

# Maine Trails Program Guidance Manual



Grants and Community Recreation Program Bureau of  
Parks and Lands  
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# PROGRAM OVERVIEW

H.P. 728 - L.D. 1156 established An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Promote the Design, Development and Maintenance of Trails for Outdoor Recreation and Active Transportation, to be known as the Maine Trails Program (MTP). The purpose of this program is to leverage at least \$3,000,000 in matching contributions from public and private sources to be used for the design, development and maintenance of nonmotorized, motorized and multi-use trails statewide. Pursuant to PL 2024 Ch. 652, no more than \$7,500,000 may be expended in the first year by the Bureau of Parks and Lands, and no more than \$7,500,000 may be expended by the Bureau of Parks and Lands in each of the three subsequent years, except that any unused balance may be added to the specified amount in subsequent years. The full \$30 million must be obligated by November 4, 2034.

## Program Summary

The Maine Trails Program (MTP) leverages \$30 million in bond funds to promote trail design, development, and maintenance statewide. At least \$3 million in matching contributions are expected from public and private sources. Funds must be obligated by November 4, 2034. The program is administered by a State Trail Administrator (STA) in the Bureau of Parks and Lands, Grants and Community Recreation Program.

## Funding Allocation Goals (25-25-50)

- 1) Approximately twenty-five (25) percent of available funds will be awarded to non-motorized projects
- 2) Approximately twenty-five (25) percent of available funds will be awarded to motorized projects
- 3) Approximately fifty (50) percent of available funds will be awarded to multi-use projects
- 4) Percentage targets may be exceeded in any one area if there are insufficient qualifying applications to meet the target in any other area
  - a) A project for multi-use motorized recreation (such as snowmobile and ATV use) may satisfy the 50 percent diverse use target and the 25 percent motorized use target simultaneously
  - b) A project for multi-use non-motorized trails (such as hiking and mountain biking) may satisfy the 50 percent multi-use use target and the 25 percent non-motorized use target simultaneously
- 5) The STA will determine which projects fall under each category, based on trail design and management in relation to funding availability, to best position the applicant for funding while also satisfying the required allocation of funds across trail use types
  - a) **Non-motorized projects** include:
    - i) Projects intended to benefit only non-motorized recreational trail use, such as pedestrian, biking, paddling, or equestrian use
    - ii) Projects may be classified in this category if the project also benefits secondary, non-motorized use
  - b) **Motorized projects** include:
    - i) Projects primarily intended to benefit motorized recreational use, such as snowmobiling or ATVing

- ii) Projects may be classified in this category if the project also benefits secondary, motorized use
- c) **Multi-use projects** include:
  - i) Projects primarily intended to benefit multiple types of trail use
    - (1) Multiple motorized uses of a trail, such as ATVing and snowmobile
    - (2) Multiple non-motorized uses of a trail, such as hiking and mountain biking
    - (3) Combinations of motorized and non-motorized uses of a trail, such as ATVing and mountain biking

## **Maine Trails Advisory Committee**

The Maine Trails Advisory Committee serves as the program’s primary stakeholder body, offering broad, balanced guidance to ensure that trail funding decisions support safe, sustainable, and well-managed recreational access across the state. The committee is composed of representatives from a range of user groups and partner organizations, including motorized, non-motorized, multi-use, and accessible recreation interests, alongside municipal and nonprofit trail managers. Members review program materials, advise on policy updates, and help ensure that application and scoring processes remain fair, transparent, and consistent with statewide goals for outdoor recreation. The committee does not make award decisions but plays an essential advisory role by strengthening the program’s connection to local expertise and supporting a collaborative, accountable approach to managing public trail investments. More information about the committee can be found [here](#).

# ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION PROCESS

The Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) will strive to hold at least one annual grant cycle during which applications for funding will be received, reviewed, and scored. A Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) will be announced in advance of each funding round with sufficient time to allow for project sponsors to respond to the NOFO with viable project applications.

## Eligible Applicants

- 1) Grants may be awarded to any of the following:
  - a) Non-profit organizations
  - b) ATV and Snowmobile Clubs
  - c) Municipalities
  - d) Other qualified subdivisions of State Government, including executive branch departments and agencies
- 2) Beginning in the second MTP grant cycle (2026) and beyond, applicants with noncompliant RTP or outstanding MTP projects from previous years cannot apply for the current round of funding unless all previous projects are completed and closed out prior to signing a new grant agreement.
- 3) Applicants who have noncompliant LWCF projects are not eligible. Please contact the Grants & Community Recreation Program for more information.

## Eligible Projects

- 1) Development and Renovation Grants
  - a) Development of new recreation trails, to include the construction of new trail bridges, boardwalks, culverts, staircases and other trail structures and/or the provision of appropriate signage along a trail as needed for the viability and sustainability of the trail
  - b) Renovation of existing trails, trailside and or trailhead facilities for recreational trails
  - c) Renovation includes, but is not limited to, reconstruction of trail base and surface, reroutes and old corridor decommissioning, replacement or reconstruction of a majority of structures, reconstruction of trailhead and or trailside structures (kiosks, shelters, etc.)
  - d) Development of trailside, trailhead, and trail support facilities for recreational trails
  - e) May include the development of any trailside or trailhead facility that has a direct relationship to the viability of a recreational trail. Trail support facilities such as equipment storage buildings and trail training facilities are eligible
  - f) Improvements to trail access and use for persons with disabilities and/or mobility impairments
  - g) Creation, expansion, or improvement of water trails may include construction/restoration of boat launch/landing infrastructure, signage, outhouses, portage trails, campsites, etc.
  - h) Construction of new trails on federal land provided the project has been approved by the managing agency(ies), and the applicant has sufficient control

- i) Access road improvements to establish or maintain access to trails
- 2) Bundled Applications
  - a) When multiple organizations have control/tenure over an interconnected trail system across multiple jurisdictions, these organizations may apply for grant funding under one application to benefit the cross jurisdictional interconnected trail network
  - b) One of the partner organizations must be the project lead, applicant and fiscal agent on behalf of all project partners
  - c) Application maximum award limit remains as established for any individual application
  - d) Participants in a bundled application may still apply for grant funding for a project that is unique to their organization and jurisdiction
- 3) Acquisition Grants
  - a) Land acquisition of easements and fee simple title to property for trail purposes: may include the acquisition of any kind of interest in property from a willing landowner/seller
  - b) Significant asset acquisition, including:
    - i) Old road or railroad bridges to be used as recreational trail bridges
  - c) See **Acquisition Projects** section for more information

## Eligible Project Costs

- 1) Project design & engineering
- 2) Direct project administration, supervision, and direction of work in the field or employee salary for project work in the field
- 3) Consultant and contractor services
- 4) Supplies and materials for grant-assisted project work
- 5) Signs and trail-related interpretive aids
- 6) Construction, development, and rehabilitation work on trails
- 7) Construction of bridges, railings, ramps, fences, and trail-related structures
- 8) Bank stabilization, re-vegetation (excluding ornamental landscaping), and erosion control
- 9) Trailhead and trailside development, including parking, restrooms, and related facilities
- 10) Acquisition of land or permanent easement essential to trail access or trail development
- 11) Equipment rental and/or acquisition

## Acquisition Projects

- 1) Applicants can apply for MTP funds to acquire property interests for trails on the property being acquired; however, the total MTP request cannot exceed \$250,000.00. The property assisted must serve or support

trails as its primary focus and must be critical to the existence and ongoing usefulness of trails that connect on or traverse the property. If public recreational trails do not exist on the target parcel for acquisition at the time of application, the applicant must provide actionable plans to develop public trails on the MTP-funded property within three (3) years of receipt of MTP funds. If the proposed trails are not developed or are not developed to the extent assured at the time of award, the applicant must reimburse BPL for the full amount of MTP acquisition funds.

- 2) Applicants intending to acquire property are required to obtain an appraisal of the property conducted according to the terms of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).
- 3) Acquisition costs are considered incurred when:
  - a) A property deed or other conveyance is accepted by the project sponsor or
  - b) First payment is made to an escrow account/agency for the subject property
- 4) MTP funding for local projects will not exceed 90% of the fair market value as established by an appraisal in conformance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP) or the grant cap, whichever is the lesser amount. Applicant's match must be the costs and/or value of the direct property acquisition. Pre-acquisition costs, including but not limited to survey, appraisal, appraisal review, and administration, are not reimbursable and cannot be used as a match.
- 5) Donations or partial donations of the property interests being acquired may be used as a match, but only in instances where the property interests are being conveyed at less than fair market value as established by an appraisal in conformance with the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice (USPAP).
- 6) Property rights for the land acquired using MTP funds must be retained for public use in perpetuity, or assure via deed restriction, that any subsequent owner also is bound to manage the land for public trails or trail-related uses. If this condition is not met, the project sponsor must reimburse BPL for the full amount of MTP acquisition funds for reinvestment in another local MTP project.
- 7) The applicant must obtain fee and/or easement interests (leases are not eligible for MTP funding) in the property being acquired without any restrictions, reservations, exceptions, third-party interests, etc., that would adversely affect the development, management, or use of public trails on the property.
- 8) Applicants can apply for MTP funds to acquire property interests and develop trails on the property being acquired; however, the total MTP request cannot exceed \$250,000.00.

