peco
AN EXELON COMPANY

20 YEARS

GREEN REGION

OPEN SPACE PROGRAM

administered by Natural Lands

2026 GRANT ROUND PROGRAM GUIDELINES

Purpose:

Recognizing that open space in our communities is crucial to the quality of our lives, PECO has committed to supporting municipalities, recreational authorities, and non-profits in southeastern Pennsylvania with their ongoing efforts to preserve, protect, and improve public spaces and increase our collective tree cover. PECO designed the PECO Green Region Open Space Program to assist local communities in these efforts by providing funding for some expenses not otherwise covered by state or county programs. ***Underlying the Green Region Program is PECO's endorsement of enhancing tree cover and equitable access to the outdoors through deliberate planning for open space protection as a means to encourage the wisest use of scarce resources.***

Application Deadline: 5:00 PM, Friday, November 13, 2026

Applications:

- The PECO Green Region Grant Application, as well as Program Guidelines, can be accessed through the Natural Lands website at **natlands.org/peco**, or through the PECO website at **https://www.peco.com/SafetyCommunity/Environment/Pages/OurInitiatives.aspx**.
- All grant applications must be submitted through the PECO Green Region Open Space Program online application portal. User names and passwords do not expire and can be utilized from one grant round to the next.
- **Please format all attachments to the application as PDFs or JPEGs.**

Eligible Applicants:

- Any township, borough, city, or regional recreational authority ***within PECO's service territory*** **in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, or York Counties**. Eligible applicants must receive gas and/or electric service from PECO. Please check with the PECO Green Region Program Administrator if you are unsure if your municipality is eligible.
- **Incorporated non-profit organizations within the City of Philadelphia**, including neighborhood organizations such as "Friends" groups, but exclusive of religious organizations unless programs are non-denominational.
- PECO does not provide grants to individuals.
- Recipients of PECO Green Region funding awards from the 2025 Round are ineligible to apply for the 2026 Round. Recipients of PECO Green Region funding awards from the 2024 Round and prior are eligible to apply to the 2026 Round once their prior award is officially closed out.

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Eligible Projects and Expenses:

- Improving open space owned by municipalities, organizations, or regional recreational authorities, not including property owned by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Funds may be used for habitat improvements, such as improving or installing woodlands, riparian buffers, and meadows. Funds may also be used for the installation of capital improvements for passive recreation, such as ADA accessibility improvements, trails, boardwalks, kiosks, observation platforms, and installation of LED and energy efficient lighting. Fund expenditures may also include planning costs or fees for consultants, such as landscape architects, park designers, botanists, and engineers.
- For the purposes of this program, passive recreation refers to activities that place minimal stress on a site's resources and as a result provide ecosystem service benefits, such as improved water and air quality.
- Developing or updating open space plans and feasibility studies. Expenses may include consultant fees, costs associated with obtaining public input (hall rental, advertising, etc.), and publication costs.
- Acquisition (by purchase or donation) of parcels of land to be used for open space. Expenses may include purchase costs, legal or consultant fees, surveying, environmental assessments, and appraisals.
- Acquisition (by purchase or donation) of conservation easements (also known as "development rights"). Eligible expenses may include purchase costs, legal or consultant fees, surveying, environmental assessments, and appraisals.
- In an effort to expand tree canopy in southeastern Pennsylvania, PECO encourages applicants to incorporate tree plantings into their application's project proposal, including details such as number and species of trees to be planted. While such endeavors are not a required element of the grant application, Review Committee members will look favorably upon their inclusion in the application.

Ineligible Projects and Expenses:

- Staff time for municipal, organizational, or regional recreational authority employees for any aspect of the project.
- Contractor and/or consultant fees for preparing grant applications.
- Relocation of owner/tenant, condemnation, or building repair/demolition.
- Parking lots, except for ADA improvements and/or installation or upgrades to LED lighting.
- Expenses not directly related to the use or access of land for open space and/or passive recreation. For example, construction of a public works storage facility.

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Grant Amounts and Timing:

- Grants are awarded in amounts **up to $10,000** and may be used to fund **up to 50%** of the project, with 50% or greater of project expenses covered by cash match.
- Applications will only be accepted electronically through the online application portal, which can be accessed through **natlands.org/peco**.
- **Applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM on Friday, October 30, 2026.**
- The municipality, non-profit organization, or regional recreational authority must have a source of funds, or be in the process of obtaining funds, to match or exceed the amount requested from the PECO Green Region Program. Matching funds must be in cash and must not be in-kind materials or services. Municipal or staff salaries may not be used as matching funds.
- Grant recipients are expected to **fully expend the grant funding within 18 months** of fund disbursement. Grant recipients must communicate in writing with the PECO Green Region Program Administrator if unforeseen circumstances cause a delay in meeting this deadline.
- Retroactive reimbursement for costs accrued after the application deadline but before the disbursement of grant funds may be allowed on a case-by-case basis. All requests for such reimbursement should be communicated in writing to the PECO Green Region Program Administrator.
- Within two months of the grant being fully expended, grant recipients must **submit a Final Report** and supporting documentation to the PECO Green Region Program Administrator to formally close out the grant. Grant recipients must communicate in writing with the PECO Green Region Program Administrator should unforeseen circumstances cause a delay in meeting this deadline.
- Grant recipients failing to meet these deadlines and/or to communicate in writing with the Program Administrator about the need for a deadline extension will be expected to return unspent funds to the PECO Green Region Program.
- Grant recipients may apply for an additional PECO Green Region grant once their grant award is closed out AND at least one regular (not anniversary) grant round has passed since the application submission date of the awarded project.

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Grant Conditions:

- The property and/or facility location of the project must be open to the general public and promote equal access to nature for all communities.
- If grant funds are used for acquisition of an interest in land, recipients must demonstrate that a restrictive covenant, deed restriction, conservation easement, or similar instrument will be recorded against the property stating that the property must be held in perpetuity for open space purposes.
- During the grant period, award recipients will agree to participate in press conferences or events, to be quoted in PECO literature describing the program, and to identify PECO as a funder in any materials produced to explain or promote the funded project. Draft versions of all promotional materials (press releases, articles, brochures, etc.) must be submitted to the PECO Green Region Program Administrator for approval before use.
- Within two months of the final expenditure of grant funds, the recipient will submit the Final Report form summarizing the work accomplished with the grant. Accompanying the Final Report will be an explanation justifying the use of the grant funds, backed by documentation of invoices, cancelled checks, etc., as necessary for the awarded project. Grant recipients will not be eligible to apply for additional PECO Green Region funding until a completed Final Report form is submitted and approved by the Program Administrator.
- Award recipients agree to acknowledge the use of PECO Green Region funds for the project. Wording will be supplied by PECO. If needed, 7.5" x 5.75" aluminum signs will be provided.

Review Committee:

Complete and eligible applications will be reviewed and evaluated by a committee comprised of county government officials, members of the region's non-profit land conservation community, and PECO representatives. Final decisions on award recipients and funding amounts will remain at the discretion of PECO.

Administrator:

Natural Lands, a private non-profit land conservancy with a more than 60-year history of protecting open space in southeastern Pennsylvania and the surrounding region, is the administrator of the PECO Green Region Open Space Program. Please address any questions to:

Kyle Rose, PECO Green Region Program Administrator
Natural Lands
1031 Palmers Mill Road
Media, PA 19063
610-353-5587, ext 211
krose@natlands.org