




# TECHCON & PLAYGROUNDS FOR GOOD GRANT PROPOSAL



SUBMITTED TO:  
Western Foundation  
06/18/2023

June 18, 2023

Thomas Wiley, Director of Project Planning

**Western Foundation**

4456 South Capitol St.

Denver, CO 78655

Dear Mr. Wiley:

TechCon Consultants, a structural engineering firm, would like to give back to the community that it has served for the last several years. In order to do this, we have partnered with Playgrounds for Good (PFG) to build two community playgrounds throughout the underserved locations in the greater Mesa, AZ area. PFG is an organization that works with charities and individuals to provide community playgrounds to areas that do not already have the privilege of possessing said playgrounds.

In order to make this dream a reality, we are seeking a grant in the amount of \$150,000 from The Western Foundation. This grant would allow us to touch the lives of countless youth and their families through means that they don't currently have access to that are extremely beneficial to their physical & mental well-being.

While we at TechCon Consultants may just be structural engineers, we would love to work with the kind-hearted folks at PFG to give back to our community in a way we have previously been unable to do so. We would love the opportunity to provide strong benefits to the physical and mental health of today's youth and their families.

We thank you greatly for your consideration of this generous grant and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth Morrison, TechCon Consultants

## Serving Underserved Children

Not only are features such as air quality, crime, housing, and neighborhood disadvantage associated both positively and negatively with mental health, social cohesion & well-being are as well (Acolina et al., 2022). Green space is something that is often examined for having effects on mental & physical health in neighborhoods, though it often isn't considered exactly how that green space is being used. An article by Acolina et al. examines that relationship and explains further how the use of green space can be utilized to best benefit the children and families in our neighborhoods. Playgrounds within parks may offer additional benefits than strict "green space" by offering children opportunities to benefit from a neighborhood environment (Acolina et al.). After examining the results of a study, Acolina et al. determined that children living near a playground had fewer adjustment problems on average (2022). While all mental health benefits studied were not statistically significant, they were considered meaningful. Ultimately, this study determined that "moving beyond 'green space' to investigate specific features may be worthwhile" (Acolina et al., 2022). This study leans towards playgrounds being positive things for children, especially in neighborhoods where community may be lacking in the present moment.

Those of us at TechCon Consultants, with the gracious assistance of those at Playgrounds for Good, would like to take on a project to bring these greatly beneficial features to families that currently do not have easy access to them. We would like to purchase two pieces of vacant land in the greater Mesa, AZ area to convert to public playgrounds for the children and families of the community. This process would involve landscaping the pieces of vacant land to accommodate play structures and water fountains, purchasing materials to build play structures, and finally constructing the play structures for use. There are currently 209 parks in the greater Mesa, AZ area, so with this project, we hope to increase the public playground usage by nearly one whole percent. This number may sound small, but these parks will each service a minimum of approximately 200 visitors per day, providing valuable fresh air and physical activity time for many families.

## Project Plan

TechCon Consultants & PFG are requesting a grant in the amount of \$150,000 to bring two community/public playgrounds to fruition in the greater Mesa, AZ area. This grant will cover the costs of land, landscaping, materials, and labor/construction of the playgrounds. At the moment, PFG works primarily with charities and individuals looking to contribute to public playgrounds across the country, and they have graciously agreed to work alongside us at TechCon Consultants.

In order to begin this process, TechCon Consultants & the generous workers at PFG have scouted out several available plots of land in the underserved areas of Mesa, AZ that we can choose from, based on which land is still available for purchase at the time of grant receipt. All

of these plots have been pre-approved by the Land Committee to be re-zoned for the use of a public playground. From the point of purchasing land, we expect landscaping to be a fairly quick process. We have selected plots of land that do not require tremendous amounts of landscaping to cut back on our budget and allow the maximum land use for our future playgrounds. We expect, with the work of our committee and the community volunteers, landscaping will take us approximately three weeks to complete, for each playground.

Throughout the landscaping process, we will be purchasing the materials needed for our community playgrounds. This will be a slightly slower process due to the pandemic putting many materials on backorder, but we expect to have them all within one to two weeks after completing the landscaping portion of our projects. Since we can begin purchasing materials right away, we may purchase the materials for both playgrounds at the same time.

The final portion of our project comes down to the work of our structural engineers, PFG workers, and community volunteers, as we will need to begin construction on the playgrounds. We expect this to be the most time-consuming of the project portions, taking us about one month to complete, per each playground.

## Qualifications

The proposed playground projects will be overseen by structural engineers from TechCon Consultants' engineering firm and led by PFG's experienced team of playground builders. All structural engineers at TechCon Consultants have been thoroughly vetted and have attended a minimum of four years of college in the field, though many have exceeded this with continuing education and master's degrees. They have also received background checks to round out their qualifications. The playground builders have also been thoroughly vetted with background checks and physicals to determine their eligibility to work alongside the communities that they serve.

