

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
Recreation Grants Branch

Recreational Trails

Instructions for Completing the Grant Application

Revised October 2018

(PWD 1067B-P4000)



Deadline: February 1st

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HELPFUL HINTS

You must read all application instructions and other grant preparation resources prior to completing your application. These can be read and downloaded from the [Recreation Grants Online \(RGO\) Resources page](#).

Cost effectiveness is an extremely important selection criteria. Proposals that maximize new trail opportunities across the state are most successful in this highly competitive grant competition. Project proposals that seek to fund trail rehabilitation of existing routes or trail support facilities should justify that these funding items are valuable improvements in great need by the community. More non-trail items in a grant budget often means that your proposal is less competitive in the grant pool.

Your application package should clearly and concisely express the recreational value of the trail project, show how the project was designed with the site's unique natural and cultural resource character in mind, note any meaningful trail or community connections, demonstrate sustainable design, and articulate a well-developed project budget. Supporting documentation should include labelled and easy to understand maps and representative photographs. Refer to this document, the budget template / sample, the application instructions, and the application itself frequently while composing your project proposal application. Be sure your narratives address all items noted in the instructions and grant application headings.

Make sure supporting documents are concise & easy to understand. Your project's maps and photographs (as well as your budget) are important documents used as informational PowerPoint slides during group funding discussions regarding your grant proposal. These documents should be well-planned visual aids supporting your proposed project.

Proposal Budget

- Use the Budget Template and the Budget Template sample provided on the RGO Resources page to develop and/or format the budget that you will upload with your grant application.
- Be clear & concise with your itemized budget, but avoid large single line items (e.g. "Trail Construction \$200K").
- Clearly label which items will be paid for with federal funds and which items will be paid for with matching funds.
- Round numbers to the nearest hundred dollars.

All applications must include the following supplemental documents (uploaded to RGO as PDF files):

1. Clearly labelled site map locating the trail for orientation purposes. The trail drawn and clearly labelled on a park or city map is OK.
2. U.S.G.S. topographic map (7.5 minute series) with the trail location drawn and labelled on map. An 8.5 x 11 inch copy of the portion of the map on which the project is located will suffice, but write the name of the quadrangle on the copy.
3. Labelled photographs representative of the project site.

Recommended additional supporting materials (uploaded to RGO as a single multi-page PDF file):

- Statement or Letters of Support.
- Signed statement of (public or private) land owner's willingness to allow the trail project for at least 20 years, if not on sponsor's land.

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RECREATIONAL TRAILS GRANT - APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

READ THESE INSTRUCTIONS FULLY BEFORE BEGINNING YOUR ONLINE APPLICATION. REVIEW THE [BUDGET TEMPLATE](#) & [BUDGET SAMPLE](#) DOCUMENTS. CHECK FOR THE MOST RECENT VERSION OF ALL OF THESE DOCUMENTS ON THE [RECREATION GRANTS ONLINE \(RGO\) RESOURCES PAGE](#). ALL APPLICATIONS MUST BE SUBMITTED THROUGH THE RGO SYSTEM. PLEASE REFER TO APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE INQUIRING WITH ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS.

The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) administers the Texas Recreational Trails Fund (TRTF) under the approval of the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Recreational Trails Program (RTP). This federal program receives its funding from a portion of federal gas taxes paid on fuel used in non-highway recreational vehicles. Funds can be spent on both motorized and non-motorized **publicly accessible recreational trail projects**, including:

- Construction of new recreational trails,
- Improvement of existing trails,
- Development of trailhead or trailside facilities, and
- Acquisition of trail corridors.

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS

These grant funds are set aside for the creation or significant rehabilitation of public-use trail opportunities throughout the state of Texas. Projects must remain open and maintained for public use for at least 20 years after the completion of the trail project.

