



Georgia Recreational Trails Program 2019-2020 Manual

Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Recreational Trails Program
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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).

Prospective projects will undergo a web-based, multi-phase, competitive application process submitted to GADNR.

The purpose of this manual is to serve as a source of information and guidance for prospective Applicants in securing RTP funding. It details important program fundamentals and goals, while also providing instructions on how to apply for the various project types authorized by FHWA.

Note: This booklet does not contain all materials and forms needed to apply for RTP assistance. Applicants should visit the RTP Homepage to access all current application materials and forms. These can be accessed at www.gadnr.org/rtp

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.

Support

DNR Grants Staff is available to help guide Applicants through the process associated with successfully submitting a complete grant application. The best source of information in preparing an application is this manual used in conjunction with the resources found on the RTP homepage found at www.gadnr.org/rtp. As another means of assistance, the Grants Specialist can explain the program in detail, determine eligibility, and provide assistance to make an application as competitive as possible.

Quick Facts

| | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Program Name | Recreational Trails Program |
| Funding Source | Fixing America's Surface Transportation Act (FAST Act) |
| Funding Allocation | Approximately \$3 million |
| 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"> - New trail construction - Trail restoration - Trail head facilities - Lease of heavy equipment - Purchase of hand tools to construct/renovate trails - Land acquisition for trail purposes - Water trail facilities - Trail safety and education |
| Maximum Grant Amount | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -\$200,000, non-motorized, diverse use trail projects -\$200,000, non-motorized, single use trail projects -No maximum for motorized trail projects |
| Match Requirements | 20% Match Required |
| Retainage | 25% held |
| Grant Term | 2 years |

Funding Cycle 2019-2020 Timeline

The application process consists of two phases. The Pre-application is an initial submission of project plans and funding needs. Second-level Applications are submitted after the project evaluation process and require much more detailed information. The application deadline schedule for the 2019-2020 cycle is as follows:

Pre-application Deadline: Midnight, November 17, 2019

Second-level Application Deadline (if invited): Midnight, May 31, 2020

The proposed 2019 - 2020 annual funding cycle is as follows:

- September 1, 2019: Pre-application period opens
- November 17, 2019: Pre-applications due
- November 2019 – March 2020: Pre-applications are reviewed and scored
- April 2020: All Pre-applicants are notified of results, and selected Pre-applicants are invited to submit Second-level Applications
- May 31, 2020: Second-level Applications due
- Fall 2020: Notification of Awards are released, and Financial Workshops conducted for successful Applicants; trail work begins after Project Agreement is signed.

Contact Information

To better serve Georgia residents 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: Overview and Process

1.1 Program Overview

RTP grants are intended to fund recreational trail-related projects for both motorized and non-motorized uses. Project uses include pedestrian (hiking, running and wheelchair access), biking, mountain biking, water trail use, equestrian use, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

The intent of RTP 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 trail-related education.

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.

1.2 Grant Advisory Committee

Legislation for RTP requires that each state create a state RTP Advisory Committee that represents both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users and meets at least once per fiscal year. The Committee reviews projects for funding, advises GADNR regarding program policies and procedures, and assists in the development of project eligibility and selection criteria. The committee consists of 13 members representing the following user groups:

- (1) Bicyclists;
- (2) Off-Road vehicle users;
- (3) Equestrians;
- (4) Water trail users;
- (5) Hiking, jogging, fitness (pedestrian) users;
- (6) United States Forest Service representation;

1.3 30-30-40 Requirement

RTP Legislation (23 U.S.C. 206) requires that States use:

- 30 percent of funds in a fiscal year for uses relating to motorized recreation;
- 30 percent for uses relating to non-motorized recreation;
- 40 percent for diverse recreational trail use.

The motorized, non-motorized and diverse percentages are minimum requirements that must be met and may be exceeded. A project for diverse motorized use (such as snowmobile and off-road motorcycle use) may satisfy a portion of the 40 percent diverse use requirement and a portion of the 30 percent motorized use requirement simultaneously. A project for diverse non-motorized use (such as pedestrian and bicycle use) may satisfy the 40 percent diverse use requirement and the 30 percent non-motorized use requirement simultaneously.

To provide more flexibility in RTP project selection, FHWA established five categories to account for the 30-30-40 requirements:

1. Non-motorized project for a single use
2. Non-motorized diverse use project
3. Diverse use projects
4. Motorized single use project
5. Motorized diverse use project

Section 2: Policies

2.1 Grant Funding Basics

Funding Amount

Grant requests have no minimum and are limited to a maximum of \$200,000 for non-motorized, single use and diverse use trail projects. There is no maximum grant amount in place for motorized trail projects.

Reimbursement Payments

RTP functions as a reimbursement grant program. Project Grantees must have the financial capacity to pay for project expenses prior to being reimbursed by grant funds. Once project expenses have been incurred and paid for by the Grantee, payment documentation can then be submitted to GADNR for reimbursement, up to the amount of the grant award.

Design and Engineering Expenses directly related to the project scope but incurred prior to the Project Agreement effective date are not reimbursible, although may be counted **as match only** by the Applicant up to 18 months prior to the Project Agreement effective date. Design and Engineering Expenses older than 18 months are not eligible. (See Section 2.3A for eligible expenses that may be reimbursed)

Matching Requirements

RTP grant funds can pay up to 80% of a project's total cost. Grantees must provide at least 20% of the total project cost as match. The exact match requirement for individual projects will be determined by an approved budget and identified in the Project Agreement. (see section 2.3B for eligibility of match).

Retainage

GADNR will retain (i.e. hold back) 25% of the grant amount until the project is verified as complete and all required documentation is approved.

Property Appraisals

The Uniform Appraisal Standards of Federal Land Acquisitions (UASFLA), commonly referred to as the “Yellow Book,” must be used to prepare appraisals for acquisitions, or donations if used for a Federal match. Costs for both are eligible project costs. GADNR does not provide this service. Additional guidance can be found at https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/real_estate/uniform_act/property_valuation/. Acquisition of any kind must be from a willing landowner as RTP legislation prohibits condemnation of any kind of interest in property.

2.2 Applicant Eligibility

The following summarizes entities and organizations that are eligible for RTP funding. Entities that are not directly eligible are encouraged to consider partnering with eligible entities.

Eligible Project Applicants include:

- Qualified Local Governments
- State agencies
- Federal agencies
- Nonprofit organizations
 - IRS 501(c)(3) tax exempt status required
 - Only eligible for education grants that promote recreational trail safety and environmental protection.

2.3 Project Eligibility

Note: All prospective projects and acquisitions must completely reside with Georgia’s borders. Applications for projects in which any part of it resides in a state other than Georgia, either in part or in whole, will not be considered for funding.

Types of Trails for RTP:

1. Motorized Trail Uses

Motorized single use project: A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of motorized recreational use, such as an ATV trail. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of a single motorized use.

Motorized diverse use project: A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of motorized recreational use, such as motorcycle and ATV use; or ATV use in summer and snowmobile use in winter. A project may be classified in this category if the project also benefits some non-motorized uses (it is not necessary to exclude non-motorized uses), but the primary intent must be for the benefit of motorized use.

2. Non-motorized Trail Uses

Non-motorized project for a single use: A project primarily intended to benefit only one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use. Projects serving various pedestrian uses (such as walking, hiking, wheelchair use, running, bird watching, backpacking, etc.) constitute a single use for the purposes of this category.

Non-motorized diverse use project: A project primarily intended to benefit more than one mode of non-motorized recreational trail use such as walking, bicycling, and skating; both pedestrian and equestrian use; or pedestrian use in winter and off-road bicycling use in summer.

3. Diverse Trail Uses

Diverse use projects: A project intended to benefit both non-motorized recreational trail use and motorized recreational trail use. This category includes projects where motorized use is permitted but is not the predominant beneficiary. This category includes projects where motorized and non-motorized uses are separated by season, such as equestrian use in summer and ATV use in winter.

2.3A Items Eligible for Reimbursement

Below are typical items which may be submitted for reimbursement. To qualify for reimbursement, an expenditure must be directly related to the project and have occurred after the signed Project Agreement date, but before the maximum 24-month project completion period. Final Reimbursement Requests must be made within 60 days of the project closeout date.

- Capital expenditures for acquisition such as:
 - Appraisals
 - Legal fees directly associated with the conveyance of real property or conservation easements
 - Environmental reviews
 - *Please note that indirect costs are NOT allowed*
- Permits
- Equipment rentals
- Hand Tools
- Direct materials including drainage, crossings, parking, signage, controls, shelters, hitching rails, fencing, water access barriers, underpasses, bike racks, vessel launch facilities, motorized access barriers.
- Contractual services such as:
 - Legal fees directly related to the actual acquisition of a property
 - Appraisals
 - Surveys
 - Engineering and architectural (**consulting services are not eligible**)
 - Environmental reviews and/or surveys

- Contractors and subcontractors directly related to the project scope
- Expenses directly related to the acquisition of Real Property or Conservation Easements

If unsure whether an expenditure is eligible for reimbursement, contact the Grants Specialist for verification prior to submission.

2.3B Items Eligible as Match

Project Applicants are required to provide matching funds equal to at least 20% of the total project cost, although Applicants are encouraged to provide more. If Federal funds are used as match, 5% of the match must come from a non-Federal source (23 U.S.C. 206). All sources of match must be identified in the grant application. To qualify for match, an item must be directly related to the project and have occurred no earlier than the signed Project Agreement date, but before the maximum 24-month project completion period expiration. The only exception to this is that design and engineering costs can count as match, so long as they occurred within 18 months prior to Project Agreement.

Following are common sources of matching funds:

- Applicant funds
- Donated materials valued at the fair market value of any materials from the person or persons donating the materials, documentation of gift and value required.
- Project Planning and Environmental Compliance Services, the donation of professional or accredited planning and environmental compliance services will be valued at the fair market value, documentation of gift and value required. These services are limited to costs incurred less than 18 months prior to or after the RTP Project Agreement is fully executed. This service must apply specifically to guidance or support of the project that will be accomplished with approved RTP funds.
- Land donated to a governmental agency or a nongovernmental entity for a public trail valued at the appraised value of the donation. The donation of land must have taken place not more than 18 months prior to the execution of the RTP Project Agreement and the donation must be completed prior to grant closeout to count.
- Financial donations from private organizations and individuals directly associated with the project. An example would be donating benches or trash receptacles or their services directly to the project.
- In-kind labor, equipment, and materials provided by the Applicant. Rates for volunteers should be consistent with those regular rates paid for similar work in other activities of the Applicant. A general laborer's wages may be charged in the amount of \$11.40/hr. The time of a person donating services will be valued at a rate paid as a general laborer unless the person is professionally skilled in the work being performed on the project (i.e. mason doing work on a retaining wall). When this is the case, the wage rate this individual is normally paid for performing this service may be charged to the project. The rate cannot exceed prevailing wage charges determined by the Department of Labor. A list can be found at <https://www.wdol.gov/>. The rates for labor should **not** include

payroll additives or overhead costs. If this method is used, documentation of the rate must be uploaded as an attachment to the application.

- Force Account: This is different than Volunteer Labor or Donated Equipment and Supplies. Force Account refers to the use of a Project Applicant's staff, equipment, and/or materials. All or part of the Project Applicant's share may be provided through force account. If the force account match is paid by a Federal agency, 5% of the match must come from a non-Federal source. Documentation must be verifiable from the Applicant's records and must be reasonable and necessary for efficient completion of the project.
 - Use of agency or organization's paid labor to accomplish approved RTP deliverables: valued at the current hourly rate of pay, including taxes and benefits, for employee labor per hours worked for the associated deliverable.
 - Use of agency or organization owned or leased equipment to accomplish approved RTP deliverables – valued per the Federally approved Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) equipment rates – information provided on the website: <http://www.fema.gov/schedule-equipment-rates>
 - Value of land acquired by an agency or organization for this specific project- valued at the price paid by the agency or organization for the land. This acquisition of land must have taken place no more than 18 months prior to the execution of the RTP grant contract or after the date of the signed agreement.

2.3C Conditional Project Elements

- Condemned Land: The RTP legislation prohibits using RTP funds for condemnation of any kind of interest in property. An RTP project may be located on land condemned with funds from other sources. However, it is not permissible to use the value of condemned land toward the match requirement.
- Environmental Assessment: Projects intended solely for covering environmental evaluation and documentation costs are not permissible. However, reasonable environmental evaluation and documentation costs, including costs associated with environmental permits and approvals, may be included as part of an approved project's construction engineering costs.
- Construction engineering costs: Costs incurred developing the construction documents, bid package, environmental or cultural evaluation, or permits; may not exceed 15% of the total project cost.
- Staff salary costs of existing staff are not eligible for reimbursement. New temporary staff, hired solely to accomplish an RTP project that could not be accomplished otherwise, may be eligible for reimbursement. Staff salaries (force account) are eligible for match.
- Sidewalks: RTP funds will not be used to provide paths or sidewalks along or adjacent to public roads or streets. If a sidewalk is needed to complete a missing link between other recreational trails, a case may be made to demonstrate the recreational need and why transportation funds are not being used.

- Wilderness areas are subject to the restriction of the Wilderness Act of 1964 as amended. Construction of new trails for motorized use on National Forest or Bureau of Land Management lands is not allowed unless the project is consistent with resource management plans.
- Within a Road Right-of-Way: Convict (inmate) labor is not permitted on projects within a road right-of-way, unless performed by persons who are on parole, supervised release, or probation, consistent with (23 U.S.C. 114(b)).
- Railroads: RTP projects may be located within or along railroad rights-of-way if trail users will not traverse on or between railroad tracks and if adequate safety measures are implemented in coordination with the railroad owner/operator.
- Pre-Agreement Work: Some pre-agreement project planning and environmental review costs may be eligible for match. The work must have taken place within 18 months of the Notice to Proceed and be Pre-approved by GADNR. Time spent preparing the project application is not eligible.

2.3D Items Ineligible for Reimbursement or Match

Items that are not directly associated and essential for the completion and execution of a project are generally ineligible for reimbursement or match. Since the number of potentially ineligible items is space-prohibitive to list in this manual it may be helpful to contact the Grants Specialist for verification prior to incurring such costs. Examples of ineligible costs may include:

- Routine Trail Maintenance: Includes work that should be conducted on a frequent basis to keep a trail in its originally constructed serviceable standard (e.g. mowing, tree and brush pruning, leaf and debris removal.) Routine maintenance work is usually limited to minor repair or improvements that do not significantly change the trail location, width, surface, or trail structure.
- Feasibility Studies: Trail feasibility studies are not a use permitted in the RTP legislation. The permissible uses relate to actual on-the-ground trail projects.
- Planning: Trail planning is not a permissible use of RTP funds.
- Lighting: Trail lighting shall not be considered a permissible use of RTP funds.
- Landscaping: Landscaping is not in the spirit of RTP and shall not be considered an eligible expense. Mitigation planting as part of a permit condition is not considered landscaping.
- Law Enforcement: Law enforcement related expenses are not permitted in the RTP legislation.
- Roads: Funds may not be used to improve roads for passenger vehicle use.
- Overhead: The regular operating expenses such as rent, building upkeep, utilities, insurance and fixed costs associated with a business, agency or group.
- Indirect Costs: Only direct costs that can be identified specifically with a final cost objective directly related to the trail project are eligible.
- Interpretive Signage: Signs that are interpretive in function, rather than way-finding, are not eligible. RTP education grants may fund specific types of interpretive signs.

