

## BUREAU OF RECREATION AND CONSERVATION

<b>Title:</b> Acquisition Grant- Administrative Instructions and Process		
<b>Issued by:</b> Bureau of Recreation and Conservation	<b>Effective Date:</b> 12/9/2009 <b>Scheduled Review:</b> Annual	<b>Document Number:</b> 2300-004
<b>Reviewed:</b> 12/14/23	<b>Revised:</b> 11/29/11; 7/1/2014; 7/16/15; 9/22/17; 7/24/19; 11/24/20, 6/01/22	
<b>Approved By:</b> Tom Ford, Bureau Director	<b>Program Area:</b> All	

### 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 acquisition projects. The term “Grantee” refers to a grant applicant that has been awarded a grant.

### 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 on all matters related to the administration of the grant project. 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. It is the Bureau Project Manager’s responsibility to provide information and assistance to the Grantee 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 an acquisition grant is as follows:

### **1. DCNR Award and Pre-Contracting Stage**

- 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, and next steps in the grant process.
- c) If a waiver for retroactivity has been approved, the contract start date should reflect the date of the waiver.
- d) 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. Introduction & Grant Administration**

*Note: This stage may be concurrent with the DCNR- Contracting Stage.*

- a) Grantee is introduced to the Grants Portal for project management; and a Project Checklist is generated in the Grants Portal by the Bureau Project Manager. The Project Checklist outlines the required documentation expected to be uploaded by the grantee at various stages of the project management process.
- b) Grantee is strongly encouraged to request a Partial Payment of 50% of the Grant Award through the Grants Portal Payments link upon receipt the fully executed Grant Agreement.
- c) Bureau Project Manager sends project start-up correspondence to the Grantee outlining the grant management process and project requirements. The correspondence will also be available on the Grants Portal under "Project Resources – Correspondence".

### **3. Initial Conference Call or In-Person Meeting**

- a) The Bureau Project Manager conducts an initial one-on-one meeting or conference call with the LPC to discuss the project.
- b) The initial project meeting may be waived depending upon the Grantee's prior experience with the C2P2 Grant Program and the Bureau Project Manager's understanding of the project.

*Note: If a Waiver for Retroactivity was received or the project is in advanced stages with DCNR knowledge of the project, then this stage will include approval to proceed to closing.*

### **4. Review of Draft Documents/ Approval to Proceed to Settlement**

- a) Upon DCNR review and approval of the draft deed or easement, agreement of sale, survey, title commitment report and appraisal reports, the Bureau Project Manager will give approval to proceed with acquisition of the property or easement.
- b) This stage is important to help ensure that no restrictive covenants or conditions that conflict with the grant are included in the deed or easement and that the appropriate "DCNR" non-conversion language is included in the deed or easement.

- c) When settlement has been scheduled a grant payment up to 90% of the eligible grant amount may be requested by the Grantee through the Grants Portal Payments link.
- d) 10% of the grant amount is withheld in the event of an under run and to ensure all items requested have been submitted.

## **5. Final Payment Approval and Project Closeout**

- a) Once the required documents have been uploaded into the Grants Portal and are reviewed and approved by the Bureau Project Manager, the Grantee may proceed with project closeout.
  - 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.
  - Final Costs Spreadsheet uploaded into the Grants Portal Checklist and final payment request made in the Grants Portal Payments link. Final Payment by ACH will be processed within 6-8 weeks of Bureau Project Manager approval.
- b) Bureau Project Manager reviews and approves the Final Costs Spreadsheet 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.

## **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. Waiver for Retroactivity**

See the [Waiver of Retroactivity Policy](#)

### **D. 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.

### **E. Project Specific Grant**

1. The Grant awarded is for the project as described in the grant application. Funds awarded are non-transferable if an under run occurs (i.e. acreage less per survey, market value is less based on two appraisals, etc.) or the project is terminated for reasons beyond Grantee's control (i.e. owner decides not to sell, owner sold to another party, etc.). If the scope of work cannot be completed, the Grantee will notify the Bureau Project Manager in writing as soon as possible after the details are confirmed and return all initial and/or partial payments to include interest if applicable. The returned funds need to be by check payable to the Commonwealth of

Pennsylvania. Any interest earned must be returned in a separate check, payable to Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

2. If the scope of work cannot be completed the Bureau cannot help to fund any associated costs incurred for this project.

#### **F. Record Keeping**

1. It is the responsibility of the Grantee to maintain original records that support and validate the summary information provided to the Bureau.
2. In accordance with the grant agreement, all original records related to the project shall be made available for a possible project audit for up to 3 years after the close out of the project. Any costs presented in the summary information not verifiable by a project audit may be disallowed as eligible project cost.
3. Because the DCNR deed restriction on the property or the conservation easement is perpetual, it is recommended that project records be maintained by the Grantee permanently.

#### **G. DCNR Funding Acknowledgement**

In accordance with the grant agreement, once the property or easement has been acquired the Grantee must erect an appropriate sign acknowledging that it is a public site provided by the Grantee with financial assistance from the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. The sign shall also acknowledge the funding source. See Appendix A of the grant agreement for the funding source of the grant. Refer to the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation's "[Sign Policy](#)" for further instructions and examples.

#### **H. Transfer of Property**

The Bureau must approve all property transfers in writing. If the property or easement is to be transferred to another party at the time of settlement or shortly thereafter, it is the LPC's responsibility to ensure the Bureau has approved the transfer in writing before the settlement occurs.

#### **I. Conversion of Use**

Any change in use or ownership whether whole or in part would require written approval from the Bureau of Recreation and Conservation. Go to our Policy on "[Conversion of Property Interests Acquired or Developed with State Funding](#)" for further guidance.

[Acquisition forms, guidance documents, and policies](#) may be obtained from the DCNR website.

#### **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

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Name/Title of Bureau or Office Director

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Date