2024 RTP Grant Application Preview

All applications must be submitted through the online portal to be considered for funding. Note: fields for applicant response are identified below in blue with numbers. Review the comment boxes for information regarding question flow.

SECTION 1: Applicant and Project Information

Provide information for the municipal, nonprofit, or other governmental entity applying for this grant. This should be the organization who will sign the grant agreement and who will be responsible for submitting reports and reimbursement requests.

Please note that the “Project Manager” should be the project lead and “Authorized Representative” should be the person at the organization, business or municipality that can sign legal documents.

1. Name of lead applicant organization
2. Applicant Type:
* Municipality
* Non-Profit
* Other Governmental Entity

Main Office Address

1. Address Line 1
2. Address Line 2
3. City
4. State/Area
5. Postal Code

Project Manager

*This should be the person at the organization or municipality who will provide oversight of the project, ensuring the work is completed in accordance with the scope of work outlined in the grant proposal.*

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Position
4. Phone Number
5. Email

Authorized Representative

*This should be the person at the organization or municipality that is legally authorized to sign legal documents. For example, for town lands this could be the chair of the selectboard.*

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Position
4. Phone Number
5. Email

Key Project Information

1. Project Title
2. Project location: City/Town
3. Project Location: County (check all that apply)
* Addison
* Bennington
* Caledonia
* Chittenden
* Essex
* Franklin
* Grand Isle
* Lamoille
* Orange
* Orleans
* Rutland
* Washington
* Windham
* Windsor
1. Project Location: Coordinates (application will provide a map that lets you zoom in to find these!)
2. Project Location: Census Tract Number(s)

*Select from https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5*

1. Total Amount Requested from RTP (Maximum $50,000)
2. Total Project Cost
3. Total Match
4. Match Percentage (Minimum 20% of total project cost)
5. Brief description of the project (1 or 2 short sentences)
6. Trail Use Type (check all that apply):
* Rail Trail/Multi-Use Trail
* Hiking/Running/Pedestrian Trail
* Nordic or Cross-Country Skiing Trail
* Back-County Skiing Trail/Glade
* Mountain Biking Trail
* Snowshoeing Trail
* Nature/Interpretive/Wildlife/Bird-watching Trail
* Accessible Trail
* All-Terrain Vehicle/Off-road Motorcycle Trail
* Snowmobile Trail
* Equestrian Trail
* Access Trail for Paddling or Aquatic Activities
* Other
1. Please describe briefly.

SECTION 2: Project Identification and Project Readiness

The applicant will be prompted to share required and supplemental materials to demonstrate their capacity to carry out the project and to show that the project is well thought-out and planned for success. This section is worth 10 points.

Note: Failure to provide documents where needed will result in an incomplete application, which will not be eligible for consideration for this grant round.

## Project Work Plan:

Please fill out the “RTP Workplan Template” for your project and upload it below. Title the document using the following format: 2024\_Workplan\_[Name of applicant organization]. Example: 2024\_Workplan\_FPR.

1. RTP Workplan Template Upload:

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

*Comment*

1. Please share your project work plan activities (check all that apply).
* Trail Construction (of a new trail, and/or new trail segment)
* Construction of a new trailhead parking area (or expansion of one)
* Construction of a new trailside facility
* Universal accessibility or universal design features
* Maintenance to an existing trail within the existing trail footprint
* Maintenance to an existing trailhead parking area, or trailside facility within the existing footprint
* Maintenance or rehabilitation of buildings
* Repair and/or replacement of signs, kiosks, markers, fences, gates, boardwalk decking and/or posts, bridges, culverts, and guardrails within the same footprint
* Grooming snow
* Education: Trail-related trail user, and trail safety education, programs, and/or educational materials to make available to the public
* Acquisition: Trail Easement or Corridor Easement of pre-existing trails, or Trailhead Parking Easement
* Major repair, renovation, construction or removal of dams and dikes
* Any type of work requiring heavy equipment
* Installation of signage or ancillary facilities (e.g. trash cans, benches, port-a-potties) within an existing footprint or that do not involve ground disturbance.
* Seeding and planting, blading or the ripping up of surfaced roadways or trailways for the discontinuance of the travel corridor and the reestablishing of vegetation within an existing disturbed area.
* Other
1. Please describe briefly.
2. Does your project include land acquisition? If “Yes”, you will need to answer questions regarding the status of your acquisition project. Projects that are ready to purchase, with an appraisal, purchase and sales agreement, title and environmental review in hand, will likely rank higher than acquisition proposals without that information.
	* Yes
	* No

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Required For Land Acquisition

Note: Failure to provide documents where needed will result in incomplete application / not eligible for consideration for this grant round.

