

2025 Land and Water Conservation Fund

Project Development and Pre-Application Guidance

Introduction.....	2
LWCF is a Reimbursement Program	3
Applicant Eligibility	3
Project Eligibility	3
2025 LWCF Timeline	3
Grant Awards and Funding Approval	3
How to Apply	5
Application Support.....	6
Additional Technical Support.....	6
LWCF Project Planning.....	8
Acquisition Project Eligibility and Information.....	8
Development Project Eligibility and Information	12
School-Related Projects.....	15
Project Readiness	16
Stewardship Commitment: 6(f) Requirement.....	17
Review and Selection	18
Pre-Application Criteria	18
Application Criteria.....	18
Final Selection	19
Pre-Application Content	20
Project Information Form	20
Project Workplan.....	23
Project Budget.....	25
Climate Resilience Risk Form.....	28
Permit Reports.....	29
Additional Permitting Information	29
Additional LWCF Planning Information	32
Recreation and Equity	32
UEI Required	32
Example Materials	33
Workplan Example.....	33
Budget Example.....	35

Introduction

The [Land and Water Conservation Fund \(LWCF\) Program](#) provides matching grants to States and local governments for the acquisition and development of public outdoor recreation areas and facilities (as well as funding for shared federal land acquisition and conservation strategies). The program is intended to create and maintain a nationwide legacy of high-quality recreation areas and facilities and to stimulate non-federal investments in the protection and maintenance of recreation resources across the United States.

The LWCF program was established in January 1965 to create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Since then, LWCF has provided Vermont communities and state agencies with more than \$43 million towards the acquisition, conservation, and development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. LWCF helps preserve important recreation opportunities and protect environmentally sensitive areas now and for the future by providing matching grants to states for acquiring state and community parks.

LWCF Funds are derived from federal recreation fees, Outer Continental Shelf (OCS) revenues from leasing oil and gas sites in coastal waters, federal surplus real property sales, and a portion of federal motorboat fuel taxes. Funds are apportioned to federal agencies and to the 50 states and 6 territories through the U.S. Department of the Interior National Park Service (NPS). In Vermont, LWCF is administered by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

This document is intended to provide guidance for the pre-application phase only and is intended to supplement the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). A full application guidance document with additional information will be released later.

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is subject to the provisions of Title VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, Section 504 Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Age Discrimination Act of 1975. Under these acts, the U.S. Department of Interior strictly prohibits discrimination because of race, color, handicap, age, or national origin in its federally assisted programs.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources is an equal opportunity agency and offers all persons the benefit of participating in its programs and in competing in all areas of employment regardless of race, color, religion, sex, national origin, age, disability, sexual preference, or other non-merit factors.

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LWCF 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 pay for expenditures and then submit a request to the State for reimbursement using the required documentation. The program will reimburse up to 50% of eligible project costs. Recipients are responsible for providing a minimum of 50% of the total project cost (required match), meaning LWCF can only cover half the total project expenses.

Applicant Eligibility

Who is eligible to apply for LWCF grants:

- Municipalities (e.g. towns, cities, school districts, water districts, park districts, etc.)
- State government agencies, other governmental entities (district or local authorities), or tribal governments

Project sponsors must have control and tenure of the property and agree that the area within the project boundary be retained in perpetuity for public outdoor recreation use. LWCF regulations only permit funding for projects on leased land on a very limited basis.

Project Eligibility

Eligible projects for LWCF grants include:

- Acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation.
- Development of new outdoor recreation facilities or renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation.
- A combination of the above.

2025 LWCF Timeline

- Pre-applications open and complete application materials released: October 21, 2024
- Pre-application submission deadline: December 13, 2024
- Full application submission deadline: March 15, 2025
- Grant application review and selection: mid-March - May 2025
- Compliance Reviews: June - October 2025
 - Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Endangered Species Act, state environmental permitting, state risk assessment, etc.
- Project Submission for National Park Service Review: July 2025 - January 2026
- Grant Notification and Grant Agreement Development: February - May 2026
- Anticipated Grant Implementation Period: approximately June 1, 2026 through December 31, 2028

Grant Awards and Funding Approval

Vermont receives an annual apportionment of stateside funds. The remainder is divided in half: 50% is for municipal outdoor recreation grants and 50% is for outdoor recreation projects on state lands, usually state parks. While FPR has not hosted a community grant round since 2021, we have been carefully tracking this balance and we anticipate awarding approximately \$3.3 million in the 2025 LWCF Grant Round.

For the 2025 LWCF Grant Round, we recommend submitting projects that request \$25,000 to \$1,000,000 in funding from LWCF (total project costs ranging from \$50,000-\$2,000,000+). We anticipate that selected projects will be distributed across this funding range.

Project applications are scored and ranked by a project application ranking committee following the Open Project Selection Process (OPSP) using established criteria. The resulting recommendations are reviewed and approved by the ranking committee. All applications must meet an identified need within the [Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#) and address local and regional needs. Municipalities must agree to dedicate the park or area where the project is located for public outdoor recreational use in perpetuity. In addition, the grantee must also agree to develop, operate, and maintain the development to acceptable NPS standards for public outdoor recreation. Grants are subject to approval by the NPS.

After securing federal funding approval, FPR can fully execute grant agreements. Once grant agreements are executed, awarded applicants become “project sponsors,” “sub-recipients,” or “grantees.”

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 and Federal Legislation (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 LWCF 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, email the following five documents to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@vermont.gov by **11:59 PM ET on December 13, 2024**.

1. [2025 Pre-Application Form](#)
2. [2025 LWCF Workplan](#)
3. [2025 LWCF Budget](#)
4. Completed [Climate Resilience Risk Form](#)
5. Completed [Permit Navigator](#) results or a [Project Review Sheet](#)

Incomplete proposals will not be considered after December 13, 2024, so be sure to complete all required documents before that time.

Review the appropriate “Application Content” sections in this document for more information about all pre-application materials.

Application Tip: 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, a separate guidance document will be provided with instructions and support to complete the full application.

Additional Information

Please check out the [LWCF 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 “LWCF Grant Application Question.”

Application Support

We are offering multiple opportunities for applicants to ask questions about the 2025 LWCF Grant Program.

LWCF Grant Program Webinar: Project Planning

Tuesday, October 22, 2024, 2:00-3:00 PM

The webinar will include a presentation explaining the goals of the grant program, an overview of the process, and eligible activities to help inform project planning. There will be time at the end of the session for questions from attendees related to project planning and design. The recording will be posted online afterward. [Register for the webinar.](#)

LWCF Grant Program Webinar: Pre-Application Materials

Thursday, November 14, 2024, 2:30-3:30 PM

The webinar will provide technical and content guidance about how to complete the specific materials required for the pre-application phase, including the workplan, budget, resiliency risk assessment, and permitting tools. There will be time at the end of the session for questions from attendees related to the templates and resources. The recording will be posted online afterward. [Register for the webinar.](#)

Open Office Hours

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 [LWCF webpage](#). To access the open office hours, visit the webpage and click the links below the Open Office Hour times.

