

2024 Recreation Trails Program Project Development and Pre-Application Guidance

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Introduction

Welcome to the Application Guidance for the 2024 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grants. Recreational Trails Program (RTP) grants are federally funded on an annual basis through the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and are administered at the State level in Vermont through the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (FPR). FPR makes RTP funds available to Vermont communities for the development and maintenance of public recreational trails, for both motorized and non-motorized recreation. In the 2024 grant round, we anticipate awarding approximately \$500,000 to maintain and build trails across the state of Vermont.

RTP grants to local communities and non-profit organizations throughout Vermont are awarded for recreational trail projects for their contribution to livability and connection of people to place. Project proposals are solicited through a competitive application process.

All projects funded are to help achieve the program's goals of developing and maintaining trails in proximity to all who live in and visit Vermont. And all projects are required to help achieve goals, objectives and priorities found in the [Vermont's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#). Federal legislation mandates that RTP funds are allocated across three categories: 30% for non-motorized trail uses, 30% for motorized trail uses, and 40% for multi-use/diversified trail uses.

This document is intended to provide guidance for the pre-application phase only. A full application guidance document with additional information will be released later.

RTP is a Reimbursement Program

This means that the applicant must be capable of financing the project and (after a grant agreement is fully executed) first paying for expenditures and then submitting a request to the State for reimbursement using the required documentation. The program will reimburse up to 80% of eligible project costs. Recipients are responsible for providing a minimum of 20% of the total project cost (required match).

Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply for RTP grants:

- Municipalities (cities, towns, counties, etc.)
- Non-profit organizations
- State or Federal government agencies, other governmental entities (district or local authorities), or tribal governments

2024 RTP Timeline

- Pre-application submissions: November 20-December 30, 2023
- Full application submissions: mid-January - February 11, 2024
- Grant application review and selection: mid-February - May 2024
 - This process requires multiple steps, including scoring and review by the Ranking Committee, FPR agency approval, and Federal Highway Administration authorization.
- Grant agreement development: May - September 2024
 - This process includes compliance reviews (Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, state risk assessment, etc.), drafting, state contracting, legal reviews, and applicant review.

- Depending on the complexity of the project, how responsive applicants are to requests for additional information, and the results of any compliance reviews, grant agreements may be executed earlier or later during this timeframe.
- Grant implementation: grant agreement execution date through December 31, 2026.
 - Applicants should plan for projects to begin no earlier than October 1, 2024.

Grant Awards and Funding Approval

The amount of funding available in the 2024 grant round is pending funding notification from the Federal Highway Administration. Grant amounts are dependent on each project’s merits and its needs, with a maximum grant award of \$50,000. FPR’s Commissioner has lifted the cap for motorized projects to meet federal allocation requirements (see the 40-30-30 paragraph for an explanation). After projects are selected by a ranking committee, FPR must then get federal funding approval before FPR can fully execute grant agreements.

Once grant agreements are executed, awarded applicants become “project sponsors.” **All project sponsors must wait for a fully executed grant agreement before beginning their project.** The grant agreement will include grant details of the funding amount, match requirements, scope of work, payment provisions, and other project requirements of the project. It will include both State and Federal provisions, which will be included in the full application guidance. Projects must demonstrate compliance with State and Federal regulations including but not limited to:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
- Executive Orders (which include but are not limited to Floodplain Management, Wetlands Protection, Build America/Buy America, Civil Rights Act)
- The State’s Permitting Processes

Each project sponsor is responsible for completing environmental reviews prior to construction and maintenance in accordance with federal and state regulations. In addition, there are fiscal compliance requirements, including Act 154 Certificates of Good Standing, state risk assessment, W-9s, and Certificate of Insurance requirements. Additional information about compliance related to each of these will be described in the full application guidance.

How to Apply

This year, there is a two-step application process that begins with a short pre-application submission. Pre-application submissions will be reviewed for compliance with the RTP program. Selected applicants will then be invited to submit a proposal for full review.

