



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES



RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

EDUCATION GRANT FINANCIAL WORKSHOP BOOKLET

Updated 8/26/2025



Introduction

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) supports the development and maintenance of a variety of trail types and trail-related facilities. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) is excited to help increase outdoor access in Georgia by administering our state's RTP funds. RTP is a pass-through grant program from the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) of the U.S. Department of Transportation (USDOT).

The purpose of this booklet is to serve as a source of information and guidance for project sponsors to fulfill the requirements of RTP funding.

Funding

RTP grant funds represent a portion of the Federal gasoline tax attributed to off-highway recreation. FHWA's apportionments to states are authorized by the U.S. Congress. RTP grant funds are intended to fund recreational trail-related projects for both motorized and non-motorized use. Project uses include pedestrian (hiking, running, walking, and wheelchair access), biking, mountain biking, skating, water trail use, equestrian use, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

The intent for RTP grant funding is to enhance trail opportunities by achieving results that would not otherwise be possible. RTP grants are for projects that are primarily recreational in nature, rather than serving a more utilitarian transportation function. RTP grants typically fund on-the-ground projects, while limited funds are available for educational components.

An RTP project must be a distinct project with a distinct purpose. All project elements, including the project match, must be tied to the distinct purpose.

Quick Facts

Program Name	Recreational Trails Program
Funding Source	Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act)
Funding Allocation	Approximately \$87,000.00
Eligible Applicants	<ul style="list-style-type: none">-Qualified Local Governments;-State agencies;-Federal agencies;-Non-profit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) status may apply for education grants only
Permissible Uses	<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Trail safety and education- Environmental protection- Trail-related educational materials, displays, video, audio, interactive computer displays, and printed publication.
Maximum Grant Amount	-Based on available funding
Match Requirements	20% Match Required
Retainage	25% held
Grant Term	1 year

The Next Steps

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) and the Project Sponsor shall work in close partnership to carry out all procedures necessary for the successful initiation and completion of the trail project. This collaborative approach will ensure that both parties are aligned on project goals and responsibilities.

- **Financial Workshop-**
Before the project agreement is executed, attendance at a Financial Workshop is mandatory for the Project Sponsor. This workshop will provide detailed information on financial management, budgeting, and reporting requirements related to the trail project.
- **Project Agreement-**
The legal document is provided to the project sponsor after successfully completing the financial workshop. The agreement will include detailed scope, cost, and environmental commitments of the trail project.
- **Notice to Proceed**
The fully executed copy of the project agreement is sent to the project sponsor along with the notice to proceed for the project to commence.
- **Quarterly reports/Reimbursements Request-**
Throughout the project's duration, the Project Sponsor is required to submit regular Quarterly Reports to GADNR. These reports will provide updates on project progress, expenditures, and any potential challenges or delays. Reimbursement Requests for eligible project expenses must also be submitted on a quarterly basis.
- **Final Closeout-**
To achieve Project Closure, the Project Sponsor must submit all required financial documentation, including the final quarterly report, final reimbursement package, and photos of the completed project. GADNR will review all documents and release the final payment if all information in the final documents is correct.

Contact Information

To better serve Georgia project sponsors in attaining their recreation and conservation goals, the GADNR Grants Unit staff is available by the following means during normal business hours:



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Section 1: Reimbursement Package

1.1 Reimbursement Overview

Grantees pay 100% of the total project cost and submit reimbursements for up to 80% of eligible costs. Grantees must provide at least 20% of the total project cost as a match (for ***Federal grantees, 5% must come from non-federal sources***). 25% of funding is held in retainage until the Final Inspection is complete.

Partial Billings:

A partial billing is considered to be a request made before the project is completed. Total partial billings may not exceed 75% of the total grant amount. The final 25% is held as retainage and should be requested by the Grantee in the final request.

Reimbursement Cost Breakdown (Example)

Project Total Cost = \$250,000

Applicant's Match (20%)	\$50,000
Education Grant (80%)	\$200,000
Project Total Cost (100%)	\$250,000.



1.2 Reimbursement Requirements

- Project costs are eligible for reimbursement only if the cost is incurred after the signed agreement date and within a 24-month window.
- Submit reimbursements often.
- You must include proof of payment and/or labor with each reimbursement.
- To submit any reimbursement, request that all quarterly progress reports be up to date.

