

2025 Recreational Trails Program Grant

Full Application Guidance

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Introduction

Welcome to the Full Application Guidance for the 2025 Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant. RTP is a federal-aid assistance program to help States provide and maintain recreational trails for both motorized and nonmotorized recreational trail use. The program provides funds for all kinds of recreational trail uses, such as pedestrian uses (hiking, running, wheelchair use), bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

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 2025 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 funded projects should help achieve the program's goals to:

- Strengthen the quality, extent, and resilience of existing outdoor recreation resources.
- Create and support trails that welcome all who live and visit Vermont and allow them to heal, learn, grow, and live their lives fully.
- Promote stewardship of outdoor recreation resources and enhance both trail user experiences and environmental quality.
- Encourage all trail enthusiasts to work together to provide a wide variety of recreational trail opportunities that fulfill community needs.

These goals support [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 additional information for applicants who have been invited to submit a full proposal. Additional information about eligibility, project development, and the Pre-Application process can be found in the [2025 RTP Pre-Application Guidance](#).

RTP is a Reimbursement Program

This means that the applicant must be capable of financing the project and (once a grant agreement is fully executed) covering expenditure payments 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).

Applicant 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

2025 RTP Timeline

- Pre-Application submissions: October 14 – December 6, 2024
- Full Application submissions: mid-December – January 31, 2025
- Grant application review and selection: February – March 2025
 - This process requires multiple steps, including scoring and review by the Ranking Committee, FPR agency approval, and Federal Highway Administration authorization.
- Compliance checks and grant agreement development: April – July 2025
 - 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 later than this timeframe.
- Grant implementation: grant agreement execution date through December 31, 2026.
 - Applicants should plan for projects to begin no earlier than July 14, 2025.

Grant Awards and Funding Approval

The amount of funding available in the 2025 grant round is pending funding notification from the Federal Highway Administration. Grant amounts are dependent on each project's merits and 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" or "grantees."

All project sponsors MUST wait for a fully executed grant agreement before beginning their project.

The only exception to this is for Flood Recovery projects.

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 are included in this 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. See “SECTION 5: Compliance Information” and the [“Sample 2024 RTP Grant Agreement”](#) for additional information.

The Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) operates its programs, services, and activities without discriminating on the basis of race, religion, creed, color, national origin (including limited English proficiency), ancestry, place of birth, disability, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or breastfeeding (mother and child).

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How to Apply

This year, there is two-step application process that begins with a short Pre-Application initial submission. Select applicants will then be invited to submit a Full Application for review.

Pre-Application Submission

Pre-Applications were due by **11:59 PM on December 6, 2024**. See the [2025 RTP Project Development and Pre-Application Guidance](#) for additional information about that process. Incomplete applications and Pre-Applications received after this deadline are ineligible.

How to Submit a Full Proposal

If you are invited to submit a Full Application, the application will be offered through the [ANROnline portal](#). To complete your full grant application, you will need to follow the steps below.

1. Download, review, and complete all other required templates and supplemental materials for your project.
 - a. We recommend you start drafting in a copy of the [2025 RTP Application Preview](#) so you can work collaboratively with others and use spell-checking tools.
2. Complete the RTP Grant Application Form and submit it online after the application period opens.

All downloadable documents are located on the [RTP webpage](#).

When ready, select the “Begin Form Entry” button to complete the Full Application Form. Your application is **due no later than 11:59 PM EST on January 31, 2025**. Incomplete or late applications will not be considered.

If this is your first time logging in, you will have to select the “Register an Account” button and fill out the required information to create a user profile. Registering as a user will allow you to save information in the online form as you fill out your application. As a registered user you will also receive reminder and confirmation emails about your application.

Application Tip: We strongly recommend that applicants develop responses to application questions in a separate document. A [MS Word template](#) is available online to assist you in drafting. Once you begin your application online, you will be able to return to your application to review or edit your responses, but it is easier to draft and refine language outside the application portal and then copy/paste into the online application. That separate document can also serve as a copy of your responses for your records.

Please check out the [RTP website](#) for more information about the grant program. Questions regarding the application can be directed to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.gov with the title “RTP Grant Application Question.”

Application Support

Full Application Grant Program Webinar

Tuesday, January 7, 2025, 1:00-2:00 PM

This webinar will be exclusively for applicants who have been invited to submit a Full Application. This webinar will cover some of the logistical expectations about managing an RTP grant including financial tracking, reporting, federal compliance reviews, and other administrative requirements. The purpose of this presentation is to inform applicants of what to expect in terms of managing their grant so they can adjust plans as needed prior to submitting their full proposals. There will be time at the end of the session for questions from attendees. **The link to attend will be emailed to all applicants invited to submit a Full Application.** The webinar will be recorded and emailed to all invited applicants afterward.

Open Office Hours

Tuesday, January 28, 2025, 3:00-4:00 PM

FPR Staff will host a virtual open office session exclusively for applicants invited to submit a Full Application to learn more details about the grant program and ask questions. **The link to attend will be emailed to all applicants invited to submit a Full Application.** Open office hours will be recorded and emailed to invited applicants afterward.

If the scheduled 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.

Rural Economic Development Initiative

Applicants may be eligible for grant review/editing assistance during **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](#).

Review and Selection

Pre-Application Review

Pre-Applications were reviewed by the FPR staff, who checked for project eligibility, feasibility, readiness, and compliance with any applicable federal RTP requirements.

Applicants whose Pre-Applications demonstrate all the above characteristics have been invited to submit a Full Application. If you were invited to submit a Full Application, FPR staff shared feedback and any questions that came 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.**

Full Application Screening

Full Applications will first be reviewed by FPR staff to ensure they meet minimum eligibility requirements and completeness. Applications that fail the initial screening will not be forwarded to the Ranking Committee for further review. Eligible project applications must include the following:

- Both the applicant and project must meet the [federal eligibility requirements of the Recreational Trails Program](#). Any ineligible activities or expenses will be identified and removed from consideration.
- Applications must be complete and submitted prior to the application deadline, including landowner permission.
- The project must be permissible, and the recreation benefit must outweigh any potential negative environmental impacts.

