



## **DVRPC Regional Trails Program – Phase IX: Funding to Support Trails, Trailheads, and Gateways That Connect People, Communities, and Destinations Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA)**

### **Introduction**

Partners across Greater Philadelphia are working to build a region-wide network of multi-use trails that people can use to bike, walk, roll, commute, exercise, relax, and meet neighbors and friends. This network, called the [Circuit Trails](#), connects communities across the nine counties of Greater Philadelphia and is a hub for national trails like the East Coast Greenway and 9/11 National Memorial Trail. About 370 miles of this 800-plus-mile network are complete.

Continuing to build the Circuit Trails and creating safe, accessible, and welcoming community connections to the network are two important goals to ensure the continuing success of this initiative. These goals are envisioned in the region's long-range transportation plan, *Connections 2050: Plan for Greater Philadelphia*, and in DVRPC's [Regional Trails Program](#).

Capitalized with funding from the William Penn Foundation, a total of \$1 million is available through this funding opportunity for projects in the nine-county Greater Philadelphia region to fund right-of-way acquisition, planning, design, and/or construction of multi-use trails and/or safe, accessible, and welcoming trailheads, gateways, and neighborhood connections.

A strong emphasis is placed on equity and community engagement as part of this funding opportunity.

**Responses are due by 5:00 PM on Thursday, November 10, 2022.**

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## What is DVRPC?

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally-designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a diverse nine-county region in two states: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer in New Jersey. DVRPC works to build a prosperous, innovative, equitable, resilient, and sustainable Greater Philadelphia by convening the widest array of partners to inform and facilitate data-driven decision-making. Through its programs, funding, analysis and coordination DVRPC strives to promote best practices in transportation and comprehensive planning across the region.

## Who May Apply?

Phase IX Regional Trails Program grants are intended to support the efforts of local governments, state agencies, development corporations and nonprofit organizations to plan, design, and construct multi-use trails and community connections. Applicants may include state, county, municipal and city agencies and departments; nonprofit organizations and development corporations; or any other group with the capacity to carry out such a project. Trails must be fully open to the public.

Applicants who will not be the long-term owner, manager and maintainer of a trail must show support from the entity that will perform these functions and demonstrate that this entity has the capacity to perform these functions.

Partnerships, including with community- or neighborhood-groups, are encouraged. In the event of a partnership approach, a Lead Applicant must be identified and is required to assume the contractual responsibilities of delivering the awarded project. All sub-consultants need to be able to document work completed as part of the project and must comply with DVRPC's contract terms (e.g., Title VI compliance, non-discrimination requirements).

## Geographic Eligibility and Equity

Projects that serve communities that have faced historic or current discrimination in the allocation of resources or have been subject to a disproportionate share of environmental burdens are the priority focus of this grant program. For the purposes of this program, eligibility will be limited to projects located wholly or partially within a Census Tract or Census Tracts with Indicator of Potential Disadvantage scores of 3 or more (above or well above average) for one or more of the following factors: low income population, racial minority population, ethnic minority population, limited English proficiency, or foreign-born population (see DVRPC Equity Analysis at: <https://www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/ipd/>). All projects must describe specific outreach and community engagement efforts with identified populations that will occur or have occurred as part of project development.



## Eligible Activities

Eligible activities under Phase IX include planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction. Limited funding for right-of-way acquisition is also available, though these projects will need to be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. In combination with funding to support any of the above activities, expenses related to robust community engagement, as applicable, are also eligible.

Projects must advance a part of the Circuit Trails network and/or a trailhead, gateway, and/or neighborhood connection to it.

Projects must be multi-use, supporting both pedestrian use as well as accommodating bicycles and/or wheeled mobility devices. If a trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection, this can be accomplished through a single facility or a combination of proximate facilities (e.g., a stairwell and ramp).

## Available Funds

Up to \$1 million in private funding is available for Phase IX grants. Individual awards may not exceed \$100,000.

No match or local share will be required.

All funds awarded will be provided on a cost reimbursable basis. In other words, work must be completed and invoiced to the Project Sponsor before a reimbursement can be sought from DVRPC.

DVRPC will only reimburse for costs up to the award amount and only in accordance with provisions of the contract between DVRPC and the Project Sponsor.

## Site Control

Proposed construction projects must show that a project area is under public control or that a clear plan and funding strategy is in place to obtain site control in order to complete the project before June 30, 2025 (see "Project Delivery"). Proposed design and engineering projects should demonstrate a process and timeline for establishing site control in the future in cases where the ROW is not yet under public control. If available and pertinent, documentation regarding site control should be provided. Assessment of right-of-way needs and development of strategies to acquire needed right-of-way are essential elements of feasibility studies and alternatives analyses.

## Project Delivery

Projects must be completed by June 30, 2025. Failure to meet this deadline could result in the forfeiture of any funds not currently reimbursed by DVRPC by that date.



