**Section 3030.20 Eligibility**

a) Agencies eligible for assistance under the LWCF grant program are any unit of local government with statutory authority to acquire, develop and maintain lands for public outdoor recreation purposes. This includes, but is not limited to, counties, townships, municipalities, park districts, conservation districts and forest preserve districts.

b) Grant assistance may be obtained for land acquisition costs (fee simple title or permanent easement, etc.) for public park and/or conservation purposes. The LWCF grant program shall operate on a reimbursement basis providing up to a maximum of 50% funding assistance on total approved project costs. Except, for jurisdictions having populations exceeding 2 million residents, maximum grant awards to any one project in a given year are limited to $750,000 for approved land acquisition projects. Counties serving a population exceeding 2 million residents are eligible for up to $1.15 million in annual LWCF grant funding for approved outdoor recreation acquisition projects. Municipalities with a population exceeding 2 million are eligible for up to $2.3 million in annual LWCF grant funding for approved projects. Eligible projects include, but are not limited to, acquisition of land for the following:

1) general park purposes such as community and neighborhood parks and playfields;

2) frontage on public surface waters for recreation use;

3) open space/conservation purposes to protect floodplains, wetlands, natural areas, wildlife habitat and unique geologic or biologic features; and

4) additions to such areas.

c) Acquisition of land from another public agency (excluding school districts) is not eligible for LWCF grant assistance.

d) Project costs for which reimbursement is sought cannot be incurred by the project applicant prior to grant approval notification or Department authorization. Costs incurred prior to Department approval are ineligible for grant assistance. For acquisition projects, costs are considered incurred when property deed, lease or other conveyance is accepted by the local sponsor or first payment is made on the project property or to an escrow account for the property. In addition, no purchase agreement, option, etc., or price negotiations shall be entered into without Department approval unless done in accordance with State statute.

e) No grant awards shall be awarded for the acquisition of land that will not be available for general public outdoor recreation use.

(Source: Amended at 27 Ill. Reg. 753, effective January 6, 2003)