## **Special Instructions**

- 1) Non-profit Applicants
  - a) A non-profit organization must provide documentation of its non-profit status and its federal tax identification number as part of the application package
- 2) Structural Development Projects
  - a) Projects that include weight/vehicle bearing structural development components are required to have plans and specifications prepared or approved by a professional engineer
  - b) Plans must be submitted to and approved by the STA prior to construction
  - c) See Appendix for detailed guidance

## **Ineligible Projects**

The following types of projects are not eligible for MTP funding:

- 1) Trail, trailhead, trailside amenity maintenance: work that would be considered usual and ordinary ongoing and prudent care of existing trail, trailhead, trailside or trail center infrastructure
- 2) Snowmaking equipment/infrastructure
- 3) Roads, sidewalks, gardening/landscaping, parks or park equipment, sprinklers, etc.
  - a) Limited sections of unimproved roads may be eligible for funding if renovation of that road section is essential to trailhead access and trail use
  - b) A sidewalk that connects two existing trails may be eligible
- 4) Outdoor Recreation Access Routes (ORARs) are typically not eligible
  - a) ORARs are continuous, unobstructed paths designed for pedestrian use that connect constructed features in a campground, camping unit, picnic area, trailhead, or other recreation site where modifications are provided for visitor convenience and comfort
  - b) Exceptions to this may be made when the ORAR is essential to the functionality of a trail
- 5) Construction/improvements within a federal, state, county, or town road right-of-way, e.g., bike lanes or other on-road bicycle/pedestrian amenities
- 6) Funding staff/intern positions not related to direct MTP-funded project execution
- 7) Condemnation of Land, however, an MTP project may be located on land condemned with funds from other sources
- 8) Feasibility Studies
- 9) Law Enforcement

## **Ineligible Project Match Costs**

- 1) Office work, grant reimbursement processing, other administrative support work, or general overhead
- 2) Concept plans, feasibility studies, use assessments, etc.
- 3) Food
- 4) Expenses related to the promotion of the organization
- 5) Advertising
- 6) Fundraising
- 7) Features that are ornamental or otherwise do not have a direct relation to the functionality of the trail or benefit to the user experience
- 8) Lodging
- 9) Clothing

- 10) General overhead/indirect costs (office rent, utilities, office supplies, postage, administrative time managing the grant, general organizational needs, etc.)

## Control and Tenure

- 1) The applicant must have demonstrated control over any land (public or private) to be improved or developed with grant funds
- 2) For the purposes of this program Control and Tenure is defined as follows:
  - a) Control: applicant has a use agreement or similar instrument on the affected parcel allowing the proposed work and ongoing stewardship of trail improvements by the applicant (see below for further guidance related to duration of public access)
  - b) Tenure: applicant is either the fee owner or has a conservation or recreational easement on the property affected, allowing the proposed work and ongoing stewardship of trail improvements by the applicant
- 3) There are no perpetual stewardship obligations for any trails or trail related amenities funded by this program. Nonetheless, it is in the interest of all in the trail community to have MTP investments benefit the public for as long as possible.
- 4) The public should have access to funded investments for a minimum of:
  - a) One (1) year from the time of project completion for ATV and snowmobile trail use agreements
    - i) Applicants with a history of renewed one-year use agreements will be awarded additional points during the review process
    - ii) Projects that include bridges or other major structures must secure a use agreement longer than one year
  - b) Five (5) years from the time of project completion for regular development grants
  - c) Ten (10) years from the time of project completion for any project that involves the construction of bridges or other significant trailhead, trailside, or trail structures
- 5) Applications with increased periods of secured public access will be awarded additional points during the review process
- 6) Contact program staff for review on a case-by-case basis prior to the application deadline if there are any concerns

## Environmental and Historical Preservation Project Review Requirements

- 1) Projects must be reviewed by designated state agencies to ensure there is no unmitigated negative impact on the environment or historical structures
- 2) Project review letters must be obtained from:
  - a) Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife. See [Environmental Review](#) for more information.
  - b) Maine Natural Areas Program. See [Site Review](#) for more information.
  - c) Maine Historic Preservation Commission. See [Project Review](#) for more information.

- 3) Previous project review letters are valid for up to one year given that project scope, location, or funding source has not changed
  - a) Project must be reviewed again if project scope, location, or funding source has changed
- 4) To request a project review from Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, send an email to [IFWEnvironmentalreview@maine.gov](mailto:IFWEnvironmentalreview@maine.gov) with the following information:
  - a) A cover letter indicating that MTP funds will be used for the project.
  - b) The paragraph on the scope of work. Explain the extent of any proposed ground disturbance, approximate dates of construction, and list any heavy machinery or loud equipment use. Describe project details, such as: how the trail will be used; the trail surface (natural, gravel, stone dust, etc.); if any trees need to be removed and to what extent; the trail length and width and if its being rerouted; if any herbicides or pesticides will be used and what kind; and the length and width of any bridges or culverts that will be installed or modified. Please provide pictures of the crossing.
  - c) A map clearly showing the boundaries of the project, and the location of the project within the state. A GIS shapefile or KMZ file is preferred.
- 5) To request a project review from the Maine Natural Areas Program, send an email to [maine.nap@maine.gov](mailto:maine.nap@maine.gov) with the following information:
  - a) A cover letter indicating that MTP funds will be used for the project.
  - b) The paragraph on the scope of work. Explain the extent of any proposed ground disturbance, approximate dates of construction, and list any heavy machinery or loud equipment use.
  - c) A map clearly showing the boundaries of the project, and the location of the project within the state. A GIS shapefile or KMZ file is preferred.
- 6) To request a project review from the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, send an email to [MHPCprojectreview@maine.gov](mailto:MHPCprojectreview@maine.gov) with the following required information:
  - a) A cover letter describing the project and type of permitting needed (local, state or federal) or if there are federal monies involved.
  - b) A USGS topographic quad map with the project corridor, or project sites along the corridor, clearly and accurately located.
  - c) Clear, unobstructed photos of river or stream shorelines.
  - d) Photos of any structures that will be directly impacted (stone walls, bridges, culverts, buildings, etc.) by the project, as well as photos of any buildings over fifty years of age that will have a view of the project. All photos of buildings should be keyed to the USGS topographic quad map, tax map or a site plan. If no buildings over fifty years of age exist in the vicinity, please indicate this in writing.
  - e) Specifications, plans, concept sketches and/or drawings should be submitted if available.
- 7) A single request to all three agencies can be made at the same time by sending one email with all the required information to all three agencies.
- 8) All recommendations, potential concerns, or concerns raised in the review letters must be addressed in the application