Eligible Reimbursement Requests

- Trail safety and education
- Environmental protection
- Trail-related educational materials, displays, video, audio, interactive computer displays, and printed publication

ALL ITEMS MUST BE DIRECTLY ASSOCIATED TO THE PROJECT

Reimbursement Required Documents

Reimbursements are compared to the RTP-approved budget.

Documents to include:

- ☐ Provide each invoice with a canceled check, or bank statement.
 - ☐ Signed Contracts (if applicable)
 - ☐ Bid Tabulation (if applicable)
 - ☐ Bid announcement and award documents. (if applicable)
- Donation in kind documentation:
- ☐ Volunteer Sheet (DNR required form.)
 - ☐ Timesheets
 - ☐ Support letters of donations or services.

Redact all sensitive information



Proof of Payment:

Payments are made on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must use a verifiable payment method and submit proof of payment for all project expenses with each request. Proof of payment may include a ledger or transaction report generated by the Grantee's accounting system, a bank statement, or a canceled check. GADNR will not reimburse for payments made in cash, as this method does not provide a verifiable audit trail.

A copy of the reimbursement packet is included on the next page and available on our website <https://gadnr.org/RTP>

Section 2: Match Requirements

2.1 Match Defined

- In-kind donations of labor, services, materials, and equipment from private organizations and individuals.
- Labor rates are not to exceed limits defined in www.dol.gov
- Discounts for services, equipment rental, or materials (must be recorded as a donation)
- Professional service donations
- Cash match (from applicant accounts or donations) used for equipment rental, purchase of materials, or contracted services

Documenting Goods and Services:

Grantees must retain and submit a copy of the original invoice or receipt for all goods and services purchased for the project. All goods and services must be directly related to the approved scope of work.

Documenting Donation of Items or Services:

Donations are third party contributions provided at no cost. Items and services are considered donated when they are provided by a third-party organization at either a reduced or cost-free basis. Some examples include surveys, appraisals, and engineering services. You must retain a copy of the invoice and/or a letter from the organization acknowledging the donation and its value.

The value of donated items or services must be included in the project application budget. The value of donations cannot be reimbursed, cannot include items previously purchased with RTP funds, and cannot be reported on more than one grant, even if it is unassociated to the RTP project. To be counted towards a project's match, donations must be supported by a detailed log or third-party donation statement.

Ineligible for Match and Reimbursement

- Consulting services and planning
- Indirect costs
- Equipment and large tool purchase (small hand tools allowed)
- Travel and Meals
- Incidental costs
- Items prior to the mutually signed agreement date (except Project Planning and Environmental Compliance Services, these can be used as Match up to 18 months prior).

- Administrative costs (office staff labor, facilities, overhead, etc.)
- Maintenance of equipment

Ineligible Expenses for Match

- Design and Engineering in excess of (15%)
- Project, grant, and/or construction administration and/or management.
- Work performed prior to a Notice to proceed from GADNR.
- Work not directly related to trail(s) as documented in an approved budget and executed Project Agreement.
- Marketing and advertising

For more information, refer to the Recreational Trails Program Manual or contact GADNR for any questions.

In-Kind Match

- Volunteer labor is credited based on the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS)
- In-kind donations of labor, services, materials, and equipment from private organizations and individuals.
- Labor rates are not to exceed limits defined in www.dol.gov
- Discounts for services, equipment rental, or materials (must be recorded as a donation).
- Professional service donations
- Cash match (from applicant accounts or donations) used for equipment rental, purchase of materials, or contracted services.
- Volunteer hours can only count toward the match and cannot be reimbursed.
- Volunteer or donated labor must be recorded on the Georgia RTP Labor Timesheet. (Alternate documentation cannot be accepted.)

Donated labor is time provided by a person without compensation. Labor donations are valued at an hourly rate of pay, excluding taxes, benefits and overtime. Refer to policy 2.3B for volunteer or donated labor rates. Use the **Volunteer or Donated Labor Timesheet** available at www.gadnr.org/rtp to account for donated labor.

- Individual's name
- Contact information
- Dates of service
- Worksite or location name
- Description of work performed
- Hours worked
- Individual or crew leader signature

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Documenting Vendor Discounts:

Normal vendor discounts and sales cannot be counted toward the match. However, discounts can be counted when provided to you from a vendor specifically for the RTP project. Discounts can be used as match if the following is provided:

- Invoice that clearly shows the retail price and discount provided ***and/or***
- Letter from the vendor that states they have provided a discount as a donation and includes the valuation of the discount.

Documenting Donated Real Property:

Property acquired at less than its appraised market value may be considered donated real property. To be considered as donated real property, a statement of donation from the donor must be submitted for each property acquired. An appraisal from the time of donation must be provided.

