GENERAL INSTRUCTIONS

Please use these instructions to complete your application for Trail Acquisition, Trail Planning, Trail Development, and Trail Educational Program.

At least 75% of the total project cost must be directly related to the trail or trail facilities.

- **Trail**: A designated route on land or water with public access for recreation and/or alternative transportation opportunities such as walking, jogging, hiking, fitness, backpacking, cross country skiing, bicycling, mountain biking, horseback riding, snowmobiling, four-wheel driving, all terrain off-road vehicles, canoeing, kayaking, etc. for users of all ages and abilities.

- **Trailhead**: An access point to a trail or trail system often accompanied by various public facilities; parking areas, restrooms, pavilions, water, directional and informational signs, etc.

- **Trail Amenities**: Elements used to enhance the user’s experience and comfort along a trail or at a trailhead; interpretative signs, benches, kiosk, tables, etc.

- **Pedestrian walkways internal to a park will be funded as part of a Park Development Project and will not be considered as an independent Trail Project.** An internal pedestrian walkway is local and contained within the park property boundary, such as a perimeter walkway within a park, provides for a continuous, unobstructed path which connects all accessible elements and spaces within the park facility. This walkway is usually constructed in conjunction with other park rehabilitation or development.

On the **Criteria Questions Tab, Plans Tab, and Project Partners Tab** within the DCNR GRANT PORTAL application, describe the proposed project as it relates to the DCNR priorities outlined below. Ensure that your responses are thorough and concise. To fully illustrate and support your responses, upload high quality maps, photos, and site drawings, as appropriate for your project, to your GRANT PORTAL application.

Your application will be reviewed, scored, and ranked based on your responses to the Criteria Questions, Plans, and Project Partners tabs and upload of the items listed on the project-specific Ready-to-Go Checklist. Please provide specifics related to your proposed trail project, as well as, information related to the connection to or with a larger trail system.
CRITERIA QUESTIONS TAB

All Trail Project Types

1. Briefly describe your project's needs, benefits, and urgencies and how they will be addressed through your proposed scope of work.
   - Provide a concise explanation of the needs, benefits and urgencies that have been identified by the community or organization. Why is your project needed? How was the need identified? Describe how your project will benefit your community or organization. Please explain and detail any urgencies facing your project, such as a safety hazard, threat of development and/or opportunities to leverage other funding.

2. The Department is a strong proponent of green/sustainable parks, trails, recreation facilities, and conservation areas. Briefly describe the green and sustainable management practices that have been or will be incorporated into your project. You should reference where these green and sustainable practices can be found in the project budget and site plan (as applicable).
   - Please refer to the Green and Sustainable Community Parks for additional resources and technical assistance information. Please note that upon award, it is expected that all green and sustainable best management practices proposed in this application will be incorporated into your project. Green and sustainable best management practices should be selected so they are appropriate for both your site and project. Consider the following key elements when evaluating the project:
     A. Site Location & Site Design
     B. Water
     C. Natural Landscaping
     D. Materials Selection & Construction
     E. Connecting People to Nature
     F. Operations and Maintenance
     G. Environmental Stewardship Messaging

Trail Planning & Trail Development

3. The Department requires all grant applicants to comply with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. Specifically, please describe how your project will comply with the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design. You should reference where these accessible accommodations can be found in the project budget, scope of work, and/or site plan (as applicable).
   - Please refer to DCNR’s ADA Policies Page for additional resources and technical assistance information. DCNR strongly suggests that a qualified design consultant knowledgeable of the current standards and DCNR best practices be relied on for their expertise. In addition to a qualified design consultant, the U.S. Access Board is another great resource for questions regarding ADA Standards and requirement.
**Trail Acquisition**

3. The Department is a strong proponent of public access for property acquired with grant funding. Briefly describe the anticipated level of public access for each property/easement and what benefits will be realized by the proposed level of access.

   - For acquisition projects, please refer to the [DCNR’s Public Value and Use Policy](#) for additional information. Please provide a concise, detailed explanation of the specific benefits that will be realized and the level of public access that is anticipated through the acquisition.

**Trail Educational Programs**

3. How does the project create new opportunities currently not available or build upon existing momentum?

   - Describe how your scope fulfills an unmet educational need within the trail community. Or, describe how your scope builds upon existing momentum or adds value to existing programs.

**All Trail Project Types**

4. The Department is a strong proponent of public involvement in all funded projects. Describe in detail how the public has been and/or will be engaged in the planning, design, implementation, long-term maintenance, and/or stewardship of your project (i.e. public meetings, press releases, volunteer days, etc.).