1. Acquisition Type
* Fee Acquisition
* Fee Acquisition with an Easement
* Permanent Public Access Easement
* Term Public Access Easement (25 year minimum)

### Fair Market Value

Applicants acquiring property or interests in property (e.g., easements) will be required to substantiate the value of that interest before full grant funds can be used to reimburse for acquisition costs. Obtaining an independent appraisal by a qualified appraiser that meets the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) is required unless the interest to be acquired is below $10,000 or the amount to be paid is significantly below the market value. In this case, obtaining a market analysis and providing a justification for not needing a USPAP appraisal is needed.

1. Have you completed an appraisal for the subject property?
* Yes
* No

If yes:

1. Please upload a copy of the appraisal report. *Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

Drop files here to upload

OR

CHOOSE FILE

Comment

If no:

1. Please share whether you intend to complete an appraisal, and if you will, tell us when you plan to do so. (1,250 character limit)
2. If you do not intend to complete an appraisal, please justify not needing one here. (1,250 character limit)
3. If there is no appraisal, please share your estimated value of the subject property.

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### Purchase and Sales Agreement

Complete the section below pertaining to a purchase and sales agreement. Applicants acquiring any property or easement will be required to demonstrate that they can complete the acquisition in the two-year grant period. Applicants will be required to demonstrate landowner commitment to sell the property, ideally through a purchase and sales agreement.

1. Do you have a signed purchase and sales agreement with the landowner?
* Yes
* No

If yes:

1. What is the expiration date for the purchase and sales agreement?
2. Upload the purchase and sales agreement. Help Tip Please upload a valid document. *Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

Drop files here to upload

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Comment

If no:

1. Describe how you intend to demonstrate and secure landowner commitment. (1,250 character limit)

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### Title Work, Boundaries, and Environmental Conditions

Applicants will also be required to demonstrate that they have inspected the title, boundaries and environmental conditions of the property to ensure that any legal or physical conditions do not infringe on the purposes for which the property is being acquired. Complete the section below for Title Work. Please note: Any restrictions on the property that could prevent it from being available for recreational purposes of the grant at any time may render the project ineligible.

1. Has title work been completed for the property?
* Yes
* No

If yes:

1. Upload a copy of the title report

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

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*Comment*

If no:

1. Describe how you intend to inspect the title and demonstrate that the property is free of title defects. (1,250 character limit)

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1. Please share whether there are any liens, restrictions, easements, or covenants on the property. (2,500 character limit)
2. Please describe any encumbrances on the property that could impact the public’s use of the property, the recreational value of the property, or the purpose for which the property is being acquired. (2,500 character limit)
3. Have property or easement boundaries been substantiated?
* Yes
* No

If yes:

1. Describe how boundaries have been substantiated and provide the results. (1,250 character limit)

If no:

1. Describe how you plan to substantiate the property boundaries. (1,250 character limit)

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1. Has an environmental assessment (an assessment of any possible contaminants, pollution or other issues) of the property been completed?
* Yes
* No

If yes:

1. Please describe how the inspection was performed and what it found. (1,250 character limit)

If no:

1. Please describe how you plan to perform an environmental inspection. (1,250 character limit)

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Note: You will need to itemize acquisition costs in your project budget. Eligible acquisition costs include Purchase price, closing fees, title search, title insurance, survey cost, appraisal fee, stewardship funding, administration costs.

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Project Map:

*For guidance on what grant staff will be looking for refer to RTP Project Map Checklist in the Application Guidance. Share a detailed map depicting the project location with all work plan’s components and structures with site locations highlighted and clearly marked, and a legend to understand what components will be done at what locations. Your map file should be clearly titled using the following format: 2024\_ProjectMap\_[Name of applicant organization]. Example: 2024\_ProjectMap\_FPR.*

1. Upload your Project Map. Make sure to use the Project Map Checklist Template when creating the map.

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

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*Comment*

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Project Budget:

A detailed budget is required using the RTP budget form excel template. The budget is an estimate of eligible costs associated with your project, used to show all the labor and material associated with the activities in your work plan. Be thorough, detailed, and accurate. Explain any basis used to formulate estimates for listed expenses. For guidance on how to fill out the project budget, refer to the Application Guidance document.

