

**Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation**

**Vermont Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Guide**

**&**

**RTP Grant Application Instructions**



**All RTP grant applicants are advised to read this supplement.**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is federal assistance for the development & maintenance of recreational trails in the State.

* Pre-applications were due December 11, 2020. Only applicants who submitted a Pre-application may submit a Full Grant Application
* Full grant applications are due February 24, 2021 - For information go to: <http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreational-trails-program>
* Award notification will be made in April 2021.
* The estimated date of funding approval for those awarded grants this round is tentatively **June 15, 2021 or soon after.**

## Foreword

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trailhead facilities for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail uses. The RTP is a federal-assistance program of the U.S. Dept. of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

This guide is designed to assist applicants in applying for RTP grants and understanding associated procedures. It is designed in 3-parts:

Part A: RTP Introduction & Eligibility

Part B: Completing the RTP Application

Addendums

Materials presented will answer many questions about the RTP.

If further information or clarification is needed at any time during the application or administration stages of the grant process, please contact:

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 Requesting Grant Funds

## A. RTP INTRODUCTION & ELIGIBILITY OVERVIEW

 General Overview of the Federal Recreational Trails Program

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) is a Federal assistance program of the U.S. Department of Transportation’s Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), providing funds to States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized trail uses. The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) has been designated to administer RTP in Vermont.   For an overview of federal guidelines, go to:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/overview/program_brief>

Every year FPR awards RTP grants to local communities and non-profit organizations throughout Vermont for recreational trail projects because of their many benefits of connectivity to place.

Project proposals are solicited through a competitive application process and grants are awarded based on the grant application’s scoring criteria.

Trails contribute to livability because of the wide range of activities and opportunities they offer, such as hiking, mountain biking, running, paddling (with portage trails), cross-country and back-country skiing, nature-based interpretive use, equestrian, snowmobiling, off-road bicycling, all-terrain vehicular or other off-road recreational uses (such as dirt-biking).

RTP funds are intended for trail-based projects that are primarily recreational in nature, rather than serving a strictly transportation function. For purposes of this program, sidewalks and publicly maintained roads are not considered trails. Planning proposals and feasibility studies are not eligible for funding through this program (See “Uses Not Permitted and Ineligible Expenses”).

All projects funded help achieve this program’s goals to develop and maintain trails in proximity to all who live in and visit Vermont and to achieve goals, objectives and priorities found in the State’s Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

Federal RTP legislation (23 USC Section 206) requires States to use 30% of a State’s apportionment for motorized trail use, 30% for non-motorized trail use, and 40% for diverse trail use.

NOTE: Diverse trail use can be either:

* + Diverse (more than one) non-motorized uses;
	+ Diverse (more than one) motorized trail uses (i.e., snowmobile and ATV); or,
	+ A combination of non-motorized and motorized uses;

Below is a description of project types and their funding category.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Intended Use** | **Type of Use Examples** | **Funding Categories** |
| Non-Motorized Single Use | Pedestrian or equestrian, or bicycle only | Non-Motorized Funding |
| Non-Motorized Diverse Use | Pedestrian, bicycle, and skate; both pedestrian and equestrian | Non-Motorized and Diverse Funding |
| Diverse Use | Equestrian in summer, snowmobile in winter (includes both motorized and nonmotorized trail use) | Diverse Funding |
| Motorized Single Use | Snowmobile only | Motorized Funding |
| Motorized Diverse Use | Snowmobile and Motorcycles | Motorized and Diverse Funding |

## Who Administers the Program

Each State administers its own RTP program using federal guidelines. In Vermont, the Agency of Natural Resources’ Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation (FPR) administers RTP.

FPR operates an annual competitive grant cycle for municipalities, non-profit organizations, and other governmental entities to apply for grants.

 Resources to Assist You

Online resources are available to help provide you with guidance related to federal and state rules and regulations, and to assist you in learning what is required of trail projects funded through the RTP.

* Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trails Program Guidance: <http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/guidance/rtp9908_toc.cfm>
* FPR makes available a list of resources for best practices in trail construction and trail maintenance @: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/partners-and-resources>
* Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC): Statewide trail leadership organizations, crews, clubs, resources, contractors, and professional trail builders who can assist you in project planning, implementation, and stewardship: <https://vermonttgc.org/about> VTGC is the State’s recreational trails advisory council and a clearinghouse for trail-related matters.
* Maps & Mapping: To generate a map for your application, use Internet Explorer, and go to the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources Atlas: <https://anr.vermont.gov/maps/nr-atlas>
* Before laying out new trails, re-locations, or new trail segments, make sure to minimize potential environmental impacts. To identify lands and waters that support important ecosystems, natural communities, habitats, and species go to BioFinder: <https://anr.vermont.gov/maps/biofinder>
* For assistance with universal accessibility, go to:

<http://www.fs.fed.us/recreation/programs/accessibility/pubs/pdfpubs/pdf12232806/pdf12232806Pdpi300.pdf> Note: The capacity to provide universal accessibility may be limited by terrain, cost &/or potential difficulties for construction in bringing in equipment & supplies but be sure to consider how to make trails accessible where and when feasible, and if not, to what extent you can help create or improve trail sustainability for long-term use.

Important Timelines & Items You Need to Know

* Mid-March the ranking committee meets to score and recommend project funding to the Commissioner in ranking order and in accordance with RTP’s established criteria.
* The Commissioner will decide what projects are selected for grant awards. Grant award notification will be sent out in April 2021. All applicants will be notified of grants awarded.
* Projects selected then go through a funding approval process from FHWA through VTrans, then through the State (FPR) with an executed grant agreement between the State and project Sponsor.
* FPR estimates the date of full approval, where the State signs the grant agreement for those projects selected is on June 15, 2021, or as soon after as possible.
* Subrecipients of grant funds (Project Sponsors) will be given a (2) year grant term to complete a project.
* Sponsors may apply for up to $50,000 Note: This amount can be raised or lowered by FPR’s Commissioner to fulfill program requirements, policy, and distribution of funding.
* RTP is an 80-20 Cost-Share Program: 80% RTP Funds, with a 20% Sponsor Match requirement. The matching share may consist of cash for some of the project costs, or: Volunteer labor, in-kind services, or donations of materials or other project expenditures.
* RTP is a reimbursement program: Grant disbursements are made on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must finance the project upfront, for work in the grant agreement, then submit invoices for work paid for to request reimbursement through the grant. Your grant agreement will spell out the terms of these payment provisions.
* Signs that function as traffic control devices must conform with standard highway signs and markings in FHWA’s Manual on *Uniform Traffic Control Devices* (MUTCD). The publication *Standard Highway Signs* has detailed drawings for the highway signs prescribed in the MUTCD. These documents are available @: <http://mutcd.fhwa.dot.gov/ser-shs_millennium.htm>
* Standards for designs, construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of trails are to be used for all projects. For resources, go to the State’s website: <http://fpr.vermont.gov/rereationa.learn_more>
* All projects funded are subject to Federal, State, and local laws, procedures and requirements, Executive Orders, and local ordinances.
* Projects must demonstrate compliance with State and Federal regulations including but not limited to:
	+ - National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
		- Endangered Species Act
		- National Historic Preservation Act
		- Executive Order 11988 – Floodplain Management
		- Executive Order 11990 – Wetlands Protection, and
		- Presidential Executive Order - Buy America
	+ FHWA has given a Categorical Exclusion to RTP projects based on information submitted to FHWA, and from information received from trail organizations and communities through this program, reviewing potential impacts during the State’s permitting review process, submitting materials during the State’s Pre-application and Full-application process, and with the way the State manages its administrative processes and policies to carry out this program. The State of Vermont’s permitting process and project review process through the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation help satisfy reviews to meet federal requirements; If during the State’s permitting process, it is determined that your project needs further environmental review, grantees will be notified and must document compliance to receive grant funds.