Full Application Review

Applications will then be reviewed by a Ranking Committee of experts from across the outdoor recreation sector. This committee will use the following rubric as a guide for making recommendations for project selection:

Component	Points	Characteristics of high-scoring projects
Project Identification/Plans in Place & Project Readiness	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work plan and budget are well thought out and match the scope of the project.• Timeline is achievable between July 2025 and December 2026.• All required permits and permissions have been identified and have either been secured or are in the process of being secured.• Applicant has appropriate landowner permission.

Resilience: Minimizing Environmental Impact, well-designed	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicant has identified the appropriate recommended trail standards that are relevant to their project. • Potential impacts on the natural environment and corresponding mitigation strategies are clearly defined, appropriate, effective, and reasonable. • Project includes strategies for building trails and associated infrastructure to a standard that is resilient to large-scale weather events.
Sustainability: Stewardship and maintenance plan and design	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plans for stewardship and maintenance are comprehensive, reasonable, and well-articulated. • Project has long-term commitments to support maintenance and stewardship.
Public Recreation Benefits: Equitable Trail Access and Connectivity	30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan to promote the trail spans multiple public communication strategies that could engage both visitors and residents. • Project includes intentional strategies to expand access and reduce systemic barriers to outdoor recreation. • Connection of the project to other recreation resources is well-articulated. Project fills critical gaps in existing trail systems.
Local (Municipal) Support, Community Partnerships and Citizen Involvement	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project fulfills a clearly articulated need and serves the community it is supporting. • Project connects to one or more SCORP priorities. Any additional local/regional/state plan connections are relevant, appropriate, and clearly explained.

The Ranking Committee will consider both the scores as described above, as well as assessments about the following grant priorities during the selection process:

- Organizations that did not receive a 2024 RTP grant will be given preference over the most recent round of grantees, except in special circumstances. (+10 points for applicants that did not receive a 2024 RTP grant)
 - Coalition members working on a shared project will all be counted as previous recipients and thus will not be eligible for these preference points.
 - Organizations that function as fiscal sponsors for separate chapters working on separate projects will be eligible for these preference points.
 - These criteria will only be applied for Standard RTP Track projects. For Flood Recovery Track proposals, there will be no preference applied based on grant award history.
- Projects that include remedying deferred maintenance/rehabilitation will be given preference over new trail creation or improvements. (+10 points for projects that are 100% maintenance/rehabilitation projects, +5 points for projects that are at least 50% maintenance/rehabilitation)

- 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 to 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 non-motorized trail activity, or more than one motorized trail activity, or a combination of compatible non-motorized 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 non-motorized 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 non-motorized use.

By federal rule, no more than five 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.

Application Content

Application Tip: There are character limits on all long-form response questions in the Full Application online. When considering character limits please know that **a space is considered as its own character**. If your response exceeds the character limit for a question you will see an error message. If you exceed the character limit, please shorten your response and resubmit.

SECTION 1: Applicant and Project Information

This is the section to share all required information about the applicant and the project. It will include municipality or non-profit organization contact information, contact information for the Project Manager, and pertinent information about the project.

Contact 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.

You will also be required to enter your organization's Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) and the end month of your fiscal year. You do NOT have to maintain an active SAM registration to receive an RTP grant – you must only have an "ID Assigned" so that 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>

Please note that we ask for contact information for both the project contact and the authorized representative for the organization.

- The project contact should be the person at the organization or municipality that FPR can ask questions about the project. This person is also responsible for ensuring the work is completed in accordance with the scope of work outlined in the grant proposal. This may be the person who is actually implementing the work in the field – or it may be the Grant Manager/Development Director/Project Coordinator who is supporting the grant administration. Either way, it should be someone responsive to email.
- The authorized representative is the person at the organization who is authorized to sign legal and financial documents. For example, a town's authorized representative is often the Selectboard Chair. For a non-profit organization, it is often the Executive Director or the Financial Manager.

Key Project information

Project Title

Please choose a project title that concisely describes the project.

Example Project Title: "ABC Trail: Reroute and Maintenance" or "XYZ Trail Spur Construction."

Project Location

Project locations should be as specific as possible and identify city/town, county, and census tract(s). Use the built-in map in the online application to identify GPS coordinates for your project location.

To find your census tract(s):

1. Go to <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5>

2. Search for your project location address or coordinates on the screening tool webpage.
3. CLICK the map on your location.
4. Scroll down below the map or look at the legend on the right. Copy the tract number and paste that number into the application.

Enter up to three census tracts. If your project spans more than three tracts, please enter the top three tracts where the most work will occur.

Budget Overview

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

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 Budget section of this Guidance for additional information).

Application Tip: Make sure the numbers you enter in the application match your budget!

RTP grants require a minimum 20% match. Enter the automatically calculated match from the budget worksheet. 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: A project asking for \$50,000 from RTP with a \$20,000 match has a match rate of 28.6%.
 $(\$20,000 \text{ match}) / (\$70,000 \text{ Total Project}) \times 100 = 28.6\%$

Brief Description of Project

Select which track you are applying for: Standard RTP or Flood Recovery. Review the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for full details about the Flood Recovery Track.

Flood Recovery Track	Standard RTP Track
Projects completed July 10, 2024- January 31, 2025.	Projects planned after January 31, 2025. Work can begin no earlier than July 14, 2025.
All proposals in this track must be construction projects directly related to addressing trail-related damage from the 2024 flooding.	Proposals in this track can focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • repairing trail-related damage caused by flooding from any year • addressing trail-related maintenance issues of any cause

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • building new trails and trail-related infrastructure • land acquisitions for trails • trail-related educational projects
Pre-award expenses dating back to July 10, 2024, will be eligible for reimbursement.	No pre-award expenses will be eligible for reimbursement. See the “Project Budget” section of the Pre-Application Guidance for pre-award matching requirements.

