

2025 Recreational Trails Program Grant Workshop

March 25, 2025

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

Kristal McKelvey & Kellie Seaton
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 and slides will be posted to website.
- Enter questions into Q&A 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 > Show live captions**

RTP Overview



RTP 350D230 – Appalachian Conservation Corps

Purpose

To develop and maintain public recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized use.

Funding

U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

RTP in Virginia

Since 1993, over 360 projects awarded

RTP Categories

Diversified/ Multi-use

Multiple non-motorized uses (hiking and biking, hiking, biking, and equestrian, etc.)

Non-motorized (*single use*)

Single non-motorized use (hiking only, biking only, paddle only, etc.)

Motorized

Single or multiple motorized uses
Can allow non-motorized uses but is designed for motorized



RTP 317N170 – Town of Altavista

2025 Funding and Award Amounts

Approximately \$1.7 million available

Diversified/ Multi-use - ~\$630,000 available (3-5 grants anticipated)

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

Non-motorized single use - ~\$465,000 available (2-4 grants anticipated)

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

Motorized - ~\$690,000 available (1-3 grants anticipated)

- Minimum request - \$25,000
- Maximum grant award - \$690,000*

Award Basics

- Awards are competitive
 - 2022: 22 applications, 5 funded (23%)
 - 2023: 25 applications, 9 funded (36%)
 - 2024: 29 applications, 7 funded (24%)
- 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 (or 25% of grant amount)
 - Example: \$125,000 total project cost would receive \$100,000 grant, requires \$25,000 match



Applicant Eligibility



RTP 326N190 – Shenandoah Valley
Bicycle Coalition

- Local governments
- State agencies
- Tribal governments
- Federal government agencies
- Public recreation government entities (park authorities, etc.)
- Non-Profit Organizations (must have letter of support from local government body)

Eligible Match

- Cash
- Force account labor
- Volunteer labor (\$33.38/hr)
- Equipment use rates
- Other grants*
- Donations
- In-kind labor, materials, equipment
- With limitations: Pre-award environmental review and design costs incurred within 18 months of award date

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.

2025 Schedule

- **March 11** – Grant round opened
- **May 6** – 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 (tentative)** – Project authorizations and grant agreements*

*do not begin work until these are released

Eligible Project Types for 2025



RTP 354N230 – Friends of
the Rappahannock

- 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 on land and water trails
- Features that increase access for people with disabilities
- Lease or purchase of trail maintenance equipment*
- If on-the-ground work is also included:
 - Acquisition of easements and fee simple property
 - Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance

New trail construction is eligible in even years (2024, 2026, etc.)

Eligible Project Examples

- **Trail maintenance** - treadway improvements, hardening, brushing, blazing, down and hazard tree removal
- **Trail improvements** - regrading, paving, short reroutes
- **New trailhead or 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, tactile models, wayfinding signage, lighting
- Paddle or motorized **boat launches** on existing water trails
- Lease or purchase of equipment to be used for trail system maintenance

Ineligible Project Examples

- Boat launches on lakes or other waters without water trail or blueway designation
- Fishing piers
- Recreational facilities not directly supporting trail use (playgrounds, sports fields, campgrounds accessed by vehicle)
- Multi-use facilities near recreational trails (visitor centers, community centers)
- Equipment for general grounds maintenance
- New connector trail or extensions to existing trail
- Conversion of road/corridor not currently in use as a public trail
- Design or preliminary engineering-only (must have constructed element)

Eligible Costs



- Preliminary engineering (design, engineering, NEPA environmental review, public comment period, permitting, bid advertisement)
- Grant administration
- Force account labor for project – related work
- Contractor or consultant services
- Construction materials
- Equipment (with limitations discussed)
- Amenities (signs, interpretative aids, lighting, benches, etc)

Ineligible Costs

Not eligible for grant reimbursement or as match:

- Indirect costs
- Feasibility studies
- Food or gifts
- Rental equipment for trail users (kayaks, track chairs, etc.)
- Most legal fees
- Late payment fees



Public Access and Right-of-Way

- RTP-funded projects must remain open to the public for 10 years following grant closeout
- At time of application, property must be owned by a local, state, federal, or tribal governmental entity or if privately-owned, must be protected by an easement or other legally-binding agreement that allows the work to occur and ensures public access*
 - *At application must be effective through 3 year grant period, at closeout must be effective for minimum of 10 additional years
- All applicants: Letter of support (or easement/use agreement documentation) from landowner required if property not owned by applicant



RTP 323M190 – Isle of Wight
County

Project Administration

Project Administration

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



RTP 334D210 – Town of Purcellville

Project Kick-off



- Listed contact 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 Phases

1. Preliminary Engineering

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

2. 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



RTP 340N210 – City of Richmond

Preliminary Engineering (PE) Phase – Environmental Review

- NEPA and Section 106 Review
- 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)
 - Project reviewed by agencies including US Fish and Wildlife Service, Department of Historic Resources, US Army Corps (Joint Permit Application)
- Public Comment/ Input
- Must be completed, reviewed, and approved by FHWA prior to bidding for Construction and any on-the-ground work

PE Phase cont. – Scoping, Design, etc.

- When applying, make sure to include PE tasks in scope of work and budget
- Design
- Permits if applicable
- Engineering if needed
- Bid documents and advertisement must be submitted for administrative review prior to posting



Construction Phase



- Cannot begin until NEPA environmental review approved by FHWA
- Permits, if not already obtained
- Should leave time for closeout procedures within grant period.

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 RTP (specific language provided)
- Procurement procedures – FHWA 1273, 2 CFR 200, & VPPA standards
 - See **Procurement Procedures** document on website
 - Since 2023: Waiver of Buy America requirements for iron, steel, construction materials, and manufactured products if grant <\$500,000
 - DBE & SWaM outreach
- *Qualified* youth corps can be non-competitively hired

Reimbursements

- Recommended once every 3 months to keep project active with FHWA
- Will be reviewed internally and through FHWA
- Funds will pass from FHWA, to DCR, to project sponsor (typically 4-8 weeks)
- Register on SAM.gov, VA-W9

Reimbursement Documentation

- Expense and proof of payment
- Matching fund proof (25% of grant funds requested) if not cash
- Certification form and other templates from RTP website
- If grant \$500,000 or greater: iron, steel, and construction materials – Buy America certification form or signed statement (\$2500 strict threshold for iron and steel)



Grant Forms and Templates

Available on website: <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/trailfund>

Documents and Forms for grant recipients

General Administrative Documents and Forms

1. 2025 RTP [Application Manual](#) (PDF) Version March 2025.
2. RTP [Procurement Procedures](#) (PDF) Version March 2025.
3. RTP [Quarterly Report Template](#) (PDF) Version March 2024.

Reimbursement Documents and Forms



Environmental Review Documents and Forms



Project Closeout

- Once all deliverables completed and final request reimbursement submitted
- Report of final accomplishments
 - Percent and dollar value of volunteer, donated, and cash contributions
 - Photographs
 - DBE & SWaM involvement if applicable
- Site inspection



RTP 339N210 – Hampton Roads Sanitation District

Project Administration

In Summary...

- Must be completed to federal and state standards
- Any delays or amendments – please keep us informed
- Extensions are possible if justifiable (at least 90 days prior to agreement expiration, and if regular quarterly reports have been submitted)

Open communication is KEY!

We are here to help make your project successful!

Project Administration Questions?



