DCNR Grant Round 28 Special Fall Round
Fall 2022

Frequently Asked Questions

NOTE: This document will be updated regularly as additional questions and/or information become available. Click a question from the list below to jump to its answer.

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General Grant Round Info

1. When does the special fall round open and close?

The special fall round opens Tuesday, September 6, 2022 and closes at 4:00 PM on Thursday, October 27, 2022.

Applicants are advised that due to the fall round's shortened review time, there will be no supplemental document window after the application period closes. All grant materials <u>must</u> be received by DCNR by the application closing time. No late materials will be accepted.

2. What funding is available for the special fall round, and what is its funding source?

The funds available are the result of decisions made as part of the Commonwealth Fiscal Year '22-'23 budget. Approximately $38 million is available for grants. Approximately $25 million of that total comes from the federal American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA).

A wide variety of information regarding this act can be found using the acronyms "ARPA" or "SLFRF," which stands for State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. See the "ARPA FAQ's" section below for more details about use of ARPA/SLFRF funds. For the purpose of this document, the acronyms ARPA and SLFRF are interchangeable.

3. Who is eligible to apply?

Counties, municipalities, councils of governments, conservation districts, and most non-profit organizations are eligible. Non-profit organizations must be registered with the IRS as 501(c)3 organizations and be registered with the Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations.

4. How do I apply?

Applications must be submitted electronically through [DCNR's Grants Customer Service Portal](). All applicants are encouraged to contact their [DCNR regional advisor]() before applying. They provide advice and can assist you in developing a competitive grant application.

5. When do funds need to be obligated and expended?

All ARPA funds must be obligated by the recipient government by December 31, 2024 and expended by December 31, 2026. Grants with funding sources other than ARPA will generally have a grant contract period of 3-4 years.

6. What kinds of projects can be funded?

Eligible project types largely mirror those for DCNR's [Community Conservation Partnerships Program grants](#), which typically have a spring application period. These project types include:

- Recreation and conservation planning
- Park rehabilitation and development
- Small community development
- Land acquisition and conservation
- Trails and greenways
- Rivers conservation
- Community and watershed forestry practices including riparian buffers, TreeVitalize, tree planting, and lawn conversion
- State and regional partnerships

7. What is the minimum grant request/award DCNR will consider?

ARPA restricts grant award amounts to $50,000 - $5,000,000. DCNR requires that the minimum grant request for park development, trail development, and Small Community development projects be $100,000.

8. What are the match requirements?

- 20% of total project cost for small communities (municipalities with populations less than 5,000) with no cap on project size
- 20% of total project cost for partnerships and heritage projects
- 20% of total project cost for community and watershed forestry projects (riparian buffers, TreeVitalize, tree planting, and lawn conversion)

For all the above, both cash and non-cash match are acceptable.

Match percentage is calculated based on total project cost, which is the sum of grant request and match. For example, a project requesting $100,000 in grants would need to show $25,000 in match (20% of the total project cost of $125,000).

For all other project types, match is 50% of total project cost (dollar-for-dollar). Match can be cash or non-cash per normal Community Conservation Partnerships Program requirements. Refer to the [eligible/ineligible costs policy](#) for your desired project type for more information.

All match must be secured at the time of application. Most local and private funds can be used as match, as can some state funds. In most cases, locally-received ARPA funds will also be eligible as match. However, this grant cannot be used as the "non-federal" match to other federal grants.

Technical Questions

1. What are the priorities for funding?

Priorities vary by project type:

- **Community Parks and Recreation –** projects that rehab existing parks and those that improve access for all
- **Land Acquisition and Conservation** – acquiring tracts of land that provide habitat corridors, connect to existing protected lands, or protect headwater streams
- **Trails –** closing listed [Priority Trail Gaps](#)
- **Community and Watershed Forestry** – community and watershed forestry practices that help with clean water and climate resilience including:
  - Riparian buffers
  - Tree planting
  - TreeVitalize
  - Lawn conversion
- **State and Regional Partnerships –** Heritage Area projects that are for:
  - Direct implementation of a Heritage Area Management Action Plan, Strategic Plan, or Interpretive Plan
  - Creation of a new or updated Heritage Area Interpretive Plan where needed
  - Small or mid-size development projects to enhance a Heritage Area (maximum grant request: $100,000)

The special fall round is also an ideal time to apply for small community grants—those for municipalities with fewer than 5,000 people. Unique to this funding round, these projects will require only 20% match with no caps on project size.

