

PARTNERSHIPS LAB

Central Park Conservancy
Institute for Urban Parks

2023 APPLICATION





About the Central Park Conservancy

The mission of the Central Park Conservancy is to preserve and celebrate Central Park as a sanctuary from the pace and pressures of city life, enhancing the enjoyment and wellbeing of all.

Central Park is a masterpiece of landscape architecture created to be a green respite for the City and all its people, and to establish New York as one of the great cities of the world. The Conservancy honors its commitment to this iconic public space by applying its deep expertise in urban park management, partnering with the community and the City of New York, and marshaling all of the resources necessary for the Park's long-term care. The Conservancy's work is founded on the belief that citizen leadership and private philanthropy are key to ensuring that the Park and its essential purpose endure.

About the Institute for Urban Parks

Helping other parks is a core value of the Central Park Conservancy and is part of our organizational mission. Since its earliest days, the Conservancy has provided support to parks throughout New York City and across the globe.

The Central Park Conservancy Institute for Urban Parks, founded in 2013, draws on the Conservancy's history and expertise as a leader in the field of urban park management and public-private partnerships. We carry out our work through a variety of program areas, including continuing education, capacity building, thought leadership, and peer-to-peer exchange so that urban park organizations have the knowledge and tools to develop and maintain great public spaces.

About the Partnerships Lab

The Partnerships Lab exists to support urban parks and open spaces in solving complex organizational challenges so that their communities receive the social, economic, environmental, and health benefits that well-cared-for parks and open spaces provide. For 10 months, the Institute embeds itself within chosen organizations, serving the role of facilitator, project manager, and advisor. Unlike other fellowship programs, the Partnerships Lab empowers participants to take ownership of the process and make choices that maximize impact for their organizations and communities.



Partnership Benefits

The Partnerships Lab provides accepted organizations with dedicated staff time, custom workshops and training opportunities, access to a diverse array of expert knowledge, and a cohort of peer organizations from across the country.

For the 2023 program, the Institute will select organizations based in New York City and across the United States.

REGULAR MEETINGS

The Institute team will meet regularly with each organization to provide facilitation, project management support, and advising. These meetings provide a safe space to workshop challenges and new ideas, ask questions, create accountability, and keep projects on track.

RESOURCES AND EXPERT KNOWLEDGE

The Institute provides access to a broad array of expertise from across the Conservancy and beyond to support the specific needs of the project. External partners may include subject-matter experts in fields such as development and fundraising, operations and management, and communications, among others. Partners also receive tailored benchmark research that leverages the Institute's robust peer network to generate relevant and applicable best practices for the organization.

FRAMEWORK

The Institute, in collaboration with each partner organization, will design a structured program to address the partner organization's challenge. The Institute will also work with each partner at the outset of the program to evaluate their organizational vision, refine their proposed goals and schedule, and determine the expertise and assistance required to successfully achieve those goals.

WORKSHOPS AND TRAININGS

Through the Lab, partners receive custom workshops and trainings designed to meet their specific challenge. Expert facilitators will guide each partner through a process of consensus-building and real-time implementation of new skills.

NETWORK

The Partnerships Lab brings together organizations from New York City and around the country to form a single cohort. The program provides shared experiences, such as a multiday kick-off retreat and a cohort training series, that enable partners to build working relationships with other open space organizations and develop a peer network.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT OF FUNDERS

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The JPB Foundation

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Ira & Susan Millstein
Donald A. Pels Charitable Trust
Sarah Peter
The Prospect Hill Foundation, Inc.
The Booth Ferris Foundation



Eligibility

Organizations that meet the following criteria will be considered for the program. Successful applicants must:

- Manage or support urban parks or open spaces that serve a diverse and/or underserved population, as defined by the applicant. These spaces may include BIDs, open streets or spaces, botanic gardens, citywide organizations, and others.
- Aspire to build the capacity of the organization for long-term success, as defined by the applicant. Projects related to strategic planning, board development, fundraising and communications, community engagement, operational strategy, and/or partnership agreements will be prioritized.
- Have a dedicated leadership team of decision-makers who can commit to a 10-month partnership, including regular virtual meetings and engagement with peers.
- Have an active 501(c)3 status or be a public city, state, or federal agency that has identified a nonprofit partner for a joint application.

