



**Application for Community  
Preservation Funding  
For Projects Requesting \$25,000 or more**

**1. PROJECT NAME: LES Playground Improvement Project**

**2. APPLICANT INFORMATION:**

Project Sponsor or Organization: Leverett Elementary School

Address: 85 Montague Rd

City, State, Zip: Leverett, MA 01054

Daytime Phone: (413) 548-9144

Email: [adina@leverettschool.org](mailto:adina@leverettschool.org)

Property Owner (if different from Applicant)

Contact Name

Address

City, State, Zip

**3. PROJECT INFORMATION:**

CPA Category (Please check all that apply):

Open Space

Historic Preservation

☒ Recreation

Affordable Housing # of Units

Project Location/Address: 85 Montague Rd, Leverett, MA 01054

Brief Project Description:

**4. AMOUNT OF CPA FUNDING REQUESTED: \$147,527.41**

**For CPC Use**

Date Received

Funding Recommendation

Date Application Deemed Complete

Public Hearing

## **B. PROJECT NARRATIVE**

### **1. Goals and Description:**

#### **A. Project Goals:**

The Leverett Elementary School (LES) is a rural elementary school located in Leverett, Massachusetts with a prekindergarten through sixth grade student population of about 140 students. The broader community of Leverett consists of approximately 11% of children under the age of 18 (US Census, 2020). LES is an inclusive setting and our student population includes students with autism, communication disorders, developmental delays, neurological disorders, vision impairments and physical impairments. About 22% of our students are identified as Students with Disabilities and have IEPs for a variety of challenges related to communication, social emotional skills, motor skills, sensory processing, cognition, and executive functioning. Another 3% of students have 504 plans.

The Leverett Elementary School (LES) playground serves as the sole playground available to the entire Leverett community. It is utilized both during school hours by the students, and at all other times by the community. The playground serves as a central location for various community programs and PTO sponsored events throughout the year.

Leverett is also home to a large senior population, comprising around 35% of its residents. The school grounds and building are used by the Leverett Council on Aging and the town's basketball and pickleball clubs. Additionally, many grandparents within the community play a vital role in supervising and engaging in children's outdoor activities after school and throughout the summer months. The playground, although frequently visited, features a play structure that is seldom used. This underutilization stems from substantial accessibility barriers, persistent and significant deterioration, and a deficient quantity and variety of inclusive and accessible play options.

The Town of Leverett conducted an ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan in June of 2018, identifying the LES Main Playground as being out of compliance with ADA requirements, citing that the playground: is not located on an accessible route, lacks accessible routes to each element within the playground, and lacks a sufficient number of accessible play components. Beginning this school year, Leverett Elementary School is partnering with the Champions Out of School Care program to provide after school care. This partnership required the indoor and outdoor spaces that the students would be using to be inspected by a licenser from the Department of Early Education and Care (EEC). Several of the LES playground structures did not meet the specifications, resulting in students unable to use those structures during the after school program. Some of the problems cited include the play structure being inaccessible to students with disabilities, not having approved surfacing, and structure materials not meeting certain specifications. This 3rd party review also found additional issues such as the swings failing to have adequate fall space, resulting in restricting their use during after school. The Playground Improvement Project aims to address each of these issues and more by: bringing the playground into ADA compliance, increasing accessibility, improving playground safety, encouraging playground equipment use by all abilities, and providing accessible outdoor recreational opportunities to be shared across generations.

With the award of Community Preservation funding, we propose to: demolish and remove the existing playground structure, prepare the playground site, install a fully ADA compliant and inclusive playground structure and accompanying components, install ADA compliant

Engineered Wood Fiber surfacing, and install Massachusetts Architectural Access Board approved ADA compliant rubber matting.

The proposed Leverett Elementary Playground Improvement Project will bring the playground into ADA compliance by including a wide variety of accessible play equipment accessed from the ground and elevated, providing accessible routes connecting all play components of the new structure with MAAB approved ADA compliant rubber mats, and installing safe, ADA-compliant Engineered Wood Fiber (EWF) surfacing. Over the past two years, the Playground Committee has worked diligently to engage a broad range of stakeholders, including students, staff, and community members, gathering valuable input through multiple rounds of feedback.

