



## 101ST GENERAL ASSEMBLY

### State of Illinois

2019 and 2020

**HB4412**

Introduced 2/3/2020, by Rep. Sonya M. Harper

#### SYNOPSIS AS INTRODUCED:

New Act  
30 ILCS 105/5.930 new

Creates the Outdoor Rx Program Act. Creates the Outside Rx Program to provide funds, through grants established by the Department of Public Health, for outdoor environmental, ecological, agricultural, or other natural resource or outdoor-based therapy programs serving the citizens of the State of Illinois. Requires the Department to establish an advisory committee to assist and advise the Department in the development and administration of the Outdoor Rx Program, including developing the form for an application for receipt of a grant. Provides that the Department shall set priorities and develop criteria for the awarding of grants to natural resource or outdoor-based therapy programs. Provides criteria for grant eligibility and selection. Provides that the Director of Public Health shall make the final decision on funding a program. Amends the State Finance Act. Creates the Outdoor Rx Program Fund as a special fund in the State treasury.

LRB101 17196 CPF 66598 b

FISCAL NOTE ACT  
MAY APPLY

A BILL FOR

1 AN ACT concerning health.

2 **Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois,**  
3 **represented in the General Assembly:**

4 Section 1. Short title. This Act may be cited as the  
5 Outdoor Rx Program Act.

6 Section 5. Intent. Studies have shown that time outdoors  
7 can be a valuable adjunct therapy in addition to more  
8 traditional health care, while also reducing reliance on  
9 prescription medication. The therapeutic benefits of time  
10 spent outdoors is clinically proven and known to help reduce  
11 stress, improve concentration, and promote overall well-being,  
12 both physical and mental. Natural resource and outdoor-based  
13 therapy programs, including adventure therapy, wilderness  
14 therapy, horticultural therapy, walk-and-talk therapy, and  
15 other nature-oriented programs, are currently being used by  
16 mental health professionals and are shown to have benefits,  
17 including, but not limited to, reduction of stress, restoration  
18 of attention, and an improved sense of well-being. Such outdoor  
19 programs aim to connect people with nature, thereby proving to  
20 be particularly beneficial to individuals undergoing a  
21 recovery process. Recognizing the healing benefits of natural  
22 resource or outdoor-based therapy programs to residents of the  
23 State, particularly veterans and individuals recovering from

1 substance abuse or a physical or mental trauma, the General  
2 Assembly supports the establishment of an Outdoor Rx Program.

3 Section 10. Definitions. In this Act:

4 "Department" means the Department of Public Health.

5 "Director" means the Director of Public Health.

6 "Fund" means the Outdoor Rx Program Fund.

7 Section 15. Outdoor Rx Program; Department rules.

8 (a) The Outdoor Rx Program is created to provide grants for  
9 outdoor environmental, ecological, agricultural, or other  
10 natural resource or outdoor-based therapy programs serving the  
11 citizens of the State of Illinois. The Department shall  
12 establish, implement, and administer the Outdoor Rx Program to  
13 provide grants for natural resource or outdoor-based therapy  
14 programs.

15 (b) The Department shall adopt any rules necessary for the  
16 implementation and administration of this Act.

17 Section 20. Advisory committee.

18 (a) The Department shall establish an advisory committee to  
19 assist and advise the Department in the development and  
20 administration of the Outdoor Rx Program. The advisory  
21 committee shall consist of at least 7 members, appointed as  
22 follows:

23 (1) at least one member appointed by the Director;

1           (2) at least one member appointed by the Director of  
2           Natural Resources;

3           (3) at least one member appointed by the Director of  
4           Veterans' Affairs;

5           (4) at least one member appointed by the Director of  
6           the Environmental Protection Agency;

7           (5) at least one member appointed by the Director from  
8           the business community;

9           (6) at least 2 members appointed by the Director from  
10          an outdoor organization; and

11          (7) any other members the Director deems sufficient to  
12          ensure a cross section of participants.