Selection Criteria

The Institute will review all complete applications and select partners based on the following criteria:

ARTICULATION OF CHALLENGE

Clear and concise articulation of a specific challenge that, if met, would allow the organization to better achieve its vision for the organization and the park or open space. Recognizing that challenges can be broad and complex, applicants should articulate a prioritized outcome and describe all previous attempts to address the challenge.

ARTICULATION OF NEED

Clear and concise articulation of the organization's need for assistance from the Institute, as opposed to a traditional consulting process, to address the identified challenge. Please include why the organization cannot overcome the challenge without the Institute's engagement.

CRITICAL STAKEHOLDERS

Identification and prioritization of the stakeholders related to the project, both inside and outside your organization, whose buy-in will be critical to the success of the project.

COMMITMENT TO EQUITY

Clear and concise articulation of how achieving the stated goal will provide social, economic, environmental, cultural, and/or health benefits to urban residents. Considerations include age, ability/disability, gender, race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, language, and/or sexuality.

COMMITMENT TO PARTNERSHIP

Commitment from a minimum of two members of your leadership team to participate in the program through consistent communication and regular meetings with the Institute team. This includes 10 months of standing biweekly check-ins, regular peer-to-peer meetings, and additional engagement as needed. Participants are expected to be proactive and will be responsible for up to four hours of additional work per week outside of regularly scheduled meetings.

