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## Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Policy Brief

### Background

Under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Economic Development Administration (EDA) was allocated \$3 billion in additional funding, with the goal of aiding underserved communities in transformational investments and economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic. This is a one-time influx of money and is not expected to be renewed.

In this brief, we will focus specifically on the ***Travel, Tourism, and Outdoor Recreation*** funding category as it is the most relevant to IMBA's mission. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) was released in July 2021.

Your organization or community could be eligible for other funding opportunities under this ARPA allocation. EDA has published the following funding opportunities:

- [Economic Adjustment Assistance](#)
- [Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation](#)
- [Indigenous Communities](#)
- [Build Back Better Regional Challenge](#)
- [Statewide Planning, Research and Networks](#)
- [Good Jobs Challenge](#)

### Resource Allocation

Of the \$3 billion in appropriated funds, Congress directed \$750 million into two specific components of *Travel, Tourism and Outdoor Recreation* (1) State Tourism Grants and (2) Competitive Tourism Grants. These are to be provided to "States and communities that have suffered economic injury as a result of job and gross domestic product losses in the travel, tourism, or outdoor recreation sectors." Mountain bike trail communities that fit this description are eligible for the Competitive Tourism Grant program. Since each state has received significant resources under the State Tourism Grants, you may also find success in advocating for large portions going to trail development and trail maintenance. Your State natural resource officers and elected officials would be natural targets for outreach and advocacy.

### Competitive Tourism Grant Eligibility

- Special district governments
- Public and State controlled institutions of higher education
- State governments
- County governments

- City or township governments
- **Nonprofits having a 501(c)(3) status with the IRS, other than institutions of higher education**
- Private institutions of higher education
- Native American tribal governments (federally recognized)

### Grant Project Award Range

Estimated total Competitive Tourism Grant Program funding: \$240 million

Award Ceiling: \$10 million | Award Floor: \$100,000

For these Competitive Tourism Grants, EDA anticipates funding approximately 150 non-construction and construction projects that cost between approximately \$500,000 and \$10,000,000, although EDA will consider applications above and below these amounts.

### Timing

While there are no application submission deadlines for Competitive Tourism Grants, EDA encourages eligible applicants to submit their applications as soon as possible and **no later than January 31, 2022**. The EDA can then review and process the application in time to get a potential award in place prior to deadlines imposed by Congress.

### Types of Projects

EDA has determined that economic injury from the coronavirus pandemic constitutes a “Special Need,” and eligibility may be established on that basis without reference to the other economic distress criteria. EDA has further determined that due to the pervasive nature of the economic impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, any construction or non-construction project that would address those impacts by creating or retaining jobs, or increasing the economic diversity or resilience of a region, is eligible for funding. Through this program, EDA can support both the development of travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation pandemic recovery strategies and the implementation of recovery projects, including in communities adjacent to National Park Service units, State Parks, National Marine Sanctuaries, and other natural destinations.

This includes:

- Water and stormwater/wastewater improvements,
- Pier construction and improvements,
- New outdoor recreation and trail infrastructure and public access enhancements,
- Nature-based infrastructure projects to improve access to recreation,
- Cultural, arts, and tourism facilities (e.g. visitor or tourist information centers),
- Workforce training facilities and capacity building programs,
- Accessibility enhancements, and
- Country-wide or multi-state travel, tourism, or outdoor recreation promotion.

Note: Because state and local tourism promotion and marketing projects are eligible uses of funds under State Tourism Grants, such projects are not eligible under the EDA Competitive Tourism Grants component.

### Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions

- Does your project meet the requirements for EDA Outdoor Rec and Tourism funding?
- Does it fit within the cost parameters set by your state?
- Have you built relationships with key decision makers, and secured diverse support?
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?
- Ready to Apply? A list of grant application requirements begin at Section D, [page 14 of this NOFO document](#) and full program information can be found by reviewing [the NOFO](#)

[full document](#). For questions concerning this ARPA Tourism NOFO, or more information about EDA programs, you may contact the appropriate EDA representative listed in Section G on page 30 of [the NOFO document](#). Updated contact information can be found on [EDA's website](#).