The Texas Trails Advisory Board and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff evaluates projects in terms of their overall quality, ability to serve recreational needs, cost-effectiveness, benefits, community support, innovation, geographic scope and distribution, and accommodation of barrier-free access. The highest ranked projects are typically those that make the best use of funds for trail construction and closely associated amenities, like signage and trailheads. Prior year grant awards are noted below:

2018: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20180524a>
2017: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20170525b>
2016: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20160526a>
2015: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20150522a>
2014: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/newsmedia/releases/?req=20140522c>

THIS IS A REIMBURSEMENT-BASED GRANT PROGRAM

Funding provided by this program is on a **cost reimbursement** basis. **Projects sponsors must have cash on hand** for all grant purchases and must initiate their approved projects **with their own funds** and be reimbursed up to **80 percent** of allowable costs **after submitting documentation of expenses**. Individual trail grant awards can range from \$4,000 (\$5,000 or more total project cost) to \$200,000 (\$250,000 or more total project cost) for non-motorized projects and \$400,000 (\$.5M or more total project cost) for motorized projects. Projects will be selected for funding based on rankings made by the Texas Trails Advisory Board made up of both motorized and non-motorized trail users. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission will approve and authorize funding for selected projects based on the recommendations of the Texas Trails Advisory Board. This typically happens in late May following each grant cycle. Selected projects must comply with FHWA funding requirements and be in accordance with all state and federal laws, and executive orders.

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WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO RECEIVE FUNDS

Eligible applicants include:

- Cities,
- Counties,
- State agencies (including TPWD state parks and wildlife management areas)
- Other governmental bodies created under state law such as river authorities, water districts, municipal utility districts, or public school districts,
- Federal land managers,
- Not-for-profit organizations (e.g. land conservancies, trail user groups, conservation clubs, "Friends of the Park", etc.) Organizations must be incorporated as a nonprofit with the Secretary of State or must have filed with their county to do business in Texas.

Only one entity will be considered the sponsor of any proposal. Even though projects are encouraged to be undertaken as partnerships, the sponsor for the project will be the one who signs the Project Agreement, is responsible to account for the costs incurred, and will receive the reimbursements. ***If the land owner is different from the sponsor, the application must include documentation of the owner's willingness to allow the trail improvements to be constructed on their land and be open to public for a minimum of 20 years.***

With their application, each applicant must submit a [DUNS number](#) and a [System for Award Management \(SAM\) CAGE code](#). If you have not already registered for these, please do so immediately as they may take several weeks to receive. These registrations are necessary prerequisites to receive federal grant funds. Please see the final page of these instructions for more information on this process. Applicants must also be in good standing with the Texas Comptroller of Public Accounts to be eligible to receive any reimbursements.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT ACTIVITIES

The following activities are permitted under this trail funding program.

1. **Construction of new recreational trails on public (federal, state, county, municipal, district, etc.) or private lands.** To receive funding for trails on private lands, the sponsor must obtain a legally binding easement, lease, or license, satisfactory to TPWD, keeping the trail open to the public for a minimum of twenty (20) years from the date of the close of the grant.
2. **Trail restoration, rehabilitation or resurfacing.** Includes rerouting or repair of areas damaged by trail use, flooding, or erosion; rehabilitation of trail tread; rehabilitation of trail facilities that have deteriorated over time; or trail accessibility upgrades.
3. **Development of trail-side and trail-head facilities.**
4. **Provision of features which facilitate access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.**
5. **Acquisition of easements or leases for trails or trail corridors.** Easements or other less than fee simple property interest must be secured for at least twenty (20) years.
6. **Acquisition of property by fee simple title when acquisition cannot be accomplished by easement.** Property acquired under this fund will be subject to continuing recreational use provision, Section 6(f) (3) of the Land and Water Conservation Fund Act.
7. **Educational signing to interpret natural and/or cultural resources or for proper trail etiquette.** Research, development and printing costs of educational/interpretive brochures or handouts are not eligible for reimbursement.

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8. **Environmental mitigation.** Provide for redesign, reconstruction, non-routine maintenance, or relocation to mitigate or minimize impact to the natural environment. Plant material is permitted as a budget item as long it is only associated with construction mitigation and/or erosion control.

