

FY 2014 NRT GRANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Maryland State Highway Administration National Recreational Trails Program

1. Introduction

The Maryland State Highway Administration (SHA) is pleased to invite the Maryland communities to submit Recreational Trail applications for FY 14 funds, with a deadline date of **2 p.m. on July 1, 2013**. SHA encourages non-profit organizations and government agencies to utilize this Program to fund trail related projects.

The US Congress first authorized the Recreational Trails Program in the Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act of 1991. It was reauthorized in 1998 under the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) and again in 2013 with the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21). The Recreational Trails Program is a reimbursement based program which provides funds to project sponsors to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both non-motorized and motorized recreational trail uses. Examples of trail uses include hiking, bicycling, in-line skating, equestrian use, canoeing, kayaking, cross-country skiing, snowmobiling, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle riding, four-wheel driving, or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

The extension of the federal surface transportation authorization legislation should provide Maryland an average of \$1,000,000 per year, from FY13 through FY 14.

Please Note: Funds requested for projects cannot exceed \$40,000 for trail construction and \$30,000 for non-construction.

Activities eligible for funding within this Program include:

- Maintenance and restoration of existing recreational trails.
- Development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities and trail linkages for recreational trails.
- Purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment.
- Construction of new recreational trails (there are restrictions on new trails on Federal land).
- Acquisition of easements or fee simple title to property for recreational trails or recreational trail corridors.
- Assessment of trail conditions for accessibility and maintenance.
- Development and dissemination of publications and operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection, (as those objectives relate to one or more of the uses of recreational trails, supporting non-law enforcement trail safety and trail use monitoring patrol programs, and providing trail related training).

All States, must use a certain percentage of their funds in a fiscal year for diverse recreational trail uses, motorized recreation and non motorized recreation.

2. Program Overview

This section will allow a potential sponsor to evaluate their project for eligibility. Recreational Trails Program funds are made available for projects that fit into at least one of the seven activities previously listed on a reimbursement basis.

Please note: These funds are not administered as typical grants, but are awarded to sponsors on a reimbursement basis; therefore, the sponsor must provide documentation of incurred expenses and proof of payment for the funds to be reimbursed.

Recreational Trails projects must conform to all applicable federal and State requirements, metropolitan and statewide planning processes and public involvement activities, including, but not limited to:

- United States Code (USC)
- Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 23

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- Uniform Relocation Assistance
- Federal Uniform Relocation Assistance and Real Property Acquisition Policies Act of 1970, as amended and provide for under 49 CFR Part 24, and 23 CFR Subchapter H Part 710
- National Environmental Policy Act
- National Historic Preservation Act-Section 106
- Department of Transportation Act-Section 4(f)
- Endangered Species Act-Section 7
- Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPO)

SHA is responsible for managing the program and assuring that all appropriate regulations are followed. SHA is also responsible for screening all requests for funding and making funding awards.

3. Program Policies

SHA requires that the maximum Federal share for each project from Recreational Trails Program funds is 80 percent. In other words, a maximum of 80 percent of the total project costs can be reimbursed by Recreational Trail Program funds; the remaining 20 percent will be covered by sponsor matching resources/funds. Matching resources/funds, such as cash, property value, design, construction, construction inspection, in-kind services and materials should be included as part of the total project costs.

4. Application Process

Project sponsors must complete a Recreational Trail Application for each project. The required information includes scope of work, funds requested, and matching funds to be provided. A blank application form can be found at: <http://www.roads.maryland.gov/Index.aspx?PageId=98>

Applications will be accepted throughout the year with an annual deadline of July 1, and will be received by:

Terry Maxwell
Maryland Scenic Byways / Recreational Trails Program
State Highway Administration
707 N Calvert Street, Mailstop C-303
Baltimore, MD 21202
tmaxwell@sha.state.md.us

Project applications will be reviewed for eligibility and adherence to Program criteria. Applications that are incomplete, do not have reasonable cost estimates, or do not have sufficient design detail, will not be considered for funding. Approved projects will receive award letters.

Please note: No activity is to be undertaken until SHA gives written notification to sponsors that they may proceed in fulfilling project requirements. The letter of award does **not** serve this purpose. Any advertisement for construction contracts, purchase of materials, equipment or supplies, or any other activity approved for reimbursement conducted prior to receiving written approval from SHA will make part or the entire project ineligible for reimbursement.

5. Project Requirements

Memorandum of Understanding: SHA and the sponsor will then execute a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The MOU defines the project, award amount, and roles of each party. Concurrently, the sponsor can proceed with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) requirements.

NEPA Requirements: All federally funded Recreational Trails projects must conform to the laws that ensure the environment is both protected and enhanced. Laws ensuring environmental protection include, but are not limited to:

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- National Environmental Policy Act
- National Historic Preservation Act-Section 106, and
- Department of Transportation Act-Section 4(f).

6. Procurement and Reimbursement

There are two types of procurement methods for Recreational Trails projects:

- Projects with a Total Cost under \$25K would follow Small Procurement Procedures, and
- Projects with a Cost Above \$25K (a purchase, construction and/or maintenance).

Disadvantaged Businesses: All necessary affirmative action steps shall be taken to assure that minority firms and women's business enterprises are used when possible. These steps shall include: placing qualified small and minority businesses and women's business enterprises on solicitation lists, assuring that small, minority businesses and women's business enterprises are solicited whenever there are potential sources.

When the MOU is fully executed, NEPA requirements are fulfilled, and the procurement requirements have been met, SHA will issue a written notice to proceed (NTP). Only then should the sponsor proceed to spend money anticipated for reimbursement by the Recreational Trails Program.

7. Monitoring and Inspection

The project sponsor will be responsible for meeting all federal, state and local requirements. SHA will monitor projects and verify that the projects are implemented and the program funds are being spent in accordance with the MOU.