- *Tuesday, November 19, 2024, 1:00-2:00 PM* – [Register for this session.](#)
 - The first half-hour of the session will be open for questions specific to project planning. The second half-hour of the session will be open for questions on any topic related to the grant program.
- *Tuesday, December 3, 11:00 AM-Noon* – [Register for this session.](#)
 - This entire session is open for any questions related to the program.

Our goal is to give everyone an equal opportunity to connect with us. We are unable to meet 1:1 with every prospective applicant during the pre-application phase. If the webinars and open office hours don't work for you, please email your questions to us at ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov. We will only meet 1:1 with applicants if we are unable to fully address questions via email.

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 towns](#). If you have further questions about how this program can help, please email the Vermont Agency of Administration at.ADM.ARPAMuniAssist@vermont.gov.

Rural Economic Development Initiative

Applicants may be eligible for grant review/editing assistance during the **full application stage** through the [Rural Economic Development Initiative](#) (REDI), a program of the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (VHCB). To qualify for assistance through REDI, the project must be located in or primarily serving a community with a population of less than 5,000 people. If you qualify and are interested in application review assistance from the REDI program, please complete the [REDI Inquiry Form](#) by December 31st.

Additional Resources

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns offers a list of strategies and resources for increasing municipal capacity for grants on their [website](#).

For projects that aren't quite "shovel-ready," we strongly recommend prospective applicants explore other opportunities first to finalize a design before applying to RTP in a future year.

Better Connections Program

The [Better Connections Program](#) provides technical assistance and funds to local communities to help them achieve their goals and plan for smart growth. The program funds municipal planning efforts to increase multi-modal transportation options and to improve land use, water quality, public health, and economic vitality in Vermont communities. This biennial competitive grant program funds broader community-level planning, which can include trail networks. This program is a partnership between the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC).

Municipal Planning Grants

The [Municipal Planning Grant \(MPG\)](#) program encourages and supports planning and revitalization for local municipalities in Vermont. Awarded annually and administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development, the MPG program works to strengthen Vermont by funding local planning initiatives that support statewide planning goals. Along with other eligible activities, municipalities or regional planning commissions can apply to this program for planning or design, including stakeholder outreach, mapping, and facility improvements and management plans.

LWCF Project Planning

Acquisition Project Eligibility and Information

The Land and Water Conservation Fund Program in Vermont has assisted with the acquisition of thousands of acres dedicated to outdoor recreation and the conservation of unique or endangered plant and animal habitat. The most common method of acquiring property is by fee simple title. This is the preferred method of acquisition since it gives the holder an absolute right to the property within limitations imposed by state or federal law. In some instances, the sponsor may wish to purchase less than fee simple title, such as easements, rights-of-way and title subject to deed restrictions. This would be permissible when fee simple is excessively expensive and lesser control of the area will not detract from recreational use of the land.

Additional Information: For full details of acquiring land with LWCF assistance, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Criteria for Acquisition” (Chapter 3, Section B).

Areas acquired may serve a variety of outdoor recreation activities including: walking, sightseeing, swimming and other water sports, picnicking, nature study, boating, hunting and shooting, camping, horseback riding, bicycling, snowmobiling, skiing, athletic fields, public playgrounds, and other outdoor recreation activities. Acquisition projects may also include structures which are to be used for outdoor recreation or support facilities for outdoor recreation.

The Department of the Interior National Park Service and the State of Vermont require procedures for the acquisition of property that are fair, consistent, and directed toward giving the property owner the full measure of compensation authorized by law, promptly, with a minimum of inconvenience, and without prolonged negotiation or costly litigation. All acquisitions must conform to the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, P. L. 91-646.

Eligible Acquisition Projects

An acquisition project should include the purchase of land for outdoor recreation purposes. A project may involve the acquisition of land to create a new park or expand an existing park. It may also consist of the acquisition of land for more than one park if the parks are of the same type. An example of a multi-site acquisition project is the purchase of land for two neighborhood parks or parcels for access points along a river to create a greenbelt park corridor.

Some examples of eligible acquisitions of land and water for public outdoor recreation include, but are not limited to:

- Community parks - sites in rural areas serving local, regional, and county recreational uses, such as camping, hiking, hunting, fishing, and picnicking.
- Existing Recreational Facilities - privately owned facilities, such as swimming pools, golf courses and youth camps, which will no longer be operated by the private sector. **The acquisition of an area or facility that is operated for public recreation is only eligible for LWCF assistance if it can be documented that the facility will be lost to recreation use if it is not acquired by the municipality/governmental entity.**

- Linear parks - land that forms a greenbelt corridor for recreational use, such as a bike path or a multi-purpose trail, or a series of access points to a river for boating and fishing.
- Natural and Scenic Areas - natural areas, preserves and outstanding scenic areas, including areas adjacent to scenic highways, where the objective is to preserve scenic or natural values, including areas of physical or biological importance and wildlife areas. These areas must be open to the general public for outdoor recreation use to the extent that the natural attributes of the areas will not be seriously impaired or lost.
- Structures - the acquisition of structures on a property if 1) the use will be for outdoor recreation and/or support of outdoor recreation activities or 2) the structures have no value and will be demolished to enable recreational development to take place. Project proposals must list all improvements and their proposed use or disposition.
- Water-Oriented Recreation Sites - areas with frontage on rivers, streams, lakes, estuaries, and reservoirs; water bodies themselves; land for creating water impoundments; and areas that provide special recreation opportunities, such as floodplains and wetlands.

LWCF assistance may be available to acquire property for which development of outdoor recreation facilities is planned at a future date, or for which development of facilities is not necessary to support outdoor recreation. If future development is planned, in the interim between acquisition and development, the property should be open for those public recreation purposes that the land is capable of supporting, or that can be achieved with minimum public investment. Non-recreation activities such as agriculture occurring on the property at the time of acquisition may continue for up to three (3) years.

You MUST have a complete appraisal of the property that meets the “Uniform Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisitions,” also commonly known as “yellow book” standards. A copy of this document may be found at <http://www.justice.gov/enrd/land-ack/Uniform-Appraisal-Standards.pdf>.

If selected to receive LWCF assistance, you must also submit a title report to the state well in advance of your closing date so that we may complete a legal review of all interests in the property.

IMPORTANT: To receive Land and Water Conservation Funds for your acquisition, do not acquire any land until federal approval has been obtained.

Ineligible Acquisition Projects

The following types of acquisitions are ineligible for LWCF assistance:

- Historic sites and structures.
- Museums and sites to be used for museums or primarily for archaeological excavations.
- Land to help meet a public school's minimum site size requirement, as established by State or local regulations.
- Areas and facilities designed to be used primarily for semi-professional and professional arts and athletics.
- Areas and facilities to be used solely for wildlife preservation, game refuges, or fish production purposes without public access.