- 9) Projects on federal land are required to certify and document compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and any other federal regulatory requirements as determined by the Land Manager
  - a) Projects on Federal Lands require a record of decision to be submitted with the application

## Permitting

- 1) Applicants must communicate with the local Code Enforcement Officer (COE) to ensure proper permitting
- 2) If the project is on unorganized territory, the applicant must contact the [Regional Office of the Land Use Planning Commission](#) nearest where the project is located

## Budget Worksheet

- 1) Applicants must fill out and submit the program provided Budget Worksheet
- 2) Budget Worksheet can be found on the [MTP website](#)
- 3) The budget worksheet is the best estimate of the project costs

## Suggested Application Timeline

- 1) Develop a firm concept/design/plan for your project. Professional design & engineering costs incurred during the year you apply are eligible for project match
- 2) Attend one of the MTP workshops to learn more about the opportunities and limitations of this new trail funding program
- 3) Review program guidance and resource materials on the program website
- 4) Three months before deadline
  - a) Seek agreement or license from landowner if necessary
  - b) Develop project maps identifying the extent of the affected trail, or trailside amenity
  - c) Email a request for project review by the following agencies to determine if any environmental, historic or archeological implications need to be addressed in your application
    - i) Maine Historic Preservation Commission
    - ii) Maine Natural Areas Program
    - iii) Inland Fisheries and Wildlife
  - d) Confirm commitment for ongoing maintenance (or commitment from other organization(s))
  - e) Identify project manager or team
- 5) Two months before deadline
  - a) Seek guidance from your local planning department (if any) regarding compliance with any ordinances
  - b) Check with state and local Code Enforcement Officer or the [Regional Office of the Land Use Planning Commission](#) (if on unorganized territory) regarding the need for permits –

- i) Environmental
  - ii) Town
- c) Begin developing the budget. Collect documentation for grant match, letters of commitment for dollars or in-kind services
- 6) One month before deadline
  - a) Improve/revise any project map(s)
  - b) Collect support documentation
    - i) Deeds/Leases
    - ii) Use agreements
    - iii) Letters of Support – must have direct relationship to project
    - iv) Partnership letters – only if partner in funding, developing or maintaining the project
    - v) Town/Organization plans or excerpts from State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
    - vi) Photos
    - vii) Newspaper articles
  - c) Develop/refine ideas for trail promotion
- 7) Week of application deadline
  - a) Submit application to the Maine Trails Program

## **Application Review Process**

- 1) The application review process follows the Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Standard Operating Procedures for Grants Administration (in DRAFT)
- 2) Applications are reviewed for eligibility and completeness (i.e., project eligibility, “is it a trail”, budget item eligibility, late submission, evidence of communication with IF&W, MNAP, MHPC, etc.)
- 3) Applicants deemed not eligible or incomplete are removed before the formal review process
- 4) Multi-use, and Motorized and Non-motorized Subcommittees are formed by members of the [Maine Recreational Trails Advisory Committee](#)
- 5) Instructions, scoring rubric, and applications are shared with subcommittees
- 6) All projects are scored individually
- 7) Reviewers were asked to recuse themselves if they share a strong relationship with the project or application (i.e., they were the applicant, they were part of the ATV club, they lived in the town, etc.)
- 8) Submitted project budgets are reviewed for proper budget worksheet use and item eligibility, budgets are adjusted if needed

- 9) Scores are averaged and ranked
- 10) Subcommittee meetings are held to discuss scoring and grading discrepancies, applications with the highest scores, valuable projects, and consensus of funding recommendations
- 11) Generally, full funding is recommended for projects with the highest average score
- 12) Moving from highest to lowest, full funding is recommended until the yearly allocated funding amount cannot fully fund the next ranked project
- 13) If the remaining yearly allocation is over 50% of the next ranked projects requested amount, the funding is awarded to that project as a partial award
- 14) If the remaining yearly allocation is under 50% the next ranked projects requested amount, the funding is distributed at the discretion of the Advisory Committee
- 15) Scoring Rubric can be located on the program website

## **Award Process**

- 1) Successful applicants will receive a “Notice of Award” letter expressing the intent to fund the project and requesting any additional information, if any. The applicant will not have an active award however unless and until the subsequent Project Agreement between the State of Maine and the applicant has been fully executed. No work should begin until the applicant has received the fully executed project agreement.
- 2) Applications not selected for funding will receive a letter of decline. This letter will offer to meet with program staff to review the proposed project with the aim of elevating it to fundable status in a future application cycle.