## Costs

The allotted \$150,000 will be spent on all aspects of the playgrounds to be built, including the purchase of land, landscaping, materials, and labor/construction. The costs will completely cover the purchase and construction of both playgrounds that we intend to build. The cost breakdown is as follows for each playground:

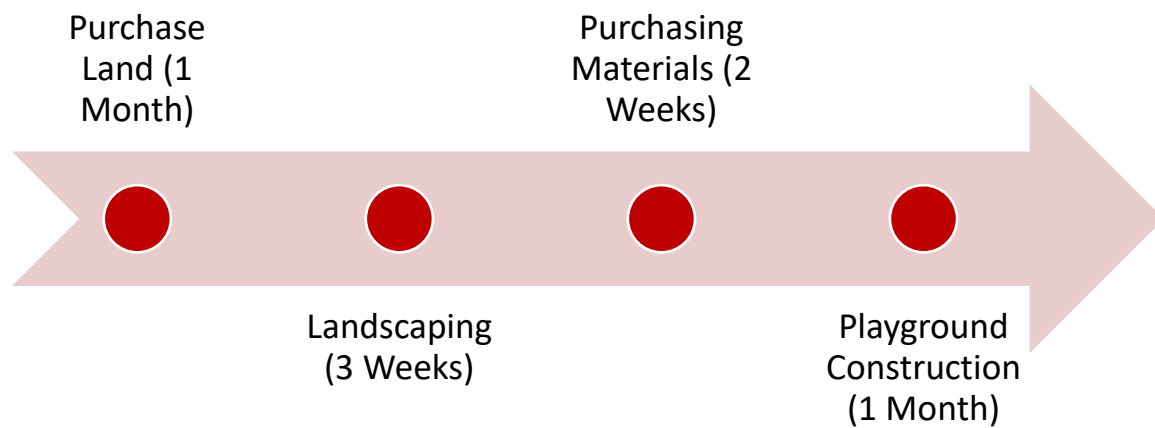
***Table 1: Project Budget***

<b>Breakdown</b>	<b>Cost</b>
Land	\$37,500
Landscaping	\$12,500
Materials	\$12,500
Labor/Construction	\$12,500

<b>Total</b>	<b>\$150,000</b>
\$75,000 x 2 Playgrounds = \$150,000	

The cost of labor and landscaping are factored in at \$12,500 each (per playground), though we are expecting volunteers to participate in the project that may potentially decrease costs overall.

*Figure 1: Project Timeline*



## Benefits

Community playgrounds offer many benefits to the children and families that utilize them each and every day. Public playgrounds offer endless opportunities for children and families to gain health and wellness benefits, in addition to the community building benefits that they provide. According to Active Southern West Virginia, public playgrounds are a “great place for kids and adults to get outside, breathe fresh air, and engage in physical activity” (2023). In a world where children suffer greatly from things like obesity, getting in fresh air and physical activity is nothing *but* beneficial. Active Southern West Virginia continues on to say that public playgrounds offer benefits where kids can “make new friends, learn to work together, and develop important social skills (2023). These are all critical social and well-being skills to develop at an early age to make life easier into adolescence, teenage years, and even adulthood.

Some of the community building benefits that come from public and community playgrounds come about when children and families are able to interact with each other in community spaces. When families are able to enjoy their community with other members of said community, they are able to bond and find familiar ground that helps us all coexist in a pleasant society. These community building benefits also extend to the aforementioned point of

children making friends, which helps strengthen the community in addition to building children's social and emotional skills.

## Conclusion

Completing this project with your assistance via your generous grant will impact the lives of so many underserved youth & families, TechCon Consultants & GFP workers, as well as the volunteers that show up to lend a hand with our project. The families and children will be physically and emotionally enriched by the project, while TechCon Consultants & GFP workers will have the honor to work alongside them to see their dreams and visions come true. The volunteers will gain not only real-world experience that can benefit them in their daily lives, but the joy of working for a common goal of good. Ultimately, this project can benefit all of those involved, including the generous donors at The Western Foundation.

## Works Cited

- Acolin, J., Hajat, A., Nurius, P. S., & Lengua, L. J. (2022, March 9). *Playgrounds are for children: Investigating developmentally-specific “green space” and child mental health*. SSM - Mental Health. <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666560322000275>
- Active places: The importance of Public Playgrounds*. Active Southern West Virginia. (2023, February 22). <https://activeswv.org/2023/02/active-places-the-importance-of-public-playgrounds/>