## Evaluation of Applications

A Regional Trails Program evaluation and selection committee consisting of representatives from each county in the DVRPC service area, DVRPC staff, Circuit Trails Coalition representatives, and state agencies will evaluate and prioritize the applications for funding based on the program evaluation criteria outlined below.

## Evaluation Criteria

The following program criteria will be used to evaluate planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction projects. The more specific the applicant's narrative regarding the details of the proposed project (as opposed to background details about the applicant or the community), the easier it will be for evaluators to make determinations about the proposal.

Note: Criteria in **black** are applicable to planning and feasibility, design, and construction projects; criteria in **purple** are applicable to planning and feasibility projects only; criteria in **blue** are applicable to design and engineering projects only; and criteria in **red** are applicable to construction projects only.

### 1. Project Readiness

- a. Is the right-of-way (ROW) fully under public control or eased for trail use?
  - i. If not, how many additional acquisitions are necessary?
  - ii. Who does ROW need to be acquired from and what is the current status of the acquisition process?
  - iii. *Planning only:* If ROW has not been secured (likely the case for a planning project), what is the likelihood that future right-of-way can be secured and at what cost?
- b. Are there potential obstacles and barriers such as bridges, road crossings, rail crossings, utility conflicts, retaining walls, tunnels, and sensitive environmental resources?
- c. *Construction only:* Has the design been completed? If not completed, is design funded?
- d. *Construction only:* What is the schedule for completion of construction?

### 2. Funding

- a. Is the project budget right-sized for the proposed scope of work?
- b. Has the sponsor committed to cover cost overruns?
- c. *Design only:* What is the strategy for acquiring future construction funding? What sources of construction funding have been identified?
- d. *Construction only:* What is the accuracy of construction cost estimate? Is it based on completed design work?

### 3. Political and Community Support

- a. Is there community support?
- b. Is the project supported of by local elected officials and agency staff?
- c. Is the trail or improvement documented in neighborhood, local, county, or state plans?

### 4. Equity

- a. Are the [Indicators of Potential Disadvantage](#) scores 3 or above (above or well above average) for low-income, racial minority, ethnic minority, limited English proficiency, and/or foreign-born in any of the Census tracts in which the project is located? If so, in how many tracts and in which categories?
- b. Will the trail provide new transportation and recreational opportunities to historically underserved populations and/or communities of color?
- c. *Planning only:* How will historically underserved populations and/or communities of color in the project area be engaged as part of the planning process for the proposed trail? What local, neighborhood, or community groups are or will be involved as partners, sub-consultants, or on the project advisory team?
- d. *Design only:* How were historically underserved populations and/or communities of color in the project area engaged as part of the planning process for the proposed trail? How will they continue to be engaged as part of the design process? What local, neighborhood, or community groups were or will be involved as partners, sub-consultants, or on the project advisory team?
- e. *Construction only:* How were historically underserved populations and/or communities of color in the project area engaged as part of the planning and/or design process for the proposed trail?

### 5. Trail Geography

- a. If a trail:
  - i. Is it part of the Circuit Trails?
  - ii. If not part of the Circuit Trails, does the trail connect to the Circuit Trails?
  - iii. How many trail miles will be planned, designed or constructed?
- b. If a trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection:
  - i. What neighborhoods does the new facility connect to the Circuit Trails?
  - ii. Will the new facility provide increased access to parks, water resources, natural areas or environmental education centers via the Circuit Trails?
  - iii. Will the new facility provide access to a community center, transit node, school, or other important community destination? If to transit, to what specific transit services does the facility connect?
- c. Does the trail, trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood provide access to “new” users? Does the proposed trail, trailhead, or gateway remove or overcome any specific barriers to access?
- d. *Planning only:* If the answers to some of the above questions are unknown or yet to be determined, will the planning or feasibility study answer them?

## 6. Trail Typology and Specifications

- a. Will the proposed trail, trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection have a paved or crushed stone surface designed to accommodate bicycles and/or wheeled mobility devices?
- b. Will the trail, trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection meet AASHTO guidelines for width (i.e. at least 10ft wide with limited exceptions)?
- c. Will the trail or connecting facility be off-road and/or physically buffered from motorized traffic?
- d. Will the trail meet all other AASHTO and ADA guidelines where applicable?

## 7. Economic and Community Benefit

- a. What are the likely economic benefits of the trail, trailhead, or gateway?
  - i. Will the trail contribute to community revitalization?
  - ii. What economic development benefits (e.g., increased recreation, increased commerce) will the trail provide?
  - iii. Is the trail part of the host municipality's economic development or marketing strategy?
- b. What community benefits will the trail, trailhead, or gateway provide?

## 8. Sponsor Capacity for Project Management

- a. *Planning only:* Does the sponsor have capacity to manage and/or experience in managing trail, trailhead, or gateway planning and feasibility studies?
- b. *Design only:* Does the sponsor have capacity to manage and/or experience managing trail, trailhead, or trail gateway design projects? Has the sponsor worked with qualified trail design consultants in the past?
- c. *Construction only:* Does the sponsor have capacity to manage and/or experience in managing trail, trailhead, or trail gateway construction projects?
- d. Are adequate staff resources dedicated to project management?