Grant Application

Application File

- Application is a MS Word document + PDF certification form
- Create PDF of completed application and insert attachments between each section as indicated
- Minimum 10pt font, maximum 30 pages including attachments (but no word limit), 30MB
- Contact us to obtain an alternative format if you are unable to access or use the fillable document
- Please reference Appendix A: Application Guidance in Manual

Application Certification Form

- Applicant Name = Grant Recipient if selected
- Please list contact person who will be the main coordinator for the project first, can insert additional emails to be notified of award status
- Signatory authority is up to the applicant

 2025 Virginia Recreational Trails Program Application Certification		
This form must be completed, signed, and submitted with your complete application package		
Applicant Name		
Contact Person Name & Title		
Applicant Street Address		
Mailing Address (if different from street address)		
Telephone Number		
Contact E-mail Address		
Applicant Type (select one) <input type="checkbox"/> State, <input type="checkbox"/> Local, <input type="checkbox"/> Tribe, <input type="checkbox"/> Federal, or <input type="checkbox"/> Non-Profit (if non-profit, please also list locality) <div></div>		<div>US Congressional District</div> <div>Virginia State Senate District Virginia</div> <div>House District</div> <div>County/Independent City & FIPS Code</div> <div>Tax Parcel ID Number</div>
		Project Title
Total Project Cost (100%) \$		Award Request Amount (up to 80% of total cost but not more than category maximum request) \$
Certification Statement By submitting this application package for consideration for funding through the Recreational Trails Program, I hereby certify the information contained in this application is true and correct. I understand this application will be rated on the basis of the information submitted and the submission of incorrect or inaccurate data or an incomplete application can result in this application becoming ineligible for funding. I hereby certify that if awarded, the applicant will comply with all applicable Federal, Commonwealth of Virginia, and local laws and regulations. I hereby certify that the applicant understands the Recreational Trails Program is an 80-20 matching reimbursement program requiring verification of expenditures in order to receive reimbursement. Further, in signing and submitting this application, I hereby certify that the applicant is capable of providing the matching contribution and of financing the project while seeking periodic reimbursement.		
Name of Official with Signatory Rights		
Title		
Signature		
Date		

Section A: Project Details

- **2. Project Title:** Descriptive but not long, 3-7 words
- **5. Project Category:** review manual, contact DCR if unsure
- **9. Scope:** RTP and match project scope only
- **Attachments:**
 - Two location maps (county and zoom)
 - Trail map with project location/s
 - Photos (up to two pages, multiple per page)
 - 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
 - Proof of public access (private property) – provide easement or lease documentation

Section B: Project Need

- **15. Trail info & 16. Need statement:**
Respond to each sub-question and bulleted item in your response as they may correspond to a scored item
- **17. Virginia Outdoors Plan:** follow links to relevant sections of recently published 2024 VOP
- **18. Local & Regional Plans:** will receive more points for meeting specific vs general need
- **Attachments:**
 - Local and regional plans w/ highlights



Section C: Public Involvement and Impact



- **19-22:** Place to discuss broader project involvement, input, community support, an/or impact
- **24. Accessibility:** Resources are provided in Appendix B.
- **Attachments:**
 - None

Section D: Design, Sustainability, and Environmental Impact


- **25. Design:** Explain level needed for this project (engineered bridge vs corridor clearing)
- **26. Design Standards:** Such as Forest Service Standard Trail Plans and Specifications, ABA Accessibility Standards, AASHTO, etc.
- **29. Future Maintenance:** tasks, frequency, labor source, and funding are all scored items
- **Attachments:**
 - Up to 4 pages of construction or preliminary design plans. Even conceptual drawings help reviewers understand the project.

Section E: Project Implementation

- **30. Schedule:** Be as detailed and include both project design and construction milestones *and* grant administrative milestones
- **31. Budget:** Be sure to attach *and* explain how it was estimated
- **32. Grant match:** List and include estimated values for each source
- **33. Procurement & 34. Buy America:** Review guidance document and outline all anticipated goods, services, and materials. Likely exempt from Buy America
- **35. Environmental review:** Maintenance-only projects still must complete full NEPA-level review
- **Attachments:**
 - Schedule if not included in box for question 28
 - One-page budget
 - Proof of match availability