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## Land and Water Conservation Fund Policy Brief

### Background

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) became law in 1965, made permanent in 2019, and received full and dedicated funding in 2020. The program was created to preserve outdoor recreation and ensure future generations have the opportunity to enjoy the outdoors, and is funded directly by profits from offshore oil and gas leasing. The fund consists of three parts: federal land acquisition, stateside assistance, and the forest legacy program.

*Federal Land Acquisition* - LWCF is the principal source of funding for the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), National Park Service (NPS), and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) to acquire land for recreational purposes.

*Stateside Assistance* - This is a matching grant program to assist the states in outdoor recreation planning, developing outdoor recreation infrastructure, and land acquisition. There are two types of grants under the stateside assistance program:

- traditional formula grants that take into account state populations, use of outdoor recreation by out of state residents, and existing federal resources within that state
- competitive grants called the Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership program that awards grants to areas that have a population of 50,000 + residents, underserved communities related to outdoor recreation, and communities that are economically disadvantaged. This is a 50:50 matching program and is managed by NPS.

*Forest Legacy Program* - Administered by the USFS this program is designed to assist private forest owners and states to maintain healthy working forests with a 75:25 matching grant to be used for permanent conservation easements and fee acquisitions. Through this structure, the FLP supports forest related jobs, sustainable forests, conservation, and access to outdoor recreation.

### Resource Allocation

LWCF became fully and permanently funded through legislation in 2020, providing \$900 million annually. The funds are divided between the three areas through the annual appropriations process and can differ from year to year, but generally it's split evenly between federal land acquisition and stateside assistance, with the forest legacy program appropriated a smaller amount. However, historically the Stateside program was scheduled to receive 60% of the

appropriated funds, but over time Congress has sought to give appropriators flexibility given concerns that states may not be able to obtain matching funds and that allocation has dropped to near 40%.

### **Eligibility**

LWCF requires each state to develop a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) (add link to our SCORP brief) that outlines opportunities and where those opportunities are most needed and a plan to reach those recreational goals. Only official governmental agencies are eligible to receive these funds, therefore its imperative mountain bike organizations work with their key decision makers in order to access these resources.

### **Grant Maximums**

LWCF grants have a limit on the amount that can be requested with the goal of identifying larger projects to ensure the biggest impact for outdoor recreation. The minimum request is \$100,000; the maximum request is \$750,000. As mentioned above the program requires a 50:50 match, and these matching funds can be a combination of both cash and in-kind contributions.

### **Timing**

Generally, LWCF grant applications are due towards the end of each year approximately late November. Applicants can expect a six to nine month timeline from application acceptance to notice to proceed.

### **Types of Projects**

Typically projects funded under the LWCF program are designated for outdoor recreation purposes rather than indoor recreation activities such as community centers, indoor rinks or stake parks. Historically the Stateside Assistance program hasn't directly funded many trail projects, but has been successfully used to develop the infrastructure that support trail networks such as parking areas, maintenance, and improvement of facilities. Below are a few examples of trail projects directly funded by the LWCF Stateside Assistance Program:

#### **Arkansas: [Upper Buffalo Headwaters](#) - IMBA EPIC**

→ Ozark-St. Francis NFs - \$13,226,000

#### **Nevada: [Bangtail Divide](#) - IMBA EPIC**

→ Gallatin NF/GYE - \$125,450,000

#### **Wisconsin: [Rock Lake](#) - IMBA EPIC**

→ Chequamegon-Nicolet NF - \$38,936,000

#### **Tennessee**

→ [Big South Fork NRR](#) IMBA EPIC- \$5.2 M

#### **Utah: [Park City Epic](#) - IMBA EPIC**

→ Uinta-Wasatch-Cache NF - \$2,700,000

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Have you organized with other mountain bike advocates or other trail organizations in your state?
- Have you built relationships with key decision makers in the state?
  - ◆ Office of Outdoor Recreation
  - ◆ Department of Natural Resources,
  - ◆ State and local elected officials, and

◆ State and local land managers

- Have you engaged in the SCORP process?
- Are you working with the SCORP Advisory Committee?
- Does your project meet the requirements for LWCF resources? Does it fit within the cost parameters of the Stateside Assistance Program?
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?