## Who’s Eligible to Apply for Grants?

Municipalities, non-profit organizations, and governmental entities may apply for grants.

## Funding Eligibility

Projects must provide legal public access to the trail and be legally allowable for the designated recreational use(s) in the grant application.

Projects must be planned and developed under the laws, policies, and administrative procedures of the State.

## Project Eligibility:

## Eligible project types are defined in the RTP legislation 23 USC 206 (d) (2). All applicants must link their proposed project to one, or more, of the following categories:

* + **Maintenance and restoration of existing trails** may include any kind of trail maintenance restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation. This category may include maintenance and restoration of trail bridges or appropriate signage along a trail.
	+ **Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages** for recreational trails may include development or rehabilitation of any trailside or trailhead facility. Trailside and trailhead facilities must have a direct relationship with a recreational trail (an existing trail leading directly to the facility).
	+ **Included in these categories are: Purchases and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment**, provided the equipment is used primarily to construct and maintain recreational trails. For all purchases of equipment, Buy America requirements apply and Federal equipment purchasing and reporting requirements apply. FPR recommends purchase of small tools and rental of equipment when needed or contracting out with contractors. Until further notice, FHWA is not processing Buy America waivers. Contact your RTP Administrator if you have questions.
	+ **Included in these categories are: Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance** authorizes specific projects to assess trails to determine the level of accessibility for people who have disabilities, to develop programs to provide trail access information, and to assess trails for current or future maintenance needs.
	+ **Educational Programs:** Federal limitations apply: States may only allocate up to 5 percent of a State’s apportionment of RTP funds for educational projects, for the development and dissemination of public trail-user education, statewide trail information or public education efforts to promote appropriate and designated uses, environmental protection related to trails (non-law enforcement), trail safety efforts, or trail-use monitoring patrol programs.
* **Acquisition of trail easements and/or fee simple title to property** with existing recreational trails, in

compliance with Federal requirements associated with deed standards and land values. 23 USC 206 (g)(1) prohibits condemnation of any kind of interest in property (e.g., eminent domain). For acquisitions, priority is given to an acquisition connecting to another existing and managed trail network and there must be an agreement with an entity who will be managing and maintaining the trail(s) once purchased.

## Permissible Costs – Examples of Common Allowable Expenditures/Direct Project Costs

1. Trail assessments using the Universal Trails Assessment Process (UTAP), or equivalent method, to assess conditions of existing trails for the purpose of improving accessibility, sustainability and for provisions that facilitate public access and use by persons with disabilities.
2. Permits & engineering fees, professional trail planning costs, trail design/project plans, specifications for your project; Note: Costs of permits commonly get incurred before grant agreement approval and while you are not able to get reimbursed for these costs, if incurred within 18 months of receiving a grant award, these costs may be used toward your match.
3. Labor and/or contracts for construction, trail maintenance, trail linkages (developing a trail to

connect from one trail location to another) and/or trail restoration costs.

1. Labor costs for on-the-ground trail crews doing project work (i.e., trail builders, trail crews, trail crew leaders, trail design consultants, project/structural engineers, contractors, equipment operators, project assessment and oversight, etc.).
2. Costs to build and install trail bridges, railings, ramps, retaining structures, bollards, gates, directional/location signage, and informational kiosks along trails or at trailhead facilities.
3. Professional engineers and/or project managers who provide professional project oversight to monitor and oversee work is being done according to the work plans and specifications.
4. Relocation of existing recreational trails.
5. Development or rehabilitation of trailhead parking areas, facilities, and trailside amenities (i.e., parking area with handicapped parking spaces, benches, compost toilets/privy, water fountains).
6. Purchases or rental fees for equipment or tools that are necessary to carry out the trail project. Federal equipment purchasing rules apply for equipment purchases.
7. Professional trail assessment costs of trail conditions associated with a project’s work plan, universal accessibility and/or sustainability.
8. Grooming, to maintain trails across snow.
9. Cost of accessibility features facilitating access to, and use of, trails by persons with physical challenges.
10. Surfacing stabilization costs.
11. Materials & Supplies needed for the project (i.e., lumber, stone, surfacing material, etc.).
12. Purchase and/or rental of trail tools or essential trail construction equipment necessary to do the work proposed and will continue to be used for the sole purpose of constructing and maintaining recreational trails.
13. Trail Education projects: Environmental awareness and safety education programs related to safe, responsible trail use, environmental resource protection aimed at educating trail users, minimizing impacts to natural and cultural resources, and appropriate trail use / trail ethics to prevent or resolve conflicts.
14. Acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for recreational trails or trail corridors. Intended solely for the purchases of trail easements and parcels with existing trails or trail corridors for the preservation of existing trail systems. The federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Policy Act of 1970 applies & you will need to comply with federal appraisal and federal acquisition requirements.
15. Publications: Grants may be used for layout and design costs associated with printing free publications, signage, or trail-related educational materials disseminated to the public via kiosks, websites, or other means. Reprinting costs of publications are not eligible.
16. Sponsors using RTP funds to develop printed materials should acknowledge the RTP, VT FPR, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Written materials developed with RTP funds are to be made available to the public.
17. Trail related law enforcement educational assistance, in some cases, may be eligible (law enforcement is not eligible). For example:
* A trailside or trailhead facility may be used as a base station by law enforcement officers using trail project funds, provided the facility is primarily a public use trail facility, and not primarily a law enforcement facility.
* A trailside or trailhead booth providing trail-related information may be used by law enforcement officers (using educational funds).
* A trail patrol primarily for educational purposes (i.e., providing information on the use of safety gear) may include appropriate law enforcement (using educational funds).
* A project sponsor may provide an overall trail safety education seminar which includes a session on trail-related law enforcement (using educational funds).