13          (b) The Advisory Committee shall develop an application  
14          form that eligible applicants shall be required to complete and  
15          submit in order to be considered for receipt of a grant under  
16          the Outdoor Rx Program.

17          Section 25. Outdoor Rx Program Fund.

18          (a) The Outdoor Rx Program Fund is created as a special  
19          fund in the State treasury. Moneys deposited into the Fund  
20          shall be used solely for the administration of the Outdoor Rx  
21          Program. The Department may accept gifts, grants, donations, or  
22          moneys from any source for deposit into the Fund. Any public  
23          agency in this State may use moneys in the Fund, subject to  
24          approval by the Director under subsection (c) of Section 35, to  
25          develop and implement natural resource or outdoor-based

1 therapy programs. The Department may award grants to public  
2 agencies and contract with any public or private agency or  
3 person to develop and implement natural resource or  
4 outdoor-based therapy programs under the Outdoor Rx Program.

5 (b) The Department shall establish limitations on the  
6 availability and use of Outdoor Rx Program moneys. However, any  
7 limitations shall be defined in the application package and the  
8 Department shall establish the limitations only after  
9 considering the following:

10 (1) consistency with the purpose of the Outdoor Rx  
11 Program, as stated in subsection (a) of Section 15; and

12 (2) availability of moneys.

13 (c) The Department may require applicants to make a  
14 matching contribution to be eligible for a grant to be awarded.

15 (d) The Department may limit the amount of funding  
16 available for any element of natural resource or outdoor-based  
17 therapy programs.

18 (e) The following conditions are placed on the use of  
19 moneys from the Fund:

20 (1) For every funded program, a contract shall be  
21 executed on behalf of the Department and by the grant  
22 recipient. The grant recipient shall not be reimbursed for  
23 costs incurred prior to the execution of the contract by  
24 both parties.

25 (2) The grant recipient shall ensure that all natural  
26 resource or outdoor-based therapy programs are in

1           accordance with any technical standards established by the  
2           Department.

3           (3) The grant recipient shall submit any reports  
4           required by the Department as directed in the funding  
5           contract.

6           (4) The grant recipient shall agree to and certify  
7           compliance with all applicable federal and State laws,  
8           regulations, and policies.

9           (5) Grant recipients shall maintain accurate  
10          accounting records on the expenditure of program moneys,  
11          provide the Department with such records consistent with  
12          the agreement or upon request, whichever is applicable, and  
13          permit the Department to audit the use of moneys in  
14          accordance with generally accepted audit practices and  
15          standards. The Department shall reserve the right to  
16          terminate its participation in any program that fails to  
17          perform according to the requirements of this Act.

18          (f) The Department may assess fees to grant recipients or  
19          Outdoor Rx Program participants for Outdoor Rx Program  
20          services.

21          (g) Moneys in the Fund shall be expended only for natural  
22          resource or outdoor-based therapy programs approved by the  
23          Director. To the extent practicable, the Director shall ensure  
24          that all moneys received during a fiscal year are expended  
25          prior to the end of that fiscal year.

1 Section 30. Eligibility criteria; applications;  
2 evaluation.

3 (a) The Director shall set priorities and develop criteria  
4 for the awarding of grants to outdoor environmental,  
5 ecological, agricultural, or other natural resource or  
6 outdoor-based therapy programs considering, at a minimum,  
7 programs that:

8 (1) utilize veterans for at least 50% of the program's  
9 implementation or administration;

10 (2) contribute to healthy lifestyles through outdoor  
11 recreation;

12 (3) will commit matching and in-kind resources;

13 (4) create partnerships with public and private  
14 entities;

15 (5) maximize the number of participants that can be  
16 served, particularly participants who are veterans or who  
17 are recovering from substance abuse or physical or mental  
18 trauma;

19 (6) use a State park, other natural venue, or  
20 Department personnel as a resource;

21 (7) make use of research-based and effective  
22 environmental, ecological, agricultural, or other natural  
23 resource or outdoor-based therapy;

24 (8) provide citizens of the State of Illinois with  
25 opportunities to directly experience and understand nature  
26 and the natural world; and

1           (9) include ongoing program evaluation, assessment,  
2           and reporting of program effectiveness.