Eligible Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trail construction• Signs and displays• Restrooms• Parking areas• Drinking water (water tanks, fountains, faucets)• Horse-watering facilities, hitching posts/corrals• Portable buildings for tool storage• Bike racks• Benches and picnic tables• Fencing or bollards• Trail building or maintenance tools
Ineligible Items
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Facilities that support other recreation activities (e.g., camping areas, park entry roads, non-trailside bathrooms, boat ramps, swimming areas, etc.)• Landscaping• Sidewalk• Other Buildings (fee booth, offices, etc.)• Purchase of mechanized equipment• Non-U.S. steel or iron products

USES NOT PERMITTED WITH TRTF FUNDS

Many of the non-permitted uses are specified in the federal act. Others have been added to the Texas program and may be changed in the future as priorities are revised.

1. Condemnation of any kind of interest in property.
2. Adding motorized uses to trails which were predominantly used by non-motorized trail users and on which motorized use was either prohibited or had not occurred, as of May 1, 1991.
3. Spending moneys on private land managed as a commercial enterprise. A trail project on private land which charges fees will be considered a commercial enterprise unless all revenues from its operation will be used only to offset the costs of its operation and maintenance.
4. Spending moneys on trails which are generally not open to the public. Projects which are restricted to club or community members only or which are only open during scheduled events will not be eligible for funding. If a project sponsor plans to charge a nominal fee for trail use (to help cover operation and maintenance costs), this is allowable and **does not** constitute a trail closed to the general public.
5. Research and planning. This program is limited to spending on site-based trail projects (construction, maintenance, or acquisition). Some site planning, design, and engineering specifications can be funded as part of a project which results in completed trail work on the ground. Regional plans, jurisdictional plans, needs assessments, or plans for an entire park or recreational area are ineligible.
6. Sidewalks or trails that have only a transportation or access path function. Trails must be of sufficient

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length to serve the recreational use for which they are proposed. A path that only connects facilities in a park will not be considered a recreation trail.

7. Administrative costs of the sponsor including application preparation costs will not be covered.
8. No equipment or foreign steel and iron products may be purchased using Texas RTP funds. Buy America provisions apply to steel and iron products that will be purchased with RTP funds, and restrict the use of foreign steel and iron products, including equipment. Note that “*Buy America*”, which is specific Congressional Law for U. S. Department of Transportation funding, is different than another federal law, “*Buy American*”.

LIMITATIONS ON GRANT AWARDS

Size of Awards

Non-Motorized Projects: The program limits the amount granted to any single sponsor in one application period to a maximum of \$200,000 (80% of a \$250,000 project). The minimum award per sponsor is \$4,000 (80% of a \$5,000 project) in an application period.

Motorized Trail Projects: The Recreational Trails Act stipulates that 30% of available funds go toward motorized trail projects. In Texas, we seek to generate enough motorized trail projects to meet or exceed this minimum threshold and have thus have instituted an increased financial award cap for motorized projects of \$400,000 (80% of a \$500,000 project).

Number of Projects per Sponsor

Non-Motorized project applicants must submit only one project per application period. The Trails Advisory Board is sensitive to the geographic distribution of funds and will not recommend funding for more than one non-motorized project per sponsor

A non-motorized project sponsor, however, may submit a single project proposal for trail work of a similar nature on an entire system of trails in one jurisdiction. For example, a city may submit one application proposing to add crushed fines on all the trails in its area, even though the trails are not connected and are located at various sites around town.

Motorized project sponsors may submit more than one project per grant period, provided such projects represent distinct project sites. A sponsor may also submit both one non-motorized project and one or more motorized projects.

30%-30%-40% Reserved Funds

The federal act mandates that at least 30 percent of the funds be earmarked for motorized trail recreation, and at least 30 percent be dedicated to non-motorized trail recreation. The remaining 40 percent is discretionary for "diversified" trail use. The Texas Trails Advisory Board will be responsible for fairly distributing selected projects among these categories based on information in the application. Historically in Texas, there has been high demand for non-motorized project funding and smaller demand for motorized project funding.