NOTE: 20% match is required for RTP projects. Be sure to complete the match summary in the budget template.

1. Upload your Project Budget using the RTP Project Budget Form Template

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

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*Comment*

1. Why is the RTP program the best source to fund this project? (1,500 character limit)

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Permitting and Landowner Permission:

### Project Permitting:

Projects must have all necessary permits in place prior to construction. For state permits, the first step is to put the project through the Permit Navigator tool, which is found on the Department of Environmental Conservation website. The Permit Navigator tool will provide the contact information for permit specialists who can be contacted for further information about obtaining permits for the project.

*Please note: if you do not want to seek a jurisdictional opinion for your project at this time, do not check the box asking whether a jurisdictional opinion is sought.*

Please upload the Permit Navigator results for your project below. [Department of Environmental Conservation](https://dec.vermont.gov/permitnavigator)

1. Upload Permit Navigator results

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

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1. If your Permit Navigator results determine that permits are likely for your project, please explain what additional steps, if any, you have taken to obtain your permits. (2,000 character limit).

### Projects on USFS Land

1. Is this a project for work on federal USFS land?
* Yes
* No

Please share the USFS contact who will serve as project manager from the USFS to oversee the work you do on USFS land. Upload the official USFS Environmental Decision Memo documenting the environmental assessment specifically for the project in this application. The USFS EDM can be obtained from the designated authorized USFS official who will oversee this project.

Enter USFS Project Manager Contact Information

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Title
4. Phone Number
5. Phone Extension
6. Email
7. Please upload the official USFS Environmental Decision Memo documenting the environmental assessment specifically for the project in this application.

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

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*Comment*

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### Projects on State Land

1. Is this a project for work on any State land?
* Yes
* No

Enter the State Contact Information

1. First Name
2. Last Name
3. Title
4. Phone Number
5. Phone Extension
6. Email

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### Landowner Permission:

1. Does your organization own 100% of the land where the project will occur?
* Yes
* No

### Written Landowner Permission

Written landowner permission for public trail access and to permit the trail work in this application is required for all projects. Permission is to be given to assure continued public access after a project is completed, for the minimum timeframes shown below. **A permission form is not required if the entity that is proposing the project and applying for this grant also owns the property in full.**

* 1 year for projects solely to groom snow
* 5 years for general maintenance activities such as removing fallen trees from the trail corridor, cleaning out and improving drainages, clipping vegetation to create a passable corridor, and adding kiosks, signage, or other minor assets; for minor trail drainage and treadway improvements such as adding water bars, small (3-5 stone) stone staircases or short sections of step stones or puncheon; and for re-routes less than 50 feet
* 10 years for new trail construction; construction of major trail infrastructure like parking lots or boardwalks; large-scale trail reconstruction and treadway improvement such as significant stone or lumber staircases and long stretches of turnpike or step stones; and for reroutes longer than 50 feet
* 25 years for permanent facilities or structures (engineered bridges, pavilions, bathrooms, etc.)

*Written landowner permission: Refer to the Application Guidance document on the Instructions page for more information on what you need to complete this section. Landowner permission is required for all work proposed on private and/or public land. Please upload as many documents as you need. Each file should be clearly titled using the following format: 2024\_LandownerPermission\_[Easement/Public/Private/Class4]\_[Name of landowner]\_[Name of applicant organization]. Example: 2024\_LetterOfPermission\_Private\_JimSmith\_FPR.*

1. Upload written landowner permission:

Help Tip Please upload a valid document

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

Drop files here to upload

OR

CHOOSE FILE

SECTION 3: Project Resilience and Sustainability

This is the section where the applicant will be prompted to share responses about how your proposed work now will provide public benefit for years to come.

## Resilience: Well-Designed to Minimize Environmental Impact (up to 30 points).

Projects should be planned and implemented to minimize environmental impact and promote resilience to extreme weather events and high use.