The Committee researched accessible and inclusive playground components, met with a variety of playground vendors, and reviewed various renderings to arrive at a playground design (attached) that we feel will provide the maximum benefit of outdoor play to users of all abilities.

Awarding the requested amount from the Community Preservation fund to the LES Improvement Project would be a significant investment in the Leverett community. This funding would greatly support our town's continuous dedication to fostering inclusivity and accessibility within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.

#### **B. Project Activities and Outcomes Description**

The Playground Committee began planning the LES Playground Improvement Project over 2 years ago with the data collection phase of the project, evaluating the current playground, its use by the community and school children, and getting feedback from LES staff members and students about the significant challenges of the current play structure. The community members were surveyed about what they hoped to see in a new inclusive and ADA compliant playground. Once we possessed data that specifically identified ADA accessibility and inclusive play components as priorities for the Playground Improvement Project, we began researching funding opportunities for the project, and discovered that the project would be well-suited for Community Preservation funding.

The proposed Leverett Elementary Playground Improvement Project will bring the playground into ADA compliance by providing accessible routes connecting all play components of the new structure, including a wide variety of accessible play equipment, and installing safe, ADA-compliant surfacing. The new playground includes a diverse array of options for different kinds of play and enjoyment. The completion of this project will allow more students and community members to engage with the playground and its surroundings, which is a hub for many activities within the town and school. The new design will not only expand playground and school ground usage but will also provide a safe environment for those who find joy and delight in it.

The Playground Committee has carefully considered each component in the inclusive and accessible playground design, far exceeding minimum requirements for ADA compliance; including 9 ground level activities of 5 different activity types throughout the structure, a transfer station and ADA accessible stairs that allow for users to access and enjoy a variety of 8 elevated play activities. The playground design includes Engineered Wood Fiber as the ADA

accessible surfacing with MAAB approved ADA rubberized mats placed on top of the surfacing to provide accessible paths through and around each playground activity.

Our proposed design includes the following elements accessible from the ground: inclusive seesaw, communication board, sensory panels, bell, flower stand, chinning bars, and dip stations. Using the transfer point and ADA stairs, various climbers and a museum washer play panel can be accessed. The design encourages imaginative play and includes components that provide enrichment and engagement with children's sensory systems, which support children's development in various areas, including motor skills, cognitive functions, and social-emotional growth. Components selected in our design stimulate each of the following sensory systems: Visual System (Sight), Auditory System (Hearing), Tactile System (Touch), Vestibular System (Balance and Movement), Proprioceptive System (Body Position), and Interoceptive System (Internal Sensations). In addition to the mentioned activity features of the new playground design, we have thoughtfully included components that encourage connection and communication among all users. These include a communication board to enhance inclusivity and aid communication, and a buddy bench to encourage friendship and inclusion. Recognizing that the Leverett Elementary School Playground is a central recreational space for the entire Leverett community, fostering connection and engagement among residents of all ages, the design prioritizes intergenerational play in addition to meeting the diverse needs of children.

There are no proposed user fees for the playground to further increase accessibility.

### **C. Indication of how the project is eligible for CPA funding.**

Funds generated through the CPA can be used for outdoor recreation, including projects that create or improve community gardens, trails, parks and playgrounds.

The Leverett Elementary School playground is eligible for Community Preservation Act (CPA) funds in Massachusetts because the project satisfies the following requirements for funding:

- **Outdoor Recreational Facility:** The LES playground is an outdoor, land-based recreational facility.
- **Capital Project:** The LES Playground Improvement Project is a capital improvement, the goal of this project is to rehabilitate existing facilities.
- **Public Land:** The LES playground is on public land, or land that is protected as open space or recreational use in the community's control.
- **Public Access & Use:** The LES playground is available for broad public use and benefit.
- **Inclusive Design:** The LES Playground Improvement Project incorporates inclusive design, accessibility for all abilities, and appropriate safety surfacing, which have been identified as priorities for CPA funding.