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## National Forest Foundation (NFF) Grant Fund Policy Brief

### Background

Chartered by Congress in 1991, the NFF funds National Forest conservation efforts while promoting responsible recreation through its grants program. The NFF has goals set on significant growth in the coming years which bodes well for mountain bike groups near National Forest lands.

### Resource Allocation

The NFF is funded in a multitude of ways, through Congressional appropriated funds, [corporate partnership support](#), and small individual donations and foundation support. In 2020, the NFF invested \$2.3M in Grants and Awards for conservation and recreation projects. In total, the NFF issued 212 grants or contracts in 2020. According to their [FY2020 financial report](#), NFF invested \$10.2M in federal and private funds, which were leveraged with \$9.5M in partner-raised funds for a total conservation value of \$19.73M.

Relevant NFF Grant Program:

- Matching Awards Program (MAP)
  - Awards federal funds from the USFS to USFS lands
  - Focused on integrated projects that are action-oriented site specific work, and have tangible benefits to forest health, outdoor experiences, and stewardship.
  - Emphasis is boots-on-the-ground and outcomes within one year.
  - Funds trail and recreation, restoration, and maintenance along with projects that include volunteers, youth/veteran engagement, and diversity, equity and inclusion.
  - Does NOT fund programs of work, planning, inventories, signage or other hardened facilities, capacity or public meetings.

### Eligibility

The NFF awards MAP grants (including fiscal sponsorships) to eligible 501c3 organizations, colleges and universities, and native american tribal nations. Applicants must have a high degree of engagement in one or more of the elements of the project: pre-implementation, project implementation, or post-implementation. NFF requires that applicants physically possess

a 1:1 Cash Match (NFF supports up to 50% of cash budget) that will be concurrently used for the grant project. MAP budget can include overhead costs for matches. Match cannot be in-kind or federal matching funds. However, in-kind or federal matching funds can serve as leverage project funding in the application and budget to make the grant application more competitive.

### **Grant Project Award Range**

The grant award range is subject to change but examples have been between \$5,000-\$65,000.

### **Timing**

Awarded MAP grants must have work completed in one (1) year and start roughly two months after the application deadline.

Key dates for 2022.

- **December 3, 2021:** Informational Webinar on MAP at **10:30 a.m. MST** [[Register Here](#)]
- January 12, 2022: Deadline for Round 1 MAP Applications
- June 22, 2022: Deadline for Round 2 MAP Applications

### **Types of Projects**

#### **MAP Grant:**

Before applicants can apply for a NFF MAP Grant, all permitting and environmental compliance work (including but not limited to NEPA) must be complete.

### **2021 Examples**

- **Rico Trails Alliance-** Circle Trail  
To improve a newly-designated non-motorized trail that will serve as a mountain biking connection between the town of Rico, CO and the Black Hawk section of the Colorado Trail. San Juan National Forest | CO <http://ricotrail alliance.org>
- **Idaho Trails Association-** South Fork Salmon River and French Creek areas  
To reopen fire-impacted non-motorized trails in the South Fork Salmon River and French Creek areas. Payette National Forest | ID <http://www.idahotrail sassociation.org>