Provide a 1-2 sentence brief summary of the location, type of project, and/or main project goals. Note that you have limited space in this question (300 characters, including spaces) so please be concise.

Example: “The Town of Anywhere plans to build a new 6-foot-wide engineered metal bridge over the Smith Creek on the Fun Times Trail in the Anywhere Municipal Forest. This new bridge will replace a 2-foot-wide wooden bridge that is rotting.”

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

SECTION 2: Project Identification and Project Readiness

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

All required templates, guidance and checklist documents can be downloaded from the [RTP webpage](#). Failure to provide documents where needed will result in an incomplete application, which will not be eligible for consideration for this grant round.

Project Workplan

The applicant will be required to submit the “RTP Workplan Template” with the tasks, activities, and performance measures for the project. A workplan 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. Your workplan will be used to develop the grant agreement if your project is awarded a grant.

You may make changes to the workplan submitted during the Pre-Application phase, but your final project should be very similar to your original proposal. Your revised workplan should address feedback received during the Pre-Application review, additional information learned about the RTP program, and/or adjustments to plans based on your internal needs. If you have no modifications, you may resubmit the same workplan as during the Pre-Application phase. **If you submit a project during the Full Application phase that is substantially different from your Pre-Application, your application may be disqualified.** Email ANR.FPRrecreationgrants@vermont.gov with any questions.

Review the “Project Workplan” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on how to complete the template.

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

- 2025_Workplan_Name of Applicant Organization

Example Workplan File Name: 2025_Workplan_ ABC Town

Application Tip: All uploaded application files will be visible to reviewers in a single folder. The purpose of these provided naming structures is to make it as easy as possible for reviewers to find what they are looking for in your files. Do NOT worry about minor formatting discrepancies, such as using underscores vs. dashes vs. spaces or whether or not you include “RTP” in your file name.

Workplan Activities

From the provided list in the online application, select all of the potential activities that are included in your workplan. This will assist reviewers in understanding your project.

Select the option that best describes how much of your project focuses on remedying deferred maintenance or rehabilitation of existing recreation assets. This should be based on budget, considering both cash and match expenses – not based on the number of workplan components.

Example: If a project has \$5,000 in volunteer-led maintenance for 10 tasks and \$20,000 for one new asset being constructed by a contractor, the applicant should check the “0-25%” option as \$5,000 of the total \$25,000 budget is 20%. *The number of tasks should not be considered!*

Calculate your maintenance costs to the nearest tenth of a percentage point and choose the best option.

Acquisition Information

If you select “yes” to the question that asks if your project includes land acquisition, you will see a whole additional section of questions appear. If you select “no” to this question, you will skip this entire section.

Application Tip: In the application form, you will be asked a series of questions. Depending on your responses, you will be directed to questions prompting you to upload documents or answer additional questions. Because of the complexity of this question flow, land acquisition questions are best reviewed in the online application and are not included in the preview.

The Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended under 49 U.S.C. 4601 (Uniform Act) applies to all RTP-funded acquisitions.

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

The types of information applicants will need to be prepared to share for acquisition projects include:

- Type of acquisition
- Fair market value of the property the applicant wishes to acquire with funding
- Appraisal information, including report from a certified appraiser
- Purchase and Sales Agreement information
- Information about title work completed
- Information about any liens, restrictions, easements, or covenants on the property
- Information about any encumbrances on the property that could impact the public’s use, recreational value, or the purpose for which the property is being acquired
- Information about property boundaries

- Information about environmental inspections completed

Your files should be clearly titled to describe the year, file description, and applicant's name.

- 2025_ [Appraisal / Purchase Agreement / Title Report]_[Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Acquisition File Name: 2025_Title Report_ ABC Town

Project Map

For all projects, we require a detailed map that depicts the project location and clearly highlights/marks all site locations of the workplan, including trail components, structures and performance measures site and provides a legend to understand what components will be done at what locations.

If you do not have access to a traditional mapping resource (i.e. ArcGIS) please use the [ANR Altas](#) to create a project map. This tool was developed to help FPR grant applicants create maps that include the required components listed below.

For additional support in creating maps with the [ANR Atlas tool](#), please review "[Creating Project Maps: Instructions for Outdoor Recreation Grant Applicants](#)".

Map Checklist:

- Clearly labeled locations for all individual construction components
- Trail(s) where work is to be done and any other connecting trails within the map area
- All roads in the map area including at least one state road and if road doesn't have highly identifying features (ex: intersection, clear mappable address, super short road, only spot where the road runs next to the river, etc.), an indication of the nearest town in relation to the project (ex: arrow with "X miles to ABC town")
- Parking/trailhead locations
- Labeled staging and access areas for construction
- Parcel boundaries for the whole map area and names of landowner(s) of parcels where work will occur
- Streams and wetlands
- Names for trails, city/towns, rivers, lakes in your map area
- North compass arrow
- Any other pertinent features depending on the project including: parking areas/access if within the map area, indications of trail difficulty or use, topo lines or other indications of slope, soils, known rare species locations, structures (buildings, bridges, campsites, etc.)

Application Tip: Depending on the scale of the project and the mapping software used, you may submit one map file that covers the whole project area, or multiple maps that show a more "zoomed in" view. Maps should be able to be zoomed in to a scale of 200 m/650' or less.

Uploaded maps will need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_ProjectMap_[Name of applicant organization]

Example Map File Name: 2025_ProjectMap_Any Town

Project Budget

Grant applicants will need to itemize project costs on the provided Budget template and upload once complete as a part of the application. 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.

You may make changes to the budget submitted during the Pre-Application phase. Your revised budget should address feedback received during the Pre-Application review, additional information learned about the RTP program, and/or adjustments to plans based on your internal needs. If you have no changes from the Pre-Application phase, you may resubmit the same budget.

Remember, 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.

Review the “Project Budget” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on eligible and ineligible expenses and how to complete the template.

