

2023 Recreational Trails Program Grant Workshop

March 22, 2023

Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation
Division of Planning & Recreation Resources

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DCR Recreation Grants



Agenda

- RTP Overview & Funding
- Eligibility
- Project Administration
- Reimbursement Procedures
- Application Process
- Application Guidance

Webinar Information:

- Webinar is being recorded and transcribed. Video will be posted to website.
- Enter questions into chat box at any time. We will stop periodically to respond. At the end of the webinar, we will activate microphones for spoken questions.
- To turn on captions: in upper right of screen, click **... More > Language and speech > Turn on live captions**

RTP Overview



Purpose:

To provide, expand, and improve public recreational trail opportunities for motorized and non-motorized use.

Funding:

U.S. Department of Transportation – Federal Highway Administration – IIJA

RTP in Virginia:

Since 1993, over 340 projects

2023 Grant Award Amounts

\$1.4 million available divided into three categories:

Diversified - \$580,000 available (3-6 grants anticipated)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$250,000

Non-motorized single use - \$435,000 available (3-6 grants)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$250,000

Motorized - \$435,000 available (2-4 grants)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$435,000

Funding Basics

- Funding is competitive
 - 2021: 35 applications, 9 funded
 - 2022: 22 applications, 5 funded
- Payments made on reimbursement basis
 - Must be able to fund project fully with periodic reimbursements
- Share/ match requirement is minimum 20% of total project cost (25% of grant amount)
 - \$100,000 grant requires \$25,000 match (\$125,000 total project cost)



Eligible Match Share = 20% Project Cost

- Cash
- Force account labor
- Volunteer labor (\$30.80/hr)
- Other grants*
- Donations
- In-kind labor, materials, equipment
- With limitations: Pre-award environmental review and design costs

All volunteer labor, in-kind items, donations, and force account labor must be clearly outlined in **application and proposed budget** and must also be **written into the grant agreement**. These items cannot be added after authorization.

2023 Schedule

- **Week of March 13** – Grant round opened
- **May 9 – Applications due** via email by 4pm
- **May-June** – Applications reviewed by DCR and Advisory Committee
- **Late June** – Applicants of projects recommended for funding are contacted
- **July-August** – Site inspections and preparing FHWA documents
- **September** – Project authorizations and grant agreements
(do not begin work until these are released)

Applicant Eligibility

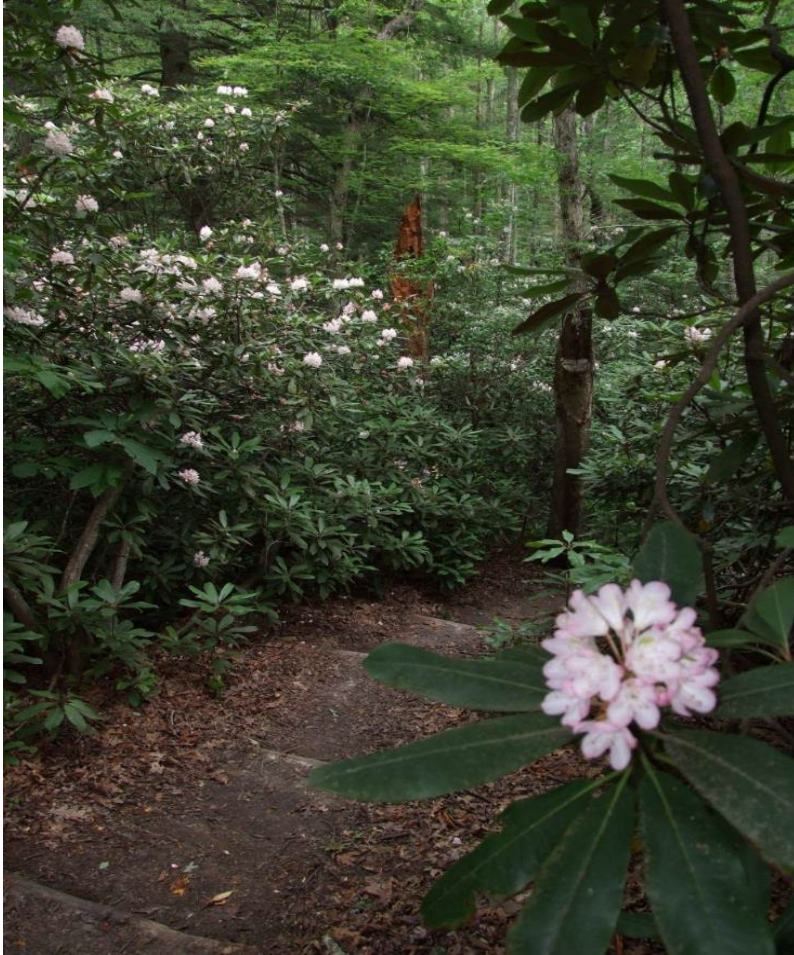
- Local governments
- State agencies
- Federal government agencies
- Tribal governments
- Public recreation government entities (Park authorities, etc)
- Non-Profits –
 - Must have letter of support from local government body



