendor. Once signed grant agreements and required certificates of insurance are submitted, the grantee works with the appropriate vendor to complete the field project. Once the project is completed, the vendor submits a Certificate of Completion to the Foundation and a credit for the appropriate dollar amount is applied to the grantee’s bill with the vendor. **Awards are announced approximately 2 months after the Application deadline.**

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### **Program Grant Applicants:**

1. The Program Grant application **does not** require a Letter of Interest (LOI). The application is available to all eligible organizations, as defined in the Guide to Grants (tax-exempt and operating soccer programming in the United States).
2. The application will be available on the Foundation’s website September 1, 2016. **The application deadline is October 7, 2016. Awards are announced approximately 2 months after the Application deadline.**
3. Please sign up for our email list (which you can do on our homepage: [www.ussoccerfoundation.org](http://www.ussoccerfoundation.org)) to be notified when the application is available.

### **Program Grant Awards**

- Cash awards are dispersed in one lump sum. Grantees are required to submit two reports (one in July and one in December) accounting for how the money was spent and noting specific outcomes related to the use of the grant money.
- Equipment credits with [www.soccer.com](http://www.soccer.com) and/or [www.kwikgoal.com](http://www.kwikgoal.com) are released once signed grant agreements and certificates of insurance are submitted to the Foundation. Grantees work directly with the Foundation’s representative at Soccer.com and/or KwikGoal to build equipment orders in line with their grant application. Equipment orders are then submitted to the Foundation for approval; once approved, the order is shipped to the grantee and billed to the Foundation.

## Reporting Requirements

### ***Safe Places to Play Grants***

- *Safe Places to Play* grantees must submit before and after pictures of their field projects.
- *Safe Places to Play* grantees must submit six and twelve month progress reports. This reporting is completed through an online portal provided to organizations awarded a grant.

### **Program Grants**

- Program grantees must submit six and twelve month progress reports. This reporting is completed through an online portal provided to organizations awarded a grant. These reports include empirical data and narrative responses about the impact of the Foundation's grant on an organization's programming as well as reporting how grant money was spent, noting specific outcomes related to the use of the grant money.

## Insurance and Grant Agreement Requirements

- Provide Proof of Commercial General Liability insurance for at least \$2,000,000 in aggregate
- Provide Proof of Automotive Liability insurance for at least \$1,000,000 each accident
- Provide Proof of Workers Compensation insurance for at least \$1,000,000
- Provide Proof of Umbrella and/or Excess insurance for at least \$2,000,000
- If applicable, provide proof of Builder's Risk Property insurance during course of installation
- Add the U.S. Soccer Foundation as an "additional insured" to all insurance coverages prior to grant execution
- The field project can include the U.S. Soccer Foundation logo, as well as other potential funder logos

## Characteristics of a Strong Application

### **Well-Written Application**

- No typos or spelling mistakes; no evidence that answers were copied and pasted from another application; all questions are answered and all required documents are included. Please proofread all submissions.

### **Youth Development Focus**

- The mission of the Foundation is to use soccer as a vehicle for social change; programs and projects must have an intentional focus on one or more aspects of youth development (health, education, safety, etc.).

### **Underserved**

- The priority of the Annual Grants program is to fund organizations that work with players in underserved communities. Underserved may be defined in the sense of socioeconomic hardship, soccer-playing opportunities, or both. Organizations from suburban or rural areas are welcome to apply (and the Foundation has funded such groups before).

### **Diverse Funding Sources**

- Diverse funding sources (other foundations, corporations, individuals, etc.) show the Foundation that an applicant is financially sustainable and is not solely dependent on one or two sources of funding.
- The amount of funding requested from the Foundation should not account for more than 50% of a program or project budget.
  - Please use your best judgment on this guideline; if your organization provides strictly soccer programming, then this guideline applies to your entire budget. If you are applying on behalf of a soccer program run by a school district, this guideline applies to the budget for the soccer program, not the entire school district.

### **Sustainability**

- The Foundation wants to be confident that the programs and projects funded through the Annual Grants cycle are sustainable. One-time events (such as camps or clinics) are not eligible for funding.
- Start-up and long-established programs are both eligible for funding; each organization should demonstrate what they have done in the past (if already established) and/or what they plan to do in the future (both financially and programmatically) to sustain themselves.

### **Community Impact**

- The Foundation seeks to fund programs and projects that have a tangible impact on their community; a thorough measurement and evaluation strategy is highly important.

### **Players Served**

- The Foundation strives to fund quality programming for the largest number of players possible; organizations need not serve hundreds or thousands of players, but the amount of the grant request should appropriately correspond to the size and scope of the program.

### **Funding Capacity**

- The Foundation's resources limit the percentage of each *Safe Places to Play* project that it can fund through this grant opportunity. Applications should exhibit a strong funding capacity (applicants must possess at least 50% of project funds in order to apply). Applications that exhibit the ability to complete a *Safe Places to Play* project within 12 months (18 month maximum) are also deemed strong applications.

### **Why Strong Programs Do Not Always Get Funded:**

- Limited Resources – like most funders, the U.S. Soccer Foundation has limited resources; as a result, every year there are high-performing, mission-aligned programs and projects that do not get funded.
- Highly Competitive – each year the Foundation receives approximately 600 applications and is able to award approximately 40-50 grants; the Foundation encourages organizations to re-apply every year they are eligible, as the pool of applicants is different each year.

### **Feedback**

- Unfortunately, due to the large volume of applications, the Foundation staff is unable to give feedback on specific applications.