**D. Description of the project applicant and any project partners.**

Siby Adina, Principal, Leverett Elementary School. [adina@leverettschool.org](mailto:adina@leverettschool.org)

Marjorie McGinnis, Town Administrator and ADA Coordinator, Town of Leverett.  
[townadministrator@leverett.ma.us](mailto:townadministrator@leverett.ma.us)

Chris Cole, Head Custodian, Leverett Elementary School - [cole@leverettschool.org](mailto:cole@leverettschool.org)

Brieta Goodwin, LES Parent, Class of 2030. Union 28 Community Network for Children Program Assistant, a Coordinated Family and Community Engagement (CFCE) funded program. [brietagoodwin@gmail.com](mailto:brietagoodwin@gmail.com)

Sadie Graham, Physical Education Teacher, Leverett Elementary School and member of Town of Leverett Recreation Committee. [graham@leverettschool.org](mailto:graham@leverettschool.org)

Adam Hartwell, LES Parent, Class of 2030. Director of Attainable Outreach for MEFA and Community Access Monitor for the Massachusetts Office On Disability.  
[Adam.F.Hartwell@gmail.com](mailto:Adam.F.Hartwell@gmail.com)

Anne-Elise Olsen, LES Parent, Class of 2030. Registered Nurse; former Leverett Elementary School Committee member. [anne.elise.olsen@gmail.com](mailto:anne.elise.olsen@gmail.com)

Seth Wilschutz, LES Parent, Class of 2028. Licensed Architect in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; previous project management with elementary playground procurement and installation. [seth.wilschutz@gmail.com](mailto:seth.wilschutz@gmail.com)

The Leverett Elementary Special Education/ Therapeutic Team was consulted as well as other staff, students, and community members.

**2. Community Need:** Indicate what community need(s) the project will address and how these are consistent with Town policy and plans. Describe the ways that the project will benefit the Town.

Leverett Elementary School and its surrounding grounds function as a vital community recreation center in the rural Town of Leverett. As the largest Town structure, the school plays a significant role in community life. The LES playground is used by students in grades K-6 during the school day. It is also utilized by Leverett families and nearby communities in the evenings on the weekends, and throughout the summer. Unfortunately, several of the current playground components **cannot** be used during the Champions After School Program as they failed to meet safety standards according to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party safety inspection from the Department of Early Childhood and Care.

Leverett is part of Franklin County, which has a disability rate exceeding the state average. Furthermore, Leverett Elementary School, open to choice students from the county and inviting play from nearby communities, serves a population where a higher incidence of disabilities is likely. About 22% of our student population are Students with Disabilities and have IEPs for a variety of challenges related to communication, social emotional skills, motor skills, sensory processing, cognition, and executive functioning. Another 3% have 504 plans. Additionally, 11.3% of the Leverett town population identify as persons with disabilities.

The anticipated completion of the LES Playground Improvement Project is expected to significantly benefit individuals with disabilities in our community. The primary outcome for the playground is to support and encourage play for children of all abilities, which will be measured by the use and enjoyment of the space. The accessible and inclusive playground design is expected to provide several benefits to people with disabilities including improved physical and mental well-being, greater mobility, decreased stress levels, and stronger social ties. The LES playground improvements will foster a sense of community and belonging, while also encouraging the development of friendships and relationships within the wider community.

This project will resolve accessibility barriers identified in the Town of Leverett's ADA Self-Evaluation and Transition Plan. The ADA compliant surfacing and MAAB approved matting that will be installed on the playground will provide accessible routes to and throughout the playground activities. By eliminating the barriers to effectively access the playground, this project will significantly increase the potential users of the playground structure. The planned quantity of ground-level features, the addition of a transfer point, and accessible steps leading to upper-level activities will significantly enhance inclusive and multigenerational play, benefiting a wider range of individuals beyond LES students and local children. In addition to the 140 Leverett Elementary School students, the school grounds are used by Leverett Council on Aging and various Town athletic groups. Furthermore, Leverett Elementary School has approximately 23% of its student population from neighboring towns who attend via School Choice. Their families also utilize the school grounds. 11.3% of the Leverett population identify as persons with disabilities and 35% of the population are over the age of 65.