*Letter of support from landowner required if property not owned by applicant

Eligible Project Types for 2023

Must be on existing land and water trails



- Maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation of existing trails
- Development or rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and/or amenities
- Features that increase access for people with disabilities
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance (if on-the-ground work is also included)
- And preliminary engineering (design, engineering, NEPA review, public comment period, permitting, bidding) for these projects

Eligible Project Examples

- **Trail maintenance** - treadway improvements, hardening, brushing, blazing, down and hazard tree removal
- **Trail improvements** - regrading, paving, short reroutes (with closure)
- **Trailhead improvements** - parking, restrooms, signage, etc.
- Replacement of **bridges** or new bridge construction on existing trail
- Addition of **amenities** along trail or at trailhead - benches, interpretive signage, wayfinding signage, lighting
- **Boat launches** on existing water trails

Ineligible Project Examples

- New connector between existing trails or trail extensions
- Boat launches on lakes or other waters without water trail designation
- Reroute without closure of former trail
- Conversion of road/corridor not currently in use as a public trail
- Multi-use facilities

Ineligible Costs

Not eligible for grant reimbursement or as match:

- Feasibility studies
- Food
- Gifts
- Most legal fees
- Late payment fees
- Items that were not initially agreed or outside of scope of work



Project Administration

Project Administration

- Grant Terms
- Preliminary Engineering Phase
- Environmental Review
- Construction Phase
- Procurement
- Reimbursements
- Project Closeout



Project Kick-off



- You will be notified of Committee results
- DCR Staff will perform an on-site pre-inspection and go over the project details in person
- Finalize Scope of Work statement
- DCR will submit the project information to FHWA for authorization
- Do NOT begin billable work until Agreement is signed

Grant Terms: Two Phases

- 18 months **Preliminary Engineering**

- NEPA/Enviro Review & acquire permits
- Completion of design plans

- 18 months **Construction**

- DCR will review bid documents prior to posting
- Do not begin on-the-ground work or bid for construction without FHWA approval of NEPA documentation and final PE reimbursement submitted

PE grants that are unable to move to construction within 2 years, must return RTP funding to DCR to return to FHWA.