2. What is the review schedule? When will I know if I've received funding?

It is anticipated that applications will all be reviewed and scored by Thanksgiving. Recommendations will be developed and vetted within DCNR by the end of 2022 with a target announcement in early- to mid-January 2023.

3. Are there any special restrictions or requirements on the use of ARPA funding from the special fall round?

Yes. Please see the "ARPA FAQ's" section below for more information.

4. Will there be future special fall funding rounds?

This fall funding round was made possible due to a one-time allocation from ARPA funds. At this time, DCNR does <u>not</u> anticipate future special fall funding rounds.

5. Will there still be DCNR's normal spring funding round next year?

Yes. DCNR's standard, annual Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) grants are expected to continue with their traditional spring application rounds. The next C2P2 application round will open on Tuesday, January 17, 2023 and close at 4:00 PM on Wednesday, April 5, 2023.

6. I applied for a C2P2 project last spring. Should I reapply for this fall round?

Applicants who received funding from the spring round should <u>not</u> reapply for the same project in the fall round, unless the application is for a separate phase of the work. Applicants whose projects were not selected in the spring round may reapply for the fall round for the same project.

7. I want to apply for a snowmobile or ATV project. Should I apply for this special fall round?

No. Snowmobile and ATV project applications should be submitted as part of the normal fall round of funding for ATV and Snowmobile grants. The [fall ATV and Snowmobile grant round](#) is open through Friday, September 30, 2022.

8. Can funding from this grant round be used in concert with federal Pennsylvania Recreational Trails (PRT) or Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) funding?

No. DCNR will not award ARPA funds in this special round to match existing open PRT or LWCF grants.

9. Can a small community apply for other project types with the reduced 20% match?

Yes. For this fall round only, municipalities with populations less than 5,000 people are eligible for the 20% match for development, trails, planning, and acquisition projects.

Getting Additional Help

1. What resources are available to guide me through the application process?

DCNR has several resources to help you prepare a competitive application:

- Your [regional advisor](#) is your first and best resource. Be sure to contact them before applying. Regional advisors can visit your project site, provide advice, and assist you in developing a more competitive application.
- Application videos and other written resources are available on [DCNR's Grants Customer Service Portal](#). Click on "Grant Opportunities," then "More Info" for the program you want to apply for.

2. Will there be a grant workshop for the fall round?

There will <u>not</u> be a standalone grant workshop for the fall round. However, a video specific to the fall round is in development and will be posted on DCNR's YouTube channel when it is finished.

A virtual workshop is planned for Community and Watershed Forestry Practices portion of the fall round. That workshop is scheduled for Tuesday, September 13 at 10:00 AM. Pre-registration is not required. [Click this link to join the webinar](#).

DCNR's usual grant workshop to prepare applicants for the spring funding round will occur as scheduled. That workshop will occur on Thursday, November 3, 2022. You can [register for the workshop here](#).

3. Who do I contact to explore application possibilities and get help?

Your [regional advisor](#) is your first and best resource. Be sure to contact them before applying. Regional advisors can visit your project site, provide advice, and assist you in developing a more competitive application.

4. How can I stay up to date on the fall funding round?

The best way to stay up to date on the fall funding round and all DCNR grant opportunities is to [sign up for the department's *DCNR Grants News* e-newsletter](#). This e-news is published twice a month and includes content on application deadlines, award announcements, educational opportunities, featured projects, and more.

pennsylvania
DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION AND NATURAL RESOURCES

ARPA FAQ's

DISCLAIMER: DCNR has done its best to develop these FAQ's based on documents from the U.S. Treasury Department. These documents are excerpted and linked throughout these FAQ's. However, this FAQ should <u>not</u> be construed as legal advice. If you have questions about ARPA funding, please direct them to your organization's solicitor or counsel.

1. **Are investments in improving outdoor spaces (e.g., parks) an eligible use of funds as a response to the public health emergency and/or its negative economic impacts?**

Yes. See FAQ 2.22 in the U.S. Treasury Department's Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions. See also pages 12 and 30 of the U.S Treasury Department's Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Overview of the Final Rule.

In summary from the overview, the Commonwealth (recipient) has "broad flexibility to (1) identify and respond to other pandemic impacts and (2) serve other populations that experienced pandemic impacts, beyond the enumerated uses and presumed eligible populations. Recipients can also identify groups or 'classes' of beneficiaries that experienced pandemic impacts and provide services to those classes."