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OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Match vs. Reimbursable Costs

The following table shows the types of costs that may be included in a project and which ones are reimbursable. Donations from the private sector (land, materials, or labor) may only be attributed to the sponsor's match. Sponsors may not make a profit by being reimbursed beyond their out-of-pocket costs. Private donations which exceed the 20 percent project sponsor share simply serve to reduce the overall cost of a project. **Please be sure match items are clearly labelled as such in the project budget.**

Allowable Costs for Reimbursement
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acquisition of fee title land or easement/lease• Service contracts• Direct labor costs (hired workers, current staff, force account)• Materials purchased (Foreign steel or iron products are not allowable.)• Equipment rental• Purchase of trail construction tools• Professional Services (e.g. design, engineering, and architectural services) are limited to 12% of the total grant construction estimate amount.• Environmental Survey costs (e.g. natural and cultural resource site assessments) may be considered above the 12% professional services limit on a case-by-case basis.• Value of currently owned equipment that was not purchased with federal money (based on FEMA rates).
Allowable Costs for Sponsor's Match
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appraised value of donated land or easement• Value of volunteer labor (\$21.35 per hour)• Value of donated materials or contribution of materials on hand• Value of donated equipment• Any of the reimbursable costs which are paid for by cash donations or sponsor's appropriations (to account for the required 20% match)

Projects on Federal Land

The re-authorization of this program in 1998 permits federal funds, in-kind labor of federal employees, and the FEMA rate value of (non-TRTF funded) federal equipment as match for TRTF funds up to 95% of the total project cost. The remaining 5 percent of the project cost must be provided by non-federal sources, typically through a partnership arrangement with a local government or non-profit group. Recreational Trail Grant funds will still not exceed 80% of the total project cost. If there are questions about projects involving federal lands or federal partners, please contact TPWD for clarification.

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Design Standards

Trails and trailhead / trailside facilities should be attractive to the public and harmonious with the natural environment. In general, new development and improvements should be designed to avoid or minimize harm to the natural setting, accommodate the number and types of proposed uses, and be consistent with topographic limitations of the site. Emphasis should be given to public health, safety, the natural environment, barrier-free access, sustainability, and the protection of recreational and community values of the area.

Natural and Cultural Resource Review

Projects recommended for funding will be submitted to TXDOT / Texas Historical Commission for a cultural resource review and to TXDOT / TPWD resource staff for a natural resource review. If these reviews find the potential for sensitive resources at a proposed project site, the project applicant will immediately be notified as to what actions are necessary to mitigate the situation.

The review by TXDOT in cooperation with the Texas Historical Commission focuses primarily on whether the project will impact known archeological sites or if the site's location and character are likely to contain archeological deposits. If the site contains, or likely contains, archeological deposits, a field survey by a qualified archeologist is usually required.

The review by the TPWD resource staff focuses primarily on whether the project site has known existence of animal and/or plant species listed as threatened or endangered, or habitat to support such species. If this is the case, the project's impact on the listed species is assessed and a field survey by a qualified biologist may be required. If the rare species is federally listed, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service must approve the project for it to proceed. If a site has not previously undergone natural and cultural resource survey, we recommend budgeting funds in the project proposal for surveys of the trail route.

Applicants will be required to remedy all resource impact concerns prior to initiating work on the project. Sometimes a simple rerouting of the trail to avoid sensitive areas will allow a project to proceed, in other cases the remedy is much more time consuming and costly. If the remedy costs are too great (over 15% of total project costs), the sponsors will have the following options: a) cover the costs of the mitigation overruns themselves or b) withdraw their application without penalty.

