## PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The Vermont legislature established the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Communities pilot grant program in 2018 with the passage of Act 194. The program’s purpose is to make grants from $10,000 up to $100,000 available to help Vermont communities fully leverage their local outdoor recreation assets to achieve a status of being an “outdoor recreation-friendly community” as envisioned by the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC) steering committee. Up to $200,000 in funds are available under the 2019-2020 VOREC grant program. VOREC’s goals are to:

* Grow the outdoor recreation related business opportunities
* Increase participation in outdoor recreation activities
* Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources
* Increase stewardship of outdoor recreation resources
* Promote public health and wellness through outdoor recreation

Grant funding can be used for a variety of purposes with the result being a community(ies) that can show measurable success supporting and growing their local economies through leveraging outdoor recreation. The successful community(ies) will be showcased as prototypes (aka “Pilots”) for a longer-term community designation program with the goal of raising the economic tide for all recreation-oriented communities.

### Administration

The program is administered by the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) in partnership with the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the VOREC steering committee. A selection committee will make recommendations for funding to the Commissioner of FPR, who in consultation with ACCD and VOREC, will select communities for the program.

**NOTE:** If your project is in the Northeast Kingdom, this application may be shared to be considered for funding from our partner, the Northern Forest Center. You may contact Joe Short at jshort@northernforest.org with any questions.

NEW THIS YEAR: **Q&A Conference Calls on Wednesday, December 11th from 11 am until noon AND Wednesday December 18th from 2:30 pm until 3:30 pm. An FAQ will be posted after these calls at** [**https://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec-community-grant-program**](https://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec-community-grant-program)**.**

***Call-In Information will be posted at:*** [**https://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec-community-grant-program**](https://fpr.vermont.gov/vorec-community-grant-program)

**Application Submission:**

**Please email a complete PDF file to** **jessica.savage@vermont.gov** **no later than JANUARY 20th, 2020. If you cannot email a PDF, hard copies must be received no later than 5 pm on January20th at the following address:**

Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation

1 National Life Drive, Davis 2

Montpelier, VT 05620

Attn: Jessica Savage

Questions regarding the application can be directed to Jessica Savage at jessica.savage@vermont.gov or 802-249-1230.

**Project Selection Process:**

Once applications are received, an initial review by FPR and ACCD staff will be done to determine eligibility and conduct initial screening. The top applications will be sent to the VOREC Community Grant Ranking Committee for scoring. Top applicants may be invited to provide a brief presentation at the Ranking Committee’s meeting in February 2020. More details to come following the grant application deadline.

Applicants are anticipated to be notified of funding selection in February 2020 and grant agreements with selected Grantees are anticipated to be signed by May 1st, 2020.

All projects are expected to be completed by May 31, 2021.

## GRANTEE RESPONSIBILITIES

**Project Team:** Applicants must establish a dedicated project team which includes a broad range of stakeholder representation (i.e. municipal staff/volunteers, education, businesses, RPCs, RDCs, outdoor recreation, social justice, or environmental organizations). **At a minimum, the project team must be led by a municipal representative and must have a representative from an**

**outdoor recreation-focused organization.**

**Measurable Outcomes:** Grantees will be responsible for ongoing tracking and measurement of outcomes to demonstrate the long-term success of their project.

**Models & Templates:** Products and deliverables developed as part of this grant program will be available for adaptation and, as appropriate, replication by other communities throughout Vermont.

**Reimbursement**: This is a reimbursement-based grant supported by State funds. The grantee must pay 100% of the cost for eligible items before submitting a request for reimbursement. Advance payment provisions may be considered if a Grantee is determined to be low risk in Pre-Award Risk Assessment and has written procedures in place to minimize time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the State to the Grantee and the disbursement of funds

**Performance Reports:** Grantees will be responsible for submitting performance reports with each request for reimbursement attesting to project progress.

**Insurance and Certifications**: If selected, Grantees will be required to submit an insurance certificate meeting the requirements of Attachment C: State Provisions for Contracts and Grants, a Risk Assessment Questionnaire and an Act 154 Certificate of Good Standing. These materials may be found on our Recreation Grants Page of our website: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreation/recreation-grants>

**NOTE:** projects which contain capital construction will be maintained and open to the public for a minimum of 10 years. These project components must meet additional grantee responsibilities including:

* Completion of an Agency of Natural Resources Project Review Sheet, and obtaining all necessary state and local permits, prior to start of construction.
* Completion of State-Approved written landowner agreements/easements, prior to start of construction
* Construction in accordance with best practices and acceptable standards for component-types

## If your project contains capital construction, you must contact Jessica Savage (jessica.savage@vermont.gov) no later than December 30th, 2019.