## 9. Sponsor Capacity for Stewardship

- a. Does the sponsor/partner have the capacity and expertise to manage and maintain the trail, trailhead, or gateway? Does the sponsor/partner have experience managing and maintaining trails?
- b. Is there a volunteer and/or "friends-of" group to assist with maintenance and programming?
- c. *Planning only:* If the stewardship organization is unknown, which may be the case for a trail still in the planning stage, is identifying or developing a stewardship organization with capacity and expertise a specific goal of the plan.



## Response Requirements

Responses to this FOA should be in the form of a letter no more than five (5) pages in length (single spaced, 12-point type). In addition, Applicants should complete and include the 1-page application form included on page 9 of this FOA. Responses should include the following information:

- A description of the proposed project area and extent (supported by a project map).
- A description of the proposed project, including how it helps to complete a segment of the Circuit or connect to a Circuit trail.
- A brief description of how the proposed project responds to the evaluation criteria relevant to your project.
- A narrative and/or budget table and project delivery timeline, including the amount and source of match (if any).

**Applicants are required to submit a project map(s).** The map(s) should indicate general project location and connectivity to the Circuit Trails. Map(s) should be clear and easy to read. Relevant documentation regarding site control/ownership, if available and pertinent, may also be attached to the submission. Map(s) and site control documentation do not count against the 5-page limit.

Non-profits, community development corporations, or others that will not own or maintain a trail after completion should include a letter(s) demonstrating support from the entity that will ultimately own, manage, and/or maintain the trail. Other letters of support and ancillary materials are optional and should only be included if they are directly relevant to the project under consideration and the evaluation criteria.

## Evaluation, Selection & Award

Projects will be evaluated in November, December, January, and February and selected projects are expected to be submitted to the DVRPC Board for approval no later than March of 2023. Individual applicants may be contacted during the evaluation period to provide additional information and clarifications.

Notification of awarded Applicants will occur following DVRPC Board approval, after which time contracting procedures will be initiated.



## Contract Administration and Grant Terms

Awarded Applicants/Lead Applicants (“the Project Sponsor”) will be required to enter into a legally binding contract with DVRPC by providing budget, scope, and other required documents within a year of the grant being awarded. Any requests for additional time must be submitted to DVRPC in writing. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the grant award amount being forfeited.

Project Sponsors are required to comply with all provisions of the award contract. Furthermore, use of grant funds will be conditioned on submission and approval of a detailed project scope of work and budget.

Grants may not be used for general operating costs, acquisition of buildings (except for the purposes of trail construction), litigation, lobbying, scholarships, or procurement and administrative functions. If selected, project costs will be reimbursed based on submittal of invoices documenting costs.

All project tasks must be completed no later than June 30, 2025. Failure to meet this schedule could result in a forfeiture of grant funds.

## Project Delivery and the Use of Consultants

Proposed project activities may be undertaken by organization staff, a design or engineering consultant, a construction contractor, other consultant, or some combination of the above as appropriate. If an outside consultant is sought, the selection process must comply with all local procurement requirements and must also adhere to the standards of any applicable matching funding source. The Project Sponsor or their hired forces are responsible for ensuring that all standards and regulations are followed for any matching funding source or future construction funding source (in the case of design projects).

## Submission

All submissions pursuant to this FOA **must be delivered to DVRPC no later than 5:00 PM on Thursday, November 10, 2022** via electronic means (see submission instructions below).

Applications received after the due date and time will not be considered. All responses must be submitted in a .pdf format by email to [regionaltrailsfoa@dvrpc.org](mailto:regionaltrailsfoa@dvrpc.org). File size must be under 25 MB. Please note that DVRPC cannot receive documents shared via Dropbox.

Please direct all questions to Shawn Megill Legendre at [slegendre@dvrpc.org](mailto:slegendre@dvrpc.org) or 215-238-2934. Applicants are also invited to contact Shawn to discuss projects or go over any questions they may have prior to submitting their application.



## Regional Trails Program – Phase IX Grants – Application Form

### General Information

Proposed Project Title: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Contact Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Contact Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Contact Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Applicant Contact Email: \_\_\_\_\_

### RTP Application Request

Request Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Match Amount (if any): \_\_\_\_\_

### Location of Project

Municipality(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

County(ies): \_\_\_\_\_

Please list any connecting or adjacent trails:

# Phase 9 Funding Eligible Census Tracts

# THE CIRCUIT TRAILS



Census tract with above or well above average score for one or more of the following Indicators of Potential Disadvantage (IPDs): Ethnic Minority, Foreign-Born, Limited English Proficiency, Low Income, Racial Minority

Source: U.S. Census 2016-2020 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

### The Circuit Trails

- Existing
- In Progress
- Pipeline
- Planned