## **Appeal Rights**

- 1) Appeals are governed by 01-001 CMR c. 8 of the [Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Rules](#).
- 2) APPEAL REQUEST: Pursuant to the Rules for Departmental (DACF) Grant Awards and Appeals (01-001, Ch. 8), an aggrieved person (the “petitioner”) may request an appeal hearing on a grant award decision by submitting a request for appeal to the Commissioner, in writing, no later than fifteen (15) calendar days from the date of the award decision. The written request for appeal must describe the specific nature of the grievance, including the Appeal Criteria as defined below. The Commissioner shall grant an appeal hearing unless it is determined that:
  - a) The petitioner is not an aggrieved person; or
  - b) The written request for appeal was submitted more than fifteen (15) calendar days after notification of award
- 3) APPEAL CRITERIA: The burden of proof within the hearing of appeal lies with the petitioner. The evidence presented must specifically address and be limited to one or more of the following:
  - a) Violation of the law;
  - b) Irregularities creating fundamental unfairness; or
  - c) Arbitrary or capricious award.

# PROJECT ADMINISTRATION & COMPLIANCE

## Fiscal Guidelines

- 1) For the first and second grant cycle
  - a) 100% of available MTP funding will be reserved for local projects
  - b) The maximum award amount will be \$250,000
    - i) This amount may be modified in subsequent grant cycles
- 2) Eight (8) awards of up to \$250,000 will be offered
  - a) two (2) to motorized projects
  - b) two (2) to non-motorized projects
  - c) four (4) to multi-use projects
- 3) All other awards will be capped at \$150,000
- 4) Grants will not exceed ninety percent (90%) of a project's total cost or the maximum award amount, whichever is less
- 5) The minimum match required is ten percent (10%) of eligible costs or the maximum award amount, whichever is less
- 6) The MTP grant is primarily a reimbursement grant, the applicant must front project costs as they are incurred prior to submitting requests for reimbursement of the grant share
  - a) Generally, the program will entertain three reimbursement requests during the project life cycle: one reimbursement after the first season or significant milestone, one reimbursement after the second season or significant milestone, and final reimbursement after project completion and final inspection
  - b) Upon execution of a Project Agreement, applicants are eligible to request up to 25% of their total award amount as an advance against future reimbursements
    - i) Ten percent (10%) match for the advanced funding must be provided in the project sponsor's first regular reimbursement request

## Match Limitations & Types

- 1) Cash outlay – costs paid by the project sponsor and submitted as a match instead of for reimbursement
- 2) Value of volunteer labor, donated equipment and materials
  - a) Value of volunteer labor may be calculated using two methods depending on the type of labor:
    - i) Professionals – If a person is professionally skilled in the work being donated to the project (i.e., a welder working on a steel trail bridge), the wage rate this individual is normally paid for performing

this service may be charged to the project. The rate cannot exceed the prevailing wage (excluding common laborer) and/or equipment charges determined by the Maine Department of Transportation (DOT). A list of DOT labor and equipment rates can be found at:  
<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/laborrates/>

ii) All other volunteer (unskilled) labor – Will be valued at the current Independent Sector rate for Maine:  
<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

iii) Value of donated equipment may be based on current FEMA rates, or MeDOT rates whichever is greater: <https://www.fema.gov/assistance/public/tools-resources/schedule-equipment-rates>

b) Volunteer labor, donated equipment and materials may only be used as match and are not reimbursable

### 3) Record of volunteer labor and equipment

i) Volunteer labor must be recorded - information must include

(1) Volunteer name

(2) Telephone number

b) Record log must be signed by a project steward or volunteer supervisor

c) Volunteer equipment and mileage log templates are available from the STA

d) Time for each value item is time in use, not time on site

### 4) Other state and local grants, including ATV and Snowmobile program grants, unless specifically excluded

### 5) No costs incurred prior to the date of grant approval and receipt of a fully executed Project Agreement with the state will be eligible for reimbursement

a) Design and engineering costs incurred within two years of the project agreement are eligible as use for the project match

b) Design and engineering costs may include planning and environmental assessment (including cultural assessment)

### 6) Costs are incurred when work is performed, or goods are received

a) A final request for reimbursement may be submitted after the project end date provided the costs for which reimbursement is being sought were incurred within the established project period as found on the project agreement