The playground's increased accessibility and inclusivity are expected to lead to a significant rise in usage by both the school and the broader community. This project will provide Leverett residents with a local, accessible playground, greatly reducing the need to travel for recreational playground use.

**3. Community Support and Outreach:** Demonstrate community support for this project. Submit at least 3 letters, petitions, or other documentations of support.

#### **SEE ATTACHED LETTERS OF COMMUNITY SUPPORT**

**4. Maintenance:** If ongoing maintenance is required for the project, indicate how it will be funded.

Playground equipment will be monitored each weekday during the school year by LES staff. The LES Playground Maintenance Plan includes assessing equipment, play behavior, and developing systems for regular maintenance, repair, replacement, and removal. The playground will be monitored for securely anchored equipment, durable materials, and no signs of damage like splintering, rusting, or peeling surfaces; hardware like S-hooks, bolts, and hinges will be checked for sharp edges, pinch points, or areas for entanglement. Any sign of malfunction, damage, or areas of concern will be reported immediately to the Principal and Head Custodian. The Head Custodian will be responsible for contacting Miracle Recreation for warranty service immediately, or if out of warranty, will oversee arrangements for repair.

Each piece of Miracle Recreation equipment is carefully designed for safety and undergoes rigorous testing to ensure that it meets the highest standards. Miracle is committed to providing equipment that meets and/or exceeds the performance safety specifications established by organizations such as ASTM, CPSC, CSA, CPSIA, IPEMA and EN. Miracle Recreation offers a

variety of limited warranties on their products, ranging from one year to lifetime. Specifically, they offer a 15-year warranty on all rigid main play structure plastics, steel, and vinyl-coated components. Other warranties include 8-year, 5-year, 3-year, and 1-year warranties depending on the specific product. Miracle Recreation playground structures, with proper maintenance, can last for 8 to 20 years or even longer.

The Engineered Wood Fiber surfacing will be monitored annually by the Head Custodian during the summer school recess, and will be topped off as needed to maintain ADA depth requirements for impact attenuation. Engineered wood fiber (EWF) surfacing is a loose-fill playground material made from processed wood fibers designed to provide a soft, impact-absorbing surface for playgrounds. EWF becomes compressed over time and loses its shock absorbency, requiring adding a fresh layer of material occasionally in order to continue to meet the ADA depth requirement of 12 inches. The frequency at which LES will need to add new EWF depends on how heavily the playground is used and the efficacy of the site's water drainage. MAAB approved ADA compliant rubber matting will help protect heavily trafficked areas and prolong the life and depth of EWF surfacing. EWF will last approximately 8 years if it is topped off before needing to budget to entirely replace it. The ADA matting will be monitored by LES staff for lifting or damage, reporting any such findings to the Head Custodian who will repair or replace the mats as needed.

The funding sources for ongoing playground maintenance are: the school budget, PTO funding, the Town of Leverett, and/or The Leverett Education Foundation.

5. **Success Factors:** Describe how the project's success will be measured. Indicate the specific method(s) that will be used to evaluate each project outcome. Identify any significant barriers to complete the projected outcomes and specify how these would be addressed.

Leverett Elementary School's playground serves as the sole play area in Leverett and is accessible to residents and their visitors outside of school hours. The playground is used daily by 140 Leverett Elementary School students during the school day. Unfortunately, several of the current playground structures **cannot** be used during the Champions After School Program as it failed to meet safety standards according to a 3<sup>rd</sup> party safety inspection from the Department of Early Childhood and Care. Addressing these issues would allow the playground to meet the criteria for licensing, providing students with a fun and safe outdoor playspace during the afterschool program. The playground also serves as the recreational space for school and community events held in the evenings and on weekends.

Throughout the year, the Parent-Teacher Organization holds many events, with the playground serving as the central space for welcoming new families, fostering community, and providing a recreational location for community events.

The LES playground also serves as an additional community resource for the U28 Community Network for Children programming during the school year and the summer, with a monthly playgroup being held in the summer at the playground for children ages 0-5 and their caregivers.