Barrier-Free Access

Applicants must ensure that support facilities in the area proposed for TRTF assistance will meet current barrier-free accessibility standards (i.e. construct elements of the proposed project accessible to users who are physically and/or mentally disabled). All trailhead parking facilities, trail bridges, and restrooms developed with grant assistance must be fully accessible. Typically, newly constructed trails intended for use by pedestrians must be accessible to people using wheelchairs, whether manual or motorized. Projects in developed areas should place particular emphasis on accessibility. *Sponsors will need to justify why it is not feasible to make trails fully accessible.* Projects should be registered with the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation Architectural (TDLR) Elimination of Architectural Barriers Program.

Sometimes physical limitations of the trail corridor site do not allow for total accessibility. Some projects may be required to obtain a variance to Texas Accessibility Standards from the Texas Department of Licensing and Regulation. However, land managers are encouraged to incorporate accessible features when they do not negatively impact the environment. When a sponsor proposes accessible facilities above and beyond that required by law, it will make the application more competitive and increase its potential for funding.

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SUBMISSION, REVIEW, AND SELECTION OF PROJECTS

Project applicants shall submit an original application utilizing the Recreation Grants Online (RGO) web-based grant management software. The application must include all applicable support documentation. **Application deadline is February 1st of each year.**

Recreation Grants Online (RGO)

The program utilizes an online application process through Recreation Grants Online (RGO). Paper applications will not be accepted. To access the online application, please create an account for your organization at <https://tpwd-recgrants.fluidreview.com/>. After you have logged in, click on “View My Submission,” scroll down to “Create a New Submission,” choose “Recreational Trails,” enter your project name and select “Get Started.” Be sure you are submitting an application for the current year’s grant cycle. To submit a full application, click on the “start” button next to the “Apply for a Recreational Trails Grant” task and begin your application. Remember to click “Save & Continue Editing” frequently to save the information and click “Submit” once complete. After the application is submitted, an email notification will be sent to the application account owner. If this email notification is not received, contact Recreational Trails Program staff immediately to confirm the application was submitted properly. For questions regarding project eligibility, review the eligibility section or contact Recreational Trails Program staff.

RGO is designed so that you can manage your own account representatives. You may add or delete members as you wish. Edit members by logging into your account and under “members” on the right hand side of the page, click on “Add Member.” You will be asked to provide name and email and designate the type of membership for this person. The creator of the account will automatically be designated as the owner. The “member” category allows members to submit all reports and requests. There is also a “read only” member category where individuals can see all the documents but not edit or submit them. Once you request someone to be added as a member, they will receive an email (check your spam folders). New users need to follow directions on the email to create a password for their account. To change the site owner, email Recreational Trails Program staff to request the change.

Additional resources can be found in RGO at the “Resources” link located at the top, right-hand portion of your screen. If you have any technical questions about how to use the site, contact Recreational Trails Program staff. Technical support is available Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. CST.

Application

Fill out all fields in a clear and concise manner. Many fields have descriptive text to help you with your response. If you have any questions, you may contact Recreational Trails Program staff.

See the final page of these instructions for more information on the DUNS (Data Universal Numbering System) and SAM (System for Award Management) registration process. If you cannot complete registration prior to the application deadline, but you have started the process, you may include “IN PROGRESS” in the text box instead of your registration number. DUNS registration tends to be a quick process while registering in SAM can take a number of weeks. Federal entities may include “NA” in the SAM CAGE Code text box.

All narratives submitted in the application should be clear and concise. Be sure to address all topics noted in each section heading. The “Description of the Project” should be particularly concise, using approximately 200 words.

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Proposal Budget

You must use the [Budget Template](#) provided on the [RGO Resources](#) page to communicate your project budget. Additional instructions are found on the second tab of the template. Applicants must submit their completed Budget, in the budget template format, through the RGO portal as an Excel, PDF, or similar file. Please use the file naming convention of “XXXXXX_BUDGET”, replacing the X’s with the name of your municipality or organization. If you require a budget template with additional room for line items, you may request an expanded spreadsheet from the Recreational Trails Program Staff.