- Budget Contingencies: Contingencies included as budget line items are not permitted.
- Legal Fees: Legal fees are not eligible for inclusion in any project budget.
- Meals: Food or beverage purchases are not eligible expenses under RTP.
- Equipment: Including, but not limited to, ATV's for maintenance use, lawn mowers both push and riding, large machinery.
- Administrative Costs
- Maintenance of Equipment: Not considered direct trail cost.

2.3E Buy America

Buy America requirements apply to steel and iron permanently incorporated in a project funded by RTP when the total value of the materials or equipment exceeds \$2,500. The provision requires these materials be melted and manufactured domestically and that documentation is obtained to verify Buy America compliance.

These provisions apply to all materials and equipment permanently incorporated into the project, regardless of whether the items are acquired and paid for with matching funds or donated to the Grantee as part of the RTP match. Steel that does not comply with Buy America must to be inventoried and the total should not exceed \$2,500. More guidance can be found at <https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/construction/cqit/buyam.cfm>.

- Request for Buy America Waiver: Waiver requests may be made for items that do not meet Buy America requirements. Grantee must work with DNR's RTP Grant Coordinator who will further coordinate the request with FHWA. Waiver requests are then made available for public review and comment. For vehicle and equipment purchase waivers, FHWA processes requests on a quarterly schedule, on the condition that the product has final domestic assembly.

Note: The processing of waiver requests can cause significant delay for a project.

2.3F Air Quality

Many RTP projects and project-related activities are exempt from air quality conformity requirements of the Clean Air Act Amendments of 1990. However, RTP projects and project-related activities which involve new construction within air quality non-attainment or maintenance areas may be subject to the air quality conformity rule (40 CFR parts 51 and 93).

2.3G Extensions and Changes of Scope

Extension Requests

Grantees may request timeline extensions if the project is expected to exceed the 24-month deadline. Generally speaking, extensions will be limited to an additional 90 days. Extensions shall be considered at the discretion of GADNR and FHWA. All extension requests will be submitted at www.gadnr.org/rtp. All formal requests will be reviewed by GADNR and FHWA. Extension requests shall be made at least 90-days prior to the project's completion date. If the extension request is granted, the Grantee must sign an Amended Project Agreement.

Change of Scope

Grantees may request to change the scope of the original project. All formal requests will be reviewed by the GADNR and FHWA. Change of Scope requests must be made prior to the project's completion date. If the Change of Scope request is granted, the Grantee must sign an Amended Project Agreement.

GADNR will make every attempt to submit requests to the Federal Highway Administration, although FHWA schedules may not allow for immediate review. For this reason, Grantees should consider heavily the need for such requests in order to minimize project delays.

Note: It is critical that Grantees understand that expenses, donations, or in-kind materials or services may be ineligible for consideration after the original agreement date and before an approved extension or Change of Scope request is mutually signed and tendered by GADNR. Incurring these costs prior to an approved extension will be done at the Grantee's own risk.

2.3H Types of Projects

- Construction of new recreational trails
 - This category includes construction of entirely new trails, expansion of trails and new linkages between existing trails.
 - This category may include construction of new trail bridges or providing appropriate way-finding signage along a trail.
 - For projects on Federal land, the most important requirement is that the Federal agency land manager approves of the project in accordance with other applicable Federal laws and regulations.
- Restoration of existing trails
 - This may be interpreted broadly to include any kind of non-deferred trail maintenance, restoration, rehabilitation, or relocation.
 - This category may include maintenance and restoration of trail bridges or providing appropriate way-finding signage along a trail.
- Lease of trail construction and maintenance equipment
 - On the ground equipment for completing trail work.
 - Equipment cannot be used for other activities such as patrol or law enforcement.

- Vehicles used for transportation, such as trucks, ATVs, side-by-sides and snowmobiles are not eligible.
- Development & rehabilitation of trailhead facilities & trail linkages for recreation trails
 - This can include parking/staging areas for trails including items like restrooms and trail information kiosks (interpretive signage not allowed).
- Acquisition of easements and property for recreational trails or corridors
 - RTP legislation prohibits condemnation of any kind of interest in property. Therefore, acquisition of any kind of interest in property must be from a willing landowner.
- Water Trails:
 - The definition of “recreational trail” in the RTP legislation includes non-motorized “aquatic or water activities.” Examples of water trail projects include staging areas or trailhead facilities near access points.

2.3I Education Grants

RTP allocates limited funds for education that promotes trail safety and environmental protection. Education projects must have a direct relationship with a recreational trail or trails. Projects can include education programs and/or production of trail-related educational materials (whether for information displays, print, video, audio, interactive computer displays, etc.). Education grants are applied for separately from other trail projects and potential Applicants should consult with the Grants Specialist before submitting applying.

2.4 Control

Adequate control must be established by a Grantee over any land (public or private) to be improved and/or developed with RTP grant funds. Control is generally understood to mean ownership, lease, easement, or use agreement. There should be not less than 25 years of control remaining at the time of a mutually signed Project Agreement.

Control and tenure must be confirmed by the following documentation:

- Fee title
- Lease
- Conservation easement
- Use Agreement

An application submitted by an entity other than the property owner must include a signed Statement of Landowner Support in the Pre-application phase.

Note: The Statement of Landowner Support can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp

The Applicant must identify all outstanding rights or interests held by others on land upon which the project is proposed. A signed letter explaining control and tenure and an Affidavit of

Ownership (No template available. This document is to be procured by the Applicant) must be submitted for all projects.

Land managers maintain discretionary management responsibilities as needed to keep the Project property reasonably open, accessible, and safe for public use.

2.5 Long-term Obligations for Grant Recipients

It is important for potential Grantees to understand long-term obligations that are associated with this program. The following are key requirements:

- Ownership: Grant recipients must retain legal control and oversight of the property (via ownership or lease) and maintain facilities on property acquired or developed with an RTP grant.
- Project protection: RTP project must remain protected in that area for no less than 25 years
- Completed RTP projects must be open to public access for all

Section 3: Application Process

3.1 Grant Application Process

RTP biennial grant opportunities involve a competitive application process followed by an invitation only Second-level Application process.

The road to securing RTP funding begins with the completion of the **Pre-application**, available at www.gadnr.org/rtp. It is in this initial phase that the Applicant inputs their basic data, contact information, project scope, answers administrative and qualitative criteria questions, and supplies required project documentation needed by GADNR to review and rank each project. Once the GADNR staff scores and ranks all completed Pre-applications, The Georgia Recreational Trails Advisory Committee will review the Pre-applications and rankings, and the GADNR selected projects will move forward to an invitation only **Second-level application**. It is in this stage that the Applicants supply a more detailed level of information than what was submitted in the Pre-application. They also submit required environmental reviews, as well as various legal documents required by GADNR.