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Does your USFS project meet the requirements for an NFF Grant? Does it have a final NEPA supporting document? Does your project have local USFS approval and a support letter?
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?
- Ready to apply:
  - ◆ Download the [2022 Request for Proposals](#)
  - ◆ Contact Kerry Morse, Conservation Awards Manager for current RFP.
  - ◆ Phone: 406.830.3358 Email: [kmorse@nationalforests.org](mailto:kmorse@nationalforests.org)
- [List of Past MAP Awards](#)
- [MAP Application Tips](#) (Appendix to the RFP)
- [Guidance on NFF Budget Forms](#) (Appendix to the RFP)



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## **National Forest System Trails Stewardship (NFSTS) Grants Fund Policy Brief**

### **Background**

This Forest Service program is a product of the National Forest System Trails Stewardship Act that passed Congress in 2016. The funding remains discretionary as a commitment to the program by the USFS. Funding and availability varies each year.

### **Resource Allocation**

The program is funded by dedicated but fluctuating USFS dollars and is managed by the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance. The program is a collaboration between IMBA, American Hiking Society, American Trails, Back Country Horsemen of America, National Off-Highway Vehicle Conservation Council, and the American Motorcyclist Association, each participating in the project rating and selection process. In 2021, there was \$550,000 available in funding. In recent years, anywhere between \$100,000-\$290,000 has been awarded to bike trails across national forests from this program. Typical costs that can be reimbursed include salary and fringe benefits for crews and staff, supplies and equipment, transportation reimbursement, contract costs for specialized equipment or skills, materials, volunteer food, and training. Organizations are allowed to include up to 10% indirect costs in their proposals.

### **Eligibility**

Grants are available to any trail and stewardship non-profit organization recognized by the IRS. Efforts are made to ensure funding is allocated to all nine USFS regions each cycle. More information can be found [here](#). A secondary objective of the Trail Stewardship Funding program is to encourage an increase in the number and hours of volunteer labor on trails in the National Forests. High volunteer numbers tend to score better but are not required.

### **Grant Project Award Range**

In 2021, the program awarded approximately \$550,000 in total grants to 48 projects ranging from \$2,000 - \$20,000 each. The program requires either a non-federal cash or in-kind match of at least 1:1 ratio but tends to score better with greater than 100% match combinations.

### **Timing**

Grants are awarded through an annual spring competitive application process. Trail work is usually performed during the Summer/Fall Field Season (May - December) of the same year.

### **Types of Projects**

Work can be performed on motorized or non-motorized trails, both inside and outside of wilderness. The program offers necessary funding to improve trail maintenance and reduce the deferred maintenance backlog on the National Forest System Trails. Typical costs that can be reimbursed include salary and fringe benefits for crews and staff, supplies and equipment, transportation, contract costs for specialized equipment or skills, materials, volunteer food, and training. Organizations are allowed to include up to 10% indirect costs in their proposals. See below for 2021 examples of funded projects. In 2021, a total of \$289,125 was used to maintain and repair over 1200 miles of mountain bike and multi-use trails with the aid of 2691 volunteers. Below are a few examples of trail projects directly funded by the NFSTS Grants Program:

**New Mexico:** [Enchanted Circle Trails Association](#) - Lost Lake Trail

→ National Forest, Taos, New Mexico - \$8000

**Idaho:** [Wood River Bicycle Coalition](#)/National Forest Fdn. - Adams Gulch Adaptive Trail

→ Sawtooth National Forest - \$13,700

**Colorado:** [Headwaters Trails Alliance](#)- Grand County Trails

→ Arapaho National Forest - \$20,000

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Does your USFS project meet the requirements for NFSTS Grants? Does it fit within the cost parameters?
- Have you organized with other mountain bike advocates or other trail organizations in your state for this project to improve your potential scoring?
- Does your project have local USFS approval and support?
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?
- Ready to apply:
  - ◆ [NFSTS Grant Application information](#)
  - ◆ [Grant application budget form](#)
  - ◆ [Grant fact sheet](#)
  - ◆ [Grant application](#)
  - ◆ [More information on the grant](#)



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## Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant Fund Policy Brief

### **Background**

Congress established the ORLP in 2014 as a competitive grant fund to invest in close-to-home outdoor recreation opportunities in underserved communities. The ORLP, which is funded by the LWCF State and Local Assistance Program, is a complementary grant program to the State-side formula LWCF grants program. It enables urban communities to create parks and outdoor recreation spaces and connect people to the outdoors. ORLP awards grants directly to cities and municipalities. This fund is administered by each state.