Documenting Equipment or Tool use Allowance

If you use your organization's equipment or tools, you may be allowed to claim some of the costs as a non-reimbursable amount (match). If the lower of the purchase price or fair market value of the equipment or tool is equal to **\$1,000 or more**, you may claim a use allowance. The use allowance is either an established rental rate or your own calculation, but that may not exceed the current rental rate for equivalent equipment or tools in the project area for the period of use.

For example, if you use a mini-excavator for 24 months and the daily rental rate is \$150 (720 days x \$150 = \$108,000), but they have a monthly rental rate of \$1,000 (\$1,000 x 24 =

\$24,000), you must use the lower of the two rates (\$24,000). To take it one step further, if the mini-excavator's fair market value was \$15,000, you would only be able to show a use allowance of \$15,000 which is the lower of rental cost and fair market value.

Equipment purchased with RTP grant funding is not allowed to be claimed for equipment use allowance.

When reporting use allowance, you must track the time and date of use, location of use and identification information (make, model, serial number, description, etc.) to accompany the Reimbursement Request.

Section 3: Contracts & Procurement

3.1 Contracts \$25,000.00 or Greater

- Complete a formal, public bid process
- Provide a copy of the bid tabulation.
- Bid announcement and Award documents.
- A copy of the signed contract.
- Invoices and any change orders.
- Provide proof of full payment for the completed contract.

<https://www.transportation.gov/civil-rights/disadvantaged-business-enterprise/dbe-guidance>

******If you have questions or concerns, contact the Grants Specialists.***

3.2 Contracts Under \$25,000.00

Grantees must follow their own internal required vendor/contractor bid and procurement policies.

******Contact GADNR if the signed contract rises above the threshold.***



3.3 Buy America Requirements



Based on all the information available to the Agency, DOT finds that it is in the public interest to issue a waiver of BABA's domestic preferences for iron and steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in projects funded under DOT-administered financial assistance award for which:

- The total value of the non-compliant products is no more than the lesser of \$1,000,000.00 or 5% of total applicable costs for the project; or
- The total amount of Federal financial assistance applied to the project, through awards or subawards, is below \$500,000.00

Additional Guidance:

- FHWA Buy America requirements apply to all projects funded under title 23 U.S.C., including the RTP.
- The Buy America provision in 23 CFR 635.410 (b)(1)(ii) requires that steel/iron materials (including components and subcomponents) be melted and manufactured domestically.
- If documentation of domestic steel/iron manufacturing is not available, then a waiver request is necessary.
- FHWA processes quarterly Buy America waivers for vehicles and equipment on the condition that the product has final domestic assembly (even if it is not possible to document the origin of the steel).
- Trail grooming vehicles and mechanized equipment primarily constructed with steel or iron must comply with Buy America requirements or must request a waiver.

Section 4: Quarterly Report

4.1 Grant Term

Project Sponsors will have 24 months to complete the project from the date of the signed Project Agreement.

Start Date: Once an executed Project Agreement is in place, Grantees will be issued a Notice to Proceed, which authorizes work to begin.

End Date: Projects must be completed within 24 months of the signed grant agreement. No additional costs may be incurred after the project end date.

Closeout Period: No later than 45 days after work is completed and/or no more than 45 days after the grant end date. Grantees must submit a final progress report and request for reimbursement and denote it as such.

4.2 Reporting Requirements

The following reports are required for projects:

- Quarterly Progress Reports
- Requests for Reimbursement
- Final report once the project is completed

4.3 Quarterly Progress Reports

Once a Notice to Proceed has been issued, the Project Sponsor shall report to GADNR on the progress of the project on a quarterly basis as follows:

- Period beginning January 1, ending March 31: Report is due April 30.
- Period beginning April 1, ending June 30: Report is due July 31.
- Period beginning July 1, ending September 30: Report is due October 31.
- Period beginning October 1, ending December 31: Report is due January 31.

The grantee is required to submit quarterly reports to GADNR to ensure that GADNR is aware of the project's progress. Progress reports can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp. The progress report summarizes the work accomplished to date, any issues that may be arising with the project, an estimated percentage of project completion, and an estimate of funds to be expended over the next quarter. Photos or other documents are required in communicating the status of your project.

GEORGIA RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES
PROJECT PROGRESS REPORT
IN ACCORDANCE WITH 20CFR100
CFR 16.20.10

This report must be detailed, supporting evidence included with pictures. The Grant Recipient shall attach to this report appropriate pictures illustrating project construction activities before and after, during this quarter.

