



LISC
SPORTS & RECREATION



GRASSROOTS
Field Grant Program in partnership with LISC

**NFL/LISC GRASSROOTS PROGRAM AND THE NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS
GRANT \$250,000 TO INSTALL NEW ARTIFICIAL TURF SURFACE AT
FITCHBURG'S CROCKER FIELD**

Award is part of \$3 million in new grants to athletic fields nationwide

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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January 31, 2023 – Fitchburg Public Schools has been granted \$250,000 by the New England Patriots through the National Football League Foundation Grassroots Program to install a new artificial turf surface at Crocker Field.

The grant from the Patriots, the NFL Foundation, and Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC) is part of \$3 million in field refurbishment awards allocated this year. The field will serve about 5,000 youth, including the Fitchburg High School football team.

The NFL Foundation Grassroots Program – a partnership between the NFL Foundation and LISC, the nation's leading community development support organization – has supported the construction or renovation of 431 football fields nationwide since 1998. During that time, the NFL Foundation has granted nearly \$61.8 million to revitalize playing fields in underserved neighborhoods. Fields are newly built or significantly renovated, with improvements such as irrigation systems, lights, bleachers,

scoreboards, goal posts and turf. Grassroots grants are issued once established funding thresholds are reached for each project.

Providing athletic fields for children to participate in competitive sports is an investment that will pay dividends for years to come,” said **Patriots Chairman and CEO Robert Kraft**. “The lessons learned and the exercise gained through competitive sports is so important, especially at the high school level. We have received such positive feedback from the dozens of communities that have benefitted from these grants over the years. We are happy to provide this year’s field to Fitchburg Public Schools and look forward to working with the NFL and LISC to provide grants to proud New England communities for years to come.”

LISC identifies local, nonprofit, community-based agencies that have an interest in building or refurbishing football fields in schools and neighborhood parks. Through the program, local agencies are provided with the necessary financing and technical assistance to improve the quality and safety of fields in their communities. The agencies oversee the construction, maintenance and programming of the fields.

“LISC is thrilled to support the restoration and upgrade of Fitchburg’s historic Crocker Field as a resource for their students and families,” said **Karen E. Kelleher, Executive Director of LISC Boston**. “It’s exciting to know that this field, and the activities it hosts, particularly the Thanksgiving rivalry with Leominster, will continue to play a central role in the life of the city for generations to come.”

“Crocker Field has served generations of Fitchburg students who have played, performed and graduated on this hallowed field”, said **Jeff Bennett**, who led the effort for the Crocker Field on behalf of **Fitchburg Public Schools**. “The NFL Grant and commitment from the New England Patriots and the Kraft Family will ensure that Crocker Field will continue to serve as a vital part of student and community life in Fitchburg for decades to come!

About the NFL Foundation

The National Football League Foundation is a nonprofit organization dedicated to improving the lives of those touched by the game of football – from players at all levels to communities across the country. The NFL Foundation and its members, the 32 NFL clubs, support the health, safety and wellness of athletes, youth football, and the communities that support our game. For more information on the NFL Foundation, visit: www.NFLFoundation.org

About LISC

LISC is one of the country’s largest community development organizations, helping forge vibrant, resilient communities across America. We work with residents and partners to close systemic gaps in health, wealth and opportunity and advance racial equity so that people and places can thrive. Since our founding in 1979, LISC has invested \$26.7 billion to create more than 463,000 affordable homes and apartments, develop 78.5 million square feet of retail, community and educational space and help tens of thousands of people find employment and improve their finances. For more, visit www.lisc.org.

About the New England Patriots Foundation

Robert Kraft established the New England Patriots Foundation in 1994 as a way to give back to the communities the Patriots call home. The mission of the foundation is to aid individuals and families that are often marginalized in today’s society. Through the implementation of year-round programming and support of philanthropic agencies, the foundation is building stronger communities throughout New England. For more information about the New England Patriots Foundation, visit www.patriots.com/community.