How to Submit a Pre-Application

To submit your pre-application, submit the following materials by **11:59 PM ET on December 30, 2023**.

1. Complete the [“Pre-Application: Part 1” online form](#).
 - a. See “PART 1: Applicant and Project Information” in this document for more information regarding the questions in the pre-application.
2. Email the following three documents to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@vermont.gov

- a. [2024 RTP Workplan](#)
- b. [2024 RTP Budget](#)
- c. Completed [Permit Navigator](#) results or a [Project Review Sheet](#)

Incomplete proposals will not be considered after December 30, 2023, so be sure to complete BOTH the form and email your additional documents before that time. Review the appropriate “Application Content” sections below for more information about those documents.

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

Submitting a Full Proposal

If you are invited to submit a full proposal, the grant application will be offered through the ANROnline portal. A separate guidance document will be provided with instructions and support to complete the full application.

Please check out the [RTP website](#) for more information about the grant program, including additional resources, templates, and opportunities to sign up for or view information sessions on the grant program. Questions regarding the application can be directed to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.gov with the subject line “RTP Grant Application Question.”

Application Support

We are offering multiple opportunities for applicants to ask questions about the 2024 RTP Grant Program.

Grant Program Webinar

Tuesday, December 5, 2023, 1:00-2:00 PM

The webinar will include a presentation explaining the goals of the grant program, an overview of the process, and eligible activities. There will be time at the end of the session for questions from attendees. Register for the webinar and find the recording afterward on the [RTP webpage](#).

Open Office Hours

Wednesday, December 13, 2023, 3:00-4:00 PM

Staff at FPR will host a virtual open office session for prospective applicants to learn more details about the grant program and ask questions. Open office hours will be recorded and posted on the [RTP webpage](#). To access the open office hours, visit the webpage and click the links below the Open Office Hour times.

If the webinar and open office hours don't work for you, please email us at ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov.

Additional Technical Support

Municipal Technical Assistance Program

Towns that need help with grant development, management, or administration, can get support from the State of Vermont's [Municipal Technical Assistance Program](#). The program is intended to assist communities

that have a limited capacity for accessing and applying for state and federal grants. To be eligible for this program, towns must be pre-approved by the Vermont Agency of Administration. Here is the current list of [pre-approved of towns](#). If you have further questions about how this program can help, please email the Vermont Agency of Administration at ADM.ARPAMuniAssist@vermont.gov.

Project Development

When developing a plan for RTP projects, here are some general tips for project planning:

- Your project should be ready to be implemented in the timeframe of the grant. For example, for a project that repairs an eroded section of a hiking trail, you should know how many water bars and stone steps you need to fix the problem. For a project that involves building a new trail, you should have a flagged line and map that depicts the location of the trail and any associated infrastructure that will need to be installed (like boardwalks or kiosks).
- As soon as you have a plan in place for the project you will seek funds for, find out if what you are proposing will need any State and local permits. Start this process by completing the Permit Navigator tool, as outlined in this document. Permit processes can take 3 - 6 months, or longer, depending on the nature of the work being proposed or if site visits are necessary.
- Projects selected for funding require local public support. Start garnering local support early in the planning process. Host a public meeting and invite community members to learn and be involved in the plans for this project. Offer ways community members can support this project. Consider partnering with local schools, businesses, local agencies, and other organizations; Local support helps build capacity. Be sure the project meets local needs in the community where the trail project will occur. Create ways to offer fun future use of the trail, and future stewardship of the trail.
- Develop partnerships with organizations, professional trail builders, and other organizations who can support the project with best practices in trail construction, trail maintenance, and future stewardship. Collaboration and community partnerships are key to success.
- Projects funded are to be primarily recreation oriented and must support strategies identified in the Action Plan of [Vermont's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects include:

