

Recreational Trail Grant Program - 2020 Grant Round

Frequently asked questions

What are trail grants?

The Recreation Trails Grant Program is funded by the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration. In Rhode Island, the program is administered by the Department of Environmental Management in cooperation with the RI Department of Transportation. The goal of the program is to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities. More information about the Federal Highway Administration Recreational Trail Program can be found at:

https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/

Who can apply?

Eligible applicants include:

- Government agencies (state, local, and federal)
- Other governmental bodies created under State law (e.g. land trusts, watershed councils, public school districts, etc.)
- Federally recognized Native American tribes
- Not for profit organizations

What can the grants be used for?

The purpose of the program is to provide funding for recreational trail projects such as development of new trails, improvement or restoration of existing trails, and development of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages.

Ineligible activities (those not eligible for funding) include projects on trails not open to the general public, research and planning projects, and landscaping.

How do I apply for a grant? Application forms are available from the DEM Website:

<http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/planning/grants/index.php#grant2>.

Applications may be emailed to Gregg.cassidy@dem.ri.gov, or can be mailed or delivered to RI DEM, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908. Materials sent by mail or delivered to RIDEM must be in an envelope clearly marked "ATTN: Gregg Cassidy, P&D." Applications must be received prior to 3pm on Thursday, January 28th.

How will my application be evaluated?

The Rhode Island Trails Advisory Committee (TAC) will evaluate each application and will recommend funding for the highest scoring projects. The TAC seeks strong projects that:

- Construct off-road recreational trail connections
- Serve the diversity of Rhode Island residents
- Fill critical gaps in existing trail networks
- Have a detailed and reasonable budget and strong local match

- Are ready for implementation – environmental and permitting challenges have been identified and alternatives and solutions have been fully explored
- Respond to climate change impacts and employ resiliency methods to protect the resources
- Provide access for users of all fitness levels
- Provide access for users of all ages and abilities

A detailed listing of grant criteria can be accessed on the DEM website <http://www.dem.ri.gov/programs/planning/grants/index.php#grant2>.

What are eligible grant expenses? Allowable costs are those that are necessary for the safe and efficient completion of the project and that have been outlined in the grant application “scope of work” and approved by the Trail Advisory Committee.

Do I need wetland permits? It depends. If the project impacts a wetland or other area where regulations require a permit, then yes, a permit is required. A review of cultural resources and endangered species may also be required. It is the grantee’s responsibility to obtain all permits that may be required, and to meet all requirements of those permits.

Permitting can be a lengthy process. In order to ensure projects are completed within the grant period, it is important that the permit process be started as early as possible. Application materials should include a reasonable timetable for all elements of the project, including permitting.

Does the grant cover all project costs? The federal share of the grant is limited to up to eighty (80) percent of total (eligible) project costs; at least twenty (20) percent of the project cost must be contributed by the grantee or other qualifying sources. This can be cash match (payment of expenses) or donations of materials and services (including volunteer labor). Only expenses in the approved scope of work are eligible for reimbursement, up to a maximum of 80% of the eligible project costs, up to the grant award.

How do I document expenses? Grantees must follow the same policies and procedures used by state and local government. This includes obtaining quotes for purchases, invoices for materials and services, and submitting canceled checks or bank statements documenting payment. Volunteer match must be documented using sign in sheets listing the project, participants name, the task performed, as well as the number of hours worked.

How do I apply for reimbursement? When the project is complete, submit copies of quotes, invoices, and proof of payment (bank statements and/or canceled checks). Materials may be emailed to gregg.cassidy@dem.ri.gov or can be mailed or delivered to

RI DEM, Attention Gregg Cassidy, Division of Planning & Development, 235 Promenade St., Providence, RI 02908.

How long do I get to complete the project? The project must be complete within 18 months of project award. Keep in mind that no work on the project may begin until the grantee has received an authorized contract number.

Are any interim reports required? Grantees must file a progress report every 6 months. Progress reports for the period January through June will be due by the following July 31; progress reports for the period July through December will be due by the following January 31.