Using the template, provide an itemized list of all activities to be undertaken and the cost of each activity. Provide as much detail as possible (consider trail construction materials, volunteer or paid labor, services contracts, land acquisition, equipment/tool rental and the value of in-house equipment or labor). Professional Services costs (design, engineering, or architectural services) are limited to 12% of the total grant construction estimate amount. Environmental survey costs (natural or cultural resource site assessments) are also limited to 12% of the total grant construction estimate amount. Environmental surveys costs may be considered above the 12% professional services limit on a case-by-case basis. Sponsor administrative costs cannot be included.

This document details the allowable and non-allowable expenses for Recreational Trail grants. Read these instructions carefully as any non-allowable expenses on the proposed budget may result in the removal of your application from consideration. Any additional or detailed budget documents (e.g., a construction estimate document from a contractor) can be included in your proposal as an additional supporting document.

The project budget will become part of your grant contract if awarded. Please round all numbers to the nearest hundred dollar. Be clear with your budget and show as many line items as are appropriate. Avoid single item budgets (e.g., “Trail Construction \$200,000”). **Clearly articulate which budget items are to be paid for with Federal funds and which items are paid for with sponsor match.**

Additional instructions about how to complete your Budget can be found on the second tab of the Budget Template document.

Support Documentation

Clear and easy to understand support documentation is important to the success of your proposal. PDF documents are the recommended file type for all uploads. Your application must include USGS topographic maps, site maps, and representative photographs of the project site. Clearly identify your distinct project location in every map you include in your proposal, regardless of the scale. Legible hand-drawn and scanned documents are appropriate if you have no other way to include or markup your maps and photographs. Please make sure all documents are not pixelated and are easy to read. **Your project’s maps and photographs are important documents used during funding discussions regarding your grant proposal and should be well-planned visual aids supporting your proposed project.**

If applicable to your site, lease agreements or signed statements of landowner willingness should also be included.

Additional supporting documents like letters of support should also be included. Each type of support documentation should include only one PDF file. Combine multiple pages into one PDF document for each category of support documentation, including Site Map, USGS Topographic Map, Project Photographs, and Additional Supporting Documentation.

Please upload documents using these file name conventions, replacing the X’s with the name of your municipality or organization: XXXXXX_SITEMAP, XXXXXX_TOPOMAP, XXXXXX_PHOTOS, XXXXXX_SUPPORT.

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Review and Evaluation Process

The project applications will be reviewed for completeness and eligibility prior to the being reviewed for quality. The Texas Trails Advisory Board will assist TPWD staff in selecting a slate of recommended projects to be presented to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Commission for final approval. Project applicants will be notified in writing through RGO of their project's selection or disapproval after the Commission action, typically by early June of each year. Please make sure all contact information in RGO is up to date.

Criteria for Selecting Projects

The Texas Recreational Trail Grant Program does not have a hard point-based scoring system. The Texas Trails Advisory Board and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department staff will evaluate each application on its own merit. Projects will be evaluated in terms of their eligibility, application quality, overall project quality, ability to serve recreational needs, cost-effectiveness, benefits, community support, innovation, connectivity, geographic scope and distribution, and accommodation of barrier free access.

The cost-effectiveness criteria rewards those projects which accomplish a lot with a little amount of funding as well as those projects which propose a greater proportion of basic trail work as opposed to support facilities, design, and engineering. Basic trail work includes tasks such as trail layout, vegetation clearing, bridges, work on the trail tread (shaping, drainage structures, surfacing, steps, and erosion control), retaining walls, and acquisition of trail corridor. Trailside and trailhead facilities are considered support facilities because they are not providing *direct* recreation opportunities.

Projects which serve multiple, compatible trail users will be given priority as will projects undertaken with broad partnerships and community support. Trail projects that, when completed, serve more of a transportation function will be ranked lower than those that serve a recreational function.