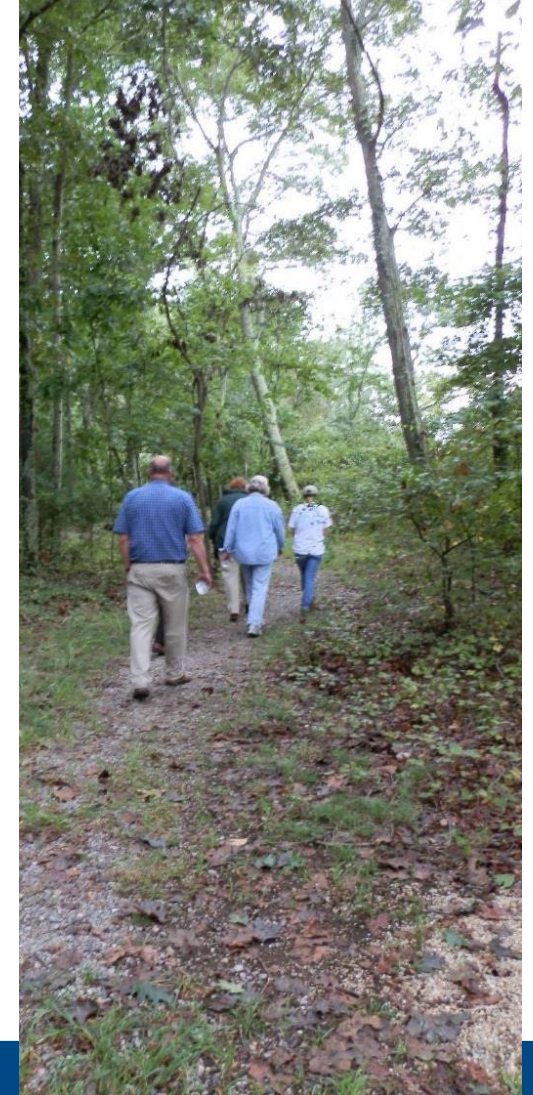


Preliminary Engineering (PE) Phase – Environmental Analysis

- Guidance on website: instructions for completing each section per NEPA standards; CE Determination Form
- Goal: to complete a **Categorical Exclusion**, Environmental Assessment, or Enviro Impact Statement
- Process: contact state and federal agencies with project details, save all correspondence, fill out forms
 - See **Environmental Review Guidance** document for agency contact info.
 - Most projects qualify for a Categorical Exclusion (CE)
- Public Comment/ Input
- Must be completed, reviewed, and approved by FHWA prior to bidding for Construction and any on-the-ground work

PE Phase – Scoping, Design, etc.

- When applying, make sure to include what needs to be completed in the PE scope of work
- Permits if applicable
- Engineering if needed
- If contracted, Bid documents and final reports/billing from engineer will be needed



Construction Phase

- PE Phase must be closed out prior to beginning
- Permits obtained
- DCR to review plans and bid documents prior to construction beginning



Procurement

- All project goods and services must be competitively procured following federal and state procedures
- Bid/RFP documentation **MUST** contain notice that: *partial funding is provided by FHWA – VA DCR – RTP and 2, 23, 49 CFR...*
- Procurement procedures – FHWA 1273, Buy America, Build America, Buy America & VPPA standards
 - See **Procurement Procedures** document on website
 - New: Iron, steel, **construction materials** (aluminum, lumber, composites)
 - DBE & SWaM outreach
- *Qualified* youth corps can be non-competitively hired

Reimbursement Documentation

- Expenses (truly spent – cleared checks & full invoices) – specific to the project
- Matching fund proof (20%) if not cash
- For all iron, steel, and construction materials – Buy America certification form or signed statement (\$2500 strict threshold for iron and steel)



Documents and Forms for Grant Recipients

<https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd>

- **01 RTP - VA RTP Manual** (PDF) - Contains general information on the RTP program. **Updated March 2023.**
- **02 RTP - Preliminary Engineering (PE) Phase Project Checklist** (Word) - Items that must be complete and submitted prior to construction authorization.
- **03 RTP - Reimbursement Request Guide** (PDF) - Guide for submitting reimbursement requests to DCR, includes lists of required documentation.
- **04 RTP - Example Reimbursement Package** (PDF) - Example reimbursement submission.
- **05 RTP - Categorical Exclusion Determination Form** (Word) - The summary form DCR submits to FHWA, along with all NEPA documentation, for FHWA review and approval. Recipients fill out the form in conjunction with other NEPA procedures outlined in Environmental Review Guidance document. **Updated March 2022.**
- **06 RTP - Quarterly Report Template** (PDF) - Project update due every three months.
- **07 RTP - Reimbursement Certification Form** (Excel) - Form that must be completed, signed and included with every reimbursement request, provided in two formats.
- **08 RTP - Reimbursement Certification Form** (PDF)
- **09 RTP - Data Sheet Summarizing Invoices** (Word) - To be used for requests containing multiple invoices.