- Areas to be used mainly for indoor facilities, including properties with existing structures or planned construction of indoor facilities that do not support outdoor recreation (for example: purchasing land that is an intended site for a future library or fire station). Also prohibited are areas where existing indoor recreation facilities, if left in place, will not leave sufficient area at the site for development of outdoor recreation facilities to justify the cost of the acquisition.
- Areas with facilities/assets that will continue to be used to support commercial train operations.
- Sites containing lodges, motels, cabins, restaurants, and similar elaborate facilities which are to be operated by the project sponsor or concessionaire to serve recreationists with food and sleeping quarters.
- Agricultural land primarily for preservation in agricultural purposes
- Acquisition of federal surplus property.

Pre-Agreement Acquisition Costs

There are NO pre-agreement costs that are automatically eligible for LWCF reimbursement involving land acquisition.

Exceptions may be made only when absolutely necessary, and only if the applicant stands to lose an opportunity to acquire a significant piece of property if action to secure property is not taken immediately. In these circumstances, it is possible the National Park Service (NPS) may grant a **Waiver of Retroactivity** allowing the sponsor to proceed with the acquisition prior to project approval. If the project is approved at a later date, the costs will be eligible for assistance. It is not a commitment on the part of the State or NPS to award a grant for the project but merely a waiver of the requirement that only costs incurred after project approval are eligible. A waiver does not constitute a commitment on behalf of the sponsor to purchase the property and it does not imply qualitative approval of the project. To request a waiver of retroactivity, submit the following to FPR:

- A letter of justification requesting the waiver (including a detailed description and reasons for the request).
- Parcel, site, and location maps.
- An environmental assessment of the proposed park, if applicable.
- Any other documentation that might be appropriate such as a letter from the property owner declaring his intent to sell the land quickly.

The applicant must not move forward with the acquisition until the "Waiver of Retroactivity" has been approved by National Park Service.

Eligible Acquisition Costs

- Purchase costs of real property.
- Purchase costs of easements and other rights and interest in real property.
- The value of real property donated to the project sponsor by private entities may be eligible for the sponsors matching share, as determined by appraisal.
- Incidental and relocation assistance costs ONLY as allowed by the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act.
- Acquisition costs of land from another public agency at the minimum cost allowed by law.
- Costs of real property acquired through exchanges, subject to appraisal requirements, for one tract of land having greater value than another.

Ineligible Acquisition Costs

- Incidental costs relating to the acquisition of real property and of interests in real property such as appraisal fees, legal fees or legal boundary map expenses, unless allowable under the Uniform Act (42 U.S.C. § 4601 et seq.)
- Fines and penalties.
- The value of, or expenditures for, lands acquired from the United States at less than fair market value.

Development Project Eligibility and Information

Development projects can be the construction or rehabilitation of outdoor recreation facilities or areas. A major rehabilitation project may consist of the repair, restoration, demolition, or reconstruction of eligible facilities, which is necessitated by obsolescence, building code changes, or normal wear and tear not attributed to a lack of maintenance.

Additional Information: For full details for development projects with LWCF assistance, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Criteria for Development” (Chapter 3, Section C).

Plans for the development of land and/or facilities should be based on the needs of the public, the expected use, and the type and character of the area. Facilities should be attractive for public use and generally be consistent with the surrounding environment. Plans and specifications for the improvements and/or facilities should be in accord with established engineering and architectural practices. Emphasis should be given to the health and safety of users, accessibility to the general public, and the protection of the recreation and natural values of the area. Facilities can only be developed on properties that the project sponsor has title to or complete control and tenure.

Example Eligible Facilities for Development Projects

- Sports and playfields
- Playgrounds
- Trails and/or trailheads with a total cost over \$62,500.
 - *Smaller projects should be submitted to the [Recreational Trails Program](#).*
- Camping facilities
- Picnic facilities
- Boating facilities
- Swimming areas
- Boating Facilities
- Fishing/hunting facilities
- Winter sports facilities
- Community gardens
- Recreation support facilities, such as restroom buildings, roads, parking, landscaping, and walkways

Example Ineligible Facilities for Development Projects

- Indoor facilities (except swimming pools and ice-skating rinks)
- Community centers
- Historic buildings
- Park manager’s residences
- Meeting rooms
- Auditoriums
- Maintenance equipment or routine maintenance projects
- Commercial-type amusement centers
- Professional or semi-professional sporting complexes
- Roads outside of the 6(f) area

Adequate Control and Tenure

Applicants must be able to establish adequate control and tenure of land, including the project site as well as lands within the [LWCF project boundary area](#). Control and tenure may be demonstrated by:

- fee simple ownership of all project lands without encumbrances (applicant owns 100% of the land in full)
- a lease from the Federal government with a remaining term of 25 years or more,
- Partial ownership (e.g., conservation easement) provided the ownership arrangement mandates and maintains appropriate outdoor recreation access in perpetuity.

Eligible Costs for Development Projects

- Construction costs, which may include necessary construction activities from site preparation to completion of the project within limits of the scope of work. Construction costs commonly include labor, building materials, construction equipment rentals, and construction supplies.
- Certain types of permanent recreation equipment are eligible, provided it is required by state law or regulation to make a facility initially operable. Such equipment might include sprinkler systems, pumps, lifeguard stands, tennis nets, baseball backstops and similar items. The purchase of equipment for maintenance or operational purposes (i.e. mowers) is not eligible.
- Informational and directional signs at entrances, exits, or other necessary locations throughout the project area, interpretive facilities for items of particular interest, and certain other facilities intended to explain the project or draw the public to it.

Pre-agreement Costs for Development Projects

The costs of site investigation and selection, site planning, feasibility studies, preliminary design, environmental assessment, preparation of cost estimates, construction drawings and specifications may be eligible for assistance although incurred prior to project approval.

The use of professional, outside consultants in the formulation of project proposals is encouraged. Thus, the development of work programs, cost estimates and budgets, workflow charts, and such other items as are necessary to develop a sound planning program by outside consultants, university personnel, or by appropriate state personnel may be allowable costs, although incurred prior to project approval.

All pre-agreement planning costs incurred within three years prior to project submission to National Park Service are allowable IF they are clearly identified as such in the application. Eligible planning costs incurred beyond three years may be allowable provided the earliest date from which they are incurred is identified in the project agreement. The sponsor must provide sufficient information to justify the amounts of pre-agreement costs, periods during which they were incurred and their purpose to justify the applicability to the particular project. If you question the eligibility of any costs related to your project, contact our office.

There are NO pre-agreement construction costs that are eligible for LWCF reimbursement or match.

Sub-Contracting Information

Applicants should be sure to follow their municipality's procurement standards for hiring a consultant. Grantees and subgrantees shall use their own procurement procedures that reflect applicable state and local laws, provided the procurements conform to the requirements of [2 CFR 200](#).

When contracting with any vendor, be sure to solicit written price quotes for all supplies, materials, crews/workforce/laborers. Maintain records from the solicitation. All reimbursement and match project activities must take place:

- in accordance with the terms of the grant agreement,
- after federal and state funding approval, and
- after a grant agreement is fully executed by both the grantee and FPR.

Review FPR's [Procurement Guidance for Grantees](#) to find more information related to contracting as it relates to grants.