Federal guidance for the Recreational Trail Program encourages project sponsors to engage qualified youth conservation or service corps to perform funded trail construction and maintenance tasks. A list of qualified youth and young adult service programs can be found at <http://www.corpsnetwork.org/impact/corps-by-state>. Please note in your budget and narrative if you intend to use a conservation corps as a part of your project.

Proposals should clearly articulate the recreational value of a trail project (does the project add new recreational opportunities to an area), show how the project is unique to the site, note any meaningful trail or community connections, and include labelled and easy to understand maps and representative photographs.

Resubmission

Sponsors whose projects are not selected and approved for funding may resubmit their proposals for consideration in the next cycle by notifying TPWD prior to the next deadline. Sponsors may wish to modify their proposals to give them a better chance of achieving a higher ranking.

PUBLIC SUPPORT OR OPPOSITION TO A PROJECT

Documented public support or opposition to a project will be considered by the Texas Trails Advisory Board during the evaluation of projects and recommendations for funding. Resolutions of support from local political entities are not required to submit a project proposal for funding or to receive funding. However, if opposition to a project arises to the extent that a political subdivision, within whose jurisdiction the project falls, passes a resolution opposing funding of the project, that will be sufficient cause to not select the project. A resolution of opposition would also be grounds to rescind funding for a previously funded project if the resolution is received prior to the start of construction.

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PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Approved Projects

The grant recipient may only initiate activities to undertake the approved scope of work **after** a Project Agreement is signed and permission to proceed with construction is granted. This includes not taking title to lands or easements that are included in the project costs. The sponsor will not be reimbursed for project costs incurred prior to the date of the signed Agreement. Unlike the Texas Recreation and Parks Account (Local Parks) grants, the TRTF does not allow application preparation, site design, and other pre-application costs to be recovered retroactively. For this reason, applicants need only develop project concepts well enough to have a reasonable budget. In specific instances, sponsors of approved projects may initiate a grant agreement and be given permission to proceed with only a project site archeological or environmental survey before permission to proceed with construction is granted.

The Project Agreement is the contract between TPWD and the sponsor setting forth the approved work, allowable costs, and the sponsor's commitment to follow required procedures.

Compliance with Federal and State Requirements

During the application period, sponsors are **not** being asked to obtain all the necessary permits and clearances which the project ultimately will need. Projects approved to receive federal funds, however, must meet any number of federal and state requirements. If selected, sponsors must be prepared to submit many federal forms; undergo environmental reviews and possibly prepare mitigation plans; obtain all permits and permissions; comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policy Act of 1970 and other acquisition requirements (if acquisition is involved); follow required procurement procedures, expect audits, and supply quarterly progress reports. *If you are not deterred by this, we look forward to being your partner in providing more recreational trail opportunities!*

Reimbursement Procedures

In general, TPWD will reimburse the sponsor for 80 percent of the project's total cost provided:

- (a) The costs are for allowable expenditures as outlined in the sponsor's application and approved in the Project Agreement signed by TPWD and the sponsor, and
- (b) Sponsor supplies adequate documentation that fully accounts for out-of-pocket expenditures and any donated labor, land, or materials, and certifies that the expenditures have been incurred on the project.
- (c) The amount of donated labor, land, or materials does not exceed 20 percent of the total project costs.
- (d) Quarterly Progress Reports are submitted and regular progress is made on the project.

Sponsors must submit reimbursement requests to TPWD at a minimum of a quarterly basis by submitting receipts and other documentation of expenditures and work undertaken. After processing the billing, TPWD will make a payment to the sponsor for 80 percent of the amount submitted. It can take up to 60 days for reimbursement payments to reach sponsors. Reimbursements must be submitted via TPWD's online grant management system, Rec Grants Online.

Quarterly Reporting

Quarterly reports allow staff to evaluate your project status throughout the grant award. Reports are due in RGO within 2 weeks of quarter closing dates. Reports must be submitted regardless of grant inactivity for that quarter and are considered late if received after the due date. Reports must include a project status narrative as well as a current photo of the project site.