- Maintenance/restoration of existing trails
- Construction of new trails, with certain limitations for projects on federal lands
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead amenities, facilities, parking areas (i.e., signage, kiosks, composting toilets, recycle receptacles, or trail structures along the trail, directly associated with the trail)
- Land Acquisitions: Acquisition of trail easements or fee simple title to property with trails or recreational trail corridors in conformance with the Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, P.L. 91-646.
- Educational projects: States have flexibility to use up to 5% of a State's annual apportionment for educational projects that provide trail-related information to the public (i.e., educational information about trail safety, appropriate trail use, managed and allowable use(s), accessibility, and environmental protection)

Recreational trails are defined in the RTP regulations as a thoroughfare or track across land or snow used for recreational purposes. Funds can be awarded for a wide range of activities and opportunities such as hiking, mountain biking, running, paddling (with portage trails), cross-country and back-country skiing, skating and skateboarding trails, nature-based interpretive use, multi-use trails, equestrian, snowmobiling, all-terrain vehicular or other off-road recreational uses (such as dirt-biking). Multiple recreational trail uses are encouraged.

All eligible project types below must be performed in accordance with the recommended standards for outdoor recreation assets. See FPR's [Recommended Trail Standards](#). In addition, trails should be designed to Accessible Design Standards, unless they meet one or more of the exceptions (see "Universally Accessible Trails and Accessible Design Standards" at the end of this document for additional information).

Applicants are encouraged to enter into contracts and cooperative agreements with professional trail builders and qualified youth conservation or service corps to develop and provide training and to work in trail patrols. When contracting with any vendor, be sure to solicit written price quotes for all supplies, materials, crews/workforce/laborers. Maintain records from the solicitation of at least three quotes, and your justification for choosing the vendor accordingly. All projects are subject to approval by the landowners/managers, and by FPR and FHWA, and are subject to all applicable local, state, and federal laws and regulations. All reimbursement and match project activities must take place in accordance with the terms in the grant agreement, after federal and state funding approval, and after a grant agreement is fully executed by both the grantee and FPR.

See the Budget Development section of this document for additional guidance about allowable expenses.

Ineligible Projects

RTP is intended for recreational trail-based projects, where recreational use is the primary purpose, rather than serving a strictly transportation function. For purposes of this program, sidewalks and publicly maintained roads are not considered trails.

RTP funds may not be used for any of the following:

- Trail work along any recreational trail/s on land where the proposed trail use is not permitted, and where written landowner permission or support is not given
- Condemnation of any kind of interest in property
- Upgrading, expanding, otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to trails that, prior to May 1, 1991, were predominantly used by non-motorized trail users, and on which motorized use was either prohibited or had not occurred
- Feasibility studies, stand-alone planning, permitting and/or engineering and design plans
- General land acquisition
- Law enforcement
- Picnic facilities
- Play equipment
- Campgrounds or park facilities
- Sidewalks or road improvements
- Expenses related to promotion of the applicant's organization, promotional materials, publication reprints, or advertising
- Fundraising
- Lodging and food

- Payments which are not in compliance with relevant state or federal laws or regulations

Review and Selection

Pre-Application Criteria

Pre-Applications will be reviewed by the FPR Outdoor Recreation Grants Staff team, who will be checking for:

- Project eligibility
 - Does the applying entity, project intent, scope of work, timeline, and budget meet the requirements outlined in this document?
- Project feasibility
 - Are the timeline, budget expectations, and permitting needs realistic, clear, appropriate to the scope of work, and suggest a high opportunity for successful completion with the permitted time and grant award amounts?
- Project readiness
 - Is the work plan complete, and does it include all relevant steps needed to accomplish the project?
 - Does the work plan include a sufficient level of detail to indicate an in-depth planning process?
 - Does the applicant have the majority of match funding already committed?
 - Does the applicant have the landowner permissions required for the project? If not, how many permissions need to be secured and does the applicant have a clear and realistic plan for securing those before the application deadline?
 - Is the applicant aware of all relevant permits?
- Compliance with any applicable federal RTP requirements
 - Based on the information submitted, does this project appear to comply with federal RTP requirements?

