



Park and Trail Partnership Grants

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS ROUND 11

*If you have questions about the information provided below,
contact PTNY at grants@ptny.org or 518-434-1583 x3*

Overview

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY), the New York State (NYS) Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), and the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) with support from Governor Hochul and the NYS Legislature, are pleased to announce the eleventh round of competitive grants through the Park and Trail Partnership Grants. The program is administered by PTNY, in partnership with OPRHP and DEC.

The Park and Trail Partnership Grant program is a \$2.5 million capacity-building matching grants program funded through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. The program is designed to:

- Enhance the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, accessibility, maintenance and promotion of New York State parks, trails, state historic sites, and public lands.
- Increase the sustainability, effectiveness, diversity, productivity, and volunteer and fundraising capabilities of not-for-profit organizations that promote, maintain, and support New York State parks, trails, state historic sites and public lands.
- Promote the tourism and economic development benefits of outdoor recreation through the growth and expansion of a connected statewide network of parks, trails, greenways and public lands.

All final applications must be submitted by Friday, August 29, 2025 . Award decisions are expected to be announced in early 2026.

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to:

1. Review all materials on the [Park and Trail Partnership Grant program website](#), including the FAQs and Evaluation Criteria;
2. Participate in an upcoming webinar; and
3. Consult with PTNY staff if there are any questions about the program.

Eligibility

The Park and Trail Partnership Grants program is open to organizations whose purpose is the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, environmental education, maintenance, and/or promotion of New York State parks, trails, historic sites, or facility/facilities under the jurisdiction of OPRHP or public land under the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). In addition:

1. An applicant must be registered as a charity with the New York State Attorney General's office and submit its CHAR500/410 Annual Financial Report.
2. An applicant must be classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or have a Memorandum of Understanding with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt fiscal agent.
3. An applicant must, at the time of application, have and be in good standing under a current agreement with OPRHP or DEC for ongoing volunteer services, fundraising, programming or operational support applicable to the grant request.
4. (a) For an Applicant supporting OPRHP sites(s), the organization's articles of incorporation shall expressly state the organization's purpose is the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, environmental education, maintenance, and/or promotion of one or more parks, trail, historic site, or facility under the jurisdiction of OPRHP. In addition, the Applicant's agreement referenced in (3) above shall implement this purpose.
(b) Applicants maintaining a current formal agreement with DEC must either have included in its mission the support of a specific DEC site or facility, or its mission must state the activities it conducts at one or multiple DEC location(s) as stated in its current formal agreement.

Award Categories and Matches

There are four types of capacity-building grants available to eligible organizations through the Park and Trail Partnership Grant program.

1. Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants

Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants may be used to assist organizations with the stewardship, interpretation, promotion, education, and public access of a New York State park, trail, historic site or DEC public land, or a partnership involving more than one such organization, which significantly enhances the organization's visibility and capacity. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Public access or engagement improvements, such as kiosks, exhibits, signage, new trails with signage, boat launches and docks, and other activities that enhance public enjoyment of the public resource.
- Restoration of historic structures or preservation of artifacts as well as cataloging and digitizing collections for better public access.
- Building infrastructure to better accommodate visitors with disabilities or mobility challenges.
- Design and installation of interpretive information and displays, especially projects that engage wider audiences by incorporating multiple languages, aids for the visually or hearing impaired, or the inclusion of historically excluded voices or stories.
- Improving access and upgrading buildings to increase multi-season use.

- Development and implementation of a community outreach plan to enhance community access to and enjoyment of the public resource and awareness of the organization's role in its preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance and/or promotion.
- Community and constituency-building initiatives, events, and programs that promote public education and recreation resulting in greater public support and broader public involvement, especially from new and presently underserved audiences, and those which enhance age-friendly recreational opportunities.
- Development and implementation of public resource marketing plans, especially if undertaken in partnership with local tourism promotion efforts.
- Shared consultant services between more than one eligible organization.

Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grant applications which include a project involving construction or rehabilitation must include the following documents with the application based on project location (links to these forms are included in the online application form):

OPRHP Properties:

- A signed Short Environmental Assessment Form Part 1 ONLY
 - See Part C of the Environmental Review Form
- A signed State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review form.
- A map with the location of the project identified.
- A site plan, which depicts the location and elements of the project clearly.

DEC Properties:

- A regional map with the location of the project identified.
- A site plan, which depicts the location and elements of the project clearly; and if applicable, documentation showing that the proposed project is in a Unit Management Plan (UMP) or Recreation Management Plan (RMP), including released draft management plan(s).
- For projects located within the Forest Preserve, and that involve earth work or tree cutting, documentation of an approved Forest Preserve Work Plan.

Examples of projects that are considered construction or rehabilitation are:

- Building rehabilitation.
- Any change to historic structure: adding or removing anything, painting, remodeling or reconstructing.
- Improvements, such as interpretive kiosks, exhibits, signage, new trails with signage, trail work and other activities that enhance public enjoyment and access to the park, trail, site or public land.
- Activities whose costs are part of a larger construction project.
- Activities that involve any ground disturbance or shovel in the ground.
- Activities that require engineering plans and specifications.
- Activities that require State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) review.

PTNY will notify successful grant applications that involve construction and require additional review.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$300,000; a 10 percent match of the total project budget is required, up to 50 percent of which may be in-kind. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.

2. Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants

Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants strengthen the capacity and expertise of individual organizations that support New York State parks, trails, historic sites and public lands, or a partnership involving more than one such organization, in order to aid them in fulfilling their mission and to improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Development of a multi-year strategic plan or major fundraising/capital or marketing campaign plan.
- Board/staff training and development, including facilitated retreats.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) training/consultant services or board recruitment campaigns that reflect your park/site's community and park/site visitors.
- Developing partnerships with DEIA-focused non-profits in your community, such as events and programs, that will help welcome more users to the park/site and expand accessibility in a broad sense.
- Website and email newsletter design and development, graphic design, and printing and distribution of digital or print brochures, newsletters and other promotional materials.
- Efforts to expand the organization's membership and broaden the diversity of support for the organization.
- Software to improve fundraising/development/donor relations, bookkeeping, or recordkeeping. Grant funds may cover initial software purchase or licensing, but not license renewal.
- Development and implementation of activities that will provide a future ongoing revenue source.
- Development and implementation of a volunteer program.
- Development of partnerships to promote new or strengthen existing collaboration with more than one organization and/or local government to increase public support for and/or participation in the planning, development, promotion or stewardship of the public resource.
- Hiring of temporary contractors, staff or interns to support the organization's capacity-building work.
- Shared consultant services between more than one eligible organization.

Awards & Match: One-year grants up to \$200,000; a 10 percent match of the total project budget is required, up to 50 percent of which may be in-kind. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.

3. Professional Development Grants

Professional Development Grants support the hiring of permanent staff to advance organizations to a higher and sustainable level of professionalism, fiscal and administrative stability, and

community outreach that in the future they will be able to sustain on their own. Professional Development Grants may be used to support:

- First Staff Hire: hiring the organization's first permanent employee, full- or part-time.
- Additional Staff: hiring an additional full- or part-time permanent staff member to fill a critical administrative, outreach or development need, or other key function.
- Upgrade to Full-time Staff: increasing a part-time executive director, or other key staff position to full time.
- Shared Staff: hiring a staff person to be shared by two or more eligible organizations.

Professional Development Grants are meant to support permanent increases in staffing capacity. If an organization is interested in hiring temporary contractors or staff to support the organization's work, this request would fall under a Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grant or a Stewardship and Public Access Capacity grant.

All applicants for the Professional Development Grant must have an existing strategic plan or other long-term (3 or more years) organizational plan at the time of application.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$150,000 encompassing a period of two years; a 20 percent cash match of the total project budget is required. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory one-year progress report.

Organizations interested in a Professional Development Grant must first submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) by Thursday, June 26, 2025. Full applications are by invitation only. Organizations will be notified by the end of June if they are invited to submit a full proposal application, **due Friday, August 29, 2025.**

4. Step-Up Grants

Step-up Grants assist organizations with the administrative and legal fees needed to secure 501(c)(3) status, along with the costs associated with completing a consultant-facilitated organizational assessment and resulting plan(s).

Awards & Match: One-year grants up to \$20,000; a \$500 match is required, cash or in-kind. Award disbursed at contract signing.

4. **Match Guidelines**

How to calculate the match

The Park and Trail Partnership Grant program is a matching grants program. Other than Step-up Grants, which require a flat \$500 match, all grant categories require organizations to contribute a percentage of the total project cost (not the total grant request). Below are some examples of how to calculate the required match.

Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants (COE) and Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants (SPAC) – 10% match

Grants may cover up to 90 percent of total project budget. A minimum 10 percent match of the total project amount is required, up to 50 percent of which may be in-kind.

If your organization's total project cost is \$25,000, you may apply for a grant of \$22,500 (90 percent of \$25,000) and your organization will need to provide a match of at least \$2,500 (10 percent of \$25,000), \$1,250 of which may be in-kind.

Alternatively, if your organization expects to raise no more than \$3,000 in matching funds, both cash and in-kind, then you should not apply for more than \$27,000 in grant funds. [Divide the amount you expect to raise by .10 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

Professional Development Grants – 20% match

Grants may cover up to 80 percent of total project budget encompassing a period of two years. A minimum 20 percent match (cash) of the total project budget is required.

If your organization's total project cost is \$100,000, you may apply for a grant of \$80,000 and your organization will need to provide a match of \$20,000, all of which must be cash.

Alternatively, if your organization expects to raise no more than \$10,000 in matching funds, then you should not apply for more than \$50,000 in grant funds. [Divide the amount you expect to raise by .20 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

Matching funds

Applicant organizations must match the grant with non-state funds. Matching funds must be verifiable at the time of application (full-application stage for Professional Development Grants). Documentation of matching funds is required before funding for awarded projects is disbursed.

In-kind match contributions must be quantifiable and documented and may include:

- donation of professional and construction services (legal, facilitation, consultation, etc. as well as the donation of travel costs from that individual);
- donation of goods (meeting rooms, equipment, printing costs, food or refreshments, construction materials); and
- donation of unskilled/general labor from volunteers (trail work, administrative work, construction work).

Evaluation Criteria

Please see the [evaluation criteria](#) for each grant category.

Environmental Review

1. All applicants must complete the [Not-for-Profit Environmental Review Form](#) and submit it with their applications. PTNY will notify successful grant applicants with projects that involve construction about additional review requirements.
2. For grant proposals that do not involve construction projects, applicants must check the last box in Part B, “the project involves administrative components.”
3. For a list of what classifies as construction, please see Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants section above (#4).

How to Apply

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a Park and Trail Partnership grant must first create an account with our online grant application and reporting system. Once registered, you will be able to see available grants and follow the steps to apply. To register and begin the application process, visit the [online application and reporting system](#).

Webinars

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a Park and Trail Partnership Grant are strongly encouraged to participate in an upcoming webinar. Applicants will receive an invitation via email. If you do not, please contact PTNY at grants@ptny.org or 518-434-1583x3.

Webinar Schedule

General webinar for prospective applicants

(this same webinar will be offered twice)

Thursday, June 3 | 11:00am - noon

Webinar for prospective Professional Development Grant applicants only.

Tuesday, June 10 | 11:00am-12:00pm

General webinar for prospective applicants

(this same webinar will be offered twice)

Tuesday, June 24 | 7pm – 8pm

Contact

If you have questions about Park and Trail Partnership Grants, contact Parks & Trails New York at grants@ptny.org or 518-434-1583x3. Visit us online at: www.ptny.org.