## What’s not Permissible for RTP Projects:

1. Advertising.
2. Appraisal fees and legal fees related to acquisitions.
3. Property Condemnation of any kind (eminent domain).
4. Construction of trails within a Federally designated Wilderness Area.
5. Upgrading, expanding, or otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to recreational trails predominantly used by non-motorized recreational users, and on which, as of May 1, 1991, motorized use was prohibited or had not occurred.
6. Facilities that are ornamental and do not have a direct benefit to trail users.
7. Stand-alone feasibility studies & stand-alone trail planning. Trail feasibility studies are not among the permissible uses, and a project proposal for the sole purpose of planning or performing a trail feasibility study would not be eligible.
8. Food for volunteers working on a project.
9. Costs associated with fund raising.
10. Law enforcement.
11. Lodging.
12. Payments which are not in compliance with relevant state or federal laws or regulations.
13. Payments in conflict with 501(C)(3) regulations such as payment of board members.
14. Promotional items (t-shirts, patches, caps, buttons, pens, etc. promoting an organization).
15. Railroads: Before approving a trail on a railroad right-of-way, States must ensure that the railroad has been rail banked, and the trail project has a legal right to be located on the railroad right-of-way.
16. Roads: RTP funds may not be used for improvements to roads and/or bridges for general passenger vehicle use unless those roads/bridges are specifically designated for recreational use by the managing agency.
17. If Vermont towns designate class IV roads to be used for recreational use(s), and you are applying to maintain a class IV road that has been designated by the town for recreational use, a completed Class IV road resolution form must accompany the grant application.
18. Sidewalks adjacent to public roads; RTP funds should not be used to provide shoulders or sidewalks along roads unless the shoulders or sidewalks are necessary to complete a trail link.
19. Paved multi-use/bike paths; (NOTE: if you are planning on developing a paved path, contact the Vermont Agency of Transportation Local Facilities section)
20. Publication re-prints: Original prints are allowable, but we ask publications also to be made available to the public electronically and on websites for public consumption.
21. Purchase of tools or equipment that would be used for other than trail purposes.
22. Trail work on land where landowner permission for public access for public use of trails has not been granted.
23. Value of citizen volunteer’ time at public forums or public meetings.
24. Disc golf. Like many outdoor recreational sports, this activity is considered outside the scope of what RTP funds were intended for and is not eligible for RTP funding. It is referred to as a park facility. RTP funds are intended to build trails, not parks.

If you are planning a trail project and are not sure whether the project is the right fit for RTP, first contact the RTP Administrator to learn more about RTP requirements before you apply.

## B. COMPLETING THE RTP FULL GRANT APPLICATION

Full Grant Application due date: February 24, 2021

* 1. Carefully review the project eligibility section of this supplement to understand the different requirements and eligible expenditures.
	2. Complete all sections of the full grant application. Be concise yet thorough.
	3. Insert and label attachments as instructed, in sequence.
	4. Do not change the format of the application.
	5. Attach any permits, permit reviews, or clearances provided by SHPO or permitting specialists.

##  Full Application Instructions:

## **Part I - Applicant Information**

Self-explanatory.

**Part II - Project Information/Administrative Reporting**

Self-explanatory.

**Project Justification:** Why needed? What makes this a priority for funding?

**SCORP:** To list 1 of the 5 priorities in the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan that this project addresses, go to SCORP online: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/land-and-water-conservation-fund>

## **Town Plans or Town Forest Plans:** Reference town plans, forest management plans, long range land management plans; Contact your Regional Planning Commission and share the trail project you are proposing to them and see how they can provide you with any technical assistance you may need to help you plan out the rest of your project. Attach letters of support for your project from your Regional Planning Commission.

**Landowner Permission Guidance:**

**Construction and/or maintenance of trails must have the permission and approval of landowners, administering agencies of the State, or other municipal entities charged with management of impacted lands.**

**FPR requires that permission for the use of any land be in writing and that the Project Sponsors keep copies of all such permission information on file. The landowner permission agreement is to state the duration of the agreement.**

**To secure a longer duration of one’s property for trail use, consider how your organization will convey an overall management plan for development, maintenance, and management of a trail over an individual’s property.**

**While permanent trail easements, or ten-year trail easements are preferable for federal grants, there is an option of written agreements between the organization applying for funds, and the private landowner on which the Project is located (permission for the project work to be done, bringing in crews, contractors, and equipment, for public access after the project is completed, and for future management and trail maintenance).**

FPR considers a 10-year commitment by a private landowner to be commensurate with a public investment (federal RTP funds) in trail construction and at least a five- year commitment for trail maintenance for the purposes of establishing an appropriate timeframe for guaranteed public access.

In 2016, FPR sought clarity from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) regarding what they determined to be an acceptable timeframe and documentation of a private landowner’s assurance of public access.

We ask organizations applying for RTP funds to attach a copy of written landowner permission, in the form of an agreement between the organization applying for funds and the private landowner on which the Project is located; If possible, these kinds of written landowner agreements are to be attached to the grant application before execution by the organization and landowner, so if a grant is awarded the State shall approve a fully executed agreement prior to its execution by the organization and the landowner.

To help smooth the process in the State’s approval, these written landowner agreements should at minimum, include the following provisions to ensure public access to the trail across the owner’s land on which the trail Project is located.

Framed: This written agreement is a commitment between the organization and the landowner, that, at a minimum,

(1) obligates the landowner to keep the recreational trail / project open and available for public use for a period of at least \_\_\_ (ten/five) years, and

(2) authorizes the organization awarded public funds to enter onto the landowner’s property to construct, maintain and repair the recreational trail / project for a minimum period of at least \_\_ (ten/five) years.

To ensure the ten-year or five-year commitment, the written agreement is to be fully executed by the organization and landowner when grant funds are awarded by the State in spring of 2021.

In the event the Agreement is terminated by either the organization or the landowner, or the recreational trail / Project ceases to be open and available and maintained for public recreational use prior to ten (or five) years from its original execution of the landowner Agreement, and in the event the State is obligated to reimburse all or a portion of the federal or state (public) funds allocated to the Project, the organization receiving the award shall reimburse the State for the full amount the State is obligated to reimburse.

Written landowner agreements, or trail easements protect public investments being made for the development and maintenance of recreational trails, for future public recreational use, the purpose of the RTP program.

“Project” is defined in the grant agreement and includes the recreational trail and any/all associated facilities, e.g., parking lot, kiosk, bridges, etc.