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_Budget Form_ [Name of Applicant]

Example Budget File Name: 2025_Budget_ABC Town

Budget Match Narrative

RTP grants require a minimum 20% match of the **total project cost** (RTP request + your matching funds = total project cost). Review the “Project budget” section of the [Pre-Application Guidance](#) for information on how to calculate this

After you upload your budget, BRIEFLY describe the sources of match and the status of that match. Describe the total match contributions by source. If you have not confirmed match, use this section to outline your plan to secure match by source. For each match contribution, be sure to describe.

- Who is providing the match by source. Be sure to clearly identify the general source of match for each contributor: state, federal, local, or private. We ask you to do this because this is something we're required to submit to the FHWA if your project is selected.
 - State funds: other state grants/funds. Identify grants/funds by name.
 - Local 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 in-kind contributions from local government entities.
 - Private contributions (e.g. nonprofit organization cash, donations from individuals, cash or in-kind support from businesses) and other non-governmental grants (e.g., foundation grants, local non-profit organizational grants, awards).
 - Name nonprofits, foundations, and private businesses as relevant. Use GENERAL terms for contributions from individuals, such as "individual donations" or "volunteers" – do NOT name private donors.
 - [Other Federal Funds](#): other federal grants, funds, federal aid, etc. so long as the project is eligible under the other federal program(s). Identify grants/funds by name.
- The total contribution for each source.
- The type of funding (ex: cash, in-kind labor, grant, donated material, etc.).
- Whether the match is as committed or pending.
 - "Committed" match funding has been designated, promised, or approved to support this project; common examples include, but are not limited to, pledged donations, existing cash reserves, allocations in approved budgets, and grants received.
 - "Pending" match describes support that would support this project that has not yet been committed; common examples include: other submitted grant proposals currently under review, volunteers that still need to be recruited, future budget allocations that have not been approved. If known, describe when you'll know when you'll confirm any pending sources.

Example based on the sample budget in the Pre-Application Guidance: Anytown has committed a total of \$4,700 in local match. Of this, \$4,000 was in cash from the 2024 annual budget and \$700 will be in-kind staff time. Pending private match contributions will be secured by 2026 when construction begins, including \$3,273 in volunteer labor and a \$300 in-kind donation from the Anytown Hardware store through their community giving program, which has quarterly applications.

Permitting and Landowner Permission

Permitting

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](#).

If your scope of work has not changed, resubmit the same Permit Navigator Report or Project Review Sheet from the Pre-Application phase. If anything in your scope of work has changed (ex: length of trail, type of work planned), you MUST submit updated permitting results. See the [2025 RTP Pre-Application Guidance](#) for a review of the Permit Navigator steps, if needed.

For all construction projects, you must complete the Permit Navigator or Project Review sheet for your project and submit a PDF of the results in your Full Application. You can find detailed directions about both of these tools in the [Pre-Application Guidance](#). If you do not submit this by the deadline, your application will be incomplete. The only exceptions to this are:

- For projects on USFS land:
 - 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 RTP application.
- For projects on State land:
 - Submit a letter of support from the State employee responsible for managing recreation on the land utilized in this proposal. This could be the District Recreation Specialist, District Stewardship Forester, Park Manager, or other State Land Manager. This State contact will be responsible for overseeing environmental reviews and the permitting process and will provide notice of environmental review completion to the Applicant and FPR's Grant Management Team.

If your project qualifies for one of the exceptions outlined above, please upload the letters mentioned above in the Permit Navigator/Project Review Sheet upload section.

Reminder: 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 if you make any major changes in your Full Application proposal.

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.

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

You must submit a PDF of the Permit Navigator results or Project Review Sheet in your application. If your project does not include construction at all (ex: 100% of your work is snow grooming, land acquisition, or trail-related education), please upload a document on letterhead that clearly states your project does not include construction and thus no permits are required.

Submit documents that are clearly titled using the following format:

- RTP Permit Navigator Results - [Name of Applicant]
- RTP Project Review Sheet - [Name of Applicant]
- RTP Permit Statement – [Name of Applicant]

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

You will also be prompted to provide a brief summary of your steps **to date** to obtain any necessary permits.

Example “To Date” Permit Steps: Calling Permit Specialists, receiving confirmation from the Permit Specialists that an XYZ permit is not required but that an ABC permit is likely, hiring a contractor to complete additional surveys, preparing and submitting permit applications currently under review, changing construction materials or design based on permit requirements, updating timeline and budget to account for permit requirements.

If no permits were identified in your Permit Navigator or Project Review Sheet, simply state that in the open-ended permit progress question.

Remember: If your Permit Navigator results or Project Review Sheet identifies permits that will be required for your project, be sure to include **future plans** to secure those permits in BOTH your Workplan and Budget.

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 project work and to ensure the resource will be open for public use in perpetuity. Learn more about FPR's landowner permission requirement in "[All About Landowner Permission Forms: A Resource for Grant Applicants, Grantees, and Grant Project Partners.](#)"

First, the application asks about potential encumbrances that could impact the work location, including easements, deed restrictions, and rights of way. These restrictions could either positively or negatively influence recreation at your site – whether the project is occurring on land owned by the applicant or another entity.

If you do not already know this information, you must do some research! Potential questions include:

- Is the landowner already aware of any restrictions? Use this as a starting point – but this should be confirmed through further research.
- Was the property acquired with assistance from a nonprofit, such as VHCB, Vermont Land Trust, or the Nature Conservancy? These types of acquisitions frequently include easements or deed restrictions.
- Is there anything recorded in a deed, such as a restriction or right of way? Copies of deeds are generally available at the town clerk's office.
- For public land projects: is this project taking place within an existing [LWCF 6\(f\) boundary](#)? LWCF requires mandatory public recreation access and maintenance in perpetuity. Check the [list of previously funded LWCF projects](#) to see if there's a history of LWCF funding at this location.

If the applying organization owns 100% of the land in full (fee simple ownership) where work will occur, you will simply affirm that in the application. But if any portion of the work will occur on land owned by other entities – including easement holders – you **MUST** submit signed landowner permission documentation from all landowners in the application.