### 7) Local administrative costs, indirect costs, and facility overhead are not eligible for match or reimbursement

a) Administrative costs in the form of in-the-field /on the ground project management, supervision and direction are eligible for match or reimbursement

b) Multi-jurisdictional and multi-partner projects of a regional scale may support a project manager to directly oversee and implement the project across these partners and jurisdictions

c) If unsure about an item, contact the STA or other trail program staff

## Record Retention

- 8) All program and financial records shall be retained by the applicant for state audit purposes following completion of the project
- 9) At a minimum, the following records will be retained and made available for audit:
  - a) Invoices for purchased materials or records of donated materials
  - b) Invoices for all design and construction costs or records of donated services
  - c) Signed time sheets records for all donated labor
  - d) Cancelled checks, copies, credit card statements, EFT documentation of payments, and/or other appropriate proof of payment

## **Change in Project Scope**

- 1) Changes in project scope include:
  - a) Time extensions
  - b) Requests for additional funding
  - c) Project modifications
- 2) Changes in project scope may be approved by the STA if:
  - a) Justified
  - b) Align with the original project vision
- 3) All requests must be submitted in writing to the STA
  - a) Requests must include a revised project budget
- 4) Requests for time extension for the completion of a project will be granted in the case of significant, unforeseen, and documented circumstances that prevent the timely completion of a project
- 5) Requests for additional funding may be considered with sufficient justification but only in support of the original project scope as detailed in the original application
  - a) Upon approval of a project modification
  - b) An Amendment to the Project Agreement will be prepared
- 6) No work after the original project period may begin until this amendment has been processed

## **Program Acknowledgement**

- 1) Recipients shall post in a prominent place on the Facilities and shall maintain in good condition a sign approved by the STA, giving public acknowledgment of assistance from the MTP
- 2) The sign should be constructed of permanent, sturdy material large enough to be clearly visible and located at a prominent access point to the funded trail sections
- 3) The suggested language identifies the site as a cooperative venture, ex:

This "Project name here" (ex. Great Dark Forest Trail Project)  
Developed with assistance provided by the citizens of Maine through  
The Maine Trails Program  
Administered by  
The Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands

- 4) Any printed materials such as trail brochures, celebration announcements or website information must also identify the financial partnership of MTP that helped to make the project a reality
- 5) Tools and equipment purchased with MTP funds must be permanently marked to acknowledge MTP funding assistance
- 6) Any balance of MTP funds remaining after the project period has closed or after the project is completed will be re-obligated to future MTP projects
- 7) In the case of projects receiving advanced award funding, any balance must be returned to BPL within ninety days of project closeout

# PROJECT EXECUTION

## Project Timeline

- 1) Projects will generally be completed within two full construction seasons following a signed Project Agreement
- 2) Time extensions may be approved
  - a) See Change in Project Scope

## Compliance and Construction Report

- 1) Progress inspections may be conducted by state representatives at any time
- 2) This may include on-the-ground project inspection and/or review of the sponsor's MTP records and files
- 3) Upon notification of project completion, BPL will:
  - a) Inspect the project
  - b) Recommend corrective action if appropriate
  - c) Deficiencies must be corrected and reported in writing to BPL within four (4) weeks of the applicant's receipt of the inspection report
  - d) Final reimbursement payment may be withheld pending the final inspection and completion of any corrective measures, if deemed necessary, by the STA, BPL, or any entity having regulatory jurisdiction over the project

## Project Completion

- 1) Projects must be completed, and final reimbursement must be requested within the project period identified in the Project Agreement
- 2) All acquisition and development projects, once completed, must submit GIS data for inclusion into the BPL GIS data layer for public information
- 3) All projects will require a post-completion inspection to ensure that the goals of the project have been met
  - a) The STA may, at their discretion, accept a project summary with associated photos supplied by the project sponsor in lieu of a site visit

# ACCOUNTING PROCEDURES

## General

- 1) A separate project ledger or account must be established for each project. This account must be cross-referenced to the MTP project number noted on your project agreement.
  - a) The MTP number must be used on all correspondence, contract documents, invoices, payroll or time sheets, equipment use sheets, and other project documents.
  - b) When issuing statements, press releases, requests for proposals, bid solicitations, and other documents describing projects or programs, all grantees receiving MTP funds shall clearly state that a portion of the project has been funded with Maine MTP assistance.
- 2) The local official records of project expenditures must be retained for three (3) years after final payment or until approval of state audit, whichever is longer.

## Acquisition Projects

- 1) MTP will fund up to 90% of the appraised value of the parcel(s).
- 2) All purchase and sale agreements and documentation must be provided to the state at the time they are generated and or at the time of the first reimbursement request.

## Development Projects

- 1) Procurement Requirements
  - a) Assuring Lowest Qualified Costs: Project sponsors must work to obtain the lowest project costs for the work performed based on the following thresholds.
    - i) Costs under \$10,000 may be negotiated directly with a qualified vendor
    - ii) Costs anticipated to be \$10,000 - \$19,999 must have three quotes from qualified vendors; the contract awarded to the vendor providing the lowest quote.
      - (1) Requests for quotes must include notification of the MTP award number.
      - (2) Quotes and intent to award must be submitted to the MTP administrator for review and approval prior to awarding a contract.
  - b) Costs at or above \$20,000 must go out to competitive bid. The contract must be awarded to the vendor with the lowest qualified bid price.
    - i) Bid documents must be publicly advertised and indicate that a portion of the project is funded via a MTP grant administered by the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Grants & Community Recreation Program.
    - ii) Bid documents must be submitted to the Grants & Community Recreation office for review and approval before public announcement.