**Part III – Scoring Criteria**

Below are listed the Established Criteria in the application that will be scored by ranking committee members. Underneath each section are some guiding questions to help guide you when addressing the criteria

**3.1 Ensuring Sustainability, Minimizing Environmental Impact, Future Maintenance Commitment & Stewardship Outreach (15 points)**

* How is the project designed to ensure longevity and sustainability?
	+ When applying for funds for trail maintenance, priority will be given to those projects that will keep trails sustainable for as long a term possible; more priority will be given to long-term sustainable trail construction or maintenance components (i.e., minor annual general maintenance includes cleaning out water bars and removing annual blow-down debris from trails).
	+ Use best practices and techniques to protect water quality and prevent erosion. List techniques to be used in your project, in your work plan. Use FPR's list of recommended trail standards: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/partners-and-resources>
	+ What project oversight will be made by trail professionals, crews, or contractors?
	+ Tell how equipment will be brought in.
	+ Discuss any trail assessments made/permitting issues addressing.
	+ Is there Town Road foreman involvement with sponsor for recreational trails on Class IV roads? How will you work together?
	+ How are you following any guidance from permitting specialists, engineers, or other professionals on minimizing environmental impact?
	+ Who will be the project manager? What is the relationship between your agency/organization and the project manager?

For future maintenance, to maximize points, along with your narrative response attach the following:

* Describe how this project will be sustained in subsequent years.
* Attach a letter or approved plan from landowner(s) and/or the trail managing organization with their commitment for continued maintenance after project is completed.
* Attach a letter from any entity who will provide future financial, organizational or community support for future annual maintenance.
* Consideration will be given to those applicants demonstrating long-term commitments to future maintenance.

**3.2 Project Readiness (20 points)**

* What is left in your planning process?
* What is the status of permits for your project currently?
* Attach copies of permits, reviews with permit specialists about decisions made, and/or clearances already obtained for your project, especially any below:
	+ Section 106 Archeology clearance issued by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), or an archeological resource assessment (ARA) completed by a qualified archeologist.
	+ US Fish & Wildlife Non-Game & Natural Heritage Program Rare & Threatened
	+ Endangered Species Review by VT Department of Fish & Wildlife’s Non-Game & Natural Heritage Program
	+ Water Quality, Wetlands, Rivers & Streams Alteration, Shoreland Permit, Stormwater, or Army Corps of Engineers.
	+ FPR State Lands Team and/or FPR District Stewardship Team review for projects on State land and written permission from FPR’s District Manager
	+ USFS Environmental Assessments and Documentation
	+ VTrans Right-of-Way Permit (to work within or bring equipment in through a VTrans Right-of-Way) or VTrans signage requirements.
	+ Any other State or local environmental, general construction, signage, or other permit needed for your project.
* Attach a timeline for your project. A timeline should include steps along the way to tell us when you think your project will start, when it will end, and any items you think may delay your project.

## In your timeline, before the project begins, show anticipated dates you expect permits.

* Ideally it would be great to have all permits in hand by the full grant application deadline. But we expect there may be permits still pending, needing to be obtained after the due date. Continue working on them, because if your project is recommended for funding permits will be needed.
* Projects thoughtfully prepared and demonstrate local planning efforts have taken place will be considered over projects that do not document local planning efforts. To support local planning efforts, tell what planning efforts occurred, attach public meeting minutes for meetings held to support the planning and development of this project.
* Collaboration involved in the planning process with local community support is key to a project’s success.
* Attach a Project Review Sheet, signed by a permitting specialist from the Agency of Natural Resources for your project. This is the document that identifies what permits may be needed for your project. **This is not only for ACT 250**. There are many state reviews and permits required for projects and the permit specialist will be able to assist when you provide your work plan to them.
* Attach copies of any permits or clearances received for this project with your full grant application and document any good faith efforts of the steps taken to try to obtain permits marked off on the Project Review Sheet.

**3.3 Public Recreation Benefits (30 points)**

* + How will your project create linkages to or help develop and strengthen connections or fill critical gaps in the existing trail system?
	+ Describe places of interest (natural or developed) available for users by using this trail.
	+ Explain why this project's linkages and connections are so crucial.
	+ How does this project improve livability for users? Others?
	+ Who will benefit from this project and in what ways?
	+ Who are the ranges of trail users? Do you have real numbers from trail counters? Or trail register boxes?
	+ Consider user groups, ages, skills, current users, and potential users.
	+ How will this project improve current and expected populations using the trail?
	+ What recreational, health, education, or economic opportunities exist? Will exists?
	+ Consider benefits of trails.
	+ Consider whether this trail can be made universally accessible.

**3.4 Collaboration & Local Support/Citizen & Community Involvement (30 points)**

* + Collaboration is key to the success of many projects in Vermont. Tell all the ways you have collaborated with partnering organizations, people, schools, businesses, and your local community to support the planning and development of this project and future public use of this trail when the project is done.
	+ Describe any assistance (donations or funds committed) to the project by public agencies, private industry, and non-profit organizations.
	+ List dates of public meetings held, special committees formed, decisions made, partnerships and alliances or coalitions made to volunteer to work on this project.
	+ Attach 3 letters of support from town, agencies/organizations, and partnerships involved who know about and support the funding request and work plan in this application.
	+ No support letters from potential contractors or youth corps organizations who may be doing work on the project**.**

**3.5 Project Identification / Plans in Place (15 points)**

(Detailed Work Plan/Deliverables, Performance Measures, Project Location Map,

Attachments of Photos, Site Assessments, Design Plans, and Project Budget)

## **Detailed Work Plan/Deliverables:**

* + - Tell/clarify what work will be done with the grant funds and how the work will be done.
		- Work plan should provide enough detail, so anyone will know how grant funds will be used.
		- Your work plan, with its project components, will be used in the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.
		- Tell what tasks done & what equipment will be used in the trail construction and/or maintenance.
		- Tell what new structures, signs, kiosks, bridges, etc. will be built/installed.
		- Include:
1. Length/width of the new trails or trail sections to be worked on.
2. Number of, and length/width of, switchbacks.
3. How many & what kind of structures will be installed (i.e., footbridges, culverts).
4. Materials to be used.
5. Description of labor, materials, and equipment to be used.
6. Clearance heights & clearance width to the trail to accommodate its use.

## **Sample Work Plan:**

The town plans to hire a contractor to construct a new \_\_\_ (insert use) trail, approximately 2 miles long, with a trail tread of \_\_\_\_\_\_ (inches; feet) wide. The new trail will extend from the existing trailhead parking area (shown on the attached map), \_\_\_\_\_\_\_ (length in feet or miles) to \_\_\_\_\_ (i.e., the summit of \_\_\_\_\_ Mountain). Work shall create a trail corridor with a \_\_\_\_\_\_ (# feet) clearance either side of the trail tread, and a clearance height of \_\_\_\_\_ feet. Work plan includes the installation of one wooden footbridge, made with rot-resistant wood, approximately 20 feet long x 5 feet wide, approximately 1,000 feet from the trailhead parking area. The location of the proposed new trail, new wooden foot bridge, and trailhead parking area are generally depicted on the attached map. The town plans to build the trail using United States Forest Service trail construction guidelines.

**Performance Measures – self explanatory**

**Project Location Map:**

A site map shows a detailed layout of your project, with elements that are noted in your work plan. It is a good idea to ask someone who knows nothing about your project if they can interpret your map.

Below are instructions and guidance to put together a map that you will need to submit with your grant application, which will be used in the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.

Clearly mark the trail(s) by name, include a legend, or key, and clearly mark the trail project location & project components on the map (showing what work will be done where).

In the legend, or key, label elements on the map and be sure to mark project components that are in the work plan.

It is easy to develop an image of what your project will accomplish when details of your project are clearly shown on a site map.

An accurate & clear map will allow reviewers to fully understand and fairly assess your project, and environmental, archaeological, and other technical reviews are able to be done more efficiently without asking you to submit a new map for their review.

##  Mapmaking Help and Tools:

* There are many tools and resources for helping to make a good map.
* Go to the VT Agency of Natural Resource’s Natural Resources Atlas to create your map: <http://gis.vtanr.opendata.arcgis.com>
* Or VT Center for Geographic Information (VCGI): <http://www.anr.state.vt.us/dec/maps.htm>

VCGI manages the Vermont Interactive Map Viewer & you can make your own map via an easy online platform. You can add shape files, map layers, and download your map in many file formats, as well as download all geo-referenced data. To get started, go to: <http://maps.vermont.gov/vcgi/vtmapviewer/>

You can add shapefiles, map layers, and download your map in many file formats, as well as download all georeferenced data.

If you need support or assistance in developing your map, contact your Regional Planning Commission (RPC). RPC’s are invaluable resources and can provide you with assistance in the development of maps for community projects. Each of the 11 RPC’s have staff with GIS expertise to help you develop maps for projects to support the planning function of the RPC. To find an RPC near you, go to the Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) website: [http://www.vapda.org/.](http://www.vapda.org/)

Example of Map and Elements are found on the next page. Be sure to include the following basic cartographic elements for your maps:

1. Map Title
2. Date of Map
3. North Arrow
4. Scale
5. Map Legend (specify “existing” vs. “proposed”)
6. Roads
7. < 100ft contours
8. Existing trails with areas to be worked on highlighted, proposed trail(s), structures etc.
9. Location of all proposed project work elements identified in the work plan (new trail, tread rehab, footbridges, boardwalks, re-routes, etc.)
10. Waterways/streams/wetlands/water bodies
11. Trail/trailhead locations
12. Town/County boundaries with town name(s)
13. Potentially Significant Natural Communities (if known)
14. Potentially Significant Archeological Areas (if known)
15. Box with GPS (latitude/longitude coordinates, in degrees, minutes, seconds format
16. Ownership parcel boundaries through which the proposed trail work traverses

See Sample Map on next page (with directions to project site shown):

**Attachments of Photos, Site Assessments, Design Plans –** self-explanatory.

**The Project Budget Form:**

The budget form is used estimate a project’s total eligible cost listing the costs of supplies, materials, and labor needed to complete your project. Identify and include all eligible materials, supplies, and labor needed to complete the project, whether purchased or donated. Where donations of labor or materials are expected, say so. Otherwise, the items listed are to be estimated costs to be paid for up front by the applicant after the applicant receives a fully executed grant (grant approval). The value of donated supplies/materials and labor must show up in the budget as both a project cost and as a part of the match. Budget Forms are online @: <http://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/grants/rtp>

**Sample Project Map with Directions to Project Site:**

The map below shows the Delaney Woods Trails project location. The trailhead to access trails at

Delaney Woods is located off East Delaney Cross Road, in Wells, Vermont. Driving directions from

the village of Wells: Drive north on North Street for 1.2 miles. Take a left onto East Delaney Cross

Road. Proceed 0.2 miles to the trailhead, on the right.



**Budget Form: General Instructions**

* Get estimates (three written price quotes) labor and materials needed for this project.
* Round each line item to the nearest dollar.
* Provide a brief description of each line item, explaining how you arrived at the estimates.
* Show the number of hours or weeks used to arrive at estimated labor rates, and indicate the hourly, weekly, or other rates used for your estimated cost.
* If referencing a formal estimate provided by a vendor, attach copy of the estimate. Do not enter into a contract arrangement with a vendor prior to receiving a fully executed grant agreement, it may disqualify you from receiving a grant.
* Be sure the budget includes all eligible project costs you anticipate incurring.
* Skilled labor is considered the professional labor to be paid for at professional wage rates or a contractor’s fees.
* Unskilled volunteer labor is considered non-professional labor and should be calculated using minimum wage rates; Vermont minimum wage rate for 2019 increases to $10.78/hour.

## **1. Line by Line Budget Form Instructions:**

A.Environmental Permitting, Archeology, Professional Trail Design and Engineering Planning Costs

Include permitting fees, site inspections, professional surveys, assessments made for permits or clearances, professional engineering designs and site plans, trail design layouts, structural specs for trailhead and trailside facilities or amenities.

These costs are part of the cost of doing a project and may be applied to your match if incurred before grant approval.

Pre-project-approval planning costs incurred by the Sponsor are part of the cost of doing a project and cannot be reimbursed with the RTP grant, but these costs may be used toward the non-Federal share of a Sponsor’s match, as pre-agreement planning and environmental assessment costs, so long as the costs are incurred no more than 18 months prior to project approval.

If you choose to use pre-agreement planning & environmental assessment costs as part of your match, list these as “Pre-Agreement Costs” in the budget form. Since costs are limited to be only those costs incurred less than 18 months prior to project approval, you will need to submit supporting documentation (invoices & proof of payment) with the grant’s reimbursement request.

B. Administration (the estimated expenses a sponsor will incur **AFTER** grant approval)A small portion of the total project cost can be calculated for project record keeping, preparing reimbursement requests, scheduling work crews, purchasing materials, etc. Specify wages that will be devoted to this administration. If your agency has negotiated any Indirect Costs with a Federal Agency, insert the Indirect Cost rate here and attach to the application the Federal Agency’s Negotiated Rate form.

Example: Administration time: 1 staff X 40 hours @ $20.00/hour = $800.00

## C. Construction Design & Engineering

Document costs for design and engineering of trails, trailside amenities, or trailhead facilities such as bridges, boardwalks, toilets, kiosks, etc. Specify wage rates and estimated hours of work or professional fees to be charged.

## D. Construction/On-Site Labor

List labor costs, or the value of labor that will go into the project. You will see separate line items for skilled labor (professional labor) and unskilled labor (to use when calculating donated labor using minimum wage rates).

Include the value of donated labor and list as either:

* + Donations of unskilled labor (calculate at the minimum wage rate for 2019 ($10.78/hour)
	+ Donations of skilled labor (professional labor donated by someone professionally skilled to do the work)

For donations of skilled labor, the value calculated is the professional wage rates in the project locale for the labor being donated.

In other words, if someone donates professional labor with a set of skills they can be or are professionally employed for, then the value of their labor is to be calculated at skilled wage rates.

For donations of equipment rentals or equipment operators donating time to operate heavy equipment, equipment rental rates and skilled wage rates should be used in accordance with rates in a project’s locale. For organizations who own & use their own equipment, federally acceptable equipment rates must be used.

## E. Hand Tool Purchase

Purchase of small hand tools may be necessary for a project if it is more cost effective than renting equipment. List tools and cost.

## F. Construction Equipment Rental

List each piece of equipment to be rented, list the rental rate and estimated number of hours of rental time. If a town or an individual is donating the use of their equipment, use current federally acceptable rental rate for equipment. Remember that operators of equipment are also project costs and should be listed either here with equipment rentals or in Section D, as on-site labor costs.

## G. Materials/Supplies Purchases

List all materials to be purchased or donated for the project, and their estimated costs. If donated, list

both here and in the Sponsor Match Summary Sheet.

## H. Publications Research & Design

Complete this section for any fees associated with research and design of a publication or kiosk materials included in your project.

## I. Other Expenses Not Listed Above

If you have other expenses that you cannot list in sections above, list them here with enough information to support how you arrived at the estimated cost. Before listing additional items, be sure they are permissible and refer to the Eligibility section of this guidebook.

## Total Project Cost

Total all estimated costs listed in the budget (Sections A – I). This will be the total project cost.

## Sponsor Match

Multiply the total project cost by .20 and this will provide you with the 20% match required.

## Total Grant Request

Subtract the Sponsor Match from the Total Project Cost.

Example of a Budget of Project Costs, Sponsor Match, and Total Grant Request:

Professional Trail Design ($1000) & Engineering Costs ($2,000) $ 3,000.00

Contractor (or labor required to perform work) $20,000.00

Trail Project Manager/Project Oversight (1 Person 80 hrs. @ $25/hr.) $ 2,000.00

(5) Volunteers to help bring in supplies & assist in labor

5 days, 8-hrs/day, each volunteer @ Minimum wage ($11.75 in 2021) $ 2,350.00

Equipment Costs (Excavator Rental) $ 50/hour @ 20 hrs. $ 1,000.00

Total Project Cost $ 28,350.00

Sponsor Match (20% of the Project Cost: $28,350.00 x .20 = 5,670.00) 5,670.00

Total Grant Request (Project cost $28,350 minus match $5,670) $ 22,680.00

#  **Sponsor Match Summary Form**

This section of the application is set up for sponsors to list all sources of match secured for the trail project.

Match can come from multiple sources. FPR encourages Sponsors to garner match through a variety of sources.

Please note: It is very important to realize the applicant must have funds to pay for the entire project upfront. A grant will allow for reimbursement up to 80% of eligible project costs shown in the budget.

Here is how to report multiple sources of match, with a hypothetical example applied to this project:

 Donations:

* (10) Volunteers to help bring in supplies & assist in labor

5 days, 8-hrs/day, each volunteer @ Minimum wage $10.50/hr.) $2,350.00

* Donation of Professional Trail Design $1,000.00

 Local Funds:

* Town Appropriation $2,320.00

##  **2. Match categories:**

List each source of match as a line item under the four categories listed on the match summary form, shown and defined below:

###

###  Federal Funds:

Sponsor match may include other federal funds. However, when using other federal funds (i.e., U.S. Forest Service, Land & Water Conservation Funds, Scenic Byways, Federal Transportation Funds) the total federal share from all federal sources cannot exceed 95% of the total cost. Please contact the RTP Administrator if you are considering matching RTP with other federal funds.

###  State Funds:

Match from state funds, state appropriations, state grants, etc.

###  Local Funds (local government/public funding):

Match using local funds set aside by the Town (or City) for the project.

###  Private Funds (Foundations, Cash Gifts):

A sponsor’s direct cash match, from cash contributions, memberships, foundations or cash gifts for a project, fundraising events that raise money are a contribution of a cash match; town force/donated labor from the town, local business donations, trail project volunteers.

Donations in labor and materials can be private funds, but if organizations are donating labor, ask if labor being donated is being paid for through federal, state, local or an organization’s private funds.

If other grants are being used as match, specify if the grant has been awarded yet, or is still pending. If a grant is pending, please provide the estimated award date. Attach confirmation letters or memos from grant programs you list as match.

###  Donations of Equipment and Materials

Identify any donations of materials that will be donated to this project. If equipment or materials will be donated, keep records indicating what is donated, with the value of the donation.

Businesses donating labor, materials or equipment must specifically list what is being donated and clearly stating “donation” on the invoice.

###  Donations of Time and Labor (volunteers)

 Identify any in-kind labor and any labor to be donated to the project by volunteers.

The time of a person donating services may be considered acceptable sponsor match. Their labor is valued as either skilled or unskilled labor.

Donations of unskilled labor is calculated at minimum wage rate which will be $10.00/hour in 2017.

For donations of skilled labor (professional labor donated by someone professionally skilled in the tasks being done) calculate the value based on professional wage rates paid in your project’s region for that same kind of labor. In other words, if someone donates time to do skilled tasks they can be/or are professionally employed for, then the value of their labor is to be calculated at those skilled wage rates.

For donations of equipment operators donating time to operate heavy equipment, skilled wage rates should be used in accordance with wage rates in a project’s locale or refer to: Vermont Highway Wage Rate Decisions (for Federal-Aid Projects), 2017 General Wage Decisions @: <http://www.aot.state.vt.us/civilrights/labor.htm>

##  Class IV Roads:

RTP funds are not to be used to improve or maintain town highway roads for low-clearance regular passenger vehicle use. However, there are certain circumstances where RTP funds are allowable to maintain a town’s recreational trails that are located on Vermont’s Class IV Roads and to assure these circumstances, applicants who are applying for funds to do work on any Class IV road in Vermont must attach a Class IV road resolution form to the grant application.

Since a Town owns the Class IV Road right-of-way and has complete responsibility for it, FPR requires a commitment from the Town to protect, maintain and repair the recreational improvement and to keep it open for recreational use for the useful life of that investment.

A Class IV Road Town Resolution Form signed by the Town Select board must accompany your grant application for projects on Town Class IV roads.

This commits the Town to protect, maintain and repair and keep the right-of-way open and available for the intended recreational use for a project’s “useful life”, consistent with the amount of investment and type of project.

Useful lifetime frames on Class IV roads:

Maintenance to the existing trail tread as preventive maintenance to keep a trail in its current condition safe and accessible for users would have a useful life far shorter than, say, a new bridge because of both longevity and total cost. The commitment will vary from short term preventive maintenance projects to commit for a period of 5 years up to twenty-five years for installation of permanent structures.

The Town must commit to assuring the project will be kept in functional repair for that useful life repairing damage caused by either authorized or unauthorized use. The Town, of course, may not actually do or pay for the work but they must share in the commitment that it be done. This can be a formal written agreement or a contract arrangement between the town and a trail partner organization to perform the work, but the Town must share the commitment in writing. Failure to live up to those commitments may result in the Town and/or Subrecipient having to reimburse the state and/or federal grant funds. With this approach, FPR may support recreational uses of the Class IV roads in the State, and a sponsor may apply for RTP funds where/when appropriate satisfying legitimate vehicular use concerns of FHWA and FPR. Attach the Class IV Road resolution form to your grant application as instructed. If you are applying for a project on a Class IV road and you do not attach a Class IV road resolution form to your grant application, your application will not be eligible.

Eligible applications from sponsors proposing work on Class IV roads will require case-by-case consideration of the work being proposed on those Class IV roads associated to help assure a project does not result in a road suitable for regular passenger vehicular traffic. Such projects would not be eligible.

Other attachments to your application:

* Photos: Good visual support to your work plan, so attach photos if you can.
* Engineering plans/construction designs: Attach for structures (bridges, etc.) in the project.

## Required Certifying Signature

Your grant application requires an authorized signature for the Certifying signature page. For municipalities this person may be the Select Board Chair, Town Manager, or Town Trustee; For non-profit organizations, the Executive Director: Or the designee of the authorized official.

Addendum A: Educational Projects

The federally funded Recreational Trail Program lets states set aside 5% of its apportionment to be allocated to educational projects which benefit all trail user groups.

Educational program criteria:

* Provides education which reaches out to the statewide trail community and all trail user groups.
* It provides a positive impact to trail systems throughout Vermont.
* Promotes safety and/or environmental protection related to recreational trails.
* Includes supporting documentation/research which demonstrates the potential effectiveness of the initiative in meeting the need with an outcome that will be beneficial to the trails community.
* Describes a realistic, tangible project that can be accomplished in the time given and has a realistic and appropriate budget.
* Thoroughly considers relevant environmental, social, and cultural issues and assists in minimizing or mitigating impacts to natural and cultural resources.
* Creates partnerships among trail users, organizations, or agencies.

Below are some examples of how you could use RTP for educational training programs:

* Develop and operate statewide trail-related environmental education programs.
* Develop and operate statewide trail safety education programs.
* Develop and provide training on trail accessibility and sustainability
* Develop and deliver training that promotes safety or environmental protection related to recreational trails. This includes training related to trail planning, design, construction, maintenance, operation, and assessment, because each of these steps can relate directly to safety and environmental protection. Note: this does not include training related to club or organizational development or grant-writing skills.

If you are applying solely for an Educational Program/Project, it must be for trail-related education and information for public recreational use. Answer the questions keeping in mind how your proposed educational project best fits the criteria and the guidance related to educational programs or projects described above and on pages 6 – 8 in this supplement.

Some questions may not be applicable to an educational project. If this is the case, write "N/A".

Addendum B: Acquisition Applications

The main purpose of RTP is to assist in maintenance (rehabilitation) of existing trails and construction of new trails, using best practices in trail design, trail construction and trail maintenance.

While acquisitions are eligible under RTP, priority will be placed on allocating funds toward maintenance and construction projects. Depending on the number of applicants requesting funds for construction and maintenance projects, your acquisition project may or may not get recommended for funding.

When acquisitions are considered, priority will be given to trail/trail corridor easements that provide linkage to an existing managed trail or trail system, over general land acquisitions (with existing trails).

Consideration to general land acquisitions will be given only if the value of existing trails is consistent with the funding request.

If you want to apply to RTP grant funds for an acquisition, contact FPR's RTP Manager to discuss whether this is the program to apply to for your project.

Applicants will be responsible for providing verifiable documentation evidencing compliance for any real property being acquired. Acquisitions of trail easements or parcels with existing trails are subject to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (the Uniform Act).

The Uniform Act provides for fair and equitable treatment of persons whose property will be acquired or who will be displaced because of programs or projects financed with Federal Funds.

To learn more about the requirements of the Uniform Act go to:

<https://www.gpo.gov/fdsys/pkg/FR-2005-01-04/pdf/05-6.pdf>

Addendum C: Equipment Purchasing Rules and Requirements

Important Information about Equipment Purchases Requirements under Code of Federal Regulations (CFR):

For the purchase of equipment, management of equipment, and disposition of equipment purchased with RTP funds, Subrecipients of RTP funds are regulated under federal uniform administrative requirements, cost principles, and audit requirements under the Office of Management and Budget’s Code of Federal Regulation (CFR) described in:

* 2 CFR Part 200.313
* 2 CFR Part 200.439
* 2 CFR Part 200.13
* 2 CFR Part 200.33
* 2 CFR Part 200.48
* 2 CFR Part 200.2
* 2 CFR Part 200.12

OMB guidance materials in 2 CFR Part 200 are available through FHWA’s website:

<http://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_enhancements/guidance/allowcosts.cfm>

The applicant of an RTP grant applying for funds for the purchase of equipment is required to:

1. Comply with federal Buy America requirements with the purchase of each piece of equipment unless a waiver to Buy America has been issued by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). If a waiver is issued by FHWA, the subrecipient of RTP funds is bound by all conditions in the waiver, including demonstration of its proof of purchase from the manufacturer’s invoice or purchase verification that the final assembly / final manufacturing of the equipment, or modifications, takes place in the United States.
2. Purchase the equipment within the specified period of performance in the grant agreement.
3. Fully insure the equipment for replacement costs, for the life of the equipment.
4. Report to the State on the condition, use, and location of equipment purchased with RTP funds, on an annual basis by January 15th each calendar year for a period of five years after the purchase date. The report shall include the following:
5. A statement listing the grant identification number and the equipment by year, make, and model.
6. A statement verifying continued ownership of the equipment by the Subrecipient.
7. A statement of location, with a physical address where equipment is stored.
8. A statement that the equipment is needed and solely being used to maintain public recreational trails.
9. A statement the equipment is being maintained in good operating condition.