Second-level Applications must be submitted by midnight on the prescribed deadline date. GADNR staff will review all Second-level Applications to verify completion. Second-level Applicants who successfully complete all requirements and submit all necessary documents by the deadline will receive funding.

GADNR will inform all Second-level Applicants of the completion and acceptance of their full application. GADNR will also supply them with a list of available dates in which to attend a mandatory Financial Workshop.

After attending a Financial Workshop, Grantees will mutually sign a Project Agreement with GADNR and will receive a **Notice to Proceed** signifying the completion of the application process.

Note: It is only upon the receipt of a Notice to Proceed that a Grantee may move forward with their project.

3.2 Pre-application Process

Pre-application:

The Pre-application is the initial stage of the funding application process. Since RTP is a competitive program, the Pre-application serves as the basis for selecting which projects advance towards approval. It is fundamentally comprised of weighted grading criteria, which shall accumulate a total score reviewable by GADNR. Successful Pre-applications advance to the Second-level Application. Second-level Applications that are approved by the FHWA will receive a mutually signed Project Agreement.

Pre-applications must be submitted by midnight on the prescribed deadline date. All Pre-applications are reviewed by GADNR staff to verify Applicant eligibility, application completeness, and are priority ranked based on the project evaluation criteria.

Specific direction on how to satisfy these requirements are contained within the Pre-application itself. The Pre-application can be completed online at www.gadnr.org/rtp. All eligible Pre-applications must include:

- **Responses to each of the Pre-application evaluation criteria**
- **Pre-application Cover Letter** – This official letter will demonstrate support and authority to submit a Pre-application, signed by a ranking authorizing representative of the entity (Board Chair, Commissioner, Mayor, etc.). It must be on official letter head and signed by the hand of the previously mentioned authority and acknowledge by the Applicant that this is a reimbursement program with a grant term of two years from date of Project Agreement and that the Applicant understands and agrees to the required 20% match of the overall project costs.

(This is a downloadable template to be completed, signed by the authorizing representative, and uploaded into the application portal. This can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp)

- **Plat/Parcel map and legal description** – A legal depiction of the property, able to be legally defensible. Typically, these can be acquired through the Applicant's County Clerk's office.
- **Preliminary Site Plan / Conceptual Plan** – This may be an artist's or engineer's rendering and visual representation of the proposed project. All elements receiving RTP funding should be

conspicuously identifiable on the plan. Any prominent features, such as rivers, streams, roads, densely forested areas, etc., should also be represented.

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

Project Location Map – A unofficial map depicting the relative location of the project site to local towns and cities. GADNR staff will utilize this map in order to visit the project site for inspections. Websites such as Google Maps, Rand McNally, etc. will suffice in being the basis for this map.

The following are minimal criteria for an acceptable Project Location Map:

- Project and applicant names
- Project site address and exact GPS coordinates may be used if no address is assigned
- At least one significant town must be depicted
- Major highway designations and the street names immediately surrounding/leading to the project site.
- North Arrow or Compass Rose

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

- **Photos of the site with Photo key** – Optional Photos may be taken of areas receiving RTP funding. An unofficial map of the project site must be included showing the relative location of each photograph taken, each location to be numbered corresponding to the photograph's number, and an arrow pointing in the direction of viewing from the photographer's perspective.

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

- **Generalized Cost Estimate/Project Budget** for purchase and/or development - This budget shall include all categories of expenditures, modestly detailed enough to reflect the types of materials and expenses anticipated for reimbursement. Only items and values on this budget will be considered for reimbursement.

(This is a downloadable template to be completed, signed by the authorizing representative, and uploaded into the application portal. This can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp)

- **A resolution adopted by the governing entity of the Applicant authorizing the application and committing all matching funds required to complete the proposed project and acceptance of agreement terms**

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

- **Current copy of deed and lease or conservation easement if applicable**
- **Signed statement from landowner expressing support** – A legally defensible document that demonstrates the support of the landowner for the project in its entirety *if the Applicant and owner are not the same.*

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

- **Letters of financial commitment from sponsors and partners.** There is no RTP formalized template for this.

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application portal)

- **Approvals to cross a public highway or a public utility right-of-way (if applicable)**

(This is a downloadable template to be completed, signed by the authorizing representative, and uploaded into the application portal. This can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp)

- **Appraisals** (Acquisition projects)

Note: Pre-applications must be submitted by the deadline stated on the public announcement or they will not be eligible.

3.3 Pre-application Definitions

Applicant Address: The main point of contact's (defined below) address where the Applicant can be contacted regarding application questions.

Applicant Chief Elected Official, Director or President: Lead official who has authorized and will approve this project on behalf of the applying entity.

Applicant Name: Legal name of the agency or organization requesting funding.

County: County in which project will occur. List all applicable counties for projects that cross county lines.

Federal Identification Number: The Federal ID is a requirement of RTP financial services division before any payments can be made to Applicant. The ID must belong to the Applicant and not a separate parent or umbrella organization.

DUNS Number: The DUNS number is a requirement for the Federal government for contracts and grants. The DUNS number is a unique nine-digit identification number for each physical location of your business. If you do not have a DUNS number, they are free and can be applied for at <https://www.sba.gov/content/getting-d-u-n-s-number>

Main Point of Contact: This is the individual who represents the Applicant and is tasked with completing the application, working directly with GADNR in submitting all necessary documentation, and managing all inbound and outbound communications between the Applicant and GADNR. Duties may be delegated down within the Applicant's organizations, although the Main Point of Contact must remain constant, as practicable as possible.

Project Cost Information: Complete the Project Budget Worksheet by adding individual budget items.

Project Description: Provide a detailed description of the proposed project. Entries in the both application stages are limited to 500 words.

Project Title: Unique name placed on your project, which will remain the same throughout the life of the project. This name must stay consistent throughout the process and cannot be changed.

Project Type: Mark the appropriate Project Type denoting the appropriate funding stream for your application. A project must clearly fit into only one option. If you are unsure of the appropriate selection, please contact the Grants Specialist.

3.4 Pre-application Evaluation Criteria

Question 1 – Compliance

Max Points 0 points

Criteria Question GADNR evaluates Applicants with active and previously awarded grants through GADNR to verify they are in full compliance with Federal and state programs. Successful completion of projects in a timely and efficient manner is an important goal of the RTP grant program. An Applicant’s past performance in effectively managing Federal or state government grants, and successfully completing grant funded projects, are important factors in evaluating performance and compliance.

- a) The Applicant is on schedule with all active GADNR administered grant projects?
- b) The Applicant is following applicable guidelines for current and past projects?

Question Details Applicant must identify that the agency submitting the application is on schedule with all GADNR administered projects.

Serious instances of non-compliance may be reason for application denial. Past noncompliance may also be cause for GADNR to place additional requirements or special conditions on the grant, if selected, and as allowed by 2 CFR 200.207.

