

**Department for Local Government
Recreational Trails Program
2026 Application**

Recreational Trails Program Information/Guidelines

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP), first authorized by the Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21), is a federal-aid assistance program to help states develop and maintain trails for both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail use. The program provides for all kinds of recreational trail uses such as walking, jogging, hiking, bicycling, mountain biking, in-line skating, equestrian, off-road motorcycling, all-terrain vehicle (ATV), four-wheel driving, and/or using other off-road motorized vehicles.

States are eligible to receive RTP funding by designating an agency and official to be responsible for the program within the state and create a Trails Advisory Board on which both motorized and non-motorized recreational trail users are represented. The Governor of Kentucky designated the Department for Local Government (DLG) as the state agency responsible for administering RTP and appointed DLG's Commissioner as the principal official to coordinate with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). In turn, the Commissioner assigned the program's administrative duties to DLG's Office of Federal Grants.

Each state may develop its own procedures to solicit and select projects for funding in response to recreational trail needs within the state. For the state of Kentucky, DLG staff will collect, review and score the applications. The Governor, with assistance from the Commissioner of DLG, will make project selections. All applicants will be notified of project approval or disapproval.

Once selected at the state level, RTP applications must be submitted to the FHWA for final federal approval. After receipt of FHWA approval, DLG will send the grant recipient a memorandum of agreement that must be signed by an appropriate official of the agency and returned to DLG. All approved applicants must read and be willing to comply with the policies and procedures set forth in the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's [LPA Guide](#).*

***Program requirements for the Recreational Trail grants are subject to change at any time. Projects submitted for consideration will be subject to any new requirements in the LPA Guide and/or LPA Manual, including specifically the requirement of a perpetual easement in favor of the Department for Local Government.**

The Recreational Trails Program mandates DLG shall allocate the annual apportionment as follows:

- 7 percent for DLG administrative support cost

The balance of the annual apportionment shall be allocated as follows:

- 30 percent for non-motorized trail purposes;
- 30 percent for motorized trail purposes;
- 35 percent for both non-motorized and motorized trail use with preference given to the greatest number of compatible uses and recreational corridor sharing;
- 5 percent for education/safety programs. The focus of the proposed project must be for public safety and public education/awareness.

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Eligible Applicants

- City and County Governments
- U.S. Forest Service
- National Park Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Corps of Engineers
- Tennessee Valley Authority
- Kentucky Department of Parks
- Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources
- Kentucky Nature Preserve Commission
- Kentucky Division of Forestry
- Kentucky River Authority

PERMISSIBLE/NONPERMISSIBLE USES

Permissible Uses

1. Construction of new trails on state, county, municipal or private lands, where a recreational need for such construction is shown and a permanent easement can be obtained;
2. Development of trailside and trailhead facilities if adjacent to a trail one mile in length or longer. Trailhead facilities eligible for RTP funding are: signage, parking, restrooms, animal resistant garbage cans (with a sufficient maintenance plan), guide maps, benches, potable water, and entry gates to trails;
3. Maintenance of existing recreational trails;
4. Restoration of areas damaged by usage of recreational trails and back country terrain;
5. Development of urban trail linkages near homes and workplaces;
6. Provision of features that facilitate the access and use of trails by persons with disabilities;
7. Acquisition of easements for trails or for trail corridors identified in a state trail plan;
8. Acquisition of fee simple title to property from a willing seller, when the objective of the acquisition cannot be accomplished by acquisition of an easement or by other means;
9. Water trails are defined as designated routes for boating. They are eligible for funding if they meet the following criteria: no less than two access points (put in/take out, dock, ramp, etc.) with a map designating the trail and access points. Eligible projects include docks, ramps, kayak launches, and guide maps.
10. Planning costs may be part of an overall application but cannot exceed 5 percent of total project costs.
11. Only as otherwise permissible, and where necessary and required by a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan (SCORP), construction of new trails crossing federal lands, where such construction is approved by the administering agency of the state and the federal agency or agencies charged with management of all impacted lands, such approval to be contingent upon compliance by the federal agency with all applicable laws, including the National Environmental Policy Act (42 U.S.C. 4321, et seq.), the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974, as amended (16 U.S.C. 16 et seq), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (43 U.S.C. 1701 et seq); and
12. Rental equipment for the recreational trails.

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Non-Permissible Uses – A grant recipient **may not** use RTP monies for:

1. Condemnation of any kind of interest in property;
2. Construction of any recreational trail on National Forest System land for motorized uses unless such lands
 - Have been allocated for uses other than wilderness by an approved agency resource management plan or have been released to uses other than wilderness by an Act of Congress, and
 - Such construction is otherwise consistent with the management direction in such approved land and resource management plan;
3. Upgrading, expanding or otherwise facilitating motorized use or access to trails predominantly used by non-motorized trail users, and on which, as of May 1, 1991 motorized use is either prohibited or has not occurred.
4. Construction of sidewalks unless the sidewalk is needed to link trails;
5. Master plans/feasibility studies, insurance, taxes, operational costs, administration, etc.
6. Roads;
7. Stables, Picnic Shelters and campgrounds

Recommended Minimum Trail Standards

	Surface Width	Trail Length
Single Use	2 Feet	
Motorized	4-6 Feet	10 Miles
Shared Use	8-10 Feet	1 Mile Plus
Hiking	2-5 Feet	4 Miles Plus
Equestrian	2-5 Feet	4 Miles Plus
Mountain Biking	2 Feet	2 Miles
Back Packing	2-4 Feet	10 Miles Plus