- c) Bid tabulations and intent to award must be submitted to the Grants & Community Recreation office for review and approval prior to awarding a contract.
  - i) Requests for reimbursement submitted without complete documentation of this process will not be processed.
- d) Sole Source Contract
  - i) \*In cases of procurement of services or materials costing over \$10,000, non-competitive proposals may be used only when the award of a contract is not feasible under options “i)” and one of the following circumstances applies:
    - (1) The item is available only from a single source.
    - (2) The public exigency or emergency for the requirement will not permit a delay resulting from public competition.
    - (3) After solicitation from several sources, competition is determined to be inadequate.
  - e) In all cases of single-source procurement, the Grants & Community Recreation program must issue approval prior to contract award.
  - f) Procurements may not be artificially “split” to avoid competitive requirements.
  - g) Project Sponsors must avoid conflict of interest or the appearance of conflict of interest when soliciting or awarding work on MTP projects.
- 2) Fair Market Value
  - a) As amended in the NHS Act, 23 USC 323 allows a “person” (private individuals, entities, organizations, or corporations) to donate funds, right-of-way, materials, or services (including donated labor) toward the local share of a project. The project sponsor must document the fair market value of newly donated private rights-of-way, materials, or services.

## **Reimbursement Documentation/Cost & Match Verification**

- 1) All programs and financial records shall be retained by the grant recipient until an audit (acceptable to the state government) is completed or for a period of three (3) years after the project is closed out, whichever occurs last.
  - a) Typically, all or most of the documentation below must be submitted with each reimbursement request as proof of the expenses and match value generated during that project period being reimbursed. Capturing these documents as they are generated during the project is strongly advised. Payroll registers by pay period, showing names, hours worked, hourly rate, benefits, deductions, gross pay, and net pay.
  - b) Timesheets for all volunteer laborers, signed by both volunteer and supervisor.
  - c) Invoices for purchased or donated materials.
  - d) Invoices for all design and construction costs.
  - e) Indicate the check number and date paid for each invoice (or credit card receipt)
  - f) Copies (front & back) of canceled checks or copies of electronic payments confirming vendor receipt of

payment.

i) Note: copies of the sponsor's accounting software registers/statements do not qualify as evidence of payment

g) Copies of all contracts associated with the project.

2) At a minimum, the following records shall also be maintained and made available for audit.

a) Payroll registers by pay period showing names, hours worked, hourly rate, benefits, deductions, gross pay and net pay.

b) Time sheets for all volunteer workers, signed by both volunteer and supervisor.

c) Invoices for purchased or donated materials.

d) Invoices for all design and construction costs.

e) Indicate check number and date paid of each invoice (or credit card receipt)

f) Copies (front & back) of cancelled checks, or copies of electronic payments confirming vendor receipt of payment.

i) Note: copies of sponsor's accounting software registers/statements do not qualify as evidence of

g) payment; copies of bank statements may.

h) Copies of all contracts associated with the project.

# BILLING PROCEDURES

## General

- 1) All requests for reimbursement should be emailed (project number in subject line) to the Grants and Community Recreation Program. Complete requests include the reimbursement transmittal form, the reimbursement worksheet summarizing all eligible costs and match items, and documentation of every item listed on the worksheet. Please be sure to include an Excel file format version of your worksheet in addition to a signed PDF version.
- 2) Requests for reimbursement should be limited to a maximum of three (3: 2 progress, one final) over the duration of your project. Exceptions may be permitted due to need. Contact the grant administrator to discuss options.
- 3) The reimbursement request from the project sponsor shall be submitted by email to the Grants and Community Recreation Program. Include the project number in the subject line of the email.
  - a) It shall consist of the Work Sheet in the original Excel file format, which will accompany this document. If you have not received this file, please contact this office before you process your first reimbursement.
    - i) The worksheet shall be itemized to agree with the project ledger in the order of postings.
    - b) The top of the sheet is for all costs for which the project sponsor wants reimbursement.
    - c) The bottom of the sheet is for all costs and in-kind expenses submitted as a match.
      - i) Splitting cash outlay expenses between reimbursement and match is permitted.
    - d) The value of the eligible match will determine the maximum allowable reimbursement.
  - 4) Sponsors will normally receive reimbursement by state check within 4-6 weeks of the date of submission of a completely documented reimbursement request.
  - 5) Submitting your work form in the original Excel format will expedite reimbursement processing.
  - 6) Advance payment protocols
    - a) When projects receive grant awards in advance of project initiation, the above process will be replicated as a means of documenting and reporting eligible expenses using the advanced funds. This will become a record of drawing down advanced funds.