Applicants whose preapplications demonstrate all the above characteristics will be invited to submit a full proposal. If you are invited to submit a full proposal, FPR staff will share feedback and any questions that come up about your proposal. We strongly recommend you plan to adjust your project and/or materials to address any questions or comments in your full application.

Application Criteria

Full applications will be reviewed by a committee of experts from across the outdoor recreation economy and diverse and equity communities and will use the following criteria as a guide for making recommendations for project selection:

- Project Identification/Plans in Place & Project Readiness – 10 points
- Resilience: Minimizing Environmental Impact, well-designed –30 points
- Sustainability: Stewardship and maintenance plan and design – 30 points
- Public Recreation Benefits: Equitable Trail Access and Connectivity – 30 points
- Local (Municipal) Support, Community Partnerships and Citizen Involvement – 20 points

The review committee will consider both the quantitative scores as described above, as well as qualitative assessments about the following grant priorities during the selection process:

- Organizations that did not receive a 2023 RTP grant will be given preference over the most recent round of grantees, except in special circumstances.
- Projects that include remedying deferred maintenance/rehabilitation will be given preference over new trail creation or improvements.
- RTP projects will be intentionally selected to support both geographic diversity across the state and a diversity of trail uses.

40-30-30 Allocation Rule

Federal legislation (23 USC Section 206) requires funding be allocated by the State to projects as follows:

- 40 percent of this program's funds must be used for recreational trail or related projects that facilitate diverse recreational trail use in recreational trail corridors, trail sides, or trailheads. Diverse means more than one trail activity, such as more than one nonmotorized trail activity, or more than one motorized trail activity, or a combination of compatible nonmotorized and motorized trail activities.
- 30 percent of this program's funds must be used for motorized recreation, either multiple or single use.
- 30 percent of this program's funds must be used for nonmotorized recreation, either multiple or single use. FPR applies the 40-30-30 formula to the money it receives from the federal government. It then applies the formula to the amount of money awarded in the General and Education Categories. These percentage requirements may not be waived, and the money must be carried over to the next grant cycle if there are insufficient applications to meet the 40-30-30 minimums.

Note: It is possible to exceed the minimum percentage requirements. For example, a diverse motorized project, such as snowmobile and motorcycle trails, may satisfy the 40 percent diverse use requirement and the 30 percent motorized use requirement simultaneously. The same applies for nonmotorized use.

By federal rule, no more than 5 percent of the State's annual apportionment of RTP funds may be allocated to education projects.

Final Selection

Projects recommended for funding will be ranked based on the above scoring, priority ranking, and allocation rules. FPR will seek funding authorization from FHWA for the recommended grant projects. FHWA authorization may take anywhere from 45 days to 6 months. Once FHWA approves the funding, FPR's business office must then process the final grant agreement between FPR and each grantee.

Pre-Application Content

PART 1: Applicant and Project Information

In this form, you will share all required information about the applicant and the project. It will include municipality or non-profit organization contact information, contact information for the application, and pertinent information about the project.

Applying Entity 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. For the address, please include the information for your main office; you will have space later in this form to share project locations.

Application Contact information

Provide the contact information for the person we should contact with any questions about your pre-application; this is also the person we will contact when we have decided whether or not you will be invited to submit a full proposal. This may be the person submitting the form, or someone else at your organization.

Project Title

Please choose a project title that concisely describes the project. For example, "ABC Trail: Reroute and Maintenance" or "XYZ Trail Spur Construction."

Project Location

Project locations should be as specific as possible and identify city/town and county.

Project Overview

Provide a summary of your project, up to 300 words. Be sure to briefly describe the project, the need for the project, and how this project will help achieve the RTP goals of developing and maintaining trails in proximity to all who live in and visit Vermont.