### **Resource Allocation**

Projects must have matching funds and partners and require a 1:1 ratio match with non-Federal funds. Priority given to projects located in economically disadvantaged communities and areas lacking outdoor recreation opportunities. Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

### **Grant Project Award Range**

Grants for project proposals range in size from \$250,000 to \$750,000, and planning grants can be up to \$75,000. The grant is open to state and local government agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes.

### **Eligibility**

To be eligible, a jurisdiction must have a population of at least 50,000 people and be located within an Urbanized Area as designated from the 2010 Census. The grant is open to state and local government agencies and federally recognized Indian tribes. ORLP is the only federal program focused exclusively on supporting parks and outdoor recreation opportunities in urban environments. Projects must have matching funds and partners. The matching fund requirement is a minimum 1:1 ratio with non-Federal funds. Matching funds may be derived from state, local, non-governmental or private sources in the form of cash or in-kind contributions.

“While cities like Los Angeles, New York and Chicago certainly meet ORLP’s definition of “urban area,” so do cities like Dubuque, Iowa. To check to see if your city qualifies, visit the [Census Bureau's list](#) or learn more about the definition on the [Census Bureau's website](#).” - [www.nrpa.org](http://www.nrpa.org)

### **Timing**

The pre-applications will be submitted through the State lead agencies for LWCF. Please [contact your state lead agency](#) for more information on their process to select proposals to submit for the national competition.

### **Types of Projects**

Past ORLP Grants Awarded

<b>State</b>	<b>Project Title</b>	<b>Federal Amount</b>
Alaska	Development of Muldoon Town Square Park	\$750,000
California	Bay View Park Playground Improvement Project	\$375,225
California	Bay Point Wetland Restoration and Public Access Project	\$750,000
Connecticut	Renovation of Colt Park Athletic Fields	\$750,000
Delaware	Father Tucker Park Playground and Spray Pad	\$306,447
Georgia	Enota Park Development	\$600,000
Iowa	Comiskey Park Development	\$508,000
Maryland	Youth Campground Improvements in Gwynns Falls Leakin Park	\$750,000
Michigan	Belle Isle Park Multi-Use Looped Trail Development	\$750,000
Minnesota	Lincoln Park Restoration	\$750,000
Missouri	Clary-Shy Park Urban Demonstration Farm	\$400,000
Missouri	Sparta Court Soccer Fields	\$450,000
New Jersey	North Camden Waterfront Park	\$750,000
New Jersey	Jesse Allen Park	\$750,000
North Carolina	Central Plaza John Chavis Memorial Park Revitalization	\$747,600
Ohio	Manhattan Marsh park Development	\$475,000
Texas	Edward Rendon Sr Metro Park – further development	\$750,000
Texas	Buffalo Bend Hidalgo Park Greenway	\$750,000
Vermont	New Neighborhood Park on Burlington's Waterfront Land Acquisition	\$500,000
Washington	Skyway Park Revitalization	\$369,626
Washington	Swan Creek Park Trail Network	\$750,000
Wisconsin	Burnham Park Redevelopment Project	\$399,255

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Does your community meet the urban requirements for ORLP Grants? Does the potential project fit within the cost parameters?
- Does your project fit within a larger project scope and/or is this something your city prioritizes?
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?