Reimbursements

- Minimum once every 3 months to keep project active with FHWA
- Please make clear when it is the final reimbursement for the Phase
- Will be reviewed internally and through FHWA
- Funds will pass from FHWA, to DCR, to subgrantee (typically 4-8 weeks)
- W9 and remittance information; register on SAM.gov

Project Closeout

- All deliverables complete
- Site inspection
- Report of final accomplishments
 - Percent and dollar value of volunteer, donated, and cash contributions
 - Photographs
 - DBE & SWaM involvement if applicable



Project Administration

In Summary...

- MUST be completed to Federal standards
- Any delays or amendments – please keep us informed
- Extensions are possible if justifiable (at least 90 days prior to agreement expiration)

Open communication is KEY!
We are here to help make your project successful!

Project Administration Questions?

Application

Application File

- Application is a MS Word document + PDF certification form
- Create PDF of completed application and insert attachments between each section
- Minimum 10pt font, maximum 25 pages including attachments (but no word limit), 25MB
- Contact us to obtain an alternative format if you are unable to access or use the fillable document
- Please reference Appendix A: Application Resources in Manual

Application Certification Form

- Applicant Name = Grant Recipient if selected
- Please list contact person who will be the main coordinator for the project, can insert additional emails to be notified of award status
- District numbers, FIPS code, and Tax parcel are required for our internal databases.
- Signatory authority is up to the applicant



Section A: Project Details



- **Project title:** Descriptive but not long, 4-8 words
- **Project category:** review manual, contact DCR if unsure
- **Scope:** RTP project scope only
- **Attachments:**
 - Trail map with project location
 - Photos (up to five)
 - Two location maps (county and zoom)
 - Proof of Right of Way (if not owner) – easement, use agreement, letter from property owner, etc.
 - Locality letter (non-profit applicants) – letter of support from locality project is located in

Section B: Project Need, Planning, and Impact

- Respond to each sub-question and bulleted item in your response
- **Access for people with disabilities:** Accessibility resources are provided in Appendix B.
- No attachments



Section C: Project Implementation



- **Schedule:** Be as detailed as possible for both preliminary engineering and construction phases
- **Design and engineering:** Grant can fund this, but please let us know the level of completion so far
- **Budget:** Be sure to attach *and* explain how it was estimated in the application document
- **Fund sources:** how will you cover matching share and fund the project while seeking reimbursements?
- **Attachments:**
 - Design/construction drawings or renderings
 - One-page budget

Section D: Grant Administration

- **Environmental review:** Even maintenance-only projects must complete a NEPA-level review
 - See **Environmental Review Guidance** document posted on website for requirements and outline your plan and schedule to complete these in the application.




D: Grant Administration, continued

- **Procurement:** Review the Procurement Procedures guidance document and outline all anticipated goods, services, and materials
- **Buy America and Build America, Buy America:** Maximum \$2500 of non-compliant iron and steel is allowed; all construction materials must be compliant
- **Past grant experience:** Specifically asking about past RTP, Land and Water Conservation Fund, and Federal or VDOT active transportation grants


Evaluation and Scoring

- Revised this year
- All applications are reviewed by DCR Recreation Grants staff for eligibility and completeness
- All eligible and complete applications are sent to the RTP Advisory Committee for scoring
- Advisory Committee meets to review the compiled scores and recommend projects for funding