As this can be an extended process, **getting signed landowner 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 ensure 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 a minimum of:

- 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; for reroutes less than 50 feet; and for all previously completed flood recovery projects

- 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.)

Application Tip: Projects with 25 year terms require an easement, which the applicant must secure on their own. FPR's landowner permission forms are insufficient for securing permission for this period of time.

All landowner permission forms, including the [Class IV Road Permission Form](#), are located on the [RTP webpage](#).

Towns granting permission for other groups to complete projects on private land should sign the [Private Landowner Permission Form](#). For routine maintenance projects, FPR will also accept memorandums of agreement (MOA) or other contractual documents between the applying entity and the public landowner, so long as the MOA includes provisions that give the applicant permission for maintenance. However, not all MOAs include provisions for new construction or major renovation/repair work on existing trails (ex: replacing a bridge, using heavy equipment), so if your MOA does not fully address all project components, applicants should secure a separate signed landowner permission form.

If you have existing landowner permission documents **that include the same content and parameters as our templates** (ex: start and end dates for the period of permission that match the time requirements outlined above, printed name and signature of landowner, date signed), you are welcome to submit your custom landowner permission forms instead.

Other formats for landowner permission are commonly used for projects that occur on state and federal lands. As these properties are generally already guaranteed to be open to the public for more than the minimum required periods of time outlined above, often the manager of the public land writes a [letter of support](#) that also states the applying organization has permission to complete the proposed project.

If there is an easement on the property that clearly allows for the proposed recreation project, you can submit a copy of the easement documentation. However, if it is not clearly stated in the easement that allows for certain recreational activities or project activities, applicants should submit both a copy of the easement and a [letter of support](#) from the easement holder. Previous examples for RTP projects that need this additional letter have included easements that allow for recreation access but do not address whether or not new trail construction is allowed, easements that allow for general recreation use (ex: are mountain bikers allowed or just hikers?), and easements that are more focused on conservation with minimal mention of recreation.

Application Tip: Failure to provide written landowner permission where needed will result in an incomplete application that is not eligible for consideration in this grant round. You should submit permission for ALL the landowners of the parcels where project work will occur. Make sure the landowner names on your map(s) correctly match your submissions.

You will need to upload copies of all signed landowner permissions. Uploaded files need to be clearly titled using the following format:

- 2025_LandownerPermission_[Type of Permission]_[Name of Landowner]_[Name of Applicant Organization]

Example Landowner Permission File Names:

- 2025_Landowner_Permission_Easement_Jane Smith_ABC Town
- 2025_Landowner_Permission_Private Landowner_Ziek Smith_ABC Town
- 2025_Landowner_Permission_Public Land_Town of Anytown_ABC Nonprofit
- 2025_Landowner_Permission_Class IV Road_Town of Anytown_ABC Nonprofit

SECTION 3: Project Resilience and Sustainability

This is the section where the applicant will be prompted to share responses about how your proposed work now will provide public benefit for years to come. Listed below are the categories the questions fall into, and the possible number of points each RTP Ranking Committee member can give to each section.

Resilience: Well-Designed to Minimize Environmental Impact

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

Much of the damage we saw to trails and other recreation infrastructure during the 2023 flooding was because the trail was not designed to modern standards and/or the water crossing was not adequate for modern rain events. On the flip side, we saw that many of the trails and water crossings that had recently been updated or rehabilitated (following recommended trail standards) withstood the rain event without as much damage. In other words, we know what we need to do to make trails able to withstand lots of rain.

RTP funds should be used to build new trails and repair or maintain existing trails in ways that implement resilient strategies. This section is worth up to 30 points.

Climate Resilience Risk Form

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

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

You are required to submit the [Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) with the Full Application materials. If nothing has changed in the project design, you may submit the same form you submitted in the Pre-Application phase, but you may also adjust the answers based on feedback or updated designs. Review the [Guidance Document for Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form](#) for additional support related to this form.

If your project potentially includes multiple sections of locations, you may submit multiple copies of the form for each section. For projects with additional components/sections that will be done at a different time or with a different funding source, complete the Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form only for the segments/locations where RTP work will occur.

Use for the RTP Application

FPR staff will provide the completed Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form and the answers to the questions in the Full Application as part of the packet for review by the Ranking Committee. The Ranking Committee will use the answers to assess the resilience of the project. This will inform the points awarded to the applicant in resilience-related categories of the scoring rubric.

For the RTP program, up to 30 points (out of 120 total) are awarded for Resilience: Minimizing Environmental Impact and up to 30 points (out of 120 total) are awarded for Sustainability: Stewardship and Maintenance plan and design. The answers in the Recreation Project Climate Resilience Risk Form will help the Ranking Committee determine a score in both of these categories.

Example: If an applicant notes that there will be waterbars or culverts included in the project, applicants should describe how they will clean and maintain that infrastructure in their stewardship plan in the Full Application.

For the Pre-Application phase, we accepted “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 be able to answer all questions before the Full Application deadline. If it was not possible to answer a question, please be sure to explain why in the comments.

Submitting a project that has potentially higher climate resilience risks does not necessarily mean that the project will not be selected. Rather, for projects that have higher climate resilience risk factors, we expect the design and stewardship plans to directly address the identified climate risks for those projects to score well and that the overall application will describe why the project is important despite the risk.

Example: If a project includes a trail bridge over a waterway, we expect the bridge to be intentionally designed to withstand flooding events as well as accommodate the expected load. Ideally, an engineer, river scientist, or other professional with expertise in this area will have been consulted to confirm this. Furthermore, justification of why the crossing is necessary in order to provide important recreation opportunities to the public should be included in the application.

Application Tip: If FPR staff identified specific risk factors to address after the Pre-Application, we strongly recommend you incorporate that feedback into your full proposal.

Additional Resilience Questions

Applicants will be asked to select which recommended trail standards will be used in this project, so work is performed to high levels of sustainability, minimize environmental impact, and provide erosion control. Find and review FPR's Recommended Trail Standards on [FPR's Partners and Resources website](#). Please select only the resources you plan to use significantly during your planning process. We'd rather see you only use a limited number of resources well than see claims you're reviewing them all; all resources selected should be addressed in the follow-up question of the application.