Select the appropriate check boxes for your project type and trail use type. Select all that apply.

Landowner Permission

To protect investments of public funds and to ensure public access to those investments, sponsors of all RTP-funded projects must have adequate landowner permission to perform the work to be done, and for future public use, for the term required by the grant program and grant agreement. Getting permission as soon as possible in your project planning process is critical.

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. Landowner permissions must be secured for:

- 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.)

In Part 1, the first question on this topic asks about whether or not you need signed landowner permission forms. Select “no” if the applying entity also owns the property where the project will take place in full; select “yes” if the applying entity does not own all the parcels on which the project will occur.

If you select a response indicating that you need permission forms, you will be directed to an additional question(s) that asks you whether you have permission, need to secure signed permission, or do not need permission based on land type (federal, state, local, private, easement, class IV road) and to identify your plans to secure those permission forms before the application deadline (if you do not already have signed forms).

Note: For the full application, you will need to upload signed landowner permission forms (templates will be provided). Failure to provide written landowner permission where needed will result in an incomplete application that is not eligible for consideration in this grant round.

Budget Overview

Enter the amount of funding you are requesting from the RTP program in this program, the total project cost (RTP funding request plus your match). The maximum request for non-motorized projects is \$50,000.

You will also enter the total value of your match (including non-monetary donations of labor or materials, state funds, local cash or in-kind contributions, or private contributions – see the Project Budget section of this Guidance for additional information).

Project Workplan

The applicant should fill out the “RTP Workplan Template” with the tasks, activities, and performance measures for the project. A work plan is a set of deliverables that should provide enough of a description to understand what work will be done where and how it will get done. It should reference the performance measures in this application and services expected by the applicant. It should be clear and concise. DO NOT GENERALIZE. Your work plan will be used in the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.

It must include:

- The name of the trail and the location where work will be performed (specific address/where in town).
- What you plan to accomplish and where along the trail that work will happen
 - Be specific about the key steps that will happen in each major activity. Separate activities that will require different people, materials/equipment, or timelines (ex: separate tree trimming with an arborist, from stair construction with a staff leading a volunteer crew, from bridge construction with a contractor)
 - Potential activities may include but are not limited to surveying/design/engineering, permitting, public outreach, bids/quotes/final budget, construction phases, site visits, events, etc.
 - If your project includes multiple sites or distinct components, copy/paste the provided chart for each site/component.

- A brief list of the inputs needed for each activity (can be bulleted)
 - Who you plan on doing work (e.g., contractors, volunteers, youth corps).
 - What equipment or tools will be used.
 - Materials to be used.
- A list of the quantifiable deliverables for each activity. Be as specific and realistic as possible with these because they will be used as performance measures if your project is selected. The following are examples of potential deliverables (note: we do NOT expect all proposals to include all these metrics, nor is this an exhaustive list– rather use this as a starting point to think about the deliverables that are most relevant to your specific project)
 - X Number of miles of new universally accessible trails
 - X Number of new universally accessible (UA) trailside facilities
 - X Number of miles of existing trails to be maintained
 - X Number of trail bridges to be constructed or restored
 - X Number of new culverts to be installed
 - X Number of new trailhead parking areas to be constructed
 - X Number of trailside facilities to be constructed or restored
 - X Number of new trail signs to be installed
 - X Number of new kiosks to be installed
 - X Number of miles of snow trails to be groomed
 - X Number of people reached via education programs (if components other than materials for signs and kiosks are part of your proposal)
 - X Number of passenger vehicle parking spaces at trailhead parking area
- Anticipated start and end dates (month and year) for each activity. Please put together an estimated planned timeline to share main parts of how/when you will implement this project and complete it by 12/31/2026.

If work is to be done on more than one trail, list each trail with its associated project components in a separate activity chart.