## Development Projects

A development project consists of the sponsor constructing recreation facilities as described in the Project Agreement. One copy of each of the following items must be submitted to the state as part of the reimbursement request:

- 1) Contracts
  - a) Proof of advertising (when the formal public process is used)
  - b) Bid tabulation

- c) Copy of signed contracts or purchase orders, including bonds, extra work orders, etc.
  - d) Copy of each paid invoice
  - e) Copies of the front and back of canceled checks, credit card receipts, and proof of electronic payment
- 2) Purchased materials:
- a) Provide evidence of the best price (quotes, bids, etc.)
  - b) Copies of paid invoices
  - c) Copies of the front and back of canceled checks, credit card receipts, and proof of electronic payment
- 3) Force Account Personnel
- a) Copy of payroll sheets
  - b) Copy of timecards or attendance sheets to support payroll
  - c) Certification of work by supervisor
  - d) Method of determining hourly rate
- 4) Force Account Equipment
- a) Detailed description of each piece of equipment (model, tonnage, bucket size, drawbar, etc.)
  - b) Record of time used on project and rate (hours or mileage)
  - c) Method of computing rates or charges
- 5) Materials are drawn from the Supply
- a) Evidence of cost
  - b) Copy of journal
- 6) Donated materials
- a) Itemized list of materials supplied
  - b) Value based on the cost to the donor or reasonable market value
  - c) Method of valuation
- 7) Donated services
- a) Timesheets showing hours worked and work performed
  - b) Basis for rates
  - c) Itemized list of time and charges

# GUIDELINES FOR LABOR & EQUIPMENT RATES

Equipment Rates can be accessed from either Maine DOT rental rates or FEMA rates. Generally, FEMA rates are more comprehensive in terms of the numbers and types of equipment listed.

Maine DOT labor/rental rates can be found here- <https://www.maine.gov/mdot/csd/laborrates/>

FEMA - <https://www.fema.gov/schedule-equipment-rates>

Unskilled Labor----- \$32.13 per hour\*\*\*

\*\* Per hour of "USE" means actual hours the equipment is being used/operated, not the total time it spends on site.

\*\*\*Or current rate established by Independent Sector (for Maine, not USA average) – please check with STA for the current rate before submitting any reimbursement.

# APPENDIX

## Structural and Development Projects

Projects that include weight/vehicle bearing structural development components are required to have plans and specifications prepared or approved by a professional engineer. **Plans for these structures must be submitted to and approved by the trails program staff prior to construction.**

- 1) Sizing:
  - a) Span should be based on DEP/LUPC Guidelines
    - i) Abutments should be placed 'landward' of 1.2 times bankfull width at normal high water
      - 1) 1.5 times bankfull width is preferred
  - b) Final span length should be made in consultation with a qualified engineer, alternately provide narrative describing method used to size bridge
- 2) Bridges:
  - a) Engineering Required for:
    - i) Non-motorized bridge greater than twenty-five (25) feet
      - 1) When using pre-engineered bridge designs, engineering is only required for abutments and placement
    - ii) Multiple Spans (i.e., supporting piers)
    - iii) For structures using metal/non-wood elements (trusses, trailer frames, etc.)
    - iv) Motorized bridge greater than fifty (50) feet
    - v) Any structures located in a floodplain
  - b) Engineering Not Required for:
    - i) Minor Span bridge less than twenty-five (25) feet using off the shelf design (previously engineered)
    - ii) Motorized bridge greater than fifty (50) feet using designs from Maine's ORV BMP handbook
      - 1) Contact the STA or the ORV office for a copy of the handbook
- 3) Boardwalks:
  - a) No engineering is required for boardwalks defined as a bridge with multiple spans in which no single span is more than four (4) feet off the ground and no pier or support is in a waterway (perennial or seasonal) or wetland
- 4) Railings:
  - a) International building codes for railings must be met for urban and high-risk trails. AASHTO requirements must be

met for rural and moderate risk areas. OSHA guidelines applied for remote and low risk areas.

- b) If a railing is required, it must be in the engineered plan (whether the plan is off the shelf or procured) - it cannot be 'added on' as there are specific load rating requirements
- c) General Guidelines for Railings: required when-
  - (i) Drop off from structure is significantly greater than natural drop offs along trail.
  - (ii) Bridges or boardwalks with a drop-off of thirty (30) inches or more in Urban/Suburban area
  - (iii) Bridges or boardwalks with a drop-off of forty-eight (48) inches more in rural area
- d) All trail bridges or boardwalks that do not have a railing (rail system) must have a curb
- e) Height requirements:
  - i) Forty-two (42) inches for pedestrians and motorized use
  - ii) Fifty-four (54) inches for mountain bike and equestrian use
- 5) All wooden structures (shelters, bridges, boardwalks, etc.) must be constructed of naturally rot-resistant woods, pressure-treated lumber, or composite materials to assure longevity of use. Upon approval by the STA, other materials may be used if adequate treatment and/or construction techniques result in sufficient durability.
- 6) International building codes must be met for urban and high-risk trails
- 7) AASHTO requirements must be met for rural and moderate risk areas
- 8) OSHA guidelines applied for remote and low risk areas.