Then, you will describe which elements from the standards you will use to ensure the outdoor recreation resources (trails, parking lots, kiosks, etc.) you are building or maintaining are resilient to extreme weather and high use.

You will also be asked to describe the potential impacts your project has on the natural environment and how you plan to mitigate those impacts in the DESIGN phase and then DURING THE CONSTRUCTION. Describe how you will reduce potential impacts to the surrounding environment including rare, threatened and endangered species, natural communities, wildlife, water resources, historic and cultural resources, neighboring properties and other land uses.

Design Examples: relocation of a trail to be over 200 feet from a mapped vernal pool, reconstruction of an eroded trail to reduce sediment loading in a stream or redesign of a water access area to move people away from a known population of rare plants, rerouting a trail to avoid a stone wall, designing a new trail to avoid multiple stream crossings, adding restrooms in high use areas to prevent water-quality impacts.

During Construction Examples: siting a staging area for equipment on previously disturbed areas like a parking lot or old log landing, using existing trails or roads to access the project site, setting up fencing to protect water resources from siltation during construction, filling in holes created by excavating rocks from project area, timing construction so it occurs outside of the bird breeding season, brushing in any trails or disturbance created during construction after the project is complete.

Sustainability: Ongoing Stewardship and Maintenance Plan

In this section, you will share how your project has been planned to promote future stewardship to ensure long-term accessibility with a demonstrated commitment to balancing natural resource protection with future recreational stewardship, management of trail access for trail users, and sustainability of the improved trail assets. This section is worth up to 30 points.

All trails require maintenance. Use this section to describe your plans to ensure future maintenance of the trail or trail system after the project is done. What types of maintenance work do you anticipate, how frequently and why? Who will be responsible for maintaining the trail? Describe any partners, if applicable, who will be part of these maintenance plans and any documented commitments they have made related to maintenance (e.g. written agreement, memorandum of understanding, co-signed land management plan). If any components in your proposed project will help reduce future maintenance, be sure to briefly describe that in this section - particularly if those components cost more. For example, if you are relocating a trail

with switchbacks and drainage dips rather than installing water bars with the intention of reducing future maintenance needs, be sure to name that.

Then, describe your plans for visitor user management. How will visitors learn about allowable trail activities, user responsibilities, safe trail use, resource protection, and respect for landowners and other trail users? How will you manage potential increases in use? What is your plan for handling user group conflicts if they arise? User group conflicts could include any instances where multiple groups might have potentially contradicting needs. For example, equestrians might need a greater turnaround radius in a trailhead parking lot, while weekend hikers are parallel parking in the middle of the parking lot during high-traffic days. Please describe your plans for identifying and mitigating any such conflicts.

Applicants are also encouraged to reach out to professional trail organizations and members of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council to learn more about trail sustainability: [Vermont Trails and Greenways Council \(vermonttgc.org\)](http://vermonttgc.org)

SECTION 4: Public Benefits and Support

This is the section where the applicant will be prompted to share how this project will impact and engage your community. Listed below are the categories the questions fall into, and the possible number of points each RTP Ranking Committee member can give to each section.

Public Recreation Benefits: Equitable Trail Access, Connectivity

In this section, you will share how your project is improving access, removing barriers, and finding ways to build and maintain trail(s) to a high level of accessibility based on the terrain and type of trail resource(s) being offered. This section is worth up to 30 points.

Once your project is completed, we want to know how people will learn about it. Share all the potential strategies you will use in order to inform and recruit people who live in or visit Vermont about your trail. Please note: your selection will inform the deliverables included in your grant agreement, so please only select the strategies you are committed to completing during the grant period.

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, members of the LGBTQ+ community, people in larger bodies, people with limited English proficiency, and populations with disabilities have often been 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. 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 facilitate equitable and just public access, trail use and development of recreational assets across Vermont.

Then, describe why this trail project is important to your community. Recognizing that there are trails that need work all over the state – and many times multiple trails within a single community that could use support– why should this one, in particular, receive RTP funding? Does this trail fill a critical gap, create linkages, or strengthen existing connections? If applicable, describe:

- Any information about past community use and support, such as trail counter data or the number of requests you've received from users.
- Any critical linkages to natural, scenic, historic and/or agricultural destination areas, parks, forests, recreation areas, schools, jobs, developed growth centers, designated downtown areas, trail systems, long-distance trails, or trail networks.

Local (Municipal) Support, Community Partnerships and Community Involvement

In this section, please share how planning this project has involved the local community. We want to hear about your project team, your public engagement efforts, how your project addresses local, regional and/or state plans. This section is worth up to 20 points.

In the application, you will describe your project team. You can share information for up to five individuals or groups (public or private) that will be significantly involved in the design and implementation of the project. The project team should fit the workplan. So, if you have critical project partners with other non-

profits, businesses, or municipal entities who will be essential to the success of this project, this is the space to describe their involvement. Alternatively, for a simple trail maintenance project, this could be as brief as describing that the staff trails manager at your organization will complete the scope of work with the VYCC providing labor.

If external partner organizations will be critically involved in implementing the work, we recommend securing letters of commitment. Unlike a letter of support, these letters confirm that your partners are aware of the planned work and are pledging their commitment to participate as described in the proposal. If you do NOT have external partners that will help implement the project, do not upload anything for this question.

We also want to know how the community has been involved in the planning of this project. Describe outreach efforts, public meetings, surveys or needs assessments done to support this project, and how the results of your community engagement have informed your planning process. Be sure to call out any specific results that are relevant to your project and how they shaped your plan.

Example: “Our town surveyed current users of our multi-use path using a QR code posted along the trail from May-August in 2022. 70% of survey respondents reported seeing improper disposal of pet waste in the past month. Our plan includes adding new signage and pet waste receptacles every quarter mile along the 1.5 miles of trail within walking distance of large neighborhoods. We have also included plans for our maintenance team to restock pet waste bags and empty the receptacles on a bi-weekly basis during the spring-fall and monthly basis in the winter to promote responsible stewardship.”

