



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

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. Over 390 miles of this 800-plus-mile network are complete.

DVRPC's Regional Trails Program supports continued implementation of the Circuit Trails and safe, accessible, and welcoming community connections to the trail network. Completion of the Circuit Trails is an important goal identified in the region's long-range transportation plan, *Connections 2050: Plan for Greater Philadelphia*. Such a network will provide important transportation options, benefit public health, stimulate economic development, and increase quality of life.

Capitalized with funding from the William Penn Foundation, a total of \$2 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.

Responses are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, May 3, 2024.

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission (DVRPC) fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Civil Rights Restoration Act of 1987, Executive Order 12898 on Environmental Justice, and related nondiscrimination mandates in all programs and activities. DVRPC is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of, all programs and activities on the basis of race, creed color, national origin, age, gender, disability, sexual orientation, or income level, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and other related nondiscrimination mandates.

DVRPC's website, www.dvrpc.org, may be translated into multiple languages. Publications and other public documents can be made available in alternative languages and formats, if requested. DVRPC's public meetings are always held in ADA-accessible facilities, and held in transit-accessible locations whenever possible. DVRPC will work to accommodate all reasonable requests for translation, interpretation, accommodations or other auxiliary services and encourages that requests be made at least seven days prior to a public meeting. Requests can be made by contacting the Commission's ADA and Title VI Compliance Officer Alison Hastings via email at public_affairs@dvrpc.org, calling (215) 592-1800, or while registering for an upcoming meeting.

Any person who believes they have been aggrieved by an unlawful discriminatory practice by DVRPC under Title VI has a right to file a formal complaint. Any such complaint must be in writing and filed with DVRPC's ADA and Title VI Compliance Officer Alison Hastings and/or the appropriate state or federal agency within 180 days of the alleged discriminatory occurrence. Complaints that a program, service, or activity of DVRPC is not accessible to persons with disabilities should be directed to Alison Hastings as well. For more information on DVRPC's Title VI program or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, please visit: www.dvrpc.org/getinvolved/titlevi/, call (215) 592-1800, or email public_affairs@dvrpc.org.



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 region that increases mobility choices by investing in a safe and modern transportation system; that protects and preserves our natural resources while creating healthy communities; and that fosters greater opportunities for all. DVRPC convenes 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?

Regional Trails Program grants are intended to support the efforts of local governments, state agencies, 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; 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

Projects must be located partially or wholly in Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and/or Philadelphia county in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and/or Mercer county in New Jersey.



Equity

As an MPO, DVRPC is responsible for meeting federal civil rights requirements, which state “no person in the United States, shall, on the grounds of race, color, or national origin be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.” Additionally, the U.S. Department of Transportation has created Justice40 guidance to address gaps in transportation infrastructure and public services by working toward the goal of at least 40% of the benefits from covered funding programs going to disadvantaged communities. The mapping tools included in this section are planning tools for DVRPC, regional planning partners, and project applicants to evaluate our work and progress toward meeting these equity-related requirements and guidelines.

Projects that serve communities that are or have historically been underserved or have been subject to a disproportionate share of environmental burdens are a priority for this grant program. Applicants should describe project locations based on regional, state, and federal analysis. These may include, but are not limited to DVRPC’s [Equity Analysis for Greater Philadelphia](#) and [Equity Through Access Map Toolkit](#); the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection’s [Environmental Justice Mapping, Assessment and Protection Tool \(EJMAP\)](#); the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection’s [Environmental Justice Mapping and Screening Tool \(PennEnviroScreen\)](#); the Council on Environmental Quality’s [Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool \(CJEST\)](#); and the U.S. Department of Transportation’s [Equitable Transportation Community \(ETC\) Explorer](#). Applicants should specifically highlight how the project will benefit identified populations and/or locations and describe specific outreach and community engagement efforts that will occur or that have occurred as part of project development.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities under this funding opportunity include planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction. Limited funding for right-of-way acquisition is also available. 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 a Circuit Trail.

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, Awards, and Match

Up to \$2 million in private funding is available under this funding opportunity. Individual awards may not exceed \$200,000.

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

Applicants for 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 December 31, 2026 (see “Project Delivery”). Applicants for 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. Applicants for planning and feasibility studies need not demonstrate site control, but assessment of right-of-way needs and development of strategies to acquire needed right-of-way should be a component of such studies if not already known.

Project Delivery

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2026. 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. *Design only:* If ROW has not been secured, what is the likelihood that right can be secured and at what cost?
 - iv. *Planning only:* If ROW has not been secured (likely the case for a planning project), is assessment of right-of-way needs and development of strategies to acquire needed right-of-way should be a component of the proposed work?
- 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 by local elected officials and agency staff?
- c. Is the trail or improvement documented in neighborhood, local, county, or state plans?

4. Equity

- a. What do regional, state, and/or federal analysis indicators of potential disadvantage, disproportionate environmental burdens, and/or transportation inequities indicate are the current and past conditions in the project area (see prior “Equity” section for analytical tools)? How does the proposed project address these conditions and/or serve impacted populations and communities?
- b. Will the trail provide new transportation and recreational opportunities to historically or currently underserved populations and/or communities of color?
- c. *Planning only:* How will historically or currently 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 or currently 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 or currently 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 and/or constructed as part of the funded project?
- 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 community and economic development or marketing strategy?
- b. What specific 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 six (6) pages in length (single spaced, 12-point type). In addition, Applicants should complete and include the 1-page application form included on page 11 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 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 6-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 May and June and selected projects are expected to be submitted to the DVRPC Board for approval as early as July 2024. 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

Project Sponsors 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 December 31, 2026. 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 Friday, May 3, 2024** 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. File size must be under 25 MB.

Please direct all questions to Shawn Megill Legendre at 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.



Resources

DVRPC Equity Analysis for Greater Philadelphia:

www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/ipd/

DVRPC Equity Through Access Map Toolkit:

dvrpcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/MapSeries/index.html?appid=06eab792a06044f89b5b7fadeef660ba

New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Mapping, Assessment and Protection Tool (EJMAP):

experience.arcgis.com/experience/548632a2351b41b8a0443cfc3a9f4ef6

Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection's Environmental Justice Mapping and Screening Tool (PennEnviroScreen):

gis.dep.pa.gov/PennEnviroScreen/

Council on Environmental Quality's Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CJEST):

screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-97.5

U.S. Department of Transportation's Equitable Transportation Community (ETC) Explorer:

experience.arcgis.com/experience/0920984aa80a4362b8778d779b090723/page/Homepage/

DVRPC Circuit Trails Map:

www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/thecircuit/



Regional Trails Program – Phase X 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: