

Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) Regional Trails Program: Building Towards 75 Additional Miles by 2035

Introduction

Partners across Greater Philadelphia are working to build a region-wide network of multi-use trails for biking, walking, rolling, commuting, exercising, relaxing, and meeting neighbors and friends. This network, called the [Circuit Trails](#), connects communities across the nine counties of Greater Philadelphia and serves as a hub for national trails, including the East Coast Greenway and the 9/11 National Memorial Trail. Over 420 miles of this 800-plus-mile network are complete.

DVRPC's Regional Trails Program supports continued implementation of the Circuit Trails and safe, accessible, and welcoming community connections to the trail network. Completion of the Circuit Trails is a priority identified in the region's long-range transportation plan, [Update: Connections 2050](#). The network will provide essential transportation options, benefit public health, stimulate economic development, and increase quality of life.

The William Penn Foundation has set a goal of completing 75 additional miles of Circuit Trails by 2035. With their funding, a total of \$4.55 million is available through this funding opportunity. Eligible projects may be in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties in New Jersey and Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia, and Berks counties in Pennsylvania. Funding may be used for right-of-way acquisition, planning, design, and construction of multi-use trails, as well as safe, accessible, and welcoming trailheads, gateways, and neighborhood connections. Funded projects must be open to the public.

Responses are due by 5:00 PM on Friday, March 27, 2026.

About DVRPC

The Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission is the federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) for a nine-county region in two states: Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, and Philadelphia counties in Pennsylvania; and Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, and Mercer counties in New Jersey. As the MPO for Greater Philadelphia, DVRPC builds consensus for a shared regional vision; enables data-based, community-centered solutions; and helps put plans into action.

DVRPC serves strictly as an advisory agency. Any planning or design concepts as prepared by DVRPC are conceptual and may require engineering design and feasibility analysis. Actual authority for carrying out any planning proposals rest solely with the governing bodies of the states, local governments, or authorities that have the primary responsibility to own, manage, or maintain any transportation facility.

DVRPC fully complies with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and related nondiscrimination mandates in all activities. For more information about DVRPC's Title VI Program or to obtain a Title VI Complaint Form, visit www.dvrpc.org/GetInvolved/TitleVI, or contact DVRPC's ADA and Title VI Compliance Officer Shoshana Akins by calling 215-592-1800 or via email at public_affairs@dvrpc.org.

Vision for Greater Philadelphia

Our shared region vision is for a Greater Philadelphia region that provides:

- A safe, modern, multimodal transportation network for all
- An innovative and connected economy with opportunity and shared prosperity
- Integrated, healthy, and walkable communities
- A preserved and restored natural environment with thriving ecological systems
- Clean, reliable, and affordable infrastructure and utility services resilient to the effects of extreme weather

Who May Apply?

Regional Trails Program grants support the efforts of local governments, state agencies, and nonprofit organizations. Applicants may include state, county, municipal, and city agencies and departments; nonprofit organizations; or any other group with the capacity to carry out such a project.

Applicants who will not be the long-term owner, manager, and maintainer of a trail must show support from the entity that will perform these functions and demonstrate that the entity has the capacity to do so.

Partnerships, including with community or neighborhood groups, are encouraged. In a partnership approach, a lead applicant must be identified and assume contractual responsibility for delivering the awarded project. All sub-consultants must be able to document work completed as part of the project and comply with DVRPC's contract terms (e.g., non-discrimination, insurance, indemnification).

Geographic Eligibility

Projects must be located partially or wholly in Burlington, Camden, Gloucester, or Mercer county in New Jersey or Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery, Philadelphia, or Berks county in Pennsylvania.

Community Impact

DVRPC is committed to supporting high-impact projects. Proposed projects should reflect community priorities as expressed in local, county, regional, and state plans and be supported by data-driven approaches to community and transportation network safety, accessibility, and connectivity. Applicants should use federal, state, and local data, such as data from the U.S. Census Bureau and data on transportation, health, economic, or other trends, to describe the community the project will serve and its expected impacts. Applicants should highlight community benefits and describe specific outreach and community engagement completed or planned as part of project development.