1. What recommended trail standards will be used in this project, so work is performed to high levels of sustainability, minimize environmental impact, and provide erosion control? Select all that apply. See FPR’s Recommended Trail Standards: <https://fpr.vermont.gov/recommended-trail-standards>
* USFS Trail Construction and Maintenance Notebook
* USFS Trail Fundamentals and Trail Management Objectives
* Vermont Town Forest Trail Design Guide
* Guidance for Non-Native Invasive Plant Species Monitoring and Control in Connection with Section 248 Projects
* USFS Accessibility Guidebook
* Access Board Guidance for Boating Facilities
* Access Board Guidance for Fishing Piers
* Adaptive Mountain Bike Standards
* IMBA Guidelines for a High Quality Trail Experience
* IMBA Trail Development Guidelines for Successfully Managing the Process
* VTrans Pedestrian and Bicycle Facility Design Manual
* USFS Equestrian Design Guidebook for Trails Trailheads and Campgrounds
* Vermont Backcountry Ski Handbook
* VAST Best Practices for the Development of Snowmobile Trails
* NPS River Access Planning Guide
* Access Fund Climbing Management Guide
* USFS Wetland Trail Design and Construction
* VT DEC Wetlands Program Recreation Trail Building and Wetlands
* VT DEC Rivers Program Recreation Trail Building and Riparian Areas
* USGS Sustainable Camping Best Management Practices
* ATC-USFS-NPS-GMC Backcountry Sanitation Manual
* Other
1. Please describe any additional standards or guidelines that will be used. Provide a link if available.
2. For your project, what elements from the standards above will you use to ensure that the outdoor recreation resources (trails, parking lots, kiosks, etc.) you are building or maintaining are resilient to extreme weather events and high use? (2,000 character limit)
3. What potential impacts does your project have on the natural environment, including rare, threatened and endangered species, water resources including wetlands, wildlife and historic resources? How will mitigate those impacts? (2,000 character limit)

## Sustainability: Stewardship and Maintenance Plan (up to 30 points)

Applicant demonstrates high likelihood of future stewardship to ensure long-term accessibility with a demonstrated commitment to balancing natural resource protection with future recreational stewardship, management of trail access for trail users, and sustainability of the improved trail assets.

1. What is the plan for continued operation and maintenance of the trail/s at this project site once the project is completed? Describe the commitments of the applicant as well as any relevant partners and if available, a brief description of any documentation of that commitment (e.g. written agreement, memorandum of understanding, co-signed land management plan) (3,000 character limit)
2. How will you manage visitors to the trail or recreation resource? What information and trail maps will be available to the public that describe allowable trail activities, user-responsibilities, safe trail use, resource protection, respect for landowners and other trail users? How will you manage potential increases in use and user group conflicts if they arise? (2,000 character limit)

SECTION 4: Public Benefits and Support

## Public Recreation Benefits: Equitable Trail Access and Connectivity (up to 30 points)

Project greatly improves access, removes barriers, and finds ways to build and maintain trail/s to a high level of accessibility based on the terrain and type of trail resource/s being offered.

1. How will the public find out about how to access or use the recreational resource? (check all that apply)
* Trail will be posted Trailfinder.info (a free-to-use, trail manager approved online trails source)
* Trail will be posted on Organization or Town website
* Trail will be posted on other free online sources (ex: tourism site, other trails apps, social media)
* Signs will be placed on roadway to guide public to the trailhead
* Printed information will be available at the organization headquarters or town office
* Information will be available at tourism or Chamber of Commerce locations
* Information and/or maps will be posted at kiosks at the trailhead
* Information and/or maps will be posted at kiosks or information booths in downtowns or other locations away from the trailhead
* Other
1. Please list additional strategies for how you will promote your trail.
2. How will your project expand access to Vermont’s outdoors and reduce systemic barriers that have excluded people from full participation in outdoor recreation opportunities? Describe how your project will support BIPOC, LGBTQ+ people, people with low income, speakers of languages beyond English, people in larger bodies, people with disabilities, and/or other identity groups. (3,000 character limit)
3. How does this project help connect trail users to natural, scenic, historic and/or agricultural destination areas, parks, forests, recreation areas, schools, jobs, developed growth centers, designated downtown areas, trail systems, long-distance trails, or trail networks? (2,500 character limit)

## Local (Municipal) Support, Community Partnerships and Citizen Involvement (up to 20 points)

Project includes local public engagement efforts, addresses local, regional and/or State plans, and has developed community partnerships, citizen involvement and public support for this project’s implementation

1. Identify up to 5 individuals or groups (public or private) that will champion the project and be significantly involved in the design and implementation of the project. Please briefly describe their role and expertise (name, title, organization, role played in the project), and what commitments they have made (financial, labor, materials, etc.). (2,500 character limit)
2. Describe the community support, public engagement efforts, and municipal involvement for this project (i.e., outreach efforts, public meetings, surveys, and needs assessments to gather public input and feedback). (2,000 character limit)
3. Describe how this project supports a specific goal or objective in the local town plan, regional plan, Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), and/or another overarching plan for land, recreation, and trail management. (2,000 character limit)

## Letters of Support

Please upload a minimum of 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. Each file should be clearly titled using the following format: 2024\_LetterOfSupport\_[Name of signee]\_[Name of applicant organization]. Example: 2024\_LetterOfSupport\_JimSmith\_FPR.