Scoring Metric (Note: No scoring points will be awarded for compliance criteria)

Question 2 – Recent Awards

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Max Points</i> | 10 points |
| <i>Criteria Question</i> | Priority points are given to Applicants that have NOT been awarded an RTP grant in the last 10 years. Have you been awarded for a project in the past 10 years? |
| <i>Criteria Details</i> | Applicant must list the project number if awarded in past 10 years |
| <i>Scoring Metric</i> | (GADNR will award 10 points for Applicants who have not received an RTP grant in the last 10 years) |

Question 3 – Economic Development Opportunities

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| <i>Max Points</i> | 15 points |
| <i>Criteria Question</i> | <p>Trail-related trip expenditures result in substantial contributions to local economies. Thus, GADNR would like to encourage the development of recreational trails to assist local communities in economic development. Such areas could greatly benefit from the trip expenditures and job creation associated with trail-based recreation.</p> <p>How will the project facilitate economic development?</p> |
| <i>Criteria Details</i> | Applicant must detail how the project will facilitate economic development. |
| <i>Scoring Metric</i> | (GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 15 points based on the information provided by the Applicant). |

Question 4 – Project Scope and Plan

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| <i>Max Points</i> | 30 points |
| <i>Criteria Question</i> | <p>A. Are the project scope, budget, and plan clear and realistic?</p> <p>Applicants should provide a clear and concise budget, clear plans and maps which depict the proposed project</p> |

elements, and specific details and timeline on how they plan to accomplish the project. Items to address include:

- What are you proposing to do?
- Project elements including trail amenities, users, length, width, and structures.
- How are you proposing to complete the work (contractor, qualified youth conservation or service corps, staff, volunteers, etc.)?
- Why is the work being done?
- What is your project timeline?

B. Has the pre-project planning occurred and is the project ready to proceed?

a. Development and restoration projects

Applicants should describe how their project is ready to proceed by responding to the following questions/requested items. A successful project need not address each bullet.

- What is the current level of design for the project (e.g., conceptual, percentage estimate, construction drawings)?
- Please provide project plans or drawings. Do the plans or drawing clearly depict the components of the project for which funding is sought? Are the project components clearly discernable from existing and/or future proposed features of the project site?
- When will the project work begin? When will work be completed or the facility opened for use?
- Is any public involvement required or planned? If yes, is it completed or when will it be completed?
- What permits will be needed to complete the project, and do you have these permits in hand now?

b. Acquisition projects

Applicant should describe what it will take to get their project completed in a timely manner including such items as:

- Completed appraisal
- Preliminary Title Report
- Level 1 or higher Environmental Assessment
- Proof of willing seller or donor

C. How have you addressed Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Guidelines for this project?

Applicant should use the Accessibilities Form to show how they are addressing ADA Guidelines for the project.

Criteria Details

Applicant must address the following:

- Address all questions
- Be descriptive
- Supporting documentation if needed

Scoring Metric

(GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 30 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Question 5 – Issues and Needs

Max Points

40 points

Criteria Question

Applicants are strongly encouraged to develop project applications that meet high priority needs of their communities and intended clientele. Project proposals addressing recreational trail development/management issues and funding needs at the statewide and local levels identified in local planning efforts will be given priority points.

The following criterion was developed by GADNR in consultation with the RTP Advisory Committee.

A. Statewide Trail Management/Development Issues

Project proposals addressing statewide trail issues will receive additional priority points (see top statewide trail issues listed below). To receive these points, Applicants should describe how the project addresses these issues for their designated project type.

Non-motorized Trail Projects

Issue 1. Need for more trails connecting towns/public places.

This issue is addressed by trails projects that connect communities to each other; provide connections between existing trails; close a gap within an existing trail; provide links to trails; provide access to parks and open space; and provide access to significant facilities

within communities such as schools, libraries, indoor recreation facilities, and businesses. Define the needs and benefits considered in proposing this project.

Issue 2. Need for trail rehabilitation/ restoration.

Trail rehabilitation/restoration involves extensive trail repair (e.g., resurfacing of asphalt trails or complete replacement, regrading, and resurfacing of all trails, making environmental improvements to existing trails) needed to bring a facility up to standards suitable for public use and accessibility (not routine maintenance). In some cases, trail rehabilitation/restoration may include necessary relocation of minor portions of the trail.

Issue 3. Need for more trail signs (directional and distance markers, and level of difficulty).

Trail users require many different types of signs to safely and enjoyably pursue their trail experience. Location signs that lead people to trailheads and parking areas, directional signs along the trail, destination signs to let people know they have reached end points, and regulatory signs that explain the dos and don'ts of the area are important trail components. Trail managers should provide information about their trails that allows users to choose the trails within their skill and capability level. It is important for all users to understand a specific trail's maximum grade and cross-slope, trail width, surface, obstacles and length before using the trail.

Water Trail Projects

Issue 1. Need for increased access for non-motorized boating.

The need for increased access for non-motorized boating is driven by a continuing increase in participation in non-motorized boating activities in both Georgia and the U.S. in recent decades. Access refers to a specific location where the public has the legal right and physical means to get to the water to launch a non-motorized boat. Non-motorized boating access may be unimproved or enhanced to varying degrees.

Issue 2. Lack of funding for non-motorized boater facilities.

Issue 3. Lack of non-motorized boating signage.

Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Projects

Issue 1. Need for more OHV designated trails.

Issue 2. Need to maintain existing OHV designated trails.

Issue 3. Prioritize loop over out-and-back trails.

B. Local and Regional Needs

The RTP was created to address trail needs in urban and rural areas of the state. Proposed projects that enhance trail opportunities for underserved populations are encouraged. Project proposals addressing trail issues identified in a regional or local comprehensive plan will receive additional priority points.

- a. The extent to which the project will satisfy priority needs, as identified in a current planning document such as a comprehensive plan or recreation master plan, county or regional master plan, trail system plan, capital improvements plan or land use/land management plan. Is the plan part of an adopted plan? If yes, provide the name of the plan, governing body that adopted/approved the plan, the date adopted/approved, and provide related portions of the document.
- b. If the project is not included in a current planning document, describe the public involvement effort that led to the selection of the project such as citizen involvement through public meetings/ workshops, open houses, interviews, questionnaires, etc.
- c. Identify the service area of the proposed project, and the estimated population served. Identify other trail resources in the service area by trail type, length, location in relation to the proposed trail project, and ownership. Service area could be a neighborhood, political jurisdiction, school district, or could also be defined along a linear greenway, water course, or unique natural/cultural area.

Criteria Details

Applicant must address the following:

- Address all questions

- Be descriptive
- Supporting documentation if needed

Scoring Metric (GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 40 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Question 6 – Demonstration of Public Support

Max Points 15 points

Criteria Question Public involvement is a means of building support and developing a constituency and a partnership for the development effort. The Applicant should show letters of support from citizens or trail user groups that articulate this specific project as a needed or supported project. A priority list developed out of the planning process to identify public support for this trail project can be used in addition to letters of support. Letters of support from organizations and agencies are also acceptable, but should cover the specific project’s public process, their fiscal support or other specific forms of support. Evidence of cooperative efforts with trail user groups and/or multiple public meetings providing citizens and organizations opportunities for involvement in the development and operation of the project can be included.

Criteria Details Letters should show public support for the projects covering the specific form of support with specific dollar amount or volunteer amount to be given within the writing of the letter.

Required Documents Public Support Letters with or without monetary value

Scoring Metric (GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 15 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Question 7 – Leverage of Grant Funds

Max Points 15 points

Criteria Question Meeting the minimum 20% match is a key consideration for Applicant’s who must provide a resolution adopted by their legal entity authorizing the grant application and committing at least the minimum matching funds required to complete the

proposed grant project. Additional points are awarded for Applicant's who provide written documentation of additional public or private monetary investments, or public or private commitment of allowable in-kind donations toward the project which result in match investments above the minimum 20%.

Criteria Details

Applicant must identify percentage of matching funds by dividing the total match dollars available by the total project cost.

All matching funds must be included and highlighted as such in the project budget. Written documentation of monetary investments or in-kind donations must be provided in the form of letters of contribution.

