Partnerships Projects

This section provides more detailed information and guidance on collaborative statewide and regional recreation, conservation and heritage projects. Grants are awarded to assist with building professional capacity and educating the public on the benefit and value of recreation, conservation and heritage in Pennsylvania.

Ready-To-Go Checklist

This Checklist is to be used by the applicant to ensure the Partnerships Project is "Ready-To-Go". The items below need to be addressed, included and/or uploaded in the application. It will be used by DCNR in the grant application evaluation process. If you have questions regarding this Checklist, please contact the DCNR Regional Advisor assigned to the region in which your project is located.

✱ Ready-to-Go Status is worth 15 points. It is essential to provide high quality, well-defined and/or detailed information for these items.

	Yes	Item
	☐	Contacted appropriate DCNR Regional or Partnerships Division Staff
	☐	Eligible applicant
	☐	The organization (unless it is an educational institution) must be both tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 and registered with the Pennsylvania Department of State, Bureau of Charitable Organizations (BCO).
	☐	Eligible scope of work activities
✱	☐	The applicant does not have any open expired DCNR grant agreements
✱	☐	The applicant has filed work plans for all currently open DCNR Partnerships grants
✱	☐	The application contains a clear & concise work plan with detailed scope of work items that contain accurate cost estimates, measurable outputs and meaningful outcomes in a timeframe not to exceed 18 months
✱	☐	Completed current progress reports for all open Partnerships grants are uploaded into the Grants Customer Service Portal (existing Partnerships grantees only)
✱	☐	The application contains a minimum of 20% secured match in relation to the total project cost. Proposed mini-grant programs contain 50% match. Letters of match commitment from entities other than applicant are uploaded. (Does not apply to Heritage Area Management Funds)
	☐	Detailed account of eligible cash and/or non-cash match
	☐	Properly completed Resolution Page uploaded into the Grants Customer Service Portal

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships projects are collaborative statewide or regional recreation, conservation, or heritage projects that convene, educate, or train partners; build capacity; undertake special purpose studies or implementation projects; or offer mini-grants to grassroots partner organizations. Partnerships projects help build local, county, regional and statewide capacity to better develop and manage natural, recreational, or heritage resources through plan implementation.

A. Statewide and Regional Projects
Statewide and regional partners may apply for grant funding to assist in advancing these and other plans and programs:
- Pennsylvania's Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan
- Pennsylvania Greenways Plan
- Pennsylvania Heritage Areas Program
- Conservation Landscapes

Eligible applicants are statewide and regional non-profit recreation, conservation and greenways organizations, regional municipal entities and Pennsylvania's 12 designated heritage areas.

Project Types:

1. Convening, Education, and Training Projects
Projects that develop, promote, and/or conduct training or education programs; prepare and distribute technical assistance or educational materials, brochures or videos and/or otherwise provide for the training and education of professionals and/or the general public on a local, county, regional or statewide basis. These projects address issues related to plan implementation, capacity building, training or education programs related to natural resource and community conservation, land and open space preservation, greenways, trails and recreation and parks.

Example of these types of projects include: Advancing awareness of rivers, greenways, trails, recreation and/or conservation issues through educational conferences, workshops, materials, publications, sojourns and websites**.**

2. Special Purpose Planning Projects
Special Purpose Planning is a comprehensive planning process that will define a long-range (5-10 year) plan of action to organize, implement, manage and market natural resource and community conservation, heritage resources, land and open space preservation, greenways, trails, recreation and parks, or cultural preservation.

Special Purpose Study is a more concentrated study or plan necessary to implement one or more of the recommendations of a previously completed planning study. These projects will be negotiated on a case-by-case basis.

The Bureau requires that project consultants are selected using a competitive request for proposal (RFP) process.

Examples of special purpose studies would be management action plans, economic assessments, marketing plans, specialized inventories, preservation and interpretive plans, as well as, special feasibility studies.

3. **Implementation Projects**
Implementation Projects are non-planning projects that implement recommendations of previously completed special purpose plans or studies. Examples of implementation projects include the construction of interpretive/educational exhibits, programs, signage and materials, as well as, promotional/marketing products. The Bureau requires an open and competitive process for the award of all sub-contracts.

4. **Mini-Grants Projects**
Statewide and regional partners may request mini-grant funding to develop small grant programs that will implement multiple projects through their local partners. These projects should advance priorities identified through previous completed plans. The request can include a combination of project types eligible for funding under the Statewide and Regional category. All projects funded require a minimum of 20% secured match. Any other proposed match amount will require written justification for review and consideration by DCNR.