1. Letter of Support Upload

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

*Comment*

1. Additional Letter of Support 1 Upload

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

*Comment*

1. Additional Letter of Support 2 Upload

*Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

*Comment*

SECTION 5: Compliance Information

1. Can your organization comply with the requirements of the Act 154 Certificate of Good Standing, Vermont FPR State Risk Assessment Questionnaire, W-9, and FPR Grantee Insurance Guidance? Please review the documents in the Application Guidance.
	* Yes
	* No
2. Can your organization comply with the procurement policies required by the RTP program? Please review the documents in the Application Guidance.
	* Yes
	* No

# Federal Grant Compliance

As a federally funded program all RTP projects are considered federal actions. As a federal action, all projects must demonstrate compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act; Section 106 of the Historic Preservation Act; Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act; and federal accessibility requirements.

## Section 106 Review:

DHP will review the activities outlined in your workplan, as well as your answers to the question below to review in compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

1. Will your project impact any existing human-made resources (buildings, signs, bridges, fences, boardwalks, etc.) more than 50 years old?
* Yes
* No
1. Please describe.
2. Will your project only disturb no more than 5 feet outside of existing disturbed areas?
* Yes, my project will take place only within previously disturbed footprint.
* No, my project will impact areas outside of previously disturbed areas.
1. Please describe.

## Endangered Special Act Review

Please provide the following information so we can help assess potential impacts for Northern Long-Eared Bats. We will use this information to help complete the Endangered Species Act Review.

1. Does your project involve cutting trees over 4 inches in diameter?
* Yes
* No
1. Can you perform the tree cutting during the winter months when bats are not using roost trees (November through March)?

*Please note that every effort should be made to cut any necessary trees in the winter. If this will not work with your project, please check "No" and explain why in the comment box that will appear.*

* Yes
* No
1. Please add an explanation for why you cannot cut trees in the winter.
2. Does your project involve clearing a new road or multi-use/ADA trail corridor?
* Yes
* No

If Yes:

1. How long is the new road/trail in feet?
2. How wide will the clearing be in feet?

## Accessibility Compliance

[Accessible design standards](https://www.fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/Accessibility-Guide-Book.pdf) are required to be used for all new trail construction projects. Exceptions are permitted for any portion of the trail where compliance would:

1. Cause substantial harm to cultural, historic, religious, or significant natural features or characteristics;
2. Substantially alter the nature of the setting or the purpose;
3. Require construction methods or materials that rare prohibited by Federal, State, or local regulations or statutes; or
4. Not be feasible due to terrain or the prevailing construction practices.
5. Will you project follow accessible design standards?
* Yes
* No. My project or a portion of my project qualifies for one of the exceptions.

If no:

1. Include your rationale, which conditions for exception are present, and which exceptions apply to the project overall. You should keep these records on file with your project plans with the date of determination, and the name and contact who made the determination. (1,500 characters)

 SECTION 6: Supplemental Information

You may also use this section to upload any other information you feel would be helpful for evaluating the proposed project (pictures, site plans and sketches, engineering designs, other planning materials, etc.). Your files should be clearly titled using the following format: 2024\_[document type]\_[Name of applicant organization]. Example: 2024\_Photos\_FPR.

Optional Documents

Upload optional documents. *Please be aware that files exceeding 100 MB in size are not allowed*

*Comment*

# Review

This step allows you to review the form to confirm the form is populated completely and accurately, prior to certification and submission.

Please note: Any work you perform filling out a form will not be accessible by RTP Program Staff or the public until you actually submit the form in the 'Certify & Submit' step.

# Certify & Sumit

This step allows you to certify the form as complete and accurate, and to submit the form for review and processing by RTP Grant Program Staff.

Please note: Any work you perform filling out a form will not be accessible by grant program staff until you actually submit the form. At the time of submission, it will be transmitted to grant program staff and it will become part of the public record, accessible per the Vermont Public Records Act.