3           (b) The Director shall select activities eligible for the  
4           awarding or grants. The activities may include, but need not be  
5           limited to, the following:

6                   (1) outdoor recreation;

7                   (2) outdoor environmental studies;

8                   (3) agricultural activities;

9                   (4) natural resource-based activities;

10                  (5) conservation;

11                  (6) ecological activities; and

12                  (7) stewardship or restoration.

13           (c) The following activities are ineligible for the  
14           awarding of grants from the Outdoor Rx Program:

15                   (1) activities that may be perceived to lobby or  
16                   advocate for political purposes;

17                   (2) activities that are not in compliance with local,  
18                   State, or federal laws; and

19                   (3) organized youth sports, such as a community league  
20                   or school team.

21           (d) The following criteria shall be used to evaluate  
22           applications:

23                   (1) proposals that provide for public or private  
24                   partnerships;

25                   (2) proposals that provide for innovative ways to  
26                   increase the availability and use of outdoor recreation



1 facilities;

2 (3) proposals that show consideration for the  
3 economics of installation or implementation to provide the  
4 greatest cost-to-benefit ratio, for example, where private  
5 parties contribute more than the minimum amount;

6 (4) proposals that commit matching and in-kind  
7 resources;

8 (5) proposals that use a State park, other natural  
9 venue, or Department personnel as a resource;

10 (6) proposals that contribute to healthy lifestyles  
11 through outdoor recreation and sound nutrition;

12 (7) proposals that contribute to the Statewide network  
13 of facilities or programs;

14 (8) proposals that encourage community involvement;

15 (9) proposals that encourage sound environmental  
16 practices;

17 (10) proposals that maximize the number of  
18 participants who can be served;

19 (11) proposals that provide an opportunity to  
20 experience the outdoors directly and understand nature and  
21 the natural world;

22 (12) proposals that include ongoing program  
23 evaluation, assessment, and reporting of program  
24 effectiveness;

25 (13) proposals that make use of research-based and  
26 effective environmental, ecological, agricultural, or

1 other natural resource-based therapy; and  
2 (14) proposals that demonstrate innovative approaches  
3 to outdoor-based therapy.

4 Section 35. Program selection.

5 (a) Completed applications shall be reviewed by the  
6 Department to determine eligibility and evaluated in  
7 accordance with the purposes, eligibility requirements,  
8 limitations, and evaluation criteria in this Act.

9 (b) The Department shall consult with and consider the  
10 recommendations of the Advisory Committee and present final  
11 recommendations to the Director.

12 (c) The Director shall make the final decision on funding a  
13 natural resource or outdoor-based therapy program.

14 Section 40. Report. On or before February 1 of each year,  
15 the Department shall issue a report to the General Assembly.  
16 The report shall state how the moneys from the Fund were  
17 utilized during the preceding calendar year and shall include:

18 (1) the amount of money deposited into the Fund during  
19 the preceding calendar year as the result of revenue  
20 derived under this Act;

21 (2) the amount of money disbursed from the Fund and the  
22 process used for such disbursements;

23 (3) recipients of grants from the Fund;

24 (4) the amount awarded to each grant recipient;

1 (5) the purposes for which such grants were awarded;

2 and

3 (6) a summary financial plan for Fund moneys, which  
4 shall include estimates of all receipts and all  
5 disbursements for the current and succeeding fiscal years,  
6 along with the actual results from the prior fiscal year.

7 Section 90. The State Finance Act is amended by adding  
8 Section 5.930 as follows:

9 (30 ILCS 105/5.930 new)

10 Sec. 5.930. The Outdoor Rx Program Fund.