Statewide and Regional Project Special Requirements and Conditions:
- Grant application scopes of work are expected to be written for a timeframe not to exceed 18 months. In general, grant awards will also be made in this fashion. The Department may award funding for a longer duration at its discretion.
- Requests for DCNR funding in a single application should generally not exceed $300,000 for an 18-month period. The Department may award higher grant amounts at its discretion.
- Match requirements for Partnerships projects are based upon the type of applicant, proposed scope of work and available funding source(s). Some conditions may require a 50:50 match. All applicants are strongly encouraged to show a minimum 20% secured match.
  - Partnerships Program match is considered secure if pledged directly by the grantee, anticipated as mini-grant local match, anticipated as a realistic volunteer value and documented in an attached partner commitment letter.
- For funding appropriated to the Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program (PHAP), Pennsylvania's 12 designated heritage areas are eligible applicants and heritage areas should follow PHAP program guidelines.

B. Local Capacity Building Projects
Partners may apply for grant funding to help build municipal, multi-municipal and/or county capacity to better develop, manage and promote recreation and park facilities and the conservation of our natural resources. Eligible applicants are primarily counties and municipalities, except where noted in special requirements and conditions.

1. **Peer**
These projects help municipalities improve their park, recreation and conservation services through a collaborative process. Projects are accomplished through contracts with experienced park, recreation or conservation professionals working closely with community leaders.

Examples of eligible projects include the forming of a new intergovernmental recreation and park agency (which is a high priority for DCNR); improving management of recreation, park and trail facilities; conducting a review of a community's recreation facilities for acceptable green principals and practices, and/or park and recreation board training and development.

Peer Project Special Requirements and Conditions:
- Peer applications are accepted at any time.
- Generally, the maximum grant award is $18,000. The applicant must provide at least a ten percent (10%) local cash match.
- In special circumstances non-profit entities will be considered for peer funding on a case by case basis.

2. **Circuit Rider**

These projects provide grant funds for county or regional organizations to hire a professional, full-time staff person. The circuit rider's purpose is to initiate new programs and services for a county and/or municipalities that individually do not have the financial resources to hire a professional staff person. The intended result of such a hiring is to increase the ability of county and local officials to more efficiently and effectively meet their recreation, park, greenways, open space and/or natural resource and community conservation needs. Examples of eligible Circuit Rider projects include:
- The first full-time professional recreation director to expand recreation program offerings for a multi-municipal agency or county.
- An established recreation and park department serving one municipality hires a recreation program coordinator to provide contracted recreation services to two or more neighboring municipalities.
- A county greenways and open space coordinator is hired to help implement a county greenways and open space network plan.

Circuit Rider Project Special Requirements and Conditions:
- Circuit rider applications are accepted at any time. The application must come from a county, one municipality, a council of governments, an authority or an official agency created under the Intergovernmental Cooperation Law. In most situations, the Bureau will require a peer review under our Peer grants before approving an application for circuit rider funding.
- To be eligible for circuit rider funding, two or more municipalities must cooperate in a new intergovernmental effort by adopting an intergovernmental agreement. A single county can be eligible without an intergovernmental agreement providing the county is undertaking or has completed the appropriate recreation and/or greenways planning and will be providing services countywide to their residents and municipalities.
- This is a four-year commitment of funding.
- Eligible project costs include the circuit rider's salary only, as well as, Bureau-approved technical assistance and training expenses as follows:
  - **First year** up to one hundred percent (100%) of gross salary.
  - **Second year** up to seventy-five percent (75%) of gross salary.
  - **Third year** up to fifty percent (50%) of gross salary.
  - **Fourth year** up to twenty-five percent (25%) of gross salary.
  - **Training Expenses** up to $2,000 available for Bureau-approved training expenses over the four years of funding.
  - **Mentoring Expenses** up to $1,500 for a Bureau-approved mentor to assist a new circuit rider.
- Participating parties must provide local funds to cover the circuit rider's employee benefits for all four years, the balance of the salary in years two, three and four, and normal support services, such as office space and furnishings, training and travel expenses, clerical support, equipment, etc.
- In year five and beyond, the Bureau expects the local effort to continue on its own.

Refer to the following web-links for documents which should be helpful in developing your Grant Application:

Statewide and Regional Projects:
- [Partnerships Grant Administrative Instructions](#)
- [Pennsylvania Heritage Area Program Guidelines](#)

Local Capacity Building Document Links:
- [Circuit Rider Projects – General Information and Guidelines](#)
- [Peer Program – General Information and Guidelines](#)

Bureau Policy Links:
- [Partnerships Eligible and Ineligible Grant Project Activities, Costs, and Match](#)