Evaluation and Scoring

- Criteria revised each year, posted on website
- 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
- Selected project applicants contacted in late June/ early July
- Unawarded applications are provided opportunity to receive feedback in August/September



U.S. Department of Transportation
Federal Highway Administration

2025 RTP Scoring Criteria



Virginia Department of Transportation

Sect. B. Project Need		25 possible		
15. & 16.	Trail details (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		
	Degree to which the cause of the issue or development of the need was unavoidable or couldn't be addressed earlier	0-3		
Max. points: 9				
16.	Need (select from range for each)	Point Range	Points	Total
	Project needed to address critical (5 pts), serious (2-4 pts), or minor (1 pts) safety issues on existing trail	0-5		
	Severity of need (due to users excluded, trail closure, lack of funding, etc.)	0-3		
Max. points: 8				
17.	Virginia Outdoors Plan (SCORP) Needs (select from range for each)	Point Range	Points	Total
	Project listed as (3 pts) or connected to (1 pt) a regional featured project in the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan OR provides or repairs priority amenities expressed in the corresponding Virginia Outdoors Plan Survey (restroom, trailhead parking, drinking water, information kiosk, trash receptacles, trailside benches, lighting) (0-3 pts) (3pts - provides restroom or three from list, 2 pts-two from list, 1 pt-one from list)	0-3		
	Degree to which project meets Recreation for All project prioritization recommendations of the 2024 Virginia Outdoors Plan (Section 2.1.6) (includes projects on publicly owned lands, expanding recreation programming, increasing access for people with disabilities, serving historically underserved communities, improving safety, contributing to health and wellbeing)	0-3		
Max. points: 8				
18.	Local and Regional Plan Needs (select from range for each)	Point Range	Points	Total
	Project need demonstrated in local and/or regional plans	0-2		
Max. points: 2				
Sect. C. Public Involvement and Impact		26 possible		
19. - 21.	Public participation & collaboration (select from range for each)	Point Range	Points	Total
	Degree of public involvement in the project	0-3		
	Degree of collaboration between agencies, land managers, users, and/or community stakeholders	0-3		
	Project has a workforce development component, such as utilizing youth or training corps, or includes youth group volunteers	0-3		
Max. points: 9				
22. & 23.	User benefits (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	0-3		
	Degree of positive local economic or tourism impact	0-2		
	Use of trail will not require an entrance fee (2 pts) or fee-free and reduced options available (1 pt)	0-2		
Max. points: 10				
24.	Access for people with disabilities (select from list or 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	0-2		
	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 fall 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)			
Max. points: 7				

Application and Evaluation Questions?



RTP 319N180 – Mendota Trail Conservancy

Other Grant Opportunities

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF)**
 - Acquisition and development of outdoor recreation sites/amenities
 - 2025 grant round tentatively scheduled June-August
 - <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>
- **Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP)**
 - Acquisition and development of outdoor recreation sites/amenities in underserved urban areas, national competition
 - 2025 grant round tentatively scheduled June-July
 - <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/recreational-planning/lwcf>
- **Virginia Land Conservation Foundation (VLCF)**
 - Fund protection of open spaces and parklands, lands of historic or cultural significance, farmlands and forests, and natural areas
 - 2025 grant round to be announced, expected summer 2025
 - <https://www.dcr.virginia.gov/land-conservation/vlcf>
- **Outdoor Recreation Roundtable's Hurricane Helene Rebuilding and Recovery Micro-Grants**
 - \$5k-\$10k grants to fund cleanup and repair of recreation sites impacted by Hurricane Helene
 - Applications due April 2
 - <https://recreationroundtable.org/news/outdoor-recreation-roundtable-announces-rebuilding-and-recovery-micro-grants-for-hurricane-helene-impacted-recreation-communities/>

Contact Information for RTP Grants

Email: recreationgrants@dcr.virginia.gov

Phone: (804) 786-1119 - Kellie Seaton, Recreation Grants Coordinator

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