

BUREAU OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

Title: Trails Development Grant- Administrative Instructions and Process		
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Approved By: Tom Ford, Bureau Director	Program Area: Trails	

AUTHORITY

Act 18 of 1995, Section 306, Community Recreation and Heritage Conservation. The Department shall have the power to administer Federal and State programs for grants and loans to local governments, municipal authorities and nonprofit organizations for community and regional projects involving the planning, acquisition, rehabilitation and development of public park, recreation and conservation areas, facilities and programs.

SCOPE

Provides directive for administration of the Community Conservation Partnerships Grant Program.

PURPOSE

The following is an overview of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR), Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (Bureau) grant process for implementing trail development projects. The term “Grantee” refers to an applicant that has been awarded a grant.

Note: For projects funded by the PA Recreational Trails federal funding program, reference the PA Recreational Trails Grant Administrative Instructions and Process Policy.

POLICY

A. Grant Administration Roles and Responsibilities

1. Local Project Coordinator (LPC)

A LPC is designated by the Grantee and serves as the official contact person for grant administration. All official correspondence will be sent to the LPC. If the LPC changes during the project, the Grantee must provide the assigned Bureau Project Manager with written notification of the change, including the name, title, address, email, and daytime telephone number of the new LPC. If the new LPC does not have a Grants Portal Account, they will need to register as a new user. Click [here](#) for instructions.

2. Bureau Project Manager

A Bureau Project manager is the assigned DCNR staff member serving as the Project Manager to work with the Grantee to successfully complete the grant project. The Project Manager will provide information and technical assistance to the LPC to ensure that the project is completed, that grant program requirements are met, and that the project can be successfully closed out. All correspondence and communications regarding the project should be directed to the Bureau Project Manager.

B. Grant Administration Process

It is the Bureau’s intent to provide each Grantee with as much assistance as needed, on a step-by-step basis, to ensure a successful project. The project will be managed through the [DCNR Grants Customer Service](#)

[Portal](#) (Grants Portal). The grant management process is outlined in the Grants Portal Project Checklist and Project Resources and consists of a series of Grantee submissions and Bureau approvals. The standard process for implementing trail development grant is as follows.

Note: For projects where PennDOT is controlling the design and bidding through their Electronic Construction Management System (ECMS), the Bureau will accept PennDOT's approvals and assurances to satisfy several of our grant management requirements. Those requirements will be addressed in the Grants Portal Checklist.

1. DCNR Award and Pre-Contracting

- a) DCNR sends "Notice-of-Selection" correspondence to the LPC and Chief Elected Official listed in the grant application.
- b) Bureau Project Manager conducts a pre-contracting call with the Grantee to confirm the designated LPC, match, project scope, grant agreement dates, ownership and/or control, and next steps in the grant process.
- c) DCNR emails a copy of the fully executed Grant Agreement to the Grantee signifying the beginning of the project management process. The Grant Agreement will also be available on the Grants Portal under the "Project Resources-Agreements, Amendments and Payments".

2. Project Start-up Correspondence and Initial Conference Call

Note: May run concurrently with the DCNR- Contracting.

- a) The Bureau Project Manager generates a checklist in the Grants Portal and sends project start-up correspondence to the Grantee outlining the initial phase of the grant management process and project requirements. The correspondence will also be available on the Grants Portal under "Project Resources – Correspondence".
- b) Upon receipt and review of the correspondence, the Grantee is to contact the Bureau Project Manager to schedule an initial conference call, to include the LPC and design consultant (if possible). During this conference call, the Grants Portal and project issues will be discussed.
- c) Grantee is instructed to review the Grant Agreement, correspondence and access the Grants Portal prior to scheduling a project start-up call with the Bureau Project Manager.
- d) Bureau Project Manager conducts a conference call or in-person meeting with the Grantee LPC and Design Consultant to review the Grant Agreement, Project Checklist, and Grants Portal.
- e) After the grant agreement is fully executed, Grantees are strongly encouraged to request a Partial Payment of 50% of the Grant Award through the Grants Portal Payments link.
- f) At this time, Grantees should have obtained a design consultant. LPCs must provide the design consultant's contact information to the Bureau Project Manager, including name, title, company, email, phone number and address.
- g) Throughout the life of the project, the LPC will receive an email on a regular basis requesting a Progress Report. Progress reports will all be submitted through the Grants Portal.

3. Initial Submission Review and Approval

- a) After the initial conference call is completed, the LPC, in conjunction with the design consultant, prepares and uploads the documents outlined in the Project Checklist under "Approval to Proceed," "Preliminary Drafts" and "Final Drafts."
- b) The Bureau Project Manager will review submissions and either approve or request revisions.
- c) The Grantee shall not proceed with bidding and procurement until the Bureau Project Manager reviews the design submissions and provides written authorization to advertise and bid the project.

4. Advertising and Bidding

- a) After the Grantee receives written authorization from the Bureau Project Manager to advertise and bid the project, the Grantee is responsible for advertising and bidding the project.
- b) Grantees are required to use an open and competitive bidding process. See [DCNR-Competitive Bidding Policy](#) for the standards that must be followed.