Scoring Metric

(GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 15 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Question 8 – Trail Maintenance and Management

Max Points

15 points

Criteria Question

Commitment to long-term maintenance and management: Maintaining existing trails in good/sustainable condition is a top priority and trails issue for all user groups. The Applicant should carefully respond to the following questions related to trail maintenance and management after the project is complete.

- a) Do you have dedicated funding for ongoing trail operation and maintenance? If yes, what is the approval cycle (e.g., annual, bi-annual, permanent, and fixed)?
- b) Do you have permanent staff for ongoing trail operation and maintenance? If yes, please identify the number of permanent and seasonal staff.
- c) Provide the following information relative to the proposed project- hours of operation, limitations on uses, proposed user fees, law enforcement provisions and responsible agency.
- d) Do you have an organization(s) that adopts/assists with trail maintenance? If yes, please identify the organization name(s).
- e) Do you have a trail management plan? If yes, please identify the title of the document, when it was adopted

by a governing body, and provide related portions of this document.

- f) Do you have a resolution of support for long-term maintenance (or similar guarantee of financial support)? If so, please provide related portions of this document.

Criteria Details Applicant must answer thoroughly and provide answers for all questions asked with detail and possible documentation included.

Scoring Metric (GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 15 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Question 9 – Discretionary Criteria

Max Points 10 points

Criteria Question Project reviewers may award the project additional points based on their subjective evaluation of the following examples: complete, concise and understandable project application package; superior design; ADA compliance; project readiness; site suitability; fiscal considerations; use of qualified youth conservation or service corps in project construction or maintenance; superior leveraging of partnerships; heritage; and potential for legacy. This list is not intended to be a complete list of all discretionary criteria to be considered by project reviewers.

Criteria Details Applicant needs to have provided all documents supporting their project and answered all questions in detail for a possibility of 10 extra points total.

Scoring Metric (GADNR will determine a value from 0 to 10 points based on the information provided by the Applicant.)

Attachments

Remember to include all relevant attachments to support responses above. A complete listed of related documents can be found in Section 3.2 of this manual.

Point Potential for Recreational Trails Program Project Applications

| | Ranking Criteria | Max Points |
|------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 | Compliance | 0 |
| 2 | Recent Awards | 10 |
| 3 | Economic Development Opportunities | 15 |
| 4 | Project Scope and Plan | 30 |
| 5 | Issues and Needs | 40 |
| 6 | Demonstration of Public Support | 15 |
| 7 | Leverage of Grant Funds | 15 |
| 8 | Trail Maintenance and Management | 15 |
| 9 | Discretionary Criteria | 10 |
| TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS | | 150 |

Consistency with Georgia’s State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and State Wildlife Action Plan

The State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is developed by GADNR and typically contains an inventory of existing outdoor recreation facilities, an analysis of outdoor recreation needs, and projects that may be implemented to address unmet recreation needs.

Georgia’s State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP) is a statewide strategy to conserve populations of native wildlife species and the natural habitats they need before these animals, plants and places become rarer and more costly to conserve or restore.

The Georgia’s State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan and State Wildlife Action Plan are extremely important documents, which have great relevance to the Recreational Trails Program. These publications play a critical part in understanding the priorities, needs, and direction of our efforts in conservation.

3.5 Second-level Application Process

Applicants who are selected as potential awardees through the Pre-application process will be invited to submit a Second-level Application. Applicants who submit a complete and accurate Second-level Application will receive funding per the Pre-application.

Second-level Application:

Applicants with selected Pre-applications will be invited to submit a Second-level Application. The Second-level Application serves as a mechanism in gathering more detailed project elements, detailed surveys and reviews, and items that only apply to Applicants who qualify for funding.

Items submitted in the Pre-application may not be updated or amended, as they were a significant contributor to the competitive nature of invitations sent to Second-level Applicants. If an item must be revised, please contact the Grants Specialist for assistance. GADNR staff will determine if a project amendment or a resubmission of a new Pre-application would be required.

Note: Significant changes to the Pre-application may jeopardize continuance in the program for the current cycle due to the competitive nature of RTP grants.

Second-level Applications shall contain the following additional items. Specific direction on how to satisfy these requirements are contained within the Second-level Application itself.

- **Second-level Application Cover Letter** – This official letter is the instrument denoting support and authority to submit a Second-level Application, signed by a ranking authorizing representative of the entity (Board Chair, Commissioner, Mayor, etc.). It must be on official letter head and signed by the hand of the previously mentioned authority. Must be on entity letterhead.
- **Copy of Deed to Property**
 - Note: If real property is to be acquired with grant funds, the acquisition must comply with the Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970 (The Uniform Act). Implementation regulations for the Act are found in 49 CFR Part 24. Do not acquire property until after the grant agreement has been executed and consultation with GADNR has occurred.
 - Affidavit of Ownership from landowner expressing support (This is applicable if the Applicant and landowner are not the same. A recorded easement allowing trail construction will be required from the landowner before construction begins.)
 - Approval by Land Manager
- **Approvals to cross a public highway or a public utility right-of-way** (if applicable)
- **High-resolution color photographs** including photo key.
- **Property Boundary Map** – This map shall depict the official boundary, as committed to by the Applicant, that shall be considered the Project Site. All RTP funded elements must reside within the Property Boundary Map. For acquisitions, it is the entire parcel(s) receiving RTP funding. It should include the boundaries of the area of potential effect, include city map for urban areas with detail. Before and after site plans, show elevations and project plans.

(This is a document of the Applicant's own creation and uploaded into the application)

- **Detailed Cost Estimate/Project Budget**– This budget shall include all items depicted in the Cost Estimate submitted during the Pre-application stage, although a higher level of detail is required. It should show units of measure/piece count estimates, cost per unit, proper

names of materials, etc. Only items and values depicted on this budget will be considered for reimbursement.

(This is a downloadable template to be completed, signed by the authorizing representative, and uploaded into the application portal. This can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp)

- **Project Description and Plans** – This is a detailed narrative describing the entire scope of the project, including location, acreage, purpose, need, and all RTP funded project elements. Stewardship projects require an electronic version of site engineering plans, depicting locations of elements within the site and distances to scale, and uploaded to the application where requested.

*(This is a document of the Applicant’s own creation and uploaded into the application portal. **Note: All plans must be submitted in .pdf format**)*

- **Project implementation schedule** – A schedule outlining the timeline and occurrence of each major project milestone and limited to an allowable 24-month project period.

(This is a downloadable template to be completed, signed by the authorizing representative, and uploaded into the application portal. This can be found at www.gadnr.org/rtp)

- **Environmental Review documents** – These documents and required environmental screenings are required for RTP funding. The environmental review ensures that the proper due diligence is invested in ensuring that the impact upon any site as a result of an RTP project is in accordance with RTP guidelines. A list of required environmental documents and reviews is referenced in section 3.6 of this manual.

3.6 Environmental Review Requirements

The environmental review process is a key component of this program. It requires that all Applicants consider the impact that their project may have upon Georgia’s natural resources.

Documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and other Federal environmental laws, regulations, and Executive Orders must be provided as part of an authorized project under the RTP Federal laws. FHWA procedures in [23 CFR 771](#) applies to RTP.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 was created to ensure Federal agencies consider the environmental impacts of their actions and decisions. NEPA Section 101(b) states “it is the continuing responsibility of the Federal government to use all practicable means, consistent with other essential considerations of national policy” to avoid environmental degradation, preserve historic, cultural, and natural resources, and “promote the widest range of beneficial uses of the environment without undesirable and unintentional consequences”.

Compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act is required regardless of where your

project is located (Federal, state, county, city, or private land) because RTP is Federally funded. FHWA will not approve funds for individual projects until NEPA requirements have been met.

Many RTP projects will qualify as **Categorical Exclusions** (CE) under NEPA ([23 CFR 771.117](#)). However, each project must be reviewed to assure that it does not have a significant impact on the environment.

State agency reviews to be completed by GADNR on behalf of the Applicant:

- Wildlife Resources Division (WRD)
- Historic Preservation Division (HPD)
- Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT)
- Floodplain Encroachment Review (EPD)
- United States Fish and Wildlife (USFW)

Environmental Review Process: Federal Lands

For projects on Federal Lands, FHWA requires a record of decision (or other NEPA decision document) be submitted with the application for review. If the project is a Categorically Excluded project, a letter from the appropriate authority is required that outlines how it was determined.

If the project is not a Categorically Excluded project, there will need to be a higher level of NEPA review. This would require the completion of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) or Environmental Analysis (EA).

GADNR will need:

- Copy of Decision memo from EA or EIS *or*
- Letter justifying determination of CE project

Environmental Review Process: Non-Federal Lands

For projects not located on Federal lands, FHWA is the lead NEPA agency. DNR has developed a programmatic agreement with FHWA.

Categories

Projects fall under one of these two categories:

EXEMPT - the following project types are exempt:

- Purchase of trail maintenance equipment, materials or supplies;
- Rehabilitation contained within the footprints of existing trails and trailhead facilities;
- Re-grading within the footprints of existing trails and/or parking areas;
- Striping and/or re-striping of existing trail facilities;
- Development and distribution of educational materials;
- Replacement, renovation, and/or rehabilitation of existing signs, kiosks and markers;
- Alterations to existing facilities to make them accessible;
- Repair or replacement of existing fencing, guardrail, retaining walls and berms within

- existing facilities, including areas needed for construction and staging;
- Acquisition of property or easements;
- Education projects.

If EXEMPT, submit with the application:

- If it is agreed that the project is exempt, no environmental review or documentation from the Applicant is needed. Note exemption on the ***RTP Environmental Screening Form***.

NON-EXEMPT – project types are non-exempt if they do not meet the project types listed above.

If NON-EXEMPT, submit with the application:

- ***RTP Environmental Screening Form*** completed and signed

The *RTP Environmental Screening Form* was designed to provide the necessary information for G A DNR and FHWA to determine if your project is a Categorical Excluded project. A copy of the application will automatically be provided to SHPO by GADNR staff on behalf of the Applicant for review.

It will be the Applicant's responsibility to provide any additional information requested by GADNR in a timely manner to assist in determining if the project is Categorical Exclusion. If the FHWA determines that the project is not Categorical Exclusion or that more information is needed for the determination, the project will not receive funds. No funds will be allocated until FHWA approves the project.

Below is a list of common project considerations for cultural resources:

- A. Any project element calling for alteration, rehabilitation, renovation, or demolition of a historically, culturally, or architecturally significant property or property contributing to the integrity of a cohesive older neighborhood or historic district needs to be cleared by the SHPO on a case-by-case basis.
- B. With limited exception, it is illegal to disturb an archaeological site or to remove an archaeological site or to remove an archaeological object from public or private lands unless that activity is authorized under a permit issued by GADNR.
- C. If human remains are found during an excavation, stop all land disturbing activity immediately, protect the burial from harm, and notify local law enforcement. Law enforcement officials, under OCGA 31-21-6, will then notify the coroner, the local government, and GADNR. Contact the RTP Coordinator and keep her/him informed of the status of the remains. This is to ensure the RTP Coordinator can consult with FHWA Division office. If on Federal lands, contact the Federal Land Manager first, as additional Federal laws apply.
- D. If other archaeological materials are found during a ground disturbing activity, stop work and contact the SHPO. If on Federal lands, contact the Federal Land Manager first. The SHPO can check to see if your project area has been surveyed and can give you a current list of archaeological consultants. Only professional archaeologists or persons working

for recognized scientific organizations may apply for an archaeological permit.

If it is determined that your project will need an archeological review or survey, it is at the expense of the Sponsor and is not eligible for RTP funding. The review or survey expense may be eligible as match if the cost is incurred within the 18 months prior to executing an agreement and prior to grant closeout.

3.7 Map Requirements

Project Location Map – An unofficial map depicting the relative location of the project site to local towns and cities. GADNR Staff will utilize this map in order to visit the project site for GADNR required inspections. This map should show precise location of the project. USGS topographic map are available at <http://www.digital-topo-maps.com/>.

Property Boundary Map – This map shall depict the official boundary, as committed to by the Applicant, that shall be considered the Project Site. All RTP funded elements must reside within the Property Boundary Map. For acquisitions, it is the entire parcel(s) receiving RTP funding.

- Precise location of the project (USGS topographic map preferred: <http://www.digital-topo-maps.com/>)
- In urban areas, please also include a city map that shows more detail.
- Boundaries of the Area of Potential Effect (APE) as noted in section II of the Environmental Screening Form.

Preliminary Site Plan/Conceptual Plan – This may be an artist’s or engineer’s rendering and visual representation of the proposed project. All elements receiving RTP funding should be conspicuously identifiable on the plan. Any prominent features, such as rivers, streams, roads, densely forested areas, etc., should also be represented as realistically as possible and include:

- Site plans (before and after).
- Project plans.
- Elevations.

Photos and Photo Key (optional): Applicants may take various photos of the key components of the project receiving funding. An unofficial map of the project site must be included showing the relative location of each photograph taken, each location to be numbered corresponding to the photograph’s number, and an arrow pointing in the direction of viewing from the photographer’s perspective.

Sections 4: Grant Recipient Requirements

4.1 Grant Term

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

Note: Any variance or extensions must be requested via a Project Agreement Amendment or resubmission (see section 2.3G) and approval through the FHWA and GADNR. Project dates may be subject to alteration by GADNR due to fund availability.

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

4.2A Quarterly Progress Reports

Once a Notice to Proceed has been issued, the Grantee 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.

Grantees are 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.

4.2B Reimbursement Requests

Payment of grant funds is on a reimbursement basis. Accurate and comprehensive documentation of project costs is critical. As applicable to the project and grant program, Applicants will be required to submit to GADNR a Reimbursement Request and detailed documentation (e.g. proof-of-purchase, proof-of-payment, force account details, etc.) prior to reimbursement. These requests may be completed and submitted at www.gadnr.org/rtp.

Reimbursements are based on eligible direct costs incurred during the development of the project. Refer to sections 2.3A – 2.3D for further instruction. **Only those approved costs that are incurred after the Project Agreement date, and up to the expiration of the 24-month project period can be reimbursed.** Eligible costs are further explained in section 2.3A. Contact the Grants Specialist for more information about eligible and ineligible costs which may not be covered in this publication.

Prior to final reimbursement, Grantees also need to demonstrate that the affected property title does not contain any issues that impact the legal authority of the Applicant to construct the proposed RTP project or acquire the grant-funded property. Applicants are encouraged to conduct a title search as early as possible in the project development process and discuss any issues with the Grants Specialist.

Grantees may request reimbursements at any time, although it is recommended that requests are submitted at least quarterly. A lack of Reimbursement Request within a six-month timeframe is deemed an inactive grant and funding from FHWA may be revoked. GADNR will generally make payment within **30 days** after a Reimbursement Request and the supporting documentation has been approved. Reimbursement Requests are based on actual project expenditures that align with the Grantee's Project Agreement, including the approved project application scope and budget.