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DATE DUE	REPORTING PERIOD
APRIL 15	January 1 – March 31
JULY 15	April 1 – June 30
OCTOBER 15	July 1 – September 30
JANUARY 15	October 1 – December 31

RETENTION AND USE

Project sponsor must commit to maintaining and operating their completed project so that it is safe for public use for a minimum of 20 years. Operation of the site must include regular and reasonable public access hours during the full course of the 20 year minimum.

Any property acquired with TRTF assistance shall be retained and used for public trail recreation in perpetuity. Any property so acquired shall not be wholly or partly converted to other than public recreation uses without the approval of the TPWD. Such approval will be given only upon conditions as TPWD deems necessary to assure the substitution of other outdoor recreation properties of at least equal fair market value and of reasonably equivalent usefulness, quality, and location. (See “Guidelines for Conversion of Fund Supported Properties” for more information.)

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE

Property developed with TRTF grant program assistance shall be operated and maintained for a minimum of 20 years from the close of the grant as follows:

- A. The property shall be maintained so as to appear attractive and inviting to the public.
- B. Sanitation and sanitary facilities shall be maintained in accordance with applicable health standards.
- C. Properties shall be kept reasonably safe for public use.
- D. Buildings, roads, trails, and other structures and improvements shall be kept in reasonable repair throughout their estimated lifetime to prevent undue deterioration and to encourage public use.
- E. The facility shall be kept open for public use at reasonable hours and times of the year, according to the type of area or facility.

AVAILABILITY TO USERS

- A. **Non-Discrimination** – Property developed with program assistance shall be open to entry and use by all persons regardless of age, race, color, sex, religion, national origin, or handicap who are otherwise eligible. Discrimination on the basis of residence, including preferential reservation or membership systems, is prohibited, except to the extent those reasonable differences in admission or other fees may be maintained on the basis of residence.
- B. **Reasonable Use Limitations** – Participants may impose reasonable limits on the type and extent of use of the areas and facilities acquired or developed with program assistance when such a limitation is necessary for maintenance or preservation. Thus, limitations may be imposed on the number of persons using an area or facility or the type of users such as hunters only or hikers only. All limitations shall be in accord with the applicable grant agreement and amendments.

Texas Parks & Wildlife Department
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CONTACTS

For further information or for questions regarding the Texas Recreational Trails Fund:

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Web address: <http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/business/grants/recreation-grants>

Online Applications and Grants Management: <http://tpwd-recgrants.fluidreview.com>

Recreation Grants Online Resources page: <https://tpwd-recgrants.fluidreview.com/res/>
Look for the documents labelled "Recreational Trails Grant..."

General Email address: rec.grants@tpwd.state.tx.us

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SAM REGISTRATION / DUNS

Due to federal requirements, we need project sponsors to be registered and active in the federal System for Award Management (SAM). SAM registration allows entities to receive a federal grant agreement, accept reimbursements, and other grant management actions. Please register in SAM as soon as possible. Once active in SAM, you will be able to see your organization's unique CAGE code and report it in your Recreational Trails grant application. Your organization must keep this registration active by updating it annually. You can follow the directions at the following link and contact the [SAM Help Desk](#) for technical guidance. When registering, please allow for your organization to be publicly viewable, so that our fiscal staff can verify it online.

https://www.sam.gov/sam/transcript/Quick_Guide_for_Grants_Registrations.pdf

Please note that registering and maintaining your organization's SAM account is free. Your organization will likely receive a number of emails from for-profit firms with marketing schemes that offer renewal of your SAM registration or maintenance of your account for a fee. Some of these emails may appear to be from a government agency. [A recent article describing these schemes is available at this link.](#) You should disregard all of these emails and conduct all of your SAM business through the official government website. Renewal of your registration is generally a fairly easy process that you should plan to perform annually.

Your organization will also need a DUNS number (Data Universal Numbering System) to register in SAM. You may already have one for your organization, but if this is not the case, you can register for it by following the link below.

<https://www.dnb.com/duns-number/get-a-duns.html>