## ELIGIBILITY

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### Eligible Applicants

Vermont municipalities are eligible to apply. Preferential consideration will be given to municipalities that are a [state designated downtown](http://accd.vermont.gov/sites/accdnew/files/documents/CD/CPR/List%20of%20Designated%20Downtowns.pdf) or [designated village center](http://geodata.vermont.gov/datasets/69a3f5c1b0334fa3967254c52c6a67d4_4). A consortium of municipalities is also welcome to apply. Consortiums must designate a “Sponsoring Municipality” in the application. The sponsoring municipality will be the team lead and fiscal agent. Applicants must demonstrate that they:

* Have completed some prior planning and mapping of outdoor recreation assets
* Have identified outdoor recreation as a component of their local economy through a local, regional, or statewide planning effort (town, regional, recreation plans, etc.)
* Have dedicated staff and/or volunteer capacity to ensure long-term success of project

### Eligible Project Activities

* Wayfinding & Interpretation: Public access improvements including maps and/or other informational materials
* Environmental Stewardship: Program or material needs related to environmental quality and stewardship of recreation assets
* Recreational Programming: Program, material, or equipment support for existing or new outdoor recreation events and programs
* Capital Projects: Signage/kiosks/maps, or small scale/leveraged outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements
* Community Marketing: Marketing activities (a percentage of a project/the program)
* Community Planning: Planning activities, including assessments or and/or mapping (a percentage of a project/the program; application cannot be for planning only)

### Eligible Expenses

* Services of consultants, subgrantees and technical assistance providers
* Outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements
* Material or equipment to support outdoor recreation programs
* Printing, website development, and event support
* Securing public access through the acquisition of land, easements, or rights-of-way

### Ineligible Expenses

* Standalone planning: planning done without any implementation elements
* Administrative staff time (grant management)
* Political activities
* Expenses incurred before the grant is awarded
* Alcohol or entertainment expenses

### APPLICATION COVER SHEET

### Applicant

**Name of Sponsoring Municipality**: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Mailing Address**:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Project Manager**:

**Phone Number**: **Email:**

**Grant Request** (*min. $10,000- max. $100,000*):

**Project Description** (brief summary: 150 words or less):

**Project Team: (Names, Titles and Brief Qualifications)**

**Town Representative:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Recreation Organization Representative:\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Others:**

## APPLICATION CHECKLIST

**Project Contributions to VOREC Objectives**

(*check all that apply*)

🞏 Promote outdoor recreation business opportunities

🞏 Increase outdoor recreation participation opportunities

🞏 Strengthen the quality and extent of outdoor recreation resources

🞏 Increase stewardship of outdoor recreational resources

**Eligible Project Activities**

(*check all that apply: projects should include two or more of these activities*)

🞏 **Wayfinding & Interpretation.** Public access improvements including maps and/or other informational materials

🞏 **Environmental Stewardship.** Program or material needs related to environmental quality and stewardship of recreation assets

🞏 **Recreational Programming.** Program, material, or equipment support for existing or new outdoor recreation events and programs

🞏 **Capital Projects.** Signage/kiosks/maps, or small scale/leveraged outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements

🞏 **Community Marketing**. Marketing activities (a percentage of a project/the program)

🞏 **Community Planning**. Planning activities, including assessments or and/or mapping (a percentage of a project/the program; application cannot be for planning only)

**Application Materials:**

🞏 **Application Cover Sheet**

🞏 **Project Narrative:** Provide responses to all questions on pages xx-xx.

🞏 **Budget:** Complete the enclosed budget sheet.

**Attachments:**

🞏 **Letters of Support.** Attach a minimum or 1 and a maximum of 3 letters of support that represent community and/or regional support for the proposed project and how it reflects the community’s expressed needs.

🞏 **Project Map(s)**. Required for Capital projects and must depict locations of project components – optional for other project activities (see below).