<u>Project Name</u>	<u>Project Number</u>
<u>Project Phase II</u>	<u>Percentage complete % (estimation)</u>
<u>Project Agreement Start Date</u>	<u>Project End Date</u>
<u>Grantee Name</u>	<u>Quarter Ending</u>
<u>Site Visit for Progress or Final Date</u>	<u>Progress visit or Final Visit</u>

If this is a Final Progress Report, please enter the date the Project was completed: _____

FINANCIAL STATUS:

Total Project Cost:	\$ _____
Amount Expended to Date:	\$ _____
Federal Funds:	\$ _____
State Funds:	\$ _____
Amount Received or	
Expended for	\$ _____ Federal Funds
Excess loaned out through the	\$ _____ State Funds
End of this Quarter:	

Quarterly reports are required regardless if no work is completed during the quarter.



A copy of the Quarterly Report document is included on the next page and available on our website: <https://gadnr.org/RTP>

Section 5: Grant Closeout

Grant closeout signifies the completion of the project. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GADNR) will ensure all agreed-upon work, as outlined in the Project Agreement, and administrative actions have been completed by the Education Project Completion Date.

The final payment will not be processed until all required documentation has been approved by GADNR to ensure all stipulations of the grant contract have been fulfilled and a successful Final Inspection has verified all aspects of scope and expenditures are present on the trail.

Within 45 days after the date of completing the project or the grant expiration date, whichever comes first, both administrative and financial closeout of the grant must occur. During this period, the following documents are due to GADNR before it can approve and process final payment and closeout:

- The grantee must notify DNR once the project has been completed.

Final Documents required:

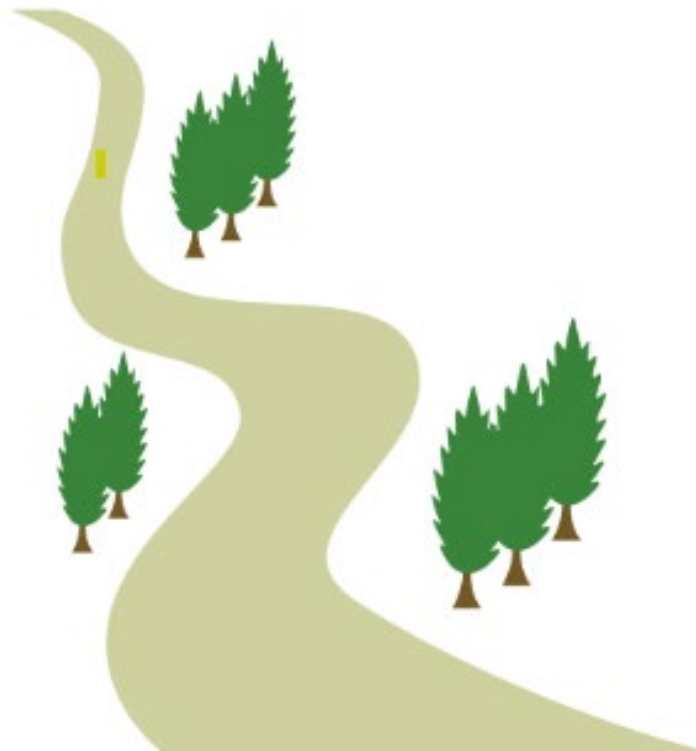
- Final Quarterly Report marked as “final” and include photos of the completed project.
- Completed reimbursement packet to include documents in section 1.2, pages 6-7)
- Photos of the completed project or copies of media funded for education purposes.

Once GADNR determines that all requirements of the Project Agreement have been satisfied, retainage will be dispersed to the Grantee per the Project Agreement. If total expenditures are less than anticipated, and payment of the full retainage amount would create a shortfall of the Applicant’s match, GADNR will adjust the payable retainage amount accordingly. In any instance where an overpayment of either reimbursement or retainage is realized, the Grantee is required to refund an amount back to GADNR equivalent to the overage.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Compliance Requirement

Any trail that has received RTP funding must remain open to the public for at least 25 years after receiving final reimbursement.

If there are proposed changes or unforeseen conditions that affect the trail project, the project sponsor must notify our office immediately. In the event of any suggested alterations or unforeseen circumstances that impact the trail project, the project's sponsor is obligated to promptly inform our office.



We appreciate you for making trails a priority in the community.

