Recreational Trails Program

“RTP”

• Fixing America’s Surface Transportation Act
  (FAST Act)
Recreational Trails Program

• Federal-Aid Program
  o Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)
  o Administered by the New State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP)

• Develop and Maintain Recreational Trails and Trail-Related Facilities

• Motorized and Non-Motorized Uses
  • 30% Motorized
  • 30% Non-Motorized
  • 40% Diverse
Recreational Trails Program

• All Trails must be physically and legally accessible to the public
• Grant awards can fund up to 80% of Total Project Cost
• Applicant must provide at least 20% of the total project cost
• Reimbursement Program – eligible costs must be incurred and paid by the project sponsor before reimbursement.
• RTP funds are authorized in phases. Federal authorization is required for each phase.

1. Preliminary Design,
2. Final Design,
3. Right-of-Way,
4. Construction
Recreational Trails Program

• Applicants must have the necessary **legal property rights** before authorization for construction activities.
  • Right-of-Way Clearance Certificate

• The proposed project must further one or more goals of:
  ✓ **Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP)**
  ✓ **Statewide Trails Plan**
  ✓ **Empire State Trail Plan**
  ✓ **local trails plan**
RTP Funding Available

$1.9 million available for RTP projects

Maximum grant award $250,000

• Trails Projects
  – Minimum award $25,000

• Equipment Purchase Only
  – Minimum award $5,000
Eligible RTP Project Categories

1. Maintenance and Restoration of Existing Trails
2. Trailside, Trailhead Facilities, and Trail Linkages
3. Purchase & Lease of Trail Equipment
4. Construction of New Trails
5. Acquisition of Easements and Fee Simple Title to Property
6. Assessment of Trail Conditions for Accessibility and Maintenance
All Applicants Must Read:

The RTP Guide

An Overview of RTP Grant Procedures
from Application to Close-out.

https://parks.ny.gov/grants/recreational-trails/default.aspx
Eligible RTP Applicants

• Prequalified Not-for-Profit Corporations

• Municipalities

✓ All applicants must register

in the Grants Gateway at

https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/
Requirement for Not-for-Profit Applicants

Register

AND

Pre-Qualify

in the

Grants Gateway

Go to: Get Started section on the Grants Reform web site

https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov
Attach with Application

✓ Photos of project area and/or equipment
✓ Map of project area
✓ State Environmental Quality Review Act (SEQRA) Documentation
✓ Documentation of community support
✓ Documentation of Property Rights
Property Acquisition

All property acquisition *must* comply with the “Uniform Act”.

- **For Each Parcel To Be Acquired Provide:**
  - A copy of the letter delivered to each property owner
    
    *(Sample RTP Notice to Owner Letter in RTP Guide)*;
  - Evidence of the owner’s willingness and intent to sell, donate or transfer the property to the applicant;
  - Any additional documentation of the property acquisition.
For Purchase or Lease of Equipment Provide:

- Written estimate for the *general type* of equipment being purchased or leased;
- A signed statement from the Responsible Local Official that all landowner permissions have been obtained.

For motorized equipment to be used on State Land:

- A signed statement from the agency of jurisdiction certifying that the use of such equipment is consistent with the applicable policies and management plans.
RTP project budgets must include *only* eligible, necessary and reasonable costs.

- **Correspond to Phased Authorizations:**
  - Preliminary Design
  - Final Design
  - Right-of-Way
  - Construction

- **Clearly Outline:**
  - Total Project Cost
  - RTP Funds Requested
  - Matching Share
Eligible Expenses

• Design Fees & Professional Services
  • Including Construction Inspection and Supervision
• Archeology
• Workforce or Contract Labor
• Purchase & Lease of Equipment
• Supplies and Materials
• Acquisition of Real Property
  • Appraisal, Title Search, Closing Costs

Generally, any costs not directly attributable to the project ARE NOT eligible.
Reimbursement

• Successful applicants are reimbursed for up to 80 percent of their eligible expenditures.

• All grantees are expected to submit a payment request every six (6) months after the earliest date of Federal Authorization.

• All projects must be completed within five (5) years from the Federal Authorization date.
Please Be Prepared...

RTP Projects Require Federal Authorization BEFORE Construction

- Do not commence work, purchase equipment, or hire professionals before Federal Authorization
  - Work accomplished prior to Federal Authorization cannot be reimbursed by RTP

- The authorization process takes time – Grantees should be prepared to meet the requirements to obtain authorization
Required Approvals

• State and Federal Environmental review
  – SEQR & NEPA
  – Endangered Species
  – Wetlands, Floodplains
  – Historic Preservation
• Design Approval by FHWA
• Right-of-Way Clearance
• Civil Rights Requirements
  – DBE & EEO
• Buy America – steel and iron
Design Report

• Required before Federal Authorization of Construction
  o Must be submitted to OPRHP during Preliminary Design Phase

Includes:
• Project Description & Location
• All Environmental Reviews
  o SEQR & NEPA
• State Historic Preservation Office Review
• Design Standards and Plans
Preparing a Competitive Application

Visit parks.ny.gov/grants/.

1. Read the **Recreational Trails Program Guide**;

2. Work closely with the **Regional Grants Administrator** for your county as listed on the Grants Contact web page;

3. Provide **ALL** required documentation listed in the “**Application Requirements**.”
Preparing a Competitive Application

4. Demonstrate how project advances:
   - Statewide Trails Plan or Local Trail Plan
   - RTP Selection Criteria

5. Pay particular attention to the **Budget Questions**
   - Clearly identify RTP Share and Matching Share

6. Read the **Scoring Tips** for each question

Get Started Early

Application Deadline available at https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/

Do not wait until the deadline to work on your application. Start now!

Read all available guidance and prepare accordingly.

Good luck!
Contact Info

NYSOPRHPGrants@parks.ny.gov  (518) 474-0427

OPRHP Regional Grants Administrators

parks.ny.gov/grants/contact.aspx