The Playground Improvement Project's success will be measured by the increase in use. We project that the proposed Playground Improvement project will result in an average monthly usage of 3,700 people during the 10 month school year. During the summer months, we anticipate 600 visitors monthly, or more.

The monthly playground usage was projected with the following data:

Monthly Leverett Elementary School Attendance: 2,700 students

Monthly LES After School Program Attendance: 600 students

Average Attendance at PTO events: 200 people (students, siblings, caregivers) per event

Town Meeting: 15 children

Monthly Evening Usage: 100 people

Monthly Weekend Usage: 120 people

Monthly Summer Usage: 480 people

**6. Project Permits & Approvals: Provide documentation as required:**

**NO Permits are required for the Playground Improvement Project per FRCOG Building Commissioner Jim Hawkins.**

- a. Control of Site:
- b. Deed Restrictions:
- c. Hazardous Materials: If there is any reason to believe that hazardous materials, or if there are hazardous materials present at the proposed site, please indicate the proposed plan for remediation.
- d. Environmental Concerns: Identify all known wetlands, floodplains, and/or any natural resource limitation that occur within the project boundaries.
- e. Evidence of Historic Significance [for historic preservation projects] :An applicant must provide evidence that the historic resource is listed or eligible for listing on the Massachusetts State Register of Historic Places or obtain a letter from the Leverett Historic Commission ["LHC"] that the historic resource is locally significant. Consult with the LHC for its approval process.
- f. Under CPA, all work on historic resources must comply with the United States Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. The Leverett CPC requires historic preservation projects to obtain a Preservation Restriction, in order to protect the Town's investment should the property change hands or become subject to additional development pressures. The Massachusetts Historical Commission must grant final approval of Preservation Restrictions.
- g. Permitting: List below any permits needed for the project. Provide copies of permits already acquired. (Applicants are responsible for all costs associated with permitting, including, but not limited to abutter mailings and advertising.)

Name of Permit	Filed (Y/N)	Date Filed	Date Obtained

**B. PROJECT BUDGET, FUNDING, & TIMELINE**



1. **Project Budget:** State the total budget for this project, and how CPA funds will be spent. Provide a detailed itemization of all project expenses, such as personnel, consultants, contracted services, equipment, and supplies. For each item, specify in parentheses how the expense was calculated, e.g. (# of hrs. x cost/hr.) Applicants should obtain at least 2 quotes for project costs when possible; if not, indicate where cost estimates have been used. For each item, identify whether CPA funds or other funding will be used, and note where applicant and/or partner in-kind contributions will cover non-CPA fundable expenses such as administration.

Use table below or include as a separate attachment.

**Cost Estimate: \$179,727.41**

**Miracle Recreation**, quote attached **\$131,522.41**

Includes: Playground Components, Playground Component Installation, Component Freight, Engineered Wood Fiber Material, MAAB Approved ADA Mats, Freight for ADA Mats

**Miracle Recreation** Additional cost estimate to address new issues from the EEC review that were not part of our initial design submitted with the municipal ADA grant application **\$21,500.00** (i.e. adding fall space for the swings and replacing tire swings)

- Accelerated Birds Nest Swing Model 2014BN from Miracle Playgrounds - \$11,000.00
- Shipping - \$1,000.00
- Installation of Birds Nest Swing - \$3,000.00
- Additional ADA rubber mats - \$1,500.00
- Additional engineered wood fiber chips and installation for Birds Nest Swing and for creating fall space - \$5,000

**USA Waste & Recycling**, quote attached **\$1,005.00**

Includes: 30 Yard Dumpster for Disposal of Existing Playground Structure (5 tons, 7 days)

**Adjustment for equipment and labor price increases for construction in FY27    \$3,500.00**

**The Town of Leverett Highway Department** (in-kind support) **\$20,600.00**

Includes: Demolition of Existing Playground Structure, Site Preparation, Installation of Engineered Wood Fiber Surfacing.

**Grass Roots Landscaping** (in-kind support) **\$1,600.00**

Includes: Installation of MAAB Approved ADA Mats.

