Background:

The following is an overview of the Bureau’s grant process for implementing trail development projects. For projects funded by the PA Recreational Trails federal funding program, reference the PA Recreational Trails Grant Administrative Instructions and Process Policy. The term “Grantee” refers to an applicant that has been awarded a grant. The Local Project Coordinator designated on the grant application will be the Bureau’s primary contact and the person to whom Bureau correspondence will be sent. We rely on the Local Project Coordinator to keep the appropriate local parties informed and involved in the process on behalf of the Grantee. If the Local Project Coordinator changes, the Bureau must be notified immediately in writing with the name and contact information for the new Local Project Coordinator.

The Bureau assigns a staff member to serve as the Project Manager to work with the Local Project Coordinator to successfully complete the grant project. It is the Bureau Project Manager’s responsibility to provide information and assistance to the Grantee to ensure that the project is completed, that grant program requirements are met, and that the project can be successfully closed out. All correspondence and communications regarding the project should be in an electronic format and directed to the Bureau Project Manager.

At several points during the grant management process the Bureau Project Manager must review and approve documents before the Grantee may proceed to the next stage. The standard process for implementing a trail development project is outlined below.

For projects where PennDOT is controlling the design and bidding through their Electronic Construction Management System (ECMS), the Bureau will accept PennDOT’s approvals and assurances to satisfy several of our grant management requirements. The Bureau’s will be address any additional requirements in the Part 1 letter.

1. **Bureau Award Notification and Contracting**
   - The Bureau sends a “notice-of-selection” letter to the Chief Elected Official listed in the grant application.
• Bureau Project Manager conducts a pre-contracting call with the Grantee to confirm the designated Local Project Coordinator, cash and/or non-cash match, project scope, grant agreement dates, ownership and/or control, and next steps in the grant process.

• A fully executed copy of the Grant Agreement/Contract is sent electronically, via email, to the Local Project Coordinator. This signifies the beginning of the project management process.

2. **Initial Project Start-up Letter and Initial Conference Call**

• At this stage, Grantees should have obtained a design consultant. Local Project Coordinators must provide the design consultant’s contact information to the Bureau Project Manager, including name, title, company, email, phone number and address.

• The Bureau Project Manager sends a start-up letter electronically, via email, to the Local Project Coordinator and design consultant. This letter provides guidance information and is accompanied with Bureau required forms and attachments.

• Upon receipt and review of the start-up letter, the Grantee is to contact the Bureau Project Manager to schedule an initial conference call, to include the design consultant and the Local Project Coordinator. During this conference call, the grant process, project issues and related comments from the start-up letter and attachments will be discussed. The Grantee should review these documents with their design consultant and/or solicitor/attorney prior to the initial conference call with the Bureau Project Manager.

• After the grant agreement is fully executed, Grantees are eligible to receive an initial partial payment. This is outlined and discussed in the initial project start-up letter and during the conference call. Grantees are strongly encouraged to complete the *Partial Payment Request* form requesting 50% of the total grant amount and return to the bureau’s Fiscal Unit via the email address on the form within two weeks of receiving the fully executed grant agreement.

• The Grantee submits a completed Bureau *Trail Project Progress Report* form to the Bureau Project Manager in January and July throughout the Grant Agreement period.

3. **Initial Submission Review and Approval**

• After the initial conference call is completed, the design consultant, in conjunction with the Local Project Coordinator, prepares and submits a pre-design, preliminary design, and final design submission package to the Bureau Project Manager for review and approval.

• The pre-design, preliminary design, and final design submissions shall be compiled as outlined in the start-up letter, and submitted electronically to the Bureau Project Manager in complete packages.
• The Grantee shall not proceed with bidding and procurement until the Bureau Project Manager reviews the design submissions and provides written authorization to advertise and bid the project.

4. Advertising and Bidding

• After the Grantee receives written authorization from the Bureau Project Manager to advertise and bid the project, the Grantee and/or their design consultant are responsible for advertising and bidding the project. Once the bids are received, the Local Project Coordinator is responsible for providing the Bureau Project Manager the bid results via a formal Bid Tabulation Sheet for review and approval.

• If the Grantee is a political subdivision or other entity for which open and competitive bidding procedures have been established by law, to include the Municipal Code, the Grantee shall comply with those procedures, as applicable to the project being funded. Reference the start-up letter for specific bidding thresholds for Pennsylvania municipal authorities and municipalities.

• See DCNR- Competitive Bidding Policy

5. Awarding of Construction/Materials Contracts and Bureau Approval of Costs

• After the Grantee, design consultant and solicitor/attorney have reviewed the bid results for eligible and ineligible costs and compliance with the Municipal Code and/or other applicable laws and regulations, and have discussed and addressed all issues with the Bureau Project Manager, the Bureau Project Manager provides written authorization to award the bid. It is expected that the award of the construction/materials contract(s) be made to the lowest qualified responsible bidder(s).

• The Grantee sends a complete Certification of Compliance with Bid Requirements Form to the Bureau Project Manager.

• The Bureau Project Manager provides written approval of costs and authorization to proceed with construction to the Grantee. The Grantee can now begin construction on the project.

• The Grantee sends an executed construction/materials contract to the Bureau Project Manager.

• The Grantee must seek prior written approval from the Bureau Project Manager for any changes to the approved project scope of work, budget, and/or timeline.

• The Bureau strongly encourages the Grantee to submit the Partial Payment Request form provided with the approval of costs letter. The Grantee may be eligible to receive up to 90% of the awarded grant amount. A minimum of 10% of the awarded grant amount will be retained for final payment.
6. **Project Close-Out**

- Concurrently or shortly after the completion of the project, the Grantee contacts the appropriate Bureau Regional Advisor to schedule an on-site, final inspection of the completed project.

- The Grantee submits a letter from the Consultant certifying that the final construction was completed in accordance with the plans and specifications approved by the Bureau.

- After all contractors/invoices have been paid in full, the Grantee submits a completed *Final Payment Request* form and requested close out documents within 60 days of project completion.

- Bureau Project Manager reviews the *Final Payment Request* form, requested close out documents, and the final site inspection report.

- Upon approval of the close out submission, the Bureau Project Manager provides written approval of the final payment to the Bureau Fiscal Unit and the Grantee. Once the final payment is issued, the project is closed.

All original records related to the project shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years from the date of the final payment and made available for a possible program audit. Any costs presented in the summary information, not verifiable by an audit, may be disallowed as an eligible project cost.

All development forms, guidance documents, and policies may be obtained at the following links:


This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.