Submitted files need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- RTP Workplan – [Name of Applicant Organization]
- Example: RTP Workplan – ABC Town

Project Budget

Grant applicants will need to itemize project costs shown on the provided budget form template. The template is already configured to automatically calculate subtotals and percentages – so please only enter text in the white-background cells in the appropriate categories that are relevant to your project.

RTP is a reimbursement program, so you need to secure funds in advance to pay for all project expenses when they occur. You will be able to seek reimbursement on a quarterly basis at maximum, and reimbursement can take 4-8 weeks to complete, so plan accordingly.

Budget Development

Allowable project activities include engineering and design, environmental permitting, archeology site planning assessment, project oversight/project administration, construction costs, labor, tools, materials, equipment rentals, equipment operators, publication research and design fees.

Here's an overview of permissible uses of funds for eligible project categories listed above:

- Reconstruction, restoration, and maintenance work on existing trails
- Maintenance and restoration of existing trails may be interpreted broadly to include any kind of trail maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation, including maintenance or restoration of trail bridges, or providing appropriate signage along a trail
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities. Rehabilitation means extensive repair needed to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use (not routine maintenance). Trailside and trailhead facilities should have a direct relationship with a recreation trail.
- Grooming snow
- Features that facilitate the access to and use of trails by persons with disabilities
- Bank stabilization, revegetation, and erosion control
- Restoration of areas damaged by use of trails
- Contractors or other costs/salaries for “on-the-ground” project field work; Cost of youth conservation crews when contracted to do the work
- New trail construction
- Consultant services for trail-related work such as trail design & construction engineering costs, including allowable costs for environmental evaluation and documentation, permits or approvals
- Trail bridges, railings, ramps, fences, and retaining structures if/when necessary
- Purchase of hand tools, hand-held power tools and rental of equipment for trail construction and maintenance to the extent it is used primarily to construct and maintain the recreation trail/s. It does not provide for the purchase or rentals of equipment to be used for purposes unrelated to the trail/s project itself.

Planning & permitting costs of a project: The cost of professional plans, environmental permits, engineering design plans, and archeology assessments involved in projects are eligible within the allowable terms of the grant.

Planning and Permitting Limited by Federal Rule: FHWA limits the allowable pre-agreement permit and planning costs incurred back to within 18 months of a project’s federal approval for planning, permitting, and engineering pre-agreement costs, and those costs can only be counted toward match (they are not reimbursable). Include these costs in the budget as both part of the total project cost, and in the match summary section of the budget form.

Costs for ARA’s and Permits: For projects involving new trail construction or any new trail facilities, please budget \$3,500 for an archeology resource assessment (ARA) as it is likely that an ARA is needed for these types of projects to meet federal requirements under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act. Other state permits may have fees associated with them, if known at this time, include them. *Additional information about ARA’s and permitting will be provided in the full application guidance.*

Other general budget guidance:

- Be thorough, detailed, and accurate. Your budget should be your best estimate of the costs for the project.
 - It is best practice to get a few price quotes from qualified businesses to support your estimates. If you get a federal RTP grant, written price quotes will be required.
 - If referencing a formal estimate provided by a vendor, attach a copy of the estimate.

Do not enter into a contract arrangement with a vendor prior to receiving a fully executed grant agreement, as it may disqualify you from receiving a grant.
 - Budgets should take into account the likelihood of reasonable increases in project services and materials between now and project implementation starting October 1, 2024.

- Round each line item to the nearest dollar.
- Provide a brief description of each line item, explaining how you arrived at the estimates.
 - For staff and contractor time: 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.
 - Volunteer labor can be used for match only. To calculate volunteer rates:
 - For unskilled labor, use the [Independent Sector's estimated volunteer rate](#) for Vermont (currently \$30.04).
 - For skilled labor (e.g., donated time from licensed professionals), you can claim the current fair market rate. *If awarded, backup documentation must be provided showing the rate of pay (usually paystub from current employer) or hours will be counted at the current unskilled volunteer labor rate.*
- Be sure the budget includes all eligible project costs you anticipate incurring.