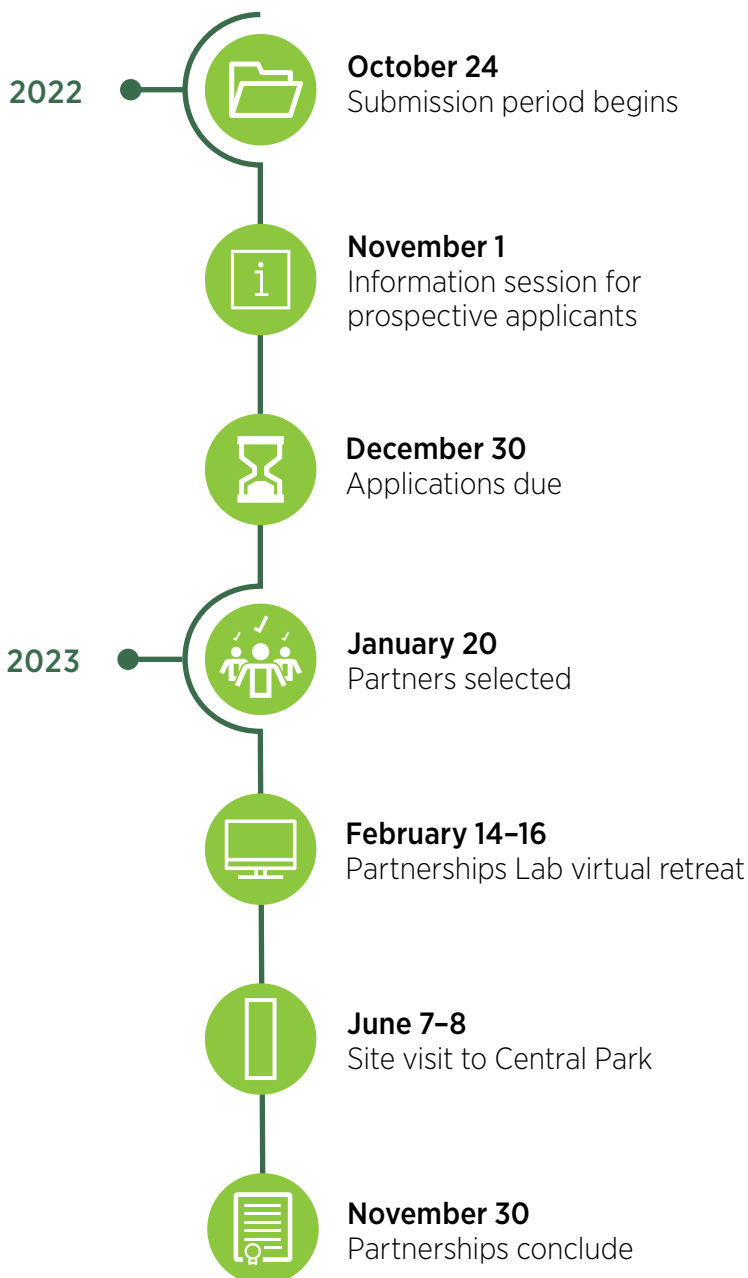
WILLINGNESS

The Partnerships Lab is a good fit for participants seeking thought partners to provide alternative solutions and processes. This requires an open-minded approach and the willingness to have perspectives challenged.



Program Schedule

Partnerships will begin in February 2023 and will conclude in November 2023. A more in-depth project schedule will be defined collaboratively by the partner and the Institute team at the outset of the partnership.



Application

(Part I)

SUBMIT ALL APPLICATIONS TO BOTH:

Grey Elam

Director of NYC Programs

gelam@centralparknyc.org

Sarah Tracy

Director of National Programs

stracy@centralparknyc.org

For more information about the Partnerships Lab, visit us online at centralparknyc.org/institute/partnerships-lab

Applications will be accepted throughout the open submission period. During this time, prospective applicants are encouraged to schedule a meeting to discuss their application with an Institute Program Director by contacting Grey Elam (NYC) or Sarah Tracy (National). After the application is submitted, an Institute staff member may request clarification and/or additional information from individual applicants.

The full application package must be submitted no later than 5:00 pm ET on Friday, December 30, 2022.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Please submit all of the following materials in a single PDF document:

• Personal Statement

Please see the following section for personal statement guidelines.

• Site Information

Provide a map of the park or open space with context, including acreage, surrounding neighborhoods, and important or relevant points of reference, as well as a summary or study of community or neighborhood demographics.

• Organization Report

Provide an annual report or summary for your park and/or organization. If there are any additional planning materials, including master plans, strategic plans, or fundraising plans, please include them.

• Financial Information

Provide your organization's:

- Most recent Form 990 or audited financial statements. If your organization does not have a financial report, provide a summary of expenditures and revenue sources.
- Annual operating budget
- Staff size
- Board size, along with any board committee structures

• Program Participants

Provide the names, titles, and emails of the organizational representatives that will be participating in the Partnerships Lab.

• Letters of Support

Provide three letters of support for the application. Letters of support are meant to demonstrate buy-in at all levels of the organization, including leadership, board members, community leaders, or external partners when applicable. We recommend considering whose support is necessary for your project to be successful when selecting letters. Please note, three letters are both the minimum and maximum requirement.

Application

(Part II)

PERSONAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES:

Applicants should respond to the following prompts in no more than six single-spaced pages using 12-point font.

Summary/Overview

- Applicant Details: List the lead applicant's name, title, organization, mailing address, email, phone number, website, and relevant social media accounts.
- Project Abstract: In 300 words or less, summarize the identified challenge, intended outcome, and anticipated obstacles.

Organization Vision, Challenges, and Goals

- What is the specific challenge you seek to address in the Partnerships Lab?
- Why is the Partnerships Lab the right venue to explore this challenge?
- At the end of 10 months, where would you hope to be as a result of the Partnerships Lab?
- How would working on this challenge help your organization address equity in your community?
- How would working on this challenge help you realize your organization's long-term vision?
- Why is this challenge timely?

Partnership

- How will your organization commit to an engaged and collaborative relationship with the Institute during the partnership?
- Who are your existing community, governmental, or nonprofit partners? Which communities might need to be involved in this effort, and which communities would be most affected by a successful outcome?
- Describe your organization's willingness to think differently about your challenge.