Explain how this project helps advance goals and objectives outlined in a local, regional and/or state plan, such as a town plan, town forest management plan, local or regional overarching plan for land, outdoor recreation, and trail management. At minimum, be sure to explain how your project address at least objective in one of the priority areas of [Vermont's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan \(SCORP\)](#).

Letters of Support

To complete this portion of the application the applicant will need to upload a minimum of 1 and a maximum of 3 letters of support that represent community support for the proposed project. Letters should describe how the proposed work reflects the community’s expressed recreational trail needs. Consider asking for letters of support from trail users, public, non-profit, and private sector entities.

Letters of Support	Letters of Commitment
Required. Minimum 1, maximum 3.	Optional. No minimum or maximum.
Gathered from community members and partners, focusing on the need for and importance of this project and/or the value of the trail.	Written only by partners who will have an active role in completing the project, as a confirmation of their participation.

Application Tip: If your project involves work on state lands, be sure to get a letter of support from the state project manager. So long as the letter includes both their support and a statement that they approve the work proposed in your application, the same letter can function as your landowner permission.

For projects related to [rail trails managed by VTrans](#) (ex: trailhead improvements or trail maintenance on the LVRT), be sure to include a letter of support from Jackie Cassino or other VTrans staff. If you already have a confirmed lease with VTrans, that should be uploaded as your landowner permission.

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

- 2025_Letter of Support_[Name of signee]_[Name of Applicant organization]
- 2025_Letter of Commitment_[Name of signee]_[Name of Applicant organization]

Example File Name: 2025_Letter of Support_Ziek Smith, Chair_ABC Planning Commission

SECTION 5: Compliance Information

This section will provide an overview and commitment related to state and federal compliance.

If selected, grantees will need to provide the following documents (do not submit these with your application – just consider them when answering the yes/no questions regarding compliance):

- **[Act 154 Certificate of Good Standing](#)**: This is for the applicant to certify that they are currently in “good standing” with the Agency of Natural Resources and the Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets pertaining to Vermont Water Quality Standards prior to receiving an award. This is a requirement for all state-issued grants with state funds.
- **[Vermont FPR State Risk Assessment Questionnaire](#)**: This is used to determine whether a potential grantee has sound financial management and if the grantee uses accounting systems that are adequate to meet the State of Vermont administrative requirements. The results of this risk assessment will inform the payment provisions in your grant agreement.
- **[W-9](#)**: A completed W-9 form must be physically signed and dated within the last 12 months of submission to grant staff. The State of Vermont will not accept digital signatures on a W-9. If you need assistance completing the form, contact your accountant or tax preparer.
- **Certificate of Insurance (COI)** – Grantee must demonstrate standard insurance coverage is in place before a grant agreement can be signed. Additional insurance may be required, depending on circumstances, but minimum requirements for coverage and documentation in a Certificate of Insurance are described in “[A Vendor Guide to FPR Agreements: Insurance Guidance](#).”

If the organization applying for this funding cannot meet the fiscal compliance requirements above, please consider an alternate fiscal sponsor for your project. If you are selected for a grant and cannot meet the fiscal compliance requirements, you will not be awarded a grant.

Application Tip: Do NOT submit these materials with your application. FPR staff will reach out and request these materials when necessary. In your application, you simply need to confirm whether or not your organization can comply with these requirements.

Procurement and Purchasing Provisions

In addition, if awarded, you will need to comply with your organization's procurement policies or use the [State's procurement and contracting procedures](#). You also must comply with the RTP grant agreement payment provisions (see [Sample 2024 RTP Grant Agreement](#)) about how you document your purchases for reimbursement. Backup documentation must be maintained, and depending on the provisions in your grant agreement, potentially submitted with each reimbursement request. Examples include copies of invoices, labor reports/forms, timesheets, or other acceptable timekeeping records. You do not need to provide any additional documentation at this time – in your application, you simply need to confirm whether or not your organization can comply with these requirements.

Federal Grant Compliance

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

National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

Many RTP projects will be classified by FHWA as categorically excluded from the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) pursuant to 40 CFR 1508.4 and 23 CFR 771.117. This means they meet criteria for a NEPA exclusion, which typically involves actions in the proposed project area that do not have a significant environmental impact. However, before any agreement is executed and before beginning any work, a project sponsor must still document compliance with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act, Federal Executive Orders related to federal wetlands, endangered species, clean water, clean air, and obtain all necessary state and local permits to satisfy the State's permitting processes.

Projects that fall under the four areas below are not exempt from NEPA and are subject to further environmental review, either at the federal or state level:

1. have a significant environmental impact
2. have substantial controversy on environmental grounds
3. have significant impact on properties protected by Section 4(f) of the Department of Transportation Act or Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act
4. are inconsistent with any federal, state, or local law, requirement, or administrative determination relating to the environmental aspects of the action

Such projects may not qualify for categorical exclusion and in most instances, are not good candidates for RTP funding.

Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act

If selected, your proposal will be submitted for review in compliance with [Section 106](#) of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (16 USC 470), which considers the effects of projects on historic properties and cultural resources. To complete the review, the State may require applicants to conduct additional archeological studies as necessary; this additional study is called an Archeological Resource Assessment (ARA). In addition, if the project involves impacts to a structure that is more than 50 years old, a review of the property may be required to determine if the structure is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. Learn more about the [Management of Historic Resources at FPR](#).

To complete Section 106 review, you may be required to complete an ARA for new trail construction projects and for when a project area is within a potentially archeologically sensitive area. If you know your project meets either of these known conditions, please be sure to incorporate an ARA into your budget and workplan prior to submission.