5. Awarding of Construction/Materials Contracts and Bureau Approval of Costs

- a) After the Grantee, design consultant and solicitor/attorney have reviewed the bid results for compliance with bid requirements and applicable laws and regulations it is expected that the award of the construction/materials contract(s) be made to the lowest qualified responsible bidder(s). If any issues are identified with the bids received, this should be discussed with the Bureau Project Manager prior to the grantee awarding a bid.
- b) The Grantee uploads the documents outlined in the Project Checklist under “Post-Bid Submission.”
- c) The Bureau Project Manager provides written approval of costs and authorization to proceed with construction to the Grantee. The Grantee can now begin construction on the project.
- d) The Grantee uploads an executed construction/materials contract to the Project Checklist under “Post-Bid Submission.”
- e) The Grantee must seek prior written approval from the Bureau Project Manager for any changes to the approved project scope of work, budget, and/or timeline.
- f) The Bureau strongly encourages the Grantee to request a Partial Payment, via the Grants Portal Payments link for up to 90% of the awarded grant amount. A minimum of 10% of the awarded grant amount will be retained for final payment.

6. Final Site Inspection

- a) Upon completion of project construction and posting of the DCNR funding acknowledgement sign, Grantee contacts Bureau Regional Advisor to schedule the final site inspection.
- b) Bureau Regional Advisor inspects the project for satisfactory completion of the Grant Agreement scope of work and takes photos.
- c) Bureau Regional Advisor sends Finals Site Inspection Report and correspondence to Grantee and uploads to RACERS. If remediation is required, comments are provided in the correspondence. Remediation must be completed in consultation with the Bureau Project Manager. A satisfactory inspection is required for final payment and project closeout. The correspondence will also be available on the Grants Portal under “Project Resources – Correspondence”.

7. Final Payment Request

- a) Per Article XII of the Grant Agreement, Grantee must submit the DCNR Final Payment Request and associated closeout documentation within 60 days of either completion of the project activities or the end date of the Grant Agreement, whichever occurs first.
- b) Grantee requests a Final Payment through the Grants Portal Payments link and uploads required close-out documents as outlined on the Grants Portal Project Checklist.

8. Final Payment Approval and Project Closeout

- a) Bureau Project Manager reviews and approves the Final Payment Request and associated closeout documentation and sends the Grantee a Final Payment and Project Closeout correspondence outlining the final eligible project costs, approved final payment, and post-completion requirements of the Grant Agreement. The correspondence will also be available on the Grants Portal under “Project Resources – Correspondence”.

- b) Final Payment by check/ACH will be processed within 6-8 weeks of Bureau Project Manager approval.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

A. Grant Payments

[See the Payment Request Processing Policy.](#)

B. Interest Income and Refund Grant Funds

All grant funds must be managed in accordance with the terms and conditions set forth in the grant agreement. Please consult your grant agreement and the Payment Request Processing Policy for specific instructions on depositing and managing grant funds.

C. Project Changes/Grant Agreement Amendments

If there is a need to modify the scope of work, contract timeframe, budget, etc., during the grant project, the Bureau Project Manager will advise the Grantee of the process for requesting an amendment.

D. Record Keeping

It is the responsibility of the Grantee to maintain all original records related to the project for a period of three (3) years from the date of the final payment and made available for a possible program audit. Any costs presented in the summary information, not verifiable by an audit, may be considered an ineligible project cost.

It is important that the Grantee maintain records of all types of approved cash and non-cash costs throughout the grant management process. The following information should be documented for In-House Staff, Donated Professional Services, and Volunteer Services: Name of Person Performing Work, Day and Date of Work, Description of Work Performed, Hours Worked, Hourly Rate, and Total Value of Work Performed.

For all projects, this will include:

- All project-related invoices and records of payment.

Additional documentation may include:

- Original payroll and accounting records relative to In-House Professional Services.
- Activity logs and time sheets relative to Donated Professional and Volunteer Services.
- Signed letters from firms, groups, or persons providing donated professional and/or volunteer services describing the type and amount (i.e. hours and rates) of services provided.

E. DCNR Funding Acknowledgment

In accordance with the grant agreement, a permanent funding acknowledgment sign or plaque must be installed and maintained at the project site identifying funding assistance from the DCNR Community Conservation Partnerships Program. The sign must be shown on the drawings and comply with the standard design as outlined in the "[Sign Policy](#)" unless local ordinances or local sign design standards require it differently. Proposed changes must be pre-approved by the DCNR Project Manager.

DISCLAIMER

The policies and procedures outlined in this guidance document are intended to supplement existing requirements. The policies and procedures herein are not an adjudication or a regulation. There is no intent on

the part of DCNR to give the rules in these policies that weight or deference. This document establishes the framework within which DCNR will exercise its administrative discretion in the future.

PAGE LENGTH

5 pages

EFFECTIVE DATE

Immediately. This policy is to be reviewed and updated every year.

EXPIRATION

This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.

Tom Ford, Bureau Director

12/14/2023

Name/Title of Bureau or Office Director

Date