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## Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund Policy Brief

### Background

As part of the Great American Outdoors Act (GAOA), the Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund was created to rectify the maintenance backlog due to years of budget shortfalls within our public lands agencies. Those agencies impacted include:

- Bureau of Indian Affairs
- Bureau of Land Management
- US Fish and Wildlife Service
- National Park Service
- US Forest Service

### Resource Allocation

GAOA set aside nearly \$10 billion over a five-year period allocating the following for each agency:

- 70% to the National Park Service
- 15% to the US Forest Service
- 5% to the US Fish and Wildlife Service
- 5% to the Bureau of Indian Affairs
- 5% to the Bureau of Land Management

For fiscal year 2021, the Department of the Interior approved 165 projects at a cost of \$1.6 billion. For 2022 they approved just 63 projects with an undermined cost as the budget approval has been delayed.

### Eligibility

With the program designed to address the maintenance backlogs of the federal land management agencies, no other entities are eligible for these monies. However, by working with federal land managers locally, organizations can suggest priority projects that have been long overdue for trail maintenance.

### Timing

The allocation of resources is based on the federal government's fiscal year which begins on October 1st. However, agencies use maintenance backlogs to begin exploring and choosing projects well in advance.

### **Types of Projects**

These projects are specifically targeted towards maintenance backlog. An example would be a trail system that has been in desperate need of water mitigation, re-routes, or permanent trail structures such as bridges. Not all projects submitted to the Department of the Interior will be approved each fiscal year. While a project may get “rejected” one year it may be approved the next.

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Do you have projects on federal lands in need of maintenance?
- Have you connected with your local federal land manager about maintenance issues?
- If you have a project, is it on their list of priorities?
- Understand the specific timeline on submission of projects.
- Do you have partners for a particular project, and if so, encourage them to also connect with the local federal land manager.
- Communicate the timeline of the maintenance need, is it immediate or can it be delayed until the next fiscal year?



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## Recreation Economy for Rural Communities

**Background** The Recreation Economy for Rural Communities (RERC) assistance program is managed by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is designed to help rural communities by providing a planning team for outdoor recreation projects. It is not a grant program and communities will not receive funds from the EPA. Planning teams will bring the community together along with other stakeholders to work on a strategic planning process with a goal of growing the outdoor recreation economy.

**Resource Allocation** Resources are in the form of planning teams to assist the community in developing strategies that improve and enhance the outdoor recreation economy.

### **Eligibility**

- Local Governments
- Indian Tribes
- Not for Profit Organizations
- Community Organizations
- Special consideration will be given to
  - ◆ Small towns and rural communities
  - ◆ Underserved communities
  - ◆ Economically disadvantaged communities
  - ◆ Communities along the northern borders of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York

**Timing** Application due dates vary, however they tend to be at the end of the calendar year in late November or December. For 2021 the date is November 22nd. Application form can be found [here](#).

**Selection Criteria** To ensure your application is a strong candidate for approval, consider the following criteria when applying for assistance. Full description of selection criteria can be found on the [EPA website](#).

- Need
- Capacity

- Goals
- Fit of Program
- Partnerships

#### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- What is the project's geographic scope?
- What is the demographic profile?
- What outdoor recreation assets can you build upon?
- What economic development challenges face the community?
- What challenges face Main Street revitalization?
- What programs currently exist focused on outdoor recreation?
- What strategies and opportunities will you build upon?
- Are you considering community workshops to accomplish your goal?
- Has your community encouraged participation from marginalized residents?
- Have you identified diverse partners to serve on a steering committee?



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## Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Fund Policy Brief

### Background

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) was established as an excise tax on gas of 18.4% through the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) that non-highway recreational users pay at the gas pump to develop and maintain outdoor recreational trails. Currently the maximum is set at \$84 million per year. The minimum match varies and is set by each state. The program has been in existence since 1991 and has funded over 25,000 projects benefiting both non-motorized and motorized users. Introduced legislation would expand the program from \$84 million to more than \$250 million.