   - You may wish to contact your [Regional Advisor](#) to discuss public outreach strategies best suited to your project needs. Applicants should focus on outreach strategies that involve the public in meaningful ways such as public meetings as part of a formal planning process, outreach campaigns, or any other method used to involve the public either in the formative process of your project or the long-term maintenance or stewardship of your project. [DCNR’s Public Participation Guide](#) for Planning Projects may provide ideas on how to best engage and involve the public in your project.

5. Explain how your project will implement the actions in [Natural Connections](#), the 2014-2019 Pennsylvania Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). To receive maximum points, you must give a detailed explanation as to how your project will address [at least 3 Actions](#) identified in the Plan on pages 9-17 of the Executive Summary. If your project is related to improving Pennsylvania’s trail network, you may find related actions in [Pennsylvania’s Land and Water Trail Network Strategic Plan](#) as well. Be sure to mention if you are:

   - Closing a trail gap ([Gap Map](#))
   - Rehabilitating a community park
   - Implementing a watershed restoration project
   - Acquiring lands that enhance landscape connectivity and/or recreational access to existing protected lands

**Trail Acquisition, Trail Development**

6. The Department requires that the site be properly maintained, kept in reasonable repair, and open and accessible to the public throughout its useful life. Please describe your strategy to operate, maintain, and/or provide stewardship to your project.
• A Maintenance Plan should consist of an inventory and analysis of all your trails, park sites and facilities, identifying both the required staffing and funding necessary to properly care for and regularly service these areas for the public. The Plan should establish schedules and timelines for regular inspections, general maintenance to include mowing, cleaning, landscaping, etc., site upgrades and facility replacements. Priority issues and procedures should be in place to address and resolve all safety concerns, sanitation or structural issues with the goal of avoiding injury, reducing liability, minimizing costly repairs, extending the useful life of the amenities, general facilities and overall site while providing a consistently high quality and level of user experience. These plans should include a schedule for when regular maintenance, cleaning or janitorial services, and/or inspections are to occur, inspection checklists or other documentation, policies for how inspections are to be collected and reported, and remedies to address issues as they are discovered. A maintenance plan should also include a cost estimate for annual maintenance needs.

• A Stewardship Plan should consist of inventory, analysis, and recommendations to establish a long-term management plan for the preservation and environmental protection of specific natural areas or important environmental aspects of specific regions. These studies usually entail substantial research conducted by experts in critical habitat identification and assessment and substantial mapping of sensitive environmental and important habitat areas.

**Trail Planning**

6. Describe your capacity to implement the proposed plan or study once it is complete. In your response please cite specific examples of how your organization has successfully implemented a previous plan or study. Include steps taken to obtain necessary funding, meet regulatory requirements, and manage construction or installation.

**Trail Educational Programs**

6. Describe how the results of the project will be sustained long-term.

• Give an account of the partnerships, methods and resources that will be employed to further implement or steward project outputs and outcomes over the long term.

**PLANS TAB**

**All Trail Project Types**

Identify and briefly describe local, county, and regional plans that your project advances through the implementation of your scope of work. Limit to three total plans.

• Identify the top three (3) relevant plans that your project advances through the implementation of the scope of work. For each plan, identify the name, date of publication, page numbers relevant to your project, hyperlink (if applicable), if it lists your project as a high priority or early implementation project (Yes/No), and a brief, detailed description of how your project advances the plan.

• Local, county, and regional plans include, but are not limited to:
  A. Rivers Conservation Plan
  B. County Park & Recreation Plan
C. Local Network Greenways, Trails and Open Space Plan  
D. Municipal Comprehensive Plan  
E. Local Comprehensive Park & Recreation Plan  
F. Watershed Plan  
G. Economic Impact Study  
H. Project Feasibility Study and/or Master Site Plan  
I. Conservation Landscape Work Plan  
J. Heritage Area Strategic Plan

**PROJECT PARTNERS TAB**

**All Trail Project Types**  
Identify all major partners (financial, technical assistance, or general support) involved in your project.

- It is essential that you solicit and engage the appropriate partners for your project, which may include local, municipal, county, state, or federal governments, private foundations, private business, or friends groups.
- All partners should provide a letter of commitment to upload to your application that details the nature of their involvement in the project.
- For all financial partners, the commitment letter should detail the amount and type of match they are providing as well as when it will become available to you. Financial partnership can take the form of a donation of cash, materials, or in-kind services, such as the use of equipment or volunteer labor.
- For all technical assistance partners, the commitment letter should detail the nature of the assistance provided by the partner, such as volunteering their time and expertise to serve as a member of a steering committee.
- If you have no financial or technical assistance partners, you should include letters of general support. Each letter should detail how the project will directly benefit the organization providing the letter.
- For projects that cross municipal boundaries, letters from all affected municipalities should be uploaded documenting their support or commitment to the project.