**🞏 (Optional)** **Supplemental Information.** Attach any other information that you feel would be helpful in evaluating the proposed project (Pictures, site plans and sketches, etc.).

## Project Narratives and Selection Criteria

Applicants are instructed to use the criteria below to describe your community(ies) current conditions and how the proposed project will achieve VOREC’s vision for an outdoor recreation friendly community by enhancing assets and connectivity in ways that improve economic conditions. See information on pages 4-6.

### Existing Assets & Capacity (10 Points). Strong foundation of outdoor recreation assets already in place with potential for growth on both private and public lands

1a. Please describe how your project has a strong foundation of existing outdoor recreation assets and capacity (250 words or less):

1b. Please describe how your project and/or community demonstrates potential for growth of outdoor recreation assets on both private and public lands (250 words or less):

1. **Planning & Environmental Stewardship** (10 Points)**. Identification of outdoor recreation as a priority through planning efforts and demonstrated commitment to balancing natural resource protection with enhancement of recreational assets.**

2a. Please describe how your project **relates to state, regional and local plans** (250 words or less):

2b. Please describe how your project, project team and community have a **demonstrated commitment to balancing natural resource protection with enhancement of recreational assets (250 words or less):**

### Community Support (10 Points): Community commitment to an outdoor recreation vision.

3. Please describe how your project has demonstrated community support and what your community’s vision is for outdoor recreation (500 words or less):

### Regional Connectivity (10 points): Opportunities for connecting assets or collaborating with others to leverage greater impact with outdoor recreation assets.

* + Planning has considered ways to connect assets locally and regionally
	+ Strategies exist to leverage an existing or potential recreation asset with regional and/or state significance

4a. Please describe how your project creates connectivity to existing or planned outdoor recreation assets (250 words or less):

4b. Please describe how your project connects to or leverages an outdoor recreation asset with regional and/or statewide significance (250 words or less):

### Economic & Community Need (10 points): Community has demonstrated need for economic growth and investment.  Increased participation and spending from outdoor recreation related activities will improve the economic conditions in the community.

* Underutilized or vacant properties
* Slow growth in grand list value
* Underemployment and underserved populations
* Decline in meals, rooms and retail taxes
* Demographic information and data showing socioeconomic need
* Federal & State designations indicating economic distress (Opportunity Zone, Low Income Census Tract, etc.)

5a. Please describe how your project ties to demonstrated community economic need (250 words or less):

5b. Please describe how your project will increase spending from outdoor recreation related activities and/or improve the economic conditions in the community (250 words or less):

### Existing Business (10 points): Existing solid network of local supporting businesses

* + Community(ies) has a cluster of businesses to support outdoor recreation visitors, such as: overnight lodging, food & beverage, retail, services, and cultural amenities
	+ Community(ies) has venue(s) and parking to accommodate a variety of events
	+ Community(ies) has water and wastewater capacity to fill vacant commercial, lodging or housing, where applicable

6. Please describe how your project is and will be supported by existing businesses and related infrastructure (500 words or less):

1. **Project Workplan and Timetable. (25 points): Please describe your project in detail and provide a thorough timeline of all grant related activities.** Use clear and concise language to describe tasks to be completed under this grant. Use of bulleted or numbered lists is encouraged. Use additional pages as needed.
2. **Measurable Outcomes.** Describe how the project team will measure the impact of this project over time.
3. **Project Readiness and Administrative Completeness** (5 points). Evaluated based on information provided in application Attachments (refer to Application Checklist).

## BUDGET SHEET

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **VOREC - Pilot Community Grant Program BUDGET** |   |   |   |   |
|  |  |  |  |  |   |
| **Other Funding Committed** | **Funding Source** | **Type** | **Amount** | **Status** |   |
| Capital Campaign | Private | Cash |  $ 3,000  | Pending | ***For example purposes only-remove before submitting***  |
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| **Total Other Funding Committed** |   |   |  **$ -**  |  |   |
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| **VOREC Project Activity** | **VOREC Request**  | **Other Funding Committed**  | **Total Activity Costs** |  |   |
| Mapping Services & Printing |  $ 9,600  |  $ 400  |  $ 10,000  | ***For example purposes only-remove before submitting***  |   |
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| **Total Project Costs** |  **$ -**  |  **$ -**  |  **$ -**  |  |   |
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