Application: _____



2023 RTP Scoring Criteria



Section/ Question	48 possible			
Sec. B	Project Need, Planning, and Impact			
14. Project need (select from range for each)		Point Range	Points	Total
Age of trail section where work will occur (30+ years = 3 pts, 20+ years = 2 pts, 10+ years = 1 pt)		0-3		
Trail usage level compared to nearby trails and population demand		0-3		
Maintenance/rehab projects: degree to which cause of issue was unavoidable (0-3)		0-3		
Amenity projects: project provides amenity priorities expressed in Virginia Outdoors Plan Survey (restroom, trailhead parking, drinking water, information kiosk, trash receptacle, trailside benches) (3pts - provides restroom or three from list, 2 pts- two from list, 1 pt- one from list)	(0-3)	0-3		
Severity of issue/need (due to safety, users excluded, trail closure, etc.)		0-5		
Degree of funding need/no other sources available		0-3		
<i>Max. points</i>			20	
15. Planning process (select from range for each)		Point Range	Points	Total
How innovative or unique the solution is for the issue or for the geographic area		0-2		
Degree of public involvement in identifying the project need, the planning process, and/or the design process		0-3		
Degree of volunteer involvement, community involvement, or youth workforce development occurring with the project		0-3		
<i>Max. points</i>			8	
16a. Trail user impact (select from range for each)		Point Range	Points	Total
Degree of positive impact on trail users		0-3		
Degree to which project will benefit or expand access to new, disadvantaged, and/or underserved users		0-2		
<i>Max. points</i>			5	
16b. Access for people with disabilities (select from range for each)		Point Range	Points	Total
Project will contain specific design elements to provide an equitable experience for trail users with sensory (including visual), cognitive, neurological, and/or mental health disabilities		0-3		
Project will contain specific design elements to provide an equitable experience for trail users with disabilities impacting mobility (including surface, slope, width, resting areas)		0-5		
Project will exceed accessibility standards (5 pts)				
Project will meet accessibility standards (4 pts)				
Some but not all project elements will meet accessibility standards, other elements fail under an allowable exception or are not covered by standards (2-3 pts)				
Application contains insufficient information to verify project will meet minimum accessibility requirements or minimum requirements not met (0-1 pts)				
Strength of organizational commitment to accessibility in all of its programs and services		0-2		
<i>Max. points</i>			10	
16c. Environmental quality impact (select from range for each)		Point Range	Points	Total
During project construction				
Positive environmental impact or very minor impact (2 pts)		0-2		
Negative environmental impact that will be reversed or mitigated when construction is complete (1 pt)				
Negative impact that will exist after construction is complete (0 pts)				
After construction				
Improvements to environmental quality in several categories (3 pts)		0-3		
Improvements to environmental quality in one or two categories (2 pts)				
No change to environmental quality from preexisting (1 pts)				
Net negative impacts resulting from this project (0 pts)				
<i>Max. points</i>			5	

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Application and Evaluation Questions?



Other Grant Opportunities in 2023:

- **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF)**
 - 2023 grant round to be announced, expected summer 2023
 - Fund protection of open spaces and parklands, lands of historic or cultural significance, farmlands and forests, and natural areas
 - Suzan Bulbulkaya, Land Conservation Manager, at suzan.bulbulkaya@dcr.virginia.gov or 804-371-5218.
- **VDOT Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)**
 - 2023 grant round to be announced, expected summer 2023
 - Funds pedestrian and bicycle facilities and cultural, historical, and environmental enhancements to transportation infrastructure.
 - Webinar on April 5th, pre-applications due by June 30th
 - Brittany Voll, Brittany.voll@vdot.virginia.gov or 804-786-8918
 - <https://www.virginiadot.org/business/prehancegrants.asp>

Other Grant Opportunities in Future:

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)**
 - Next grant round anticipated in early 2024
 - Acquisition and development of outdoor recreation sites/amenities
 - <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>
 - Kristal McKelvey, Recreation Grants Manager, 804-508-8896
- **Trail Access Grants**
 - Last held in 2021
 - Accessibility improvements to existing trails
 - Awaiting donated funds to accumulate enough to hold a grant round

Contact Information for RTP Grants

Email: recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov

Website: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfnd>

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