Adequate supporting documentation for all expenses is required with each request, as applicable, including but not limited to:

- Proof of payment, including payment for match items
- Invoices
- Donation and in-kind documentation
- Eligible equipment purchase documentation
- Documentation of procurement/bidding process
- Photos (optional)
- Construction Contract (if first construction payment)
- Bid Tabulation (if first construction payment)

GADNR may request additional supporting documentation to process a reimbursement as needed.

Note: Quarterly reports must be up to date to submit Reimbursement Requests.

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.

Final Billing:

A final billing is made when the project scope of work is completed, all required documentation has been submitted and approved, and the project is open to the public. Grantees must submit a final Reimbursement Request and identify any remaining unneeded surplus balance via an attached memo.

Amendment requests submitted to GADNR in an effort to utilize surplus funds shall not be considered for approval. Only those items as submitted in the original budget are eligible for reimbursement, per the Project Agreement.

Once a project has been closed, remaining funds are deobligated and GADNR cannot make additional payments.

Public Information:

All information and documentation submitted to GADNR is open to public review. GADNR requires that confidential or sensitive information, including home addresses, social security numbers, and bank account numbers, be removed or redacted from documents submitted to GADNR. This applies to bank account numbers included on copies of checks.

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 cancelled check. GADNR will not reimburse for payments made in cash, as this method does not provide a verifiable audit trail.

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 Payroll (Force Account):

Force account refers to the use of a Grantee's direct staff. Employee time directly related to the approved scope of work may be reported as a project cost. The reportable amount is the employee's regular rate of pay, including taxes and benefits. Taxes and benefits are eligible only if the Grantee pays them when they are due. Refer to policy 2.3D for requirements around eligibility of force account expense for reimbursement or match.

All payroll related costs must be documented on a timesheet that meets the following standards. Alternative reports generated by the Grantee's accounting system may be considered sufficient supporting documentation.

- Reflect an after-the-fact determination of the actual activity of each employee.
- Account for the total activity for which employees are compensated.
- Be signed or authorized electronically by the individual employee or by a responsible

supervisor having firsthand knowledge of the activities performed by the employee.

- Be prepared at least monthly and coincide with one or more pay periods.
- Not be budget estimates or other distributions based on a percentage before the work was performed.

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.

Documenting Donated or Volunteer Labor:

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.

Alternate documentation may be accepted and must include all of the following:

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

Costs associated with food or beverages are not allowable for volunteers.

Documenting Donated Materials and Supplies:

Materials and supplies are considered donated when they are given to the project at no cost. The reported value of donated materials is the market value of the materials or supplies at the time used. To document donated materials and supplied, submit the **Donated Materials or Supplies Record** form along with information to support the valuation determination.

Documenting Vendor Discounts:

Normal vendor discounts and sales cannot be counted towards 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 including 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. The **RTP Donated Equipment Form** should be used.

4.2C Final Report

The Final Report must be submitted by the Grantee with the final Reimbursement Request to GADNR within 45 days of the project completion date. The Final Report serves as notice that the Grantee has completed the project in compliance with applicable regulations. The Final Report will be completed on the Quarterly Progress Report form and include:

- Marked as "Final Report"
- Indication that the project is complete, accessible, and open to the public
- Photos of the completed work

- A final **Reimbursement Request**, submitted to GADNR, that shows a full account of all expenditures and match

GADNR staff will inspect all completed projects. Final payments will not be made until final documentation is received and approved, and the project has been inspected and verified as complete.

4.2D Publicity

Grantees must make every effort to acknowledge and publicize the program's participation and assistance with the project. Acknowledgement of participation shall be conspicuously placed at the project location for public viewing. Grantees may incorporate acknowledgements onto existing or new signage at the project location. The GADNR logo, which shall be included in this signage, is available at www.gadnr.org/rtp.

Additionally, if any property receiving RTP funding is, or will be, posted on a recipient's web page, it should also acknowledge and publicize the program's participation and assistance with the property.

4.2E Procurement

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

4.2F Retention Requirements

Grantees are subject to a GADNR audit of their project file. Grantees must retain and keep accessible all books, documents, papers, and records that are directly related to the RTP project **for a minimum of five years** following the close of the program agreement. These documents include but are not limited to:

- Invoices and receipts
- Copies of payments
- Timesheets and copies of internal transactions
- Records pertaining to a use allowance for sponsor-owned equipment
- Procurement documentation
- Donation logs and statements
- All books, records, documents, data, & other materials relevant to grant.

The records must support all project-related costs reported to GADNR and be made available upon request. If any litigation, claim or audit is started before the project documents are removed from the entity's records, Grantees must keep the records until all litigation, claims or audit findings involving the records have been resolved.

4.3 RTP Rules and Regulations

Compliance with Law: Grantee shall comply with all Federal, state and local laws, regulations, executive orders and ordinances applicable to the Agreement or to implementation of the Project, including without limitation 23 USC 206 and ORS 390.980 which makes funds available for the purposes of RTP. Key regulations include, but are not limited to:

- 2 CFR 200, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards 2 CFR 1201
- FHWA Recreational Trails Program Interim Guidance
- 23 U.S.C. 206 Recreational Trails Program
- 23 U.S.C. 104 (h), Recreational Trails Program Apportionments
- 23 U.S.C. 106, Project Approval and Oversight
- 23 CFR 1.36, Compliance with other Federal Laws and Regulations
- 23 CFR 771, Environmental Requirements
- 23 CFR 635.410 Buy America
- 49 CFR 29, Suspension and Debarment
- Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970
- 23 U.S.C. 114(b), Convict Labor
- 29 CFR 3, Anti-Kickback (Copeland Act)
- 23 U.S.C. 113, Prevailing Wage Rate (Davis Bacon Act)

The Grantee bears all responsibility for the administration and success of their project, including performance by third parties under sub agreements made by the Grantee for accomplishing project objectives.

Section 5: Grant Closeout

Grant closeout signifies the completion of the project. GADNR will ensure all agreed-upon work, as described in the Project Agreement, and administrative actions have been accomplished by the expiration date. Any discrepancies will be returned to the Grantee to be remedied.

Final payment will not occur until all required Final Reports and documents have been approved by GADNR to insure all aspects of the grant contract have been met.

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:

- A final letter or report attesting to the completion of the project in accordance with the approved Project Agreement/Amended Project Agreement.

- Documentation that all corrective items identified during the GADNR final on-site inspection have been completed. This may require an additional GADNR final inspection prior to close out.
- Grantee's Final Report (refer to Section 4.2C for guidance)
- Sufficient digital images of completed project elements which received funding.
- Official As-built drawings in .pdf format
- For acquisitions only - An updated property deed with required protective language and recording stamp from the local jurisdiction's County Clerk's office.
- GADNR Final Project Audit, which may include but not be limited to:
 - Audit of all paperwork submitted by the Grantee for accuracy and completion
 - Audit of all expenditures against the total project budget
 - Audit of all previous reimbursements and requests
 - Verification of a total match submitted by the Grantee
 - Final site inspection conducted by GADNR Staff

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.

The information in this manual is subject to change without notice and should not be construed as the only source of information governing the Recreational Trails Program (RTP). Potential changes to the policies and procedures herein may be necessary to properly administer the program. GADNR personnel will attempt to assist Applicants in satisfying changes in criteria and requirements as they occur.