Note: If awarded, you will need to comply with your organization's procurement policies and the RTP grant agreement purchasing provisions, or use the [State's procurement and contracting procedures](#). Backup documentation must be maintained, and depending on the provisions in your grant agreement, potentially provided. Examples include copies of invoices, labor reports forms, timesheets, or other acceptable timekeeping records.

Project Budget Instructions for projects that include an acquisition: Applicants will need to itemize acquisition costs in the project budget form. Eligible acquisition costs can include purchase price, closing and filing fees, title search, title insurance, survey cost, appraisal fee, appraisal reviewer fee, stewardship funding, and administration costs. Please list the itemized acquisition costs on any line for “Labor” or “Other” sections of the budget form.

Matching Funds

RTP grants require a minimum 20% match. Your match may include:

- Non-monetary donations of labor or business donations of materials, tools, equipment/supplies needed for the project. However, non-monetary donations may not be counted if donated prior to the signing of the grant agreement.
- State Funds: other state grants/funds
- Local Cash or In-Kind Contributions: Sponsor's direct monetary contribution; (e.g., cash from fund-raising efforts, organizational or municipal funds, local tax revenues, set-aside project funds, force-fund accounts of town/organizational labor forces, local business, private or public contributions etc.)
- Private Contributions and Other non-governmental Grants (e.g., foundation grants, local non-profit organizational grants, awards)
- Other Federal Funds: (e.g., other federal grants, funds, federal aid) might be able to be used as match, but you will need to check with the RTP Administrator and the other federal funding source(s) ahead of time

Describe your match in Column C of the spreadsheet by expense categories, and then describe match sources by type at the bottom of the spreadsheet.

Submitted Budget Forms will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- RTP Budget Form - [Name of Applicant]
- Example: RTP Budget Form – ABC Town

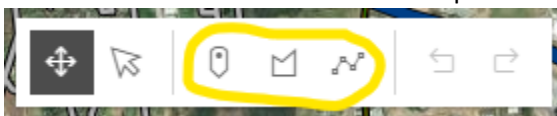
Permitting


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. Alternatively, if your project is linear or crosses multiple parcels, you'll need to complete a [Project Review Sheet](#).

For Single-Parcel Projects:

Permit Navigator is tool will help identify both Act 250 and various Agency of Natural Resources permit requirements. 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.

1. Got to: <https://permitnavigator.my.vermont.gov/s/> and click "Get Started."
 - a. Follow the prompts to accept the disclaimer.
 - b. Make a choice about whether or not you would like a [jurisdictional opinion on an Act 250](#) permit.
 - i. **Please note that if you do not want to seek a jurisdictional opinion for your project at this time, do not check the boxes throughout the application asking whether a jurisdictional opinion is sought.** If you select yes, your results from the review will be sent to Act 250 staff for official determination.
2. If you would like permit staff to receive your contact information (e.g. for jurisdictional opinion), complete the contact information under the general questions. This information is NOT included in the Permit Navigator Report, so it is completely optional.
3. Complete the required questions about category and industry. Select "yes" if your project includes construction or renovation.
4. Find your project location on a map. Use the appropriate icons on the map to mark your project area: draw a point, draw a polygon, or draw a polyline – or if you already know the coordinates, enter them in the fields below the map.



- a. Map Troubleshooting Tip: if you get an error message (ex: your polygon selection includes a public road) and the undo button  doesn't work, re-search the address in the search bar at the top right corner of the map to refresh the map.
5. Answer the required project questions. If directed, make a note about additional staff you are informed to contact (ex: the platform provides a link and directions to contact district floodplain specialists if your proposed project is near a floodplain, river, and/or stream).
 - a. You will answer questions related to: Act 250, fish and wildlife, indirect discharge/underground injection controls, lakes and ponds management and protection, residuals management and emerging contaminants, rivers, salvage yards, solid waste management, stormwater management, underground tanks, wastewater systems, and wetlands.
 - i. Please note, it is in your best interest to answer these questions as completely as possible. If you select "I don't know" wherever offered, your report will include

additional recommendations to reach out to permit specialists to gather that information.