Addendum D: Permits, Project Review Sheets, and Permit Reviews

Project Sponsors planning trail projects are asked to contact a Permit specialist from the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation to find out if any State or local permits will be needed.

All RTP project sponsors are required to submit a Project Review Sheet, completed by the Permit Specialist, to FPR for projects being proposed.

The goal of the Permit Specialist is to take the mystery, anxiety, and any frustration out of the permit process. Permit Specialists can provide you with advice about state permits required for your project and help you find the resources and staff to help you obtain your permit(s).

The Project Review Sheet (PRS) is intended to assist the applicant by providing a list of potential permits that may be needed and is a required document to support the funding approval for your project.

 Based upon the information submitted by the Project Sponsor to the Permit Specialist, the Permit Specialist will decide if the information is adequate, describe the proposed project and begin the Project Review Sheet. Two major programs, Water & Wastewater and Act 250, will review the project description and sign the Project Review Sheet. Their signature is referred to as a Jurisdictional Opinion.

 In addition, other check boxes next to potential other permits that may be needed, and it is then the responsibility of the Project Sponsor to follow up with that permit’s specialist for those permit determinations.

The Permit Handbook is a good reference book that explains most of the states permit programs with summaries of permits, required fees, and contact persons within specific programs. It is available online: <http://dec.vermont.gov/permits/handbook/info-sheets> If for any reason this weblink changes, ask the Permit Specialist to provide you with a new link to this handbook.

 A request for a Project Review Sheet should include the following information:

* The project name
* The project location (911 address)
* The property owner’s name, address, phone number and email address
* The applicant’s name, address, phone number and email address
* A detailed description of the proposed project including the size of the parcel
* A description of the existing use of the property
* When did the existing use begin
* Any prior wastewater permits
* Any prior Act 250 permits
* Any prior state permits
* Site plans if available

During the planning process, check out BioFinder: <https://anr.vermont.gov/maps/biofinder>

BioFinder is a tool that can be used to help you plan the best location of a new trail. You can explore lands and waters in and around your proposed project area to identify any of your project area that may need further assessment for its position, so that you can help support important ecosystems natural communities, habitats, and species, and design your project in a compatible location, where it will not result in impacts to lands and waters that contribute most highly to Vermont’s ecological function.

**Section 106 Reviews Performed by VT Division for Historic Preservation (DHP):**

The Vermont State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) is involved in project reviews in accordance with federal laws, primarily under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, referred to as “Section 106”, and under State Laws, such as Act 250. All RTP trail projects are subject to Section 106 clearances through SHPO. The trail project should not impact any historic properties. If you are constructing a new trail or if you are planning to relocate a section of a trail, or if the project area lies within an archaeologically sensitive area (which SHPO determines) the project may require an archaeological site assessment & a Phase I archaeology survey for your project to receive a Section 106 clearance. “Phase I” and “Phase II” site surveys are likely to be required by SHPO when projects are within archeologically sensitive areas requiring sampling and test pits taken by a qualified archeologist before you begin your project work (an additional cost for the project sponsor). All efforts to preserve historical and cultural resources should be made. To learn more, contact the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation for assistance. Their web site is: [**http://www.historicvermont.org/**](http://www.historicvermont.org/)

Addendum E: The Project Selection Process, Agreements & Requesting Grant Funds

FPR appoints RTP Ranking Committee Members to Score Your Grant Application.

In coordination with the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council (VTGC), FPR solicits ranking committee members to serve on a ranking committee whose role it is to review and score the RTP competitive grant applications.

VTGC recommends their members to serve in this capacity when there are openings. FPR's Commissioner will appoint members to this committee and will consider those who have been recommended by VTGC and others who are interested and qualified in serving. This committee reviews and scores your grant application.

Your application will be scored on how well you demonstrate the need for this project based on the established criteria, addressing each question, and justifying why your project should be funded.

Grants are very competitive, so it is crucial your responses are well thought out, complete, and concise. Answer each question. Include attachments or photos when asked for in the application.

The Commissioner of the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation will consider the ranking committee's recommendations and make the final decision of what projects will be awarded grants.

All applicants will be notified of the results by the end of April. Once each project Sponsor is notified that RTP funds have been recommended for their project, projects then go through a federal and state approval process. This process may take anywhere from 1 month to 6 months, sometimes longer, depending on size and scope of a project, and capacity and authority of administrative reviewers.

Most grant agreements are usually reviewed, approved, and fully executed by July 1. FPR estimates this grant cycle will be processing grant agreements by June 15, 2021.

In March or April FPR will request funding approval from the Federal Highway Administration for those projects being awarded grants and the RTP Program Manager will begin preparing grant agreements for each project.

Once FPR has received funding authorization from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), FPR will then send a draft grant agreement to the Sponsor to confirm the grant’s scope of work, budget and maps for work that will be in the agreement and it will go to FPR’s Business office for its final State review.

## Grant Agreements

FPR’s business office will send the grant agreement to the Sponsor for a signature when it is in its final approval stages. Once FPR’s Commissioner signs the grant agreement, project funding is officially approved.

## Steps to Request Grant Funds

Once a Sponsor receives a grant agreement, FPR will provide the project sponsor (the Subrecipient) with grant reimbursement instructions to assist in the reimbursement process.

Before submitting requests for reimbursement, the Sponsor must pay 100% of the cost of any eligible items incurred under work plan in the grant agreement. Only eligible RTP project expenditures that contribute to the completion of the project listed in this agreement will be reimbursed.

Reimbursement requests will be authorized by the State for the allowable activities pertaining to the agreement in accordance with the State’s review and authorization of each request.

The State will compensate Sponsors for work performed up to the maximum grant award provided such work is within the scope of the grant.

Subrecipients of grant funds are required to send FPR an invoice with a sponsor's performance report with each reimbursement request. The invoice shall be for the incurred expenditures, minus the Sponsor’s documented match.

Reimbursement forms may be used for supporting documentation and available through FPR and may be found on FPR’s website.

Supporting documentation shall accompany all items on reimbursement forms to verify project expenditures and payments to vendors and shall include copies of invoices with cancelled checks or bank statements showing invoices have been paid; labor report forms, time sheets or other federally acceptable timekeeping records signed by individuals who are paid or who volunteer to attest to their labor on the project. Authorized representatives or owners of businesses donating services or materials shall sign any statement or invoice when it indicates a donation was made. Such statements or invoices should clearly show the donation was made to the specific trail project by either project name or identification number.