### Resource Allocation

Each state receives funds apportioned by statutory formula and administers its program through a state parks or natural resource agency. Each state (Connecticut's Governor opted out) has a State Recreational Trail Advisory Committee to assist with the program and administer funds. RTP is currently funded at \$84M per year. However, legislation introduced in 2021 would increase the program to \$250M annually. Each state receives and allocates its portion of RTP money through a grant process

- 30% of funds are to be spent on motorized recreation;
- 30% are to be spent on non-motorized recreation.
- 40% shall be used for projects that facilitate diverse recreational trail use within a recreational trail corridor, trailside or trailhead for either motorized or non-motorized.

RTP is a reimbursement grant program. The grant sponsor (applicant) makes payments and requests for reimbursement afterward. RTP will reimburse up to 80% of the total project cost. Applicant's 20% match can be contributed in the form of cash or approved in-kind donations.

### Eligibility

The RTP provides funds to States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for motorized and non-motorized use. States administer and award grants based on state priorities in a competitive grant process. Grants are available to municipal, county, State, Tribal, or Federal government agencies and in many cases private non-profit organizations. Projects may be on public or private land with written assurances of public access. Volunteer labor is an approved part of any grant application. Volunteer labor can be billed at the approved hourly rate.

### Grant Project Award Range

The range of grants vary by state ([visit RTP for your state's details](#))  
Here is a Colorado non-motorized grants example.

- **Trail Construction Grant (up to \$250,000)**
  - For new trail or trailhead construction – New trail or trailhead construction, including the installation or creation of new facilities where none currently exists.
- **Trail Maintenance Grant (up to \$250,000)**
  - Maintenance, re-route or reconstruction of existing Trails – Enhancement or improvement of current trails to address resource damage or visitor safety concerns.
  - Enhancements or upgrades to existing trailheads – Improvement of current trailhead facilities.
- **Planning or Support Grant (up to \$45,000)**
  - Planning - Trail layout, design, engineering, feasibility studies, inventory, use studies, analysis of existing and proposed trails and master plans.
  - Support – Building and enhancement of volunteer organizations, increasing volunteer capacity, and implementing trail training and education.

### **Timing**

Grant process schedules vary widely ([visit RTP for your state's details](#))

### **Types of Projects**

Since 1991, more than 25,000 RTP-funded projects have been documented nationwide with details available on the [RTP database](#). Eligible projects include:

- Trail maintenance and restoration
- Trail, trailside, trailhead development and rehabilitation
- Construction and maintenance equipment purchase and/or lease
- New trail construction (with land manager approval)
- Land access acquisition
- Trail assessments (conditions, accessibility, maintenance)
- Educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection
- No more than 7% for state administrative costs related to this program

Below are a few examples of trail projects directly funded by the RTP Grants Fund:

**Colorado:** [Salida Mountain Trails](#) - Solstice DH Trail

→ BLM Royal Gorge Field Office - \$50,000 in RTP Funds

**Oregon:** [Whiskey Run Mountain Biking Trail](#) - 10 miles funded

→ Bandon, Oregon - \$214,618 in RTP Funds

**Maryland:** [ADI Connector Trail](#) and [Turnpike Trail Bridge](#)

→ Garrett County, MD - \$76,562 in RTP Funds

\*Other projects can be researched on the RTP State Profile page [here](#):

### **Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Does your project meet the requirements for RTP resources? Does it fit within the cost parameters set by your state?
- Have you organized with other mountain bike advocates or other trail organizations in your state to increase your chances of success?

- Have you engaged in the SCORP process? Are you working with the SCORP Advisory Committee?
- Have you built relationships with key decision makers in the state
- Do you have leads on matching funds required by the grant program?
- Ready to Apply? Grant Applications and information can be found by [visiting your state's RTP details](#)



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## **Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) NPS Program Policy Brief**

### **Background**

Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) is a nationwide program that has helped advance outdoor recreation and conservation since 1988. The RTCA program extends and expands the benefits of the National Park Service throughout the nation to connect all Americans to their parks, trails, rivers, and other special places. The program provides planning and technical assistance, through NPS-RTCA staff time, for projects led by non-profits, local communities, national parks and other land management agencies.

### **Resource Allocation**

While RTCA does not provide funding for projects, they do help project partners identify sources of financial assistance. The RTCA program provides a National Park Service employee to help organize, strategize, build public participation, and help implement a conservation and/or recreation project that is important to your community. The RTCA program works with project partners and is heavily involved in supporting and assisting project leads to help achieve short and long term success.

- RTCA expertise includes landscape architects, planners, outdoor recreation specialist, graphic designers, community engagement specialist and conservationist.
- RTCA has assisted over 6,000 communities – from rural Alaska to the Bronx.
- RTCA has helped local partners conserve more than 19,000 miles of river corridor, develop nearly 32,000 miles of trail, and protect almost 1 million acres of park land, wildlife habitat, and open space.
- RTCA-assisted projects provide an estimated 60 million residents with local access to parks and outdoor recreation.

### **Eligibility**

RTCA supports community groups, non-profits, and local, state, tribal federal government agencies with community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects. RTCA work takes place outside National Parks but they also partner with NPS units on gateway community related projects. Federal agencies must have a local partner in order to apply. RTCA Contact for your State can be found at: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/contactus.htm>

This unique program has the following basic requirements:

- An application form (available online) that lists a project contact, goals, and the projected role for NPS
- A site location map
- At least 3 commitment letters from partners working on the project. These should, if possible, also reference partner contributions being brought to the project and the level of public support
- Information that will help to better understand the project - background documents, examples of media coverage, additional support letters, maps, links to resources, project photos, etc.

### **Grant Project Award Range**

No monetary grants are made. Instead, in addition to staff time and expert guidance, RTCA can help project partners identify sources of financial assistance.

### **Timing**

The application process takes place each year. Projects are competitively scored.

- Oct - Feb – Call for Applications
- Oct - Feb – Recommended period for contact with RTCA staff
- March 1 – Applications Due
- April - May – Project Selection announced
- April - May – Project Assistance begins

### **Types of Projects**

When a community asks for assistance with a project through the RTCA application, National Park Service staff provide free, on-location facilitation and planning expertise. RTCA draws from project experiences across the country and adapts best practices to a community's specific needs to help:

- Define project vision and goals
- Inventory and map community resources
- Identify and analyze key issues and opportunities
- Engage collaborative partners and stakeholders
- Design community outreach and participation strategies
- Develop concept plans for trails, parks, and natural areas
- Set priorities and build consensus
- Identify funding sources
- Develop a sustainable organizational framework to support the project

Below are a few examples of trail projects directly supported by the RTCA Program:

**New Mexico:** East Mountain Regional Trails Council – East Mtn. Trails

- **Albuquerque, NM** – Connecting NF and BLM to local open space via interconnecting trails.

**California:** Mariposa County Planning Department – Merced River Trail

- **Mariposa, Bagby, El Portal, CA** – Establishing nearly 40 miles of multi-use trail to connect Bagby to Yosemite N.P.

**North Carolina:** Kings Mountain Gateway Trails

- **Kings Mountain, NC** – Provide connection between City of Kings Mountain, Kings Mountain National Military Park, Overmountain Victory Trail, and 2 state parks

**Arkansas:** University of Arkansas

- **Hot Springs, AR** – Connect community of Hot Springs with Hot Springs N.P. via multi-use bike trails.

**Key Actions/Questions for Trail Champions**

- Does your project need planning, capacity, or meet other requirements qualifying for RTCA support such as specific project goals and desired outcomes, featuring well-defined roles and contributions for all partners with a clearly-stated and relevant RTCA role?
- Have you organized with other mountain bike advocates or other trail organizations in your state for this project to improve your potential?
- Does your project have broad community support?
- Ready to apply: Application is available at: <https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/apply.htm>