Ineligible Costs for Development

- Ceremonial or entertainment expenses
- Expenses for publicity
- Bonus payment of any kind
- Charges for contingency reserves or other similar reserves
- Charges for deficits or overdrafts
- Taxes for which the organization involved would not have been liable to pay
- Interest expenses
- Charges incurred contrary to the policies and practices of the organization involved
- Damage judgments arising out of acquisition, construction, or equipping of a facility, whether determined by a judicial decision, arbitration or otherwise
- Operation and maintenance costs of outdoor recreation areas and facilities
- Cost of discounts not taken
- Equipment to be used for the ongoing maintenance of outdoor recreation areas and facilities including, but not limited to, automotive equipment, tractors, mowers, other machinery and tools
- Employee facilities including residences, appliances, office equipment, furniture, and utensils
- Donations or contributions made by the sponsor, such as to a charitable organization
- Salaries and expenses of the office of the Governor or of the chief executive of a political subdivision, or of the State legislature or similar local governmental bodies
- Fines and Penalties
- The sponsor is responsible for any costs in excess of those included in the confirmed cost estimate
- Any losses and related costs arising from uncollectible accounts and other claims
- Legal and professional fees paid in connection with raising funds
- Lobbying expenses

Application Tip: Ineligible costs cannot be included in the project budget as match.

School-Related Projects

Playgrounds and outdoor recreation facilities on public school grounds for joint school/general public use are eligible, provided that the facilities are not part of the normal and usual program and responsibility of educational institutions and that they otherwise meet requirements for a grant under the LWCF program. Facilities needed to meet the physical education and athletic program requirements of a school may not receive fund assistance.

The full grant application must include a schedule of the time the facility will be available to the public. The schedule of use substantiates the primary intent of the project as being public community outdoor recreation. Additionally, adequate signs must be installed, prior to final payment on the project, at the site indicating when the outdoor recreation facilities are available to the general public.

Use of federal money for playground equipment requires meeting national safety standards. The US Consumer Product Safety Commission developed the "[Handbook for Public Playground Safety](#)" as a blueprint to help local communities and other groups build safe playgrounds. This handbook includes technical safety guidelines for designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining public playgrounds.

The development of facilities primarily for interscholastic sports, such as stadiums, and athletic fields with grandstands or more bleacher seating than would normally be required for non-interscholastic athletic use, are not eligible for assistance.

IMPORTANT: The investment of LWCF funds in a parcel requires that the 6(f) area not include any structures for other than the support of outdoor recreation. Once LWCF funds are invested in a parcel, the area within the project boundary may not be converted to any use other than outdoor recreation without the approval of the Secretary of the Interior. **This means that school facilities may not be expanded into the designated recreation area.** For this reason, it is recommended that when creating a 6(f) boundary area that a buffer zone of 50 feet be maintained around any buildings that are not involved in outdoor recreation (Refer to the next section for more information on the Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act).

Project Readiness

LWCF funds “shovel-ready” and “purchase-ready” projects. When developing a plan for LWCF projects, here are some general tips:

- You must have a clear plan in place prior to applying.
 - If your project is still in a conceptual phase (For example: “We’d like to install a playground in a new town park, but we’re not exactly sure where it will go,” we strongly encourage you to consider other funding opportunities first to develop designs. LWCF cannot fund this type of high-level planning. *See Additional Resources for [Application Support](#) in this document for potential programs that can.*
- For larger projects, consider what is potentially accomplishable within the timeframe and funding allowed in this grant and segment your project into phases.
 - Just be sure each phase can be accomplished as a standalone project! Whatever components you submit to LWCF should be able to be completed and successfully opened to the public without being contingent on other work.
 - LWCF does NOT guarantee phased funding, so be aware all submissions for future phases will undergo competitive review for any FPR grants.
- As soon as you have a plan in place for your project, find out if what you are proposing will need any State and local permits. Start this process by completing the [permit reports](#) 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 – so plan ahead!
- Projects selected for funding generally 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 to build capacity. Be sure the project meets local needs in the community where the project will occur.
- Projects funded are to be primarily recreation-oriented and must support strategies identified in [Vermont's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).
 - The updated detailed SCORP has been submitted to the NPS for review. We anticipate this document will be released before the full application period.
 - If for any reason NPS does not complete their review of this SCORP before the application period ends, we will utilize the [previous SCORP](#).

Stewardship Commitment: 6(f) Requirement

***Section 6(f)(3) of the LWCF Act:** No property acquired or developed with assistance under this section shall, without the approval of the Secretary, be converted to other than public outdoor recreation uses. The Secretary shall approve such conversions only if he finds it to be in accord with the then existing comprehensive statewide outdoor recreation plan and only upon such conditions as he deems necessary to assure the substitution of other recreation properties of at least fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness and location.*

Recreational spaces acquired or developed using LWCF assistance must be maintained and remain open for public outdoor recreation **in perpetuity**. This means that park areas acquired and/or developed with LWCF assistance are federally protected and may not be converted to non-outdoor recreational use without the approval of the National Park Service. This requirement is included in section 6(f) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act and is commonly referred to as the “6(f) requirement” and the designated area of land is generally called the “6(f) area” or within the “6(f) boundary.” This requirement applies to all parks and other sites that have received funds from LWCF whether for acquisition, development, or rehabilitation.

If invited to submit a full application, you will be required to submit a 6(f) project boundary map to be created for the public outdoor recreation area being acquired and/or developed. In general, this should align with parcel boundaries and encompass the entire recreation area. If a structure exists on the property that serves to support other than outdoor recreation (i.e. school, town garage) please indicate its location on the map but omit it from the park boundary area by at least a 50-foot buffer. Public access must also be guaranteed for LWCF-assisted sites to ensure they are self-sufficient. In no case will the area be less than the area to be developed or acquired under this LWCF application. At a minimum, the area must include a logical management unit within the park to include parking and public access.

If not already in place, **deed restrictions stipulating the terms and legal requirements of the LWCF program are required of all LWCF projects.**

Application Tip: Instructions for developing a 6(f) map to be included in your application will be published in the full application guidance.

The full requirements for ongoing maintenance of an LWCF site can be found in the Stewardship chapter of the [Federal LWCF Manual](#).

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
 - Is the project permissible? Does the outdoor recreation benefit outweigh any potential environmental impacts?
- Project readiness
 - Are the submitted materials (workplan, budget, forms) complete?
 - Is the applicant aware of all relevant permits?
 - Does the project design appropriately address site-specific climate risks?
- Compliance with any applicable federal LWCF requirements
 - Based on the information submitted, does this project appear to comply with federal LWCF requirements?

Applicants whose pre-applications 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 in your full application to address any questions or comments from the pre-application review.

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 Planning, Readiness, and Feasibility – 40 points
- Connection to state, regional and local planning efforts (40 points)
- Stewardship (30 points)
- Wellness Benefits (30 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, including but not limited to:

- Geographic distribution of selected projects
- Distribution of recreation types across selected projects
- Access for underserved communities identified through state and federal processes.
- Previous history regarding project sponsor compliance with LWCF program requirements.
- Reported progress of any other active LWCF, RTP, or other FPR grant projects from the applicants.

Final Selection

Projects recommended for funding will be ranked based on the above scoring, priority ranking, and allocation rules. Following this selection, applicants move to the compliance review phase and must complete all required environmental reviews and federal compliance checks, including but not limited to:

- National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)
- Endangered Species Act
- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

Additional Information: For full details of environmental review and federal compliance, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Proposals, Environmental Review and Federal Compliance” (Chapter 4).

After all required reviews and compliance is complete, FPR will develop application packages and seek funding approval from the National Park Service (NPS) for the recommended grant projects. NPS authorization may take anywhere from one to six months. Once NPS approves the funding, FPR’s business office must then process the final grant agreement between FPR and each grantee to confirm the grant award.

Pre-Application Content

Project Information Form

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 that will sign the grant agreement and who will be responsible for submitting reports and reimbursement requests. If you are submitting a grant with a fiscal sponsor, you should enter your fiscal sponsor organization's information.

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.

Example Project Title: "ABC Park Land Acquisition" or "XYZ Playground Construction."

Project Location

Project locations should be as specific as possible and identify the city/town(s) where the project takes place. If you are proposing a regional or statewide project, please describe that.

Project Overview

Provide a summary of your project, up to 150 words. Be sure to clearly summarize what you plan to do, where you plan to do it, and a high-level overview of why this project is important.

Example Project Overview: "The Town of Anywhere plans to replace two existing tennis courts that are beyond their useful life with four new pickleball courts. The tennis courts have not been used for years, and our town's recreation department receives weekly requests from the community for pickleball. In addition, we will be installing lighting at the new courts and the parking lots that serve the courts to improve safety and increase the hours the courts are available for use."

Select the appropriate checkboxes for your project type and recreation type. Select all that apply.

Public Access

LWCF sites are required to be kept reasonably open, accessible, and safe for public use. Discrimination based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, residency, or disability is not permitted.

Additional Information: For full details on public access requirements, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “D. Availability to Users” (Chapter 8).

While many sites are free and open to the public year-round, LWCF allows public access to include:

- Restricted public access hours, such as seasonal use restrictions, daylight operating hour restrictions, or restricted hours for recreation on [school grounds](#).
- Fee-based use, potentially including differential fees for residents and non-residents (see “Discrimination on the basis of residence” under “D. Availability to Users” of the [Federal LWCF Manual](#) for full details)
- Reasonable use limitations limiting the type and extent of recreation use when necessary for maintenance or preservation. Examples include limitations imposed on the number of people using an area or facility or the type of users, such as "hunters only" or "hikers only."

On the Pre-Application Form, identify whether or not your proposed site will have any restrictions to public access, and if so, briefly explain what they are and why the restrictions are necessary.

Control and Tenure

“The project sponsor must possess sufficient title and adequate legal control of the property to be within the LWCF boundary area in order to provide reasonable assurances that a conversion pursuant to the LWCF Act (54 U.S.C. § 200305(f)(3)) will not occur without its knowledge, state review, and NPS decision.”
[Federal LWCF Manual](#)

Select the option(s) that best represents the applying entity’s [control and tenure](#) for the proposed LWCF project area.

Only if your organization has partial ownership, such as an easement, describe those rights and obligations in the follow-up question. Applications that have/will have fee simple ownership or a signed lease on federal lands should skip this question.

Buildings and Structures

LWCF has significant restrictions related to buildings and indoor structures for both acquisition and development projects within a [6\(f\) boundary](#). If there will be a building structure within your planned LWCF project area, review the [Acquisition](#) and [Development](#) sections in this document to ensure it will be eligible.

On the Pre-Application form, identify whether or not there are existing or planned buildings or structures within any land to be acquired, any planned project areas, or within the broader context of the contiguous parkland adjacent to the project area (example: you’re requesting funds to build a playground in one part of a town park, but you also have a building that houses recreation staff offices on the other end of the park).

Application Tip: This question is only asking about structures within potential LWCF areas (either active project sites or future 6(f) boundaries). If there are adjacent structures on surrounding parcels OUTSIDE of the project/park area– such as a community park that is bordered by residential housing and community businesses – please check “no” to this question.

If you respond “yes” to the buildings and structures question, briefly describe the structures and their relation to the project area, what is planned for those structures, and whether the grant-funded project includes the value of those structures.

If you are unsure about the eligibility of a known or planned structure within or adjacent to your project area, please contact the Grants Team at ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov to confirm eligibility before submitting your pre-application. If possible, please share a rough map or satellite image from online mapping software that includes the building location and the general location for the proposed LWCF project.

Project Workplan

The applicant should fill out the “LWCF Workplan Template” with the tasks, activities, and performance measures for the project. A work plan outlines all the components of your project and should provide enough of a description to understand what work will be done where and how it will get done. **DO NOT GENERALIZE.** Your work plan will be used to develop the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.

Use the top section to outline all the work that is part of your proposed LWCF Project; this includes both work funded by LWCF and eligible activities funded match.

From past experience, we know some grantees are doing complementary work outside of their LWCF project that they want the ranking committee to be aware of – but it’s not actually a part of their LWCF request. For example, applicants might want to share information about a community-informed planning process that just wrapped up or future plans for additional phases of work to demonstrate how their LWCF project is part of a bigger effort. To make it easy for reviewers to understand exactly what you’re planning to do with your LWCF project, please separate these types of activities in the second chart.

Application Tip: You should write your workplan so that someone who doesn’t have specialized construction expertise or who isn’t familiar with your site can understand what you’re planning to do. Be sure to spell out custom acronyms the first time they are used.

Your workplan must include:

- The name of the park and the general location where work will be performed
- Activity: What you plan to accomplish

Potential activities may include but are not limited to surveying, design, engineering, permitting, public outreach, bids/quotes/final budgeting, various construction phases or components, site visits, events, etc.

- If your project has multiple locations or multiple distinct construction components at the same location (for example, if you’re resurfacing a parking lot, building a new restroom, and replacing a playground all at the same park), please be sure to list those each as separate activities.
- Separate work components that will require different people, materials/equipment, or timelines as different activities (ex: separate tree trimming with an arborist, from stair construction with a staff leading a volunteer crew, from bridge construction with a contractor).
- A brief description of each activity (can be **bulleted**). Descriptions should be clear and concise for someone outside your organization/who does not have your same level of expertise to understand and describe:
 - What tasks are included?
 - Be specific about the key parts of each major activity.
 - **List ALL the steps in timeline order!**
 - In general terms, who do you plan on doing the work?
 - **Do NOT name specific contractors/vendors!!** Instead, you should refer to the contractor/vendor in more general language that describes their role.

Example budget role descriptions: contracted trail builder, environmental consultant, construction company, gravel company, youth trail crew, volunteers, staff, etc.

- What general types of equipment or tools will be used?

Example tool/equipment budget descriptions: hand tools, power tools, chainsaws, heavy machinery, etc.

- What materials will be used?
- A list of the anticipated results 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.
 - Use specific numbers as much as possible. Describe dimensions (length/width) as applicable.
 - If you aren't sure of the exact numbers, describe "at least" or "a minimum of" estimates.

Example anticipated results:

- X Number of miles of new trails constructed
- X Number of new sports fields constructed
- X Number of new parking spaces added
- X Number square feet of parking lot resurfaced
- X Number of new playing fields constructed
- X Number of trash cans/benches/portable restrooms installed
- X Number of new signs to be installed
- X-foot-long bridges or boardwalks to be constructed
- 100% of required permits secured

Application Tip: we do NOT expect all proposals to include all the above metrics, nor is this an exhaustive list– rather use this as a starting point to think about the results that are most relevant to your specific project.

- Anticipated start and end dates (month and year) for each activity. Please put together an estimated planned timeline to share the main parts of how/when you will implement this project and complete it by 12/31/2028.

See "[Example Materials](#)" at the end of this document for a completed example workplan.

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

- 2025 LWCF Workplan – [Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Workplan File Name: 2025 LWCF 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 outlined cells with a white background in the appropriate categories that are relevant to your project.

LWCF 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.

Additional Information: For full details on cost eligibility, be sure to read the [Federal LWCF Manual](#). In particular, review “Allowable Costs” (Chapter 5, Section C).

Budget Development

You will be required to submit a budget that shows the breakdowns of your estimated project costs. When preparing your budget:

- Be sure the budget includes all eligible project costs you anticipate. If it’s not included in the budget, an LWCF grant can’t pay for it!
 - If selected, the project sponsor is responsible for any costs incurred in excess of those included in the original cost estimate, so it is in your best interest to ensure your budget accurately captures all potential eligible expenses.
 - Review the Budget Category Guidance tab in the template to help determine which category to use for what type of expense.
 - If you have ineligible costs (which differ for [Acquisition](#) and [Development](#) projects), you can include those in your budget, but be sure to record those both in the “Total Cost” and “Costs Not Allowable for Participation” columns. In this circumstance, the value of the “total allowable costs” column for the ineligible cost should equal \$0.00.
- Be thorough, detailed, and accurate. Your budget should be your best estimate of the costs for the project **to the nearest whole dollar**. If you provide detailed, concise, and clear information, the ranking committee will be better able to understand and assess your project.
 - It is best practice to get a few price quotes from qualified businesses to support your estimates.
 - If referencing a formal estimate provided by a vendor, be ready to submit a copy of the estimate in the full application. **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 June 1, 2026.
- **Provide a brief description of each line item, explaining how you arrived at the estimates.**
 - Do not list budget line items by named contractors. Instead, use more general language (ex: contracted trail builder, environmental consultant, construction company, gravel company) to describe your budget lines.
 - You are permitted to reference estimates provided by contractors in the description.

Example budget descriptions: “Based on quote from ABC Company” or “Estimated based on ## tons at \$## per ton + delivery based on online pricing from XYZ gravel company”

- The budget should still be distributed across the designated categories. Do not include “flat rate” or “all-in-one” line items that cover all project components. If you received that from a contractor, we suggest you seek an itemized estimate or additional clarification to help you properly complete the budget form.
- 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. **Rates for volunteer services must be consistent with those paid for similar work by the applying entity.** If your organization does not have an established value of volunteer time, to calculate volunteer rates:
 - For unskilled labor, you can use the [Independent Sector’s estimated volunteer rate](#) for Vermont (currently \$32.73).
 - 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.*
- For construction equipment:
 - If you will be renting or contracting construction equipment, your calculations can be based on information from rental companies or contractors.
 - If the applying organization owns its equipment, you can use [FEMA’s Schedule of Equipment Rates](#) to establish value for your LWCF request or match.

Matching Funds

LWCF grants require a minimum 50% match of the **total project cost** (LWCF request + your matching funds = total project cost).

Alternatively, to calculate the percentage of match, divide the value of your match by the total project cost and multiply by 100. Round your answer to the nearest tenth.

$$(\text{Total Match Value}) / (\text{Total Project Cost}) \times 100$$

Example match calculation: A project requesting \$50,000 in funding from LWCF that provides a \$70,000 match has a total project cost of \$120,000, so:

$$(\$70,000 \text{ Match}) / (\$120,000 \text{ Total Project Cost}) \times 100 = 58.3\% \text{ match}$$

Your match may include:

- In-kind or non-monetary donations:
 - Donations of labor, materials, tools, equipment/supplies needed for the project.
 - In-kind contributions can come from federal, state, local/municipal, or private sources (nonprofits, businesses, individuals, etc.).
- Cash contributions:
 - State funds: other state grants or funds

- Local cash contributions: Municipality’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.) or cash contributions from other local government entities.
- Private cash contributions (e.g. nonprofit organization cash, donations from individuals, cash support from businesses) and other non-governmental grants (e.g., foundation grants, local nonprofit organizational grants, awards).
- Other Federal Funds: There are strict limitations on the use of federal funds as sponsor match for LWCF (see “Federal matching and supplemental programs” on page 71 of the [Federal LWCF Manual](#)). The only federal funds allowed as match for LWCF are the Federal Highway Administration’s Recreational Trail Program (RTP) Grants and Housing and Urban Development’s (HUD) Community Block Grants.

Application Tip: If you are interested in applying for [RTP funds](#) from FPR as match, we strongly encourage you to wait to apply for RTP until the 2026 round. The implantation period for the 2026 round of RTP will better align with the implementation period for this round of LWCF.

Only expenses for LWCF-eligible activities can be counted as match. For example, marketing is ineligible for LWCF, and therefore any marketing costs should not be included in your budget as part of your match calculation.

Planning for Match: Be Prepared for the Full Application

During the Pre-Application phase, you are not required to share information about the source(s) and status of your match – but be prepared to address this in the full application! You will be required to provide information about the specific sources of the match and the status of that match (whether pending or committed) in a narrative question in the full application, so you do NOT need to include that information in the budget template.

There will also be space in the application to explain your plans to secure any remaining funds. The review committee will consider both the amount of funding secured to date and your plans to secure outstanding funding during their review of the full application to assess project readiness.

See [Example Materials](#) at the end of this document to see an example completed budget.

Please submit the budget sheet in Excel format (.xls or .xlsx file type).

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

- 2025 LWCF Budget Form - [Name of Applicant]

Example Budget File Name: 2025 LWCF Budget – ABC Town

Climate Resilience Risk Form

The resilience of recreation projects is a critical component of the review process for FPR Outdoor Recreation grants, including LWCF. For this upcoming grant round, we are piloting a Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form to:

1. Provide FPR staff and the grant ranking committee with the information needed to assess the resilience of the project.
2. Help guide the grant applicant to develop more resilient projects.

The [Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) was designed considering the most commonly proposed recreation projects, as well as the forecasted impacts of climate change in Vermont including:

- Warmer temperatures and extreme heat
- Shorter, warmer winters
- Increased winter and spring precipitation
- More frequent heavy precipitation events
- Reduced soil moisture or drought
- Increased risk of wildfire
- Altered stream flows
- Damage from insect pests or pathogens
- Increases in nonnative plant species

Review the [Guidance Document for Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) for additional support related to this form.

Use for the LWCF Pre-Application

The grant applicant will fill in the *Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form* and submit it with their pre-application. FPR staff will then assess the form and note the areas where further information may be needed in the full application. Staff will then request that applicants provide additional information to address specific resilience risk factors in the full application if identified.

Example: If an applicant notes that a new picnic area and parking lot are planned in an area with established invasive species, FPR will ask the applicant to outline their plans for addressing those invasive species to prevent accidental spread by future visitors in the full application.

Responses to the form will also be used to assess project readiness. All questions on the form are required.

Example: If an applicant submits a form with multiple blank responses or writes in “unknown” for questions where that is not a provided response option (ex: trail surface, erosion prevention measures, how many water crossings), this is a sign that the project isn’t ready for LWCF funding.

For the pre-application phase, we will accept “unknown” response options for all questions where it is provided as a response option (ex: are there muddy areas or areas where water puddles?) – but we strongly encourage applicants to make a plan to determine these answers before the full application deadline.

Permit Reports

All projects must have all necessary permits in place prior to construction – whether or not you own the land or are only working within the existing footprint. 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](#). Additional directions for both of these tools are found below.

You must complete the Permit Navigator or Project Review sheet for your project and submit a PDF of the results in your application. If you do not submit this by the deadline, your application will be incomplete. The only exception to this is:

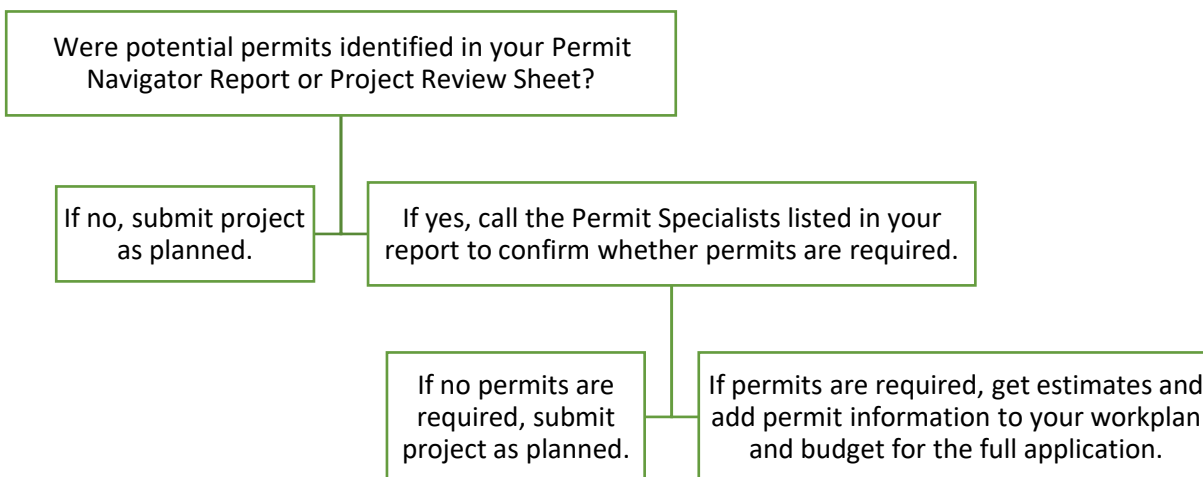
- For projects on USFS land: During the full application, you will be required to submit the official USFS Environmental Decision Memo which documents the environmental assessment of the project area. Obtain USFS Environmental Decision Memo documentation from the designated authorized official at USFS who will oversee this project. Applicants will also need to share the contact person at USFS who will oversee the work described in this LWCF application.

If your project qualifies for one of the exceptions outlined above, please address that briefly when you email your other pre-application materials.

Additional Permitting Information

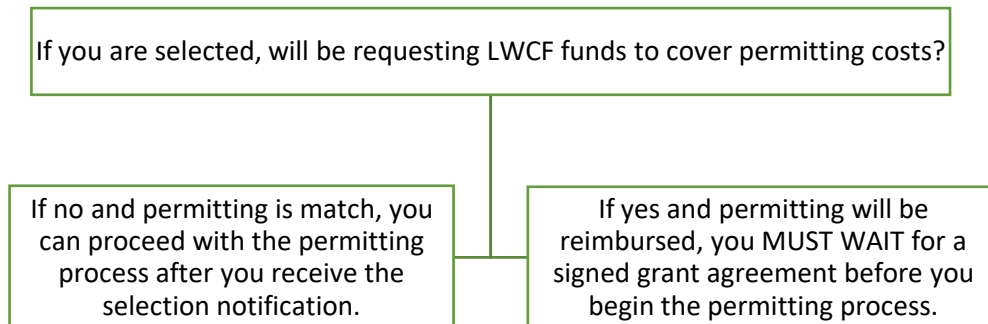
Permit Navigator Reports and Project Review Sheets identify which state permits are potentially required for a project – they are NOT actual permit applications.

It is the responsibility of the applicant to follow up with the DEC specialists identified in the reports before completing the application to determine whether or not permits will be required. In addition, Permit Navigator and Project Review Sheets only list potential state-level environmental permits. Check with your municipality to see if any other permitting is required.



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 and can cost thousands of dollars. If permits are required for your project, be sure to incorporate the permit requirements for your project into your final workplan and budget. If you do not include permit costs in your initial LWCF budget request, you cannot use LWCF dollars to cover them!

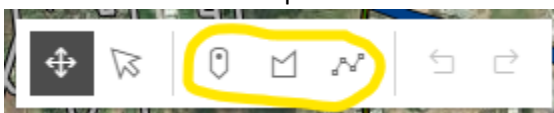
- You are allowed to begin permit processes as soon as you are ready if you will NOT be using LWCF funds to support these expenses; if you plan to use LWCF funds to support these expenses, you must wait until your grant agreement is executed.
- As described above, permit costs can be used as match if secured in advance of the grant agreement.



Permit Navigator: For Single-Parcel Projects

Permit Navigator is a tool that will help identify both Act 250 and various Agency of Natural Resources permit requirements. The Permit Navigator tool will provide contact information for permit specialists who can be contacted for further information about obtaining permits for the project.

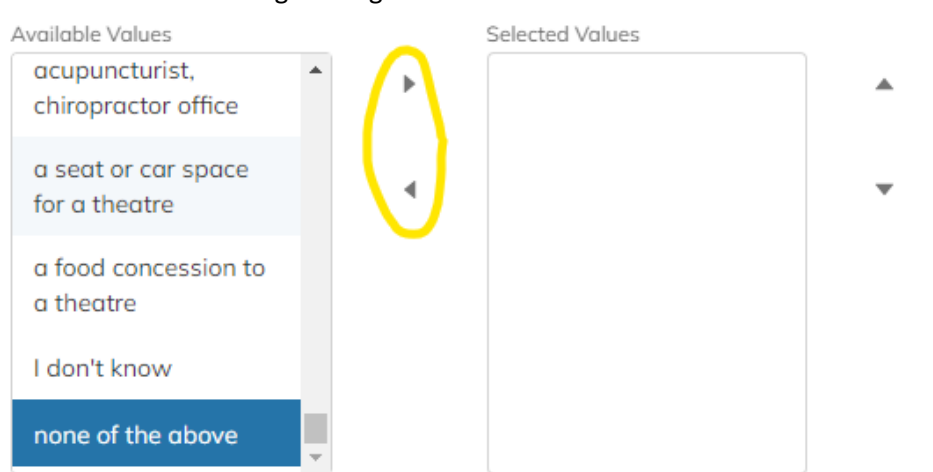
1. Go to: <https://permitnavigator.my.vermont.gov/s/> and click “Get Started.”
 - a. Follow the prompts to accept the disclaimer.
 - b. Make a choice about whether or not you would like a [jurisdictional opinion on an Act 250](#) permit.
 - i. **Please note that if you do not want to seek a jurisdictional 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 (pictured right), 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 that 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.



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.

Project Review Sheets: For Linear and Multi-Parcel Projects

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

Application Tip: Because Project Review Sheets require DEC staff involvement, be sure to start this process as soon as possible! At a minimum, you should begin at least one month before the deadline!

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

- LWCF Permit Navigator Results - [Name of Applicant]
- LWCF Project Review Sheet - [Name of Applicant]

Example Permit Report File Name: LWCF Permit Navigator Report – ABC Town

Additional LWCF Planning Information

Recreation and Equity

Outdoor recreation facilities have the potential to provide social, economic, and public health benefits. But they are not equally distributed. Low-income neighborhoods, communities of color, people in larger bodies, people who speak languages other than English, the elderly, and populations with disabilities, among others, have been historically disenfranchised and left out of the planning and decision-making process of recreation facility development.

FPR seeks to address these inequities to ensure that recreation resources throughout Vermont are extended to all residents, working toward a more equitable and just culture. As such, an application must 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 expand opportunities and reduce barriers so that all people feel welcome in Vermont's outdoors.

UEI Required

If invited to submit a full application, you will be required to provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) from Sam.gov in the application.

New for 2025! You do NOT have to maintain an active SAM registration to receive an LWCF grant – only to have an “ID Assigned” so you have a UEI.

Application Tip: Getting a UEI the first time can be an extended process! If you do not already have a UEI, please begin the process of registering as soon as possible at <https://sam.gov>

Example Materials

Workplan Example

Park or Location Name	Bernard Park			
City/Town	Anytown, VT			
Activity (Briefly describe work component and, if applicable, the specific location on the trail)	Description (What tasks are included? In general terms, who will do the work? What tools, equipment, and/or materials will be used?)	Anticipated Results (Quantifiable list of what you will accomplish)	Anticipated Start Date (Month/Year)	Anticipated End Date (Month/Year)
Land Acquisition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Town of Anytown will complete the purchase of former private school property to expand the existing community park. 	1.5-acre parcel purchased	June 2026	July 2026
Final Construction Preparations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town project manager will host RFP and select a single firm to complete the playground surface, picnic areas and new parking lot work. Town project manager to prepare and submit permit applications to the state for approval. 	Contract signed with construction firm. 100% required permits secured.	June 2026	November 2026
Playground Construction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor to install a new playground with a variety of elements that will be accessible for both able-bodied and disabled children of a range of ages will be built. The playground will have poured-in-place safety surfacing and will have features such as swings and slides, climbing apparatus, and a 12-foot-long suspension bridge. 	2,500 square foot playground constructed	May 2027	October 2027
Bathroom Renovations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor to renovate the existing bathroom building that includes men's and women's areas will be renovated to reconfigure the sink areas and some of the toilet 	2 new accessible restrooms added	May 2027	October 2027

	<p>cubicles so both can meet contemporary accessible design standards.</p>			
Picnic Area Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contractor to construct three picnic areas around the park, to include 20' diameter steel framed gazebo shelters, concrete surface, and accessible picnic tables. The picnic tables will be donated to the project by a local hardware store in Anytown. 	3 picnic areas created	May 2027	October 2027
Parking Lot Renovation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Town maintenance crew to demolish a small existing asphalt parking lot that serves the school playfield area and that will be accessible to one of the new picnic areas Contractor to create a new 7000 sq ft parking lot using porous concrete. 	20 parking spots created, including 3 parking spaces for people with disabilities.	April 2027	October 2027
Multi-Use Field Improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Volunteers organized by Town project manager to clear and demolish wooden fencing and vegetation that separates existing park from former school site. The land being acquired comprises former school playfields so minimal work is needed. However, to be fully usable new goals will need to be installed by Town staff. 	2 new goals installed	April 2028	May 2028

Budget Example

Expense Name	Description/Calculation Explanation	Total Cost	Costs Not Allowable for Participation	Total Allowable Costs
2. Land, structures, rights-of-way, appraisals, etc.				
Land Acquisition	The 1.5-acre portion of the former school property to be acquired has already been appraised to the federal standards and the value determined to be \$100,000.	\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00
Sub-Total:		\$100,000.00	\$0.00	\$100,000.00
7. Site work				
Clear and demolish fencing and vegetation that separates existing park from former school site	To be completed by volunteer work crew. Estimating X hours at \$Y per hour.	\$2,010.00	\$0.00	\$2,010.00
Sub-Total:		\$2,010.00	\$0.00	\$2,010.00
8. Demolition and removal				
Parking Lot: Demolish existing (4,500 sq ft)	To be completed by Town maintenance crew. Based on estimate from Town for labor, equipment hours, and disposal fees.	\$10,125.00	\$0.00	\$10,125.00
Sub-Total:		\$10,125.00	\$0.00	\$10,125.00
9. Construction				
Parking Lot: Install new surface (7,000 sq ft)	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$26,250.00	\$0.00	\$26,250.00
"Playground for all": Poured-in-place surface (750 sq ft)	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$6,000.00	\$0.00	\$6,000.00
"Playground for all": Purchase and install Play elements	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$41,165.00	\$0.00	\$41,165.00
Picnic areas: Purchase and install Shelters	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$26,850.00	\$0.00	\$26,850.00
Picnic areas: Concrete surface (1,200 sq ft)	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$4,200.00	\$0.00	\$4,200.00
Bathroom Renovation	Based on average estimate from 3 construction companies	\$25,000.00	\$0.00	\$25,000.00
Sub-Total:		\$129,465.00	\$0.00	\$129,465.00
11. Miscellaneous				
Goals for multi-use field (2 units)	Based on average current pricing available online + estimated 10% for inflation	\$4,200.00	\$0.00	\$4,200.00

Picnic areas: Accessible tables	Based on average current pricing available online + estimated 10% for inflation	\$4,200.00	\$0.00	\$4,200.00
Sub-Total:		\$8,400.00	\$0.00	\$8,400.00
12. SUBTOTAL (sum of lines 1-11)		\$250,000.00	\$0.00	\$250,000.00
13. Contingencies				
Contingency Reserve	20% of total estimates	\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00
Sub-Total:		\$50,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$0.00
14. SUBTOTAL		\$300,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
		Total Cost	Costs Not Allowable for Participation	Total Allowable Costs
16. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (subtract #15 from #14)		\$300,000.00	\$50,000.00	\$250,000.00
Total Federal Assistance Requested		\$125,000.00		
Match Rate (Minimum match of 50% of the project's total cost required)		50%		