2. **What category of uses of ARPA/SLFRF funding provides eligibility for the Commonwealth and grantees for outdoor recreation and other potential projects?**

There are four broad categories of eligible uses. Grants that will be awarded that use ARPA/SLFRF funds fall into the category of:

- **"Respond to the far-reaching public health and negative economic impacts of the pandemic**, by supporting the health of communities, and helping households, small businesses, impacted industries, nonprofits, and the public sector recover from economic impacts." (Source: ["Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds"](#))

The specific category DCNR's grant funding is using is Expenditure Category 2.35 – Negative Economic Impacts – Aid to Tourism, Travel, or Hospitality.

3. Can non-profit or private organizations receive ARPA/SLFRF funds? If so, how?

Yes. See FAQ 1.8 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

"…the final rule clarified that recipients may transfer funds to any entity to carry out, as a subrecipient, an eligible activity on behalf of the SLFRF recipient (transferor), as long as they comply with the SLFRF Award Terms and Conditions and other applicable requirements."

4. Do Davis-Bacon and NEPA requirements apply to ARPA/SLFRF funds?

No. See FAQ 2.21 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*. Also see FAQ's 6.3 and 6.15. FAQ 2.21 is excerpted below:

"Recipients should note that the Davis-Bacon Act requirements (prevailing wage rates) do not apply to projects funded solely with award funds from the SLFRF program, except for certain SLFRF-funded construction projects undertaken by the District of Columbia. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) does not apply to Treasury's administration of the SLFRF program, although projects supported with SLFRF funds may still be subject to NEPA review if they are also funded by other federal financial assistance programs."

Davis-Bacon Act requirements <u>do</u> apply if the project has funding from federal sources besides SLFRF, or if the project will exceed $10 million in capital/infrastructure expenditures.

5. May recipients fund a project with both ARPA funds and other sources of funding (e.g., blending, braiding, or other pairing funding sources), including in conjunction with financing provided through a debt issuance?

Generally, yes, provided the costs are eligible costs under each source program and are compliant with all other related statutory and regulatory requirements and policies, including restrictions on use of funds. The recipient must comply with applicable reporting requirements for all sources of funds supporting the SLFRF projects.

However, these grants may <u>not</u> be used as the non-federal match for other federal funds or programs.

For more information, see FAQ 4.4 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*.

6. **Do "Yellow Book" appraisal standards apply to land acquisition projects funded through this grant?**

No. However, DCNR's typical appraisal requirements for land acquisition grants do apply. 42 U.S.C.A § 4655 requires that a state agency acquiring real property with federal financial assistance provide satisfactory assurances that they will be guided, to the greatest extent practicable under State law, by the land acquisition policies of the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisitions Act of 1970 (42 USC §§ 4601-4655). This Act provides, unless an exception/waiver applies, that real property shall be appraised before the initiation of negotiations. However, the regulations attached to the act note that "Agencies may have appraisal requirements that supplement these requirements, including, to the extent appropriate, the United States Appraisal Standards for Federal Land Acquisition [UASFLA.]"

7. **Do the Buy America Preference requirements for infrastructure projects apply to awards made under the SLFRF program?**

No. See FAQ 6.18 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

"Awards made under the SLFRF program are not subject to the Buy America Preference requirements set forth in section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. 117-58. 6.19."

8. **Do the Buy America Preference requirements for infrastructure projects apply to SLFRF-funded projects if they are supplemented with funding from other federal financial assistance programs?**

Possibly, depending on the funding source. See FAQ 6.19 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

"Infrastructure projects funded solely with SLFRF award funds are not subject to the Buy America Preference requirements set forth in section 70914 of the Build America, Buy America Act included in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. 117-58. SLFRF recipients may be otherwise subject to the Buy America Preference requirements when SLFRF award funds are used on an infrastructure project in conjunction with funds from other federal programs that require compliance with the Buy America Preference requirements. Recipients are advised to consult with the other federal agencies administering federal financial assistance that is being blended or braided with SLFRF funds regarding the applicability of the Buy America Preference requirements."