**Total Cost Estimate: \$179,727.41**

Expense Item	Total	CPA	Other
<b>Miracle Recreation</b>	<b>\$153,022.41</b>	<b>\$144,027.41</b>	<b>\$8,995.00</b>
<b>USA Waste &amp; Recycling</b>	<b>\$1,005.00</b>		<b>\$1,005.00</b>
<b>The Town of Leverett Highway Department (in-kind support)</b>	<b>\$20,600.00</b>		<b>\$20,600.00</b>
<b>Grass Roots Landscaping (in-kind support)</b>	<b>\$1,600.00</b>		<b>\$1,600.00</b>

<b>Cost adjustment for equipment and labor for FY27</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>	<b>\$3,500.00</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$179,727.41</b>	<b>\$147, 527.41</b>	<b>\$32,200.00</b>

2. **Other Funding:** Describe efforts to secure other funding. Indicate what additional funding sources are available, committed, or pending. Include commitment letters, if available. Use table below or include as a separate attachment.

In May of 2025, the Playground Committee applied for the Municipal ADA Improvement Grant Program through the Massachusetts Office on Disability (MOD) to fund the LES Playground Improvement Project, a total funding request of \$122,527.41. A determination from the MOD is pending at this time. Since additional problems have been identified from the EEC review in late August 2025, we are requesting an additional \$25,000 in CPC funding to resolve them, with a total request of \$147,527.41.

The Leverett Elementary Improvement Project is being supported by the following organizations:

**The Town of Leverett Highway Department:** In-Kind Support totaling **\$20,600.00** for the following work to be performed:

Demo - \$5,200.00 - three town employees and 15-ton excavator with grapple+hand tools. 1 day of labor.

Site Prep - \$10,200.00 - three town employees, 15-ton excavator, dump trucks and loader. 1.5 days of labor.

Installation of Engineered Wood Fiber - \$5,200.00 - three town employees, 15-ton excavator, hand tools. 1 day of labor.

**Grass Roots Landscaping** In-kind support totaling **\$1,600.00** for the following work to be performed:

Installation of 44 MAAB Approved ADA Mats.

**The Leverett Education Foundation:** Financial support totaling **\$5,000.00, received.**

**The Leverett School Committee:** Financial support totaling **\$2,500.00, committed**

**The Leverett Elementary PTO:** Financial support totaling **\$2,500.00, committed**, with a pledge to help support the future maintenance of the playground.

Sources of Funds Other than CPA:	Amount:	Funding Requested (YIN)	Funding Secured (YIN)
Leverett Education Foundation	\$5,000.00	Y	Y
Leverett School Committee	\$2,500.00	Y, committed	
LES PTO	\$2,500.00	Y, committed	
In-kind Support: Leverett Highway Department	In-kind support totaling \$20,600.00	Y, committed	
Grassroots Landscaping	\$1,600.00	Y, committed	

### 3. Total Project Funding:

If the proposal is part of a multi-phase project, please indicate below the projected project costs and funding sources for the additional phases to completion.

The proposed project will be completed in FY26.

Fiscal Year	Total Project Cost	CPA Funds to be Requested	Other Funding
2025			
2026	<b>\$179,727.41</b>	<b>\$147, 527.41</b>	<b>\$32,200.00</b>
2027			
2028			

### 4. Project Timeline:

Upon the CPC Grant's approval and contract signing, the anticipated project timeline will commence as follows:

Summer 2026:

Order placed for Playground Equipment, Engineered Wood Fiber Surfacing, and MAAB approved ADA compliant rubber mats.

Fall 2026 (FY27):

Demolition and removal of current wooden play structure.

Preparation of the project site to the specifications of the Playground Vendor and ADA requirements.

Late Fall 2026:

Delivery of Playground Equipment, Engineered Wood Fiber, and MAAB approved ADA compliant rubber mats.

Installation of new, ADA compliant and inclusive playground equipment by Playground Vendor.

Installation of Engineered Wood Fiber surfacing to the depth of 12" in the renovated playground area.

Installation of MAAB approved ADA compliant rubber mats as access routes defined in the project plan.