

Court Construction

FACILITY ASSISTANCE

Community Investment

The USTA's Tennis Venue Design Group and Facility Assistance help to boost the sport in thousands of communities.

BY BEAU FIELDSEND



Are there courts in your community that need a facelift? Would you like to improve your venue, but don't know where to start? The USTA's Facility Assistance program and Tennis Venue Design Group would like to help.

The Facility Assistance program caters to a range of providers and community tennis organizations, from those looking to repair cracked courts and add 36-foot and 60-foot blended lines at their local park, to those hoping to build a state-of-the-art, multi-court facility. The USTA has funding levels up to \$100,000 for public venues, segmenting its financial assistance based on the number of courts a facility is renovating or constructing.

Along with free technical expertise, the USTA has expanded its program to offer business development assistance

for reconstruction projects, while continuing to offer world-class advocacy assistance, identification of potential partners and funding sources, and assessment of existing or planned facilities for every type of project.

"It's great to see how the Facility Assistance program has blossomed since its inception in 2005, assisting thousands of communities, helping to grow the sport, increase play opportunities and raise revenue," says Virgil Christian, USTA senior director of Strategic & Section Infrastructure. "Continuously focusing on tennis venues in local communities is the best way to get people active and engaged."

The needs of the tennis community are wide-ranging when it comes to improving existing facilities or building new ones, with many variables for public and private entities and Community Tennis Associations to consider, from

budgeting and business planning, to design and infrastructure assessments. Organizations that may be experts at tennis programming and managing the day-to-day needs of facilities may not be familiar with details specific to tennis development. This is where the USTA's Tennis Venue Design Group offers its most valuable benefit to the industry, by expanding court development, increasing the life cycle of existing courts and having a direct effect on the growth of tennis participation.

The USTA has a team of four project consultants—Heather Blythe, Robin Jones, Lynne Schachte and Lauren Zink—each responsible for the majority of projects that the Tennis Venue Design Group works on in their assigned sections. Communities and venues are leveraging their experience, expertise and advice in many areas, but a primary role is to guide projects through the grant process and be the point of contact for any questions or concerns.

To be considered for project funding, public venues must complete the USTA Facility Assistance Form at usta.com/facilities and be actively engaged with the USTA Facility Assistance program by working with a USTA project consultant. In addition, communities must show their project meets specified industry standards and is able to demonstrate a financial need, while being able to meet at least 50 percent of the project cost. (Note that when applying for 36- or 60-foot blended lines, both public and private facilities are eligible for 100 percent reimbursement.)

To date, the USTA's Facility Assistance program has invested more than \$13 million in communities nationwide, and has completed more than 8,700 projects. The program has contributed to \$500 million in tennis infrastructure in the United States, building or renovating 40,000 tennis courts.

For more information, including connecting with the Facility Consultant for your section, viewing the Tennis Venue Design Group's portfolio and client testimonials, visit usta.com/facilities or email facilities@usta.com. ■

Beau Fieldsend is the USTA's manager of Strategic & Section Infrastructure.