9. Does Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) apply to projects funded with SLFRF funds?

No. See FAQ 6.20 in the U.S. Treasury Department's _Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions_, excerpted below:

"Section 106 of the NHPA does not apply to Treasury's administration of SLFRF funds, including funds expended under the revenue loss, public health and negative economic impacts, and water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure eligible use categories. Projects supported with payments from the funds may still be subject to Section 106 of the NHPA if they involve participation from other federal agencies, including funding from other federal financial assistance programs, or are subject to receipt of approvals from other federal agencies."

10. What are the reporting requirements if we are awarded ARPA/SLFRF funds?

Grantees will be responsible for ensuring DCNR has the information needed to fill out the "subawardBulkUpload.xlsx" and "subRecipientBulkUpload.xlsx" spreadsheets posted on the commonwealth's Office of the Budget website.

Grantees must also register with SAM.gov and receive a Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number. A UEI number is necessary to report data on ARPA projects to the U.S. Treasury.

The federal General Services Administration has posted two YouTube videos on how to register with SAM.gov and how to get a UEI.

11. Can recovery funds be used to cover staff costs? What about admin costs?

Staff costs are eligible as long as the time spent is integral to the project. For example, staff time to manage volunteer tree planters in a riparian buffer project would be considered eligible. Staff time unrelated to the project cannot be funded. Admin costs may be eligible subject to limits set by each grant project type. For more detailed information on staff time and admin cost limits and requirements, see your grant project type's eligible/ineligible costs policy.

12. What provisions of the federal Uniform Guidance for grants apply to these funds? Will the Single Audit requirements apply?

See FAQ 13.1 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

"Most of the provisions of the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR Part 200) apply to this program, including the Cost Principles and Single Audit Act requirements. Recipients should refer to the Assistance Listing for detail on the specific provisions of the Uniform Guidance that do not apply to this program. The Assistance Listing will be available at https://sam.gov/fal/7cecfdef62dc42729a3fdcd449bd62b8/view.

For information related to Single Audit requirements specifically, please refer to the Compliance Supplement materials released by the Office of Management and Budget."

13. Do federal procurement requirements apply to SLFRF?

Yes. See FAQ 13.2 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

"The procurement standards for federal financial assistance are located in the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards at 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327 and apply to procurements using SLFRF funds…. Under the SLFRF program, recipients are required to follow the procurement standards set out in 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance) pursuant to the SLFRF Award Terms and Conditions executed by the recipients in connection with their SLFRF awards."

14. What is the threshold for competitive bidding?

In most cases competitive bidding will be required. As stated in the previous FAQ, recipients are required to comply with the procurement standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.317 through 2 CFR 200.327 of the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (Uniform Guidance). See FAQ 13.3 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions* and the references therein for specific requirements. It is best to review this information carefully.

15. Where can one find the most current information on assuring minority-owned businesses are included in the awards process?

See FAQ 13.5 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

 "The most up-to-date information on assuring that minority-owned businesses are included in the procurement process is located in 2 CFR 200.321, Contracting with small and minority businesses, women's business enterprises, and labor surplus area firms."

16. Is there certain language that needs to be included in a bidding package?

See FAQ 13.6 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, excerpted below:

 "Treasury does not require that there be specific language included in bidding packages, but SLFRF recipients must ensure all contracts made with SLFRF award funds contain the applicable contract provisions listed in 2 CFR Part 200, Appendix II."

17. How is a "contract" different from a "subaward?"

According to FAQ 13.10 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, grantees are considered subrecipients. From FAQ 13.10:

"The Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards in 2 CFR Part 200 (Uniform Guidance) provides definitions for "contract" and "subaward." A contract is a legal instrument by which a recipient or subrecipient purchases property or services needed to carry out the project or program under a federal award. A subaward is distinct from a contract in that a subaward is an award provided by a recipient of a federal award to a subrecipient to carry out part of a federal award on behalf of the recipient. Recipients may make subawards through any form of legal agreement, including an agreement that the recipient considers a contract. See 2 CFR 200.331 for more information on the differences between contracts and subawards."

18. Are DCNR grantees considered recipients, contractors, subrecipients, or beneficiaries for ARPA?

Most DCNR grantees from this special fall round would be considered "subrecipients" under ARPA.

A subrecipient is an entity that receives a subaward to carry out a project funded by Fiscal Recovery Funds on behalf of a recipient. The distinction between a subrecipient and a beneficiary comes from why a recipient is providing funds to the individual or entity. If the recipient is providing funds to the individual or entity for the purpose of carrying out a SLFRF program or project on behalf of the recipient, the individual or entity is acting as a subrecipient.