DVRPC's suite of mapping applications (www.dvrpc.org/data/maps/), plans and other publications (www.dvrpc.org/products/), and data catalog (catalog.dvrpc.org/dataset/) can be used to access data and planning relevant to communities.

Eligible Activities

Eligible activities include planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction. Limited funding for right-of-way acquisition is also available. In combination with funding to support any of the above activities, expenses related to robust community engagement, as applicable, are also eligible.

All projects must advance a part of the Circuit Trails network and/or a trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection to a Circuit Trail and be multi-use, supporting pedestrian use and accommodating bicycles and wheeled mobility devices. If the proposed project is a trailhead, gateway, or neighborhood connection, this can be accomplished through a single facility or a combination of proximate facilities (e.g., a stairwell and ramp).

Grants may not be used for general operating expenses, acquisition of buildings (except for purposes of trail construction), litigation, lobbying, scholarships, or procurement and administrative functions.

Available Funds, Awards, and Match

Up to \$4.55 million is available. Individual awards may not exceed \$400,000.

No match or local share will be required.

All funds awarded will be provided on a cost-reimbursable basis.

DVRPC will only reimburse costs up to the award amount and only in accordance with the provisions of the contract between DVRPC and the Project Sponsor.

Site Control

Applicants for construction projects must show that a project area is under public control or that a clear plan and funding strategy are in place to obtain site control to complete the project before December 31, 2030 (see “Project Delivery”).

Applicants for design and engineering projects should demonstrate a process and timeline for establishing future site control if the right-of-way (ROW) is not yet under public control.

Applicants for planning and feasibility studies need not demonstrate site control, but the assessment of ROW needs and the development of strategies to acquire the necessary ROW should be components of such studies, if not already known.

Project Delivery

Projects must be completed by December 31, 2030. Failure to meet this deadline could result in the forfeiture of any funds not currently reimbursed by DVRPC by that date.

Evaluation of Applications

Applications will be reviewed by a committee consisting of representatives from each county in the DVRPC service area, DVRPC staff, the Circuit Trails Coalition, and state agencies. Projects will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Overall Project Quality
- Project Readiness and Budget
- Applicant Capacity
- Regional Significance and Community Impact
- Catalytic Potential

Guiding Questions

Answers to the following questions, along with other relevant information provided by the applicant, will be used to evaluate planning and feasibility studies, design and engineering, and construction projects. The more specific the applicant's narrative regarding the details of the proposed project and the answers to the questions below, the easier it will be for evaluators to make determinations about the proposal. Applicants should include all relevant information.

Note: Criteria apply to planning and feasibility, design, and construction projects unless otherwise indicated

Planning, Feasibility only: Indicates criteria are applicable to planning and feasibility projects only

Design, Engineering only: Indicates criteria are applicable to design and engineering projects only

Construction only: Indicates criteria are applicable to construction projects only

1. Overall Project Quality

- a. If a Circuit Trail segment:
 - i. Will the segment fill a gap in a longer Circuit Trail?
 - ii. Will the segment begin work on an undeveloped Circuit Trail?
 - iii. What will the recreational utility of the trail be? What will the quality of the recreational experience be?
 - iv. What will the transportation utility of the trail be? Will it provide meaningful connections?
 - v. How many miles of trail will be built with the project? How “cost-effective” is the project?
- b. If a community connection to a trail:
 - i. Will the proposed connection create a link between neighborhoods, parks, commercial centers, major transit nodes, schools, natural areas, and/or environmental centers and the trail?
 - ii. Will the connection create a new access point or make an existing access point more welcoming, safe, and/or accessible?
- c. For all projects:
 - i. Will the trail or community connection meet AASHTO guidelines (i.e., Guide for the Development of Bicycle Facilities, 5th Edition, 2024) for surface type, width, and other features? Will the trail meet ADA guidelines?
 - ii. Will the trail or community connection be off-road and/or physically buffered from automobile and truck traffic?
 - iii. Will the trail or community connection be multi-use (i.e., accommodate bicycles, pedestrians, and forms of active transportation)?
 - iv. Does the completed or proposed design adequately respond to any location-specific conditions and needs?