If you need an ARA for Section 106 archeology clearance, you will have two options for getting the ARA done:

- Option 1. You can wait to do the ARA until after FPR has received authorization of funds from the Federal Highway Administration. You do not need to wait until the grant agreement is signed. Costs for an ARA are the only eligible pre-agreement cost within the Vermont RTP Program. *FPR staff will work with you to add this to your scope of work and budget if it was not already planned. ARAs are an eligible expense for reimbursement.*
- Option 2. You can pay upfront for the ARA before FPR receives authorization of funds from the Federal Highway Administration and use those costs as pre-agreement match. You will not be able to be reimbursed for these costs if you start before FWHA authorization.

In order to expedite that initial review to determine whether or not your project might need an ARA, please:

- Categorize your activities by selecting the appropriate boxes in the workplan activities question. Please note: that list includes both workplan activities that could trigger a more in-depth review as well as ones that are potentially exempt – so checking all boxes relevant to your project simply helps us review your project more efficiently.
- Answer the question in Section 5 to provide additional information about whether your project will have a known impact on any human-built resources more than 50 years old. Examples of human-built resources include buildings, signs, kiosks, fences, markers, bridges, culverts, guardrails, bridges, boardwalks, dams, and other similar structures. If the trail itself is more than 50 years old and you will not be impacting any other types of human-made structures, please select no.
- Answer the question in Section 5 about whether or not your project will only take place within an existing disturbed area. Examples of previously disturbed areas include preexisting trails and trailheads, Class IV roads, old logging or farm roads, plowed farm fields, or developed parks and playgrounds. If **any part** of your project will disturb more than five feet outside of a previously disturbed area (including access routes or staging areas), select yes to this question – and then share a description.
- *If you answer yes to either of the questions in the Section 106 review section, please upload photos if available of the planned work site, access roads, and/or staging areas in “SECTION 6: Supplemental Information.”*

Endangered Species Act

For RTP projects, the most common potential impact on endangered species is removal of trees over four inches in diameter, which could specifically impact Northern Long-Eared Bats. Prior to grant agreement development, FPR staff will complete the online [Information for Planning and Consultation \(IPaC\)](#) tool from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to help with the federal environmental review process. Complete the required questions to provide the information we need to complete the Endangered Species Act Review.

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 of the trail or recreational resource,

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. You will be required to answer whether or not your project will meet accessibility standards, and if not, an explanation for why your project qualifies for an exception. For exceptions, 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.

SECTION 6: Supplemental Information

Use this section to upload any additional information that will be helpful for the evaluation of the proposed project. These materials should help the Ranking Committee better understand your project but will not be specifically used for any points in the review process.

Common examples of helpful supplementary materials:

- Copies of estimates referenced in your budget.
- Design plans, structural drawings, or example images of your intended design.
 - We ESPECIALLY recommend this if your project involves a bridge - because there are [bridges](#) and there are [bridges](#) on trails!
 - We also recommend plans or examples for signage components.
- For replacement and maintenance requests: photos of the sections of trail or assets that need work.

Recommendations for submitting supplemental files:

- Submit only file types that are accessible through commonly available software, such as .doc, .docx, .xls, .jpg, .png, and .pdf files. If you submit specialty file types, such as .heic (iPhone photo default format), .numbers or .pages files (Apple software), be aware that not all reviewers will be able to access your materials.
- You are only able to upload individual files, not zip folders.
- **Be sure to use descriptive file names so that it's obvious what type of information is in each file.**
 - Rename files with nondescriptive default names, like "IMG_4826" or random-looking combinations of letters and numbers prepopulated by a scanner.
 - If possible, include a year or date with your file name and the name of the applying entity

Example Supplemental Document File Names:

2025_Photos_Any Town
2025_Bridge Design_ABC Nonprofit
2025_Sign Concept_ABC Nonprofit
2024_Budget Estimates_Any Town

Application Tip: More supplemental information is not always better. Reviewers will access all your submitted application materials in a single folder, so try to combine similar supplemental items into a single file so that reviewers can find what they are looking for! For example, if you have multiple estimates to back up your budget estimates, combine them into one PDF with the estimates in the same order as your budget lines.

Please note, this section is truly supplemental! If you have already submitted everything the review committee needs to understand your project, there is no need to upload anything here.

Review and Submit

We know that the application is long and a lot of work, but please take the chance to review the application in detail. It will be much easier for you to add documents before submitting them than for us to ask for them later. Applications that are incomplete after the application deadline will not be considered.

Once you have double-checked your application, use this section to certify that the form is complete and accurate, and then submit the RTP Full Application form for grant program staff to review.

Be sure to save a copy of your responses in a separate document prior to submission.

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

After You Submit: Viewing or Revising Your Application

After you have submitted your application, you wish to review or download your submitted materials – or potentially revise your submission:

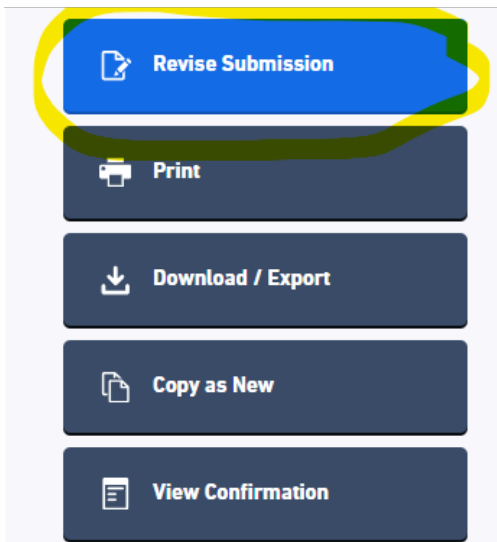
1. Go to <https://anonline.vermont.gov/>
2. Log into your account using the "Sign In" button on the right
3. Go to "My Submissions"
4. Select the proposal you'd like to edit by clicking the blue arrow next to where it says "Submitted"

11/22/2023 3:15 PM

SUBMITTED



5. Once you're in, you can review your submission by clicking the blue "View Form" button on the top right.
6. If you would like to make any changes, you should see a blue button on the right that says, "Revise Submission." **Once you click this button, your application will no longer be considered as submitted.**



7. You can make any desired edits and then you **must resubmit** by the deadline - 11:59 pm on January 31, 2025 – for your application to be considered.