- b. For questions with multiple selection options, select one or more options from the list on the left and move them to the right using the arrows.

The image shows a user interface for selecting values. On the left, under the heading "Available Values", there is a list of options: "acupuncturist, chiropractor office", "a seat or car space for a theatre", "a food concession to a theatre", "I don't know", and "none of the above". The "none of the above" option is highlighted in blue. In the center, there are two vertical arrows (one pointing right, one pointing left) enclosed in a yellow oval, indicating the mechanism for moving items between the two columns. On the right, under the heading "Selected Values", there is an empty rectangular box with a light blue border and a vertical scrollbar on its right side, indicating where the selected items will be placed.

6. When your results are complete, download and/or print that report. These results are based both on your answers to the prompts as well as environmental considerations based on mapped results.

For Linear and Multi-Parcel Projects:

Follow the directions on the [DEC website](#) to secure a Project Review Sheet.

You must complete the Permit Navigator or Project Review sheet for your project and submit a PDF of the results in your application.

Note: The only exceptions for not uploading Permit Navigator results or Project Review Sheet are for applicants with a project on United States Forest Service (USFS) land, or a project solely on State land. Applicants with projects on USFS land will be prompted to attach the official USFS Environmental Decision Memo which documents the environmental assessment of the project area. Obtain USFS Environmental Decision Memo documentation from the designated authorized official at USFS who will oversee this project. Applicants will also need to share the contact person at USFS who will oversee the work described in this RTP application. Applicants with projects solely on State land, no further items are needed. The State's contact performs environmental reviews and the permitting process and will provide notice of environmental review completion to the Applicant and FPR's grant management team.

Once identified, permit processes can take three to six months, or longer, depending on the nature of the work being proposed or if site visits are necessary. The preliminary Permit Navigator results provide an outline of additional steps to take if funded; be sure to incorporate the permit requirements for your project into your timeline and budget. You are allowed to begin permit processes as soon as you are ready if you will NOT be using RTP funds to support these expenses; if you plan to use RTP funds to support these expenses, you must wait until your grant agreement is executed. As described above, permit costs can be used as match if secured in advance of the grant agreement.

Submit Permit Navigator results or Project Review Sheet that are clearly titled using the following format:

- RTP Permit Navigator Results - [Name of Applicant]
- RTP Project Review Sheet - [Name of Applicant]
- Example: RTP Permit Navigator Results – ABC Town

Additional Planning Information

Trails and Equity

Recreational trails have the potential to provide social, economic, and public health benefits. But they are not equally distributed. Low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, people with limited English proficiency, and populations with disabilities have been historically disenfranchised and left out of the planning and decision-making process of trail development.

FPR seeks to address these inequities to ensure that recreational trails throughout Vermont are extended to all residents, working toward a more equitable and just culture. As such, it is imperative that an application describe to what ends a project is seeking to help create equitable access, especially for underserved communities. You can help make a difference by demonstrating how your project can facilitate equitable and just public access, trail use and development of recreational assets across Vermont.

Universally Accessible Trails and Accessible Design Standards

[Accessible design standards](#) 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 are prohibited by Federal, State, or local regulations or statutes, or
4. Not be feasible due to terrain or the prevailing construction practices.

The basis for all exceptions must be documented and submitted to FPR as part of the application where / when addressing universally accessible trails. 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.

Other Pertinent Information: Sam.gov

If awarded grant funds, this program requires you to register and maintain an active SAM registration with a Unique Entity Identifier number (UEI#) from Sam.gov. The UEI# replaces the DUNS#'s previously required. If you do not already have a UEI #, please bring the process of registering now and obtain one through SAM.gov online at <https://sam.gov>