The terms and conditions of federal awards flow down to subawards to subrecipients, requiring subrecipients to comply with all requirements of recipients such as the treatment of eligible uses of funds, procurement, and reporting requirements.

Acting as a subrecipient, the individual or entity is subject to subrecipient monitoring and reporting requirements. SLFRF transaction reporting is required for contractors and subrecipients who receive $50,000 or more.

19. What compliance and reporting requirements apply to subrecipients and beneficiaries?

According to FAQ 13.13 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*:

"As detailed in Treasury's Compliance and Reporting Guidance (pg. 11), subrecipients are required to comply with all of the restrictions applicable to recipients, including audit requirements under the Single Audit Act,…when recipients provide award funds to an entity to carry out a program in response to the public health emergency or its negative economic impacts, the entities receiving such funding are subrecipients. Treasury requires recipients to report detailed information in the Treasury reporting portal as part of the Project and Expenditure Report regarding subrecipients that receive subawards of $50,000 or more. Requirements for this reporting can be found in the Compliance and Reporting Guidance (pg. 21)."

20. What are the use and disposition requirements for assets purchased with SLFRF funds?

According to FAQ 13.16 in the U.S. Treasury Department's *Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions*, SLFRF funds may be used to acquire real and personal property, supplies, and equipment. See excerpt below:

"Except for property, supplies, or equipment acquired using revenue loss funds, recipients must follow the applicable provisions of the Uniform Guidance regarding property standards (2 CFR 200.310-316), subject to the requirements set out in this FAQ.

During the period of performance, a recipient may use property, supplies, or equipment purchased or improved with SLFRF funds for a purpose other than the purpose for which it was purchased or improved if such other purpose is also consistent with the eligible use requirements. If a recipient changes the use of an asset to an ineligible use or sells the asset prior to the end of the period of performance, then the recipient must follow the disposition procedures in the Uniform Guidance. See 2 CFR 200.311, 200.313, 200.314, and 200.315.

After the period of performance, the property, supplies, or equipment must be used consistent with the purpose for which it was purchased or improved or for any other eligible purpose in the same category as the purpose reported to Treasury as of the final reporting period, as set forth in the table below."

Category	Use Requirements
Public Health and Assistance to Households and Individuals	Property, supplies, or equipment last reported as being used to respond to the public health impacts of the public health emergency, as outlined in 31 CFR 35.6(b)(3)(i), or being used for the provision of services to households provided in 31 CFR 35.6(b)(3)(ii)(A), are authorized to fulfill any eligible use of funds provided in these subparagraphs of the Final Rule.
Assistance to Small Businesses, Nonprofits, and Impacted Industries	Property, supplies, or equipment last reported as being used for the provision of services to small businesses, nonprofits, and impacted industries outlined in 31 CFR 35.6(b)(3)(ii)(B)-(D) are authorized to fulfill any eligible use of funds outlined in the public health and negative economic impacts eligible use category.
Water, Sewer, or Broadband Infrastructure	Property, supplies, or equipment last reported as being used to make investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure pursuant to 31 CFR 35.6(e) are authorized to fulfill any eligible use of funds outlined in the water, sewer, and broadband infrastructure eligible use category.
Government Services/Revenue Loss	Property, supplies, or equipment acquired with revenue loss funds are exempt from the use and disposition requirements of the Uniform Guidance, regardless of award size.
Premium Pay	N/A

"If an asset's use shifts within the parameters of the eligible purpose according to this table after the period of performance, no repayment would be required. For example, converting a hospital to a behavioral health facility would qualify as being used for the eligible purpose because both expenditures respond to the public health impacts of the public health emergency, as outlined in 31 CFR 35.6(b)(3)(i), so reimbursement to Treasury would be unnecessary."

21. Where can I get more information on ARPA/SLFRF funds and requirements?

The following documents from the U.S. Treasury Department go in more depth about ARPA/SLFRF funds:

1. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds | U.S. Department of the Treasury
2. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule
3. Coronavirus State & Local Fiscal Recovery Funds: Overview of the Final Rule
4. Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds Final Rule: Frequently Asked Questions
5. Recipient Compliance and Reporting Responsibilities | U.S. Department of the Treasury
6. Compliance and Reporting Guidance PDF
7. Treasury SLFRF Compliance Supplement Addendum 1.pdf (cfo.gov)