2. Project Readiness and Budget

a. Site Control

- i. Is the right-of-way (ROW) entirely under public control or eased for trail use?
 1. If not, how many additional acquisitions are necessary?
 2. From whom does ROW need to be acquired, what is the status of the acquisition process, and what is the likelihood of success?
- ii. **Design only:** If ROW has not been secured, what is the likelihood that ROW can be secured and at what cost?
- iii. **Planning only:** If ROW has not been secured (likely the case for a planning project), is assessment of ROW needs and development of strategies to acquire needed ROW a component of the proposed work?

b. Potential Barriers

- i. Are there potential obstacles and barriers to trail development, such as bridges, road crossings, rail crossings, utility conflicts, retaining walls, tunnels, and sensitive environmental resources?
- ii. **Construction only:** Has the design been completed? If not completed, is the design funded?
- iii. **Construction only:** What is the schedule for completion of construction?

c. Budget/Cost Estimate

- i. Is the project budget right-sized for the proposed scope of work? How were costs estimated (e.g., engineer's estimate, typical item costs, comparables, direct quotes)?
- ii. Do you commit to covering cost overruns that exceed the grant amount?
- iii. **Design only:** What is the strategy for acquiring future construction funding? What sources of construction funding have been identified?

3. Applicant Capacity

a. Community Support

- i. Describe local elected officials and agency staff support for the project.
- ii. Describe community or neighborhood groups, business associations, or other local group support for the project.
- iii. Is the trail or improvement documented in neighborhood, local, county, or state plans? What plan goals does the project support?

b. Project Management

- i. **Planning only:** Does the applicant have capacity to manage and/or experience in managing trail, trailhead, or gateway planning and feasibility studies?
- ii. **Design only:** Does the applicant have capacity to manage and/or experience

managing trail, trailhead, or trail gateway design projects? Has the sponsor worked with qualified trail design consultants in the past?

- iii. **Construction only:** Does the applicant have capacity to manage and/or experience in managing trail, trailhead, or trail gateway construction projects?

c. Stewardship

- i. Does the applicant or partners have the capacity and expertise to manage and maintain the trail, trailhead, or gateway? Does the sponsor/partner have experience managing and maintaining trails?
- ii. Is there a volunteer and/or “friends-of” group to assist with maintenance and/or programming?
- iii. **Planning only:** If the stewardship organization is unknown, then is identifying or developing a stewardship organization with capacity and expertise a specific goal of the plan?

4. Regional Significance and Community Impact

- a. What specific benefits will the trail or community connection provide? Use of federal, state, and local data, such as U.S. Census data, crash, health, economic, or other data, to describe the community the project will serve, and its expected impacts, is encouraged.
- b. Does the trail, trailhead, or gateway provide new access to specific users, neighborhoods, or communities?
- c. Does the proposed trail, trailhead, or gateway remove or overcome any specific barriers to access?
- d. How does the trail or community connection contribute to the overall Circuit Trails network and/or provide new users access to this network?

5. Catalytic Potential

- a. Describe how the project is a quality use of Regional Trails Program funds. For instance, will a grant initiate a new project by funding early-stage development? Or will the grant close a funding gap that could not otherwise be closed by another funding source?
- b. Is the requested grant a meaningful amount given the overall scope of the project?
- c. What additional funding will the proposed grant leverage? For example, does grant funding for design set the project up to pursue construction funding from another source?

Response Requirements

Responses to this Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) should be in the form of a letter of no more than six (6) pages in length (single-spaced, 12-point type). Applicants must provide the 1-page application cover included on page 9 of this FOA in its entirety. Responses should include the following information:

- A description of the proposed project area.

- A project map that illustrates the general project location and connectivity to the Circuit Trails. Map(s) should be clear and easy to read.
- A description of the proposed project, including how it helps to complete a segment of the Circuit or connect to a Circuit Trail.
- A description of how the proposed project responds to the relevant evaluation criteria.
- A narrative and/or budget table and project delivery timeline, including the amount and source of match (if any).
- Relevant documentation regarding site control/ownership, if available and pertinent, may also be attached to the submission.

Note: Map(s) and site control documentation do not count against the 6-page limit.

Nonprofits, community development corporations, or others that will not own or maintain a trail after completion should include a letter(s) demonstrating support from the entity that will ultimately own, manage, and/or maintain the trail. Other letters of support and ancillary materials are optional and should be included only if they are directly relevant to the project under consideration and to the evaluation criteria.

Schedule for Evaluation, Selection & Award

The selection committee will evaluate applications during the spring of 2026. Recommended projects for funding will be forwarded to the DVRPC Board for approval as early as July 2026.

Individual applicants may be contacted during the evaluation period to provide additional information and clarification.

Notification of awarded applicants will occur following DVRPC Board approval, after which time contracting procedures will be initiated.

Contract Administration and Grant Terms

Awarded applicants will be required to enter a legally binding contract with DVRPC by providing a budget, scope, and other required documents within six months of the grant being awarded. Any requests for additional time must be submitted in writing to DVRPC for review and approval. Failure to meet the deadline will result in the grant award amount being forfeited.

Applicants, now project sponsors, are required to comply with all provisions of the award contract. Furthermore, reimbursements will be conditioned on submission and approval of a detailed project scope of work and budget. Project costs will be reimbursed upon submission of invoices documenting project costs.

All project tasks must be completed by December 31, 2030. Failure to meet this schedule could result in a forfeiture of grant funds.

Project Delivery and the Use of Consultants

Proposed project activities may be undertaken by organization staff, a design or engineering consultant, a construction contractor, another qualified consultant, or a combination of the above as appropriate. If an outside consultant is sought, the selection process must comply with all applicable local procurement requirements and adhere to the standards of any applicable matching fund source. The Project Sponsor or their hired forces are responsible for ensuring that all applicable standards and regulations are followed for any matching funding source or future construction funding source (in the case of design projects).

Submission

All submissions pursuant to this FOA must be delivered to DVRPC no later than 5:00 PM on Friday, March 27, 2026, via electronic means (see submission instructions below). Applications received after the due date and time will not be considered. All responses must be submitted in a .pdf format by email to regionaltrailsfoa@dvrpc.org. File size must be under 25 MB.

Please direct all questions to Shawn Megill Legendre at slegendre@dvrpc.org or 215-238-2934. Applicants are also invited to contact Shawn to discuss projects or go over any questions they may have before submitting their application.

DVRPC Resources

- Circuit Trails Map
www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/thecircuit/
- Title VI Compliance Tool for the Greater Philadelphia Region
www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/ipd/
- Link Tool for Assessing Potential Connectivity Benefit of New Bicycle or Pedestrian Facilities
cloud.dvrpc.org/webmaps/link/
- Regional Crash Data Viewer
www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/crash-data/
- Regional High Injury Network
dvrpcgis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/instant/sidebar/index.html?appid=8d22f881822e4044bbd7ee64900ac2f8
- Traffic Counts (including Bicycles and Pedestrian Counts)
www.dvrpc.org/webmaps/trafficcounts/

Regional Trails Program – Phase XI Grants: Application Cover Form

General Information

Proposed Project Title: _____

Applicant Organization: _____

Applicant Contact Name: _____

Applicant Contact Address: _____

Applicant Contact Phone: _____

Applicant Contact Email: _____

RTP Application Request

Request Amount: _____

Match Amount (if any): _____

Location of Project

Municipality(ies): _____

County(ies): _____

Please list any connecting or adjacent trails: