



Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program 2021 Grant Application Guidelines

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GRANT PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program (MTSGP) is a new state program that provides funding for the development, renovation, and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized recreational trails and trailside facilities throughout Montana and in its communities (23-2-108 and 23-2-109, MCA). The MTSGP is administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks.

Program Background

The MTSGP was authorized by Senate Bill 24 in the 2019 Legislative Session. Funding for the program comes from \$1.37 of Montana's \$9.00 light vehicle registration fee. Each cycle, the program targets funding 30% motorized projects, 30% non-motorized projects, and 40% diversified projects (projects serving multiuse trails).

Eligible Funding Areas

1. New trail and shared-use path construction;
2. Rehabilitation and maintenance of existing trails and shared-use paths, including grooming of trails for motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation; and
3. Construction and maintenance of trailside and trailhead facilities, including but not limited to bridges, fencing, parking, bathrooms, latrines, picnic shelters, interpretation, trail signs, and trailside weed management.

Funding associated with the development of trail safety and education programs, equipment¹ purchases, or land acquisitions is not eligible.

Available Funding

The amount of available funding is expected to be approximately \$1.25 million. Applicants may request up to \$50,000 in grant funds.

Match Requirement

Each project must have a ratio of 90% MTSGP funds to 10% matching funds.

Eligible Applicants

Grant applicants may include federal, tribal, state, county, or municipal agencies (including school districts), and recreational associations and clubs.

Application and Project Period

The application period is open November 2, 2020 to February 1, 2021 at 3:00pm MST.

Successful MTSGP projects will begin in early July 2021 and end in October 2024.

For More Information

Visit the Parks Website: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/>

Contact the Program Manager, Michelle McNamee: michelle.mcnamee@mt.gov or 406-444-7642

¹ "Equipment" is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than five years and with an acquisition cost that exceeds \$1,000.

2021 APPLICATION CYCLE OVERVIEW

This is the first grant cycle for the MTS GP. The amount of available funding is expected to be approximately \$1.25 million.

Eligible funding areas include:

1. New trail and shared-use path construction;
2. Rehabilitation and maintenance of existing trails and shared-use paths, including grooming of trails for motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation; and
3. Construction and maintenance of trailside and trailhead facilities, including but not limited to bridges, fencing, parking, bathrooms, latrines, picnic shelters, interpretation, trail signs, and trailside weed management.

Funding associated with the development of trail safety and education programs, equipment² purchases, or land acquisitions is not eligible.

Application Period

The 2021 MTS GP application period is open from November 2, 2020 to February 1, 2021 at 3:00pm MST.

Applications must be submitted online through WebGrants (<https://funding.mt.gov>). Applications will not be accepted after 3:00pm MST on February 1, 2021. An organization can submit only one grant application per grant cycle.

Application and Review Timeline



² "Equipment" is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than five years and with an acquisition cost that exceeds \$1,000.

Project Start

Successful 2021 MTSGP projects will begin in early July 2021. Project expenses incurred before the Contract Agreement is signed (expected July 2021) cannot be reimbursed or used as match.

Project Close

The deadline for grantees to expend their 2021 MTSGP funds and accrue match is October 15, 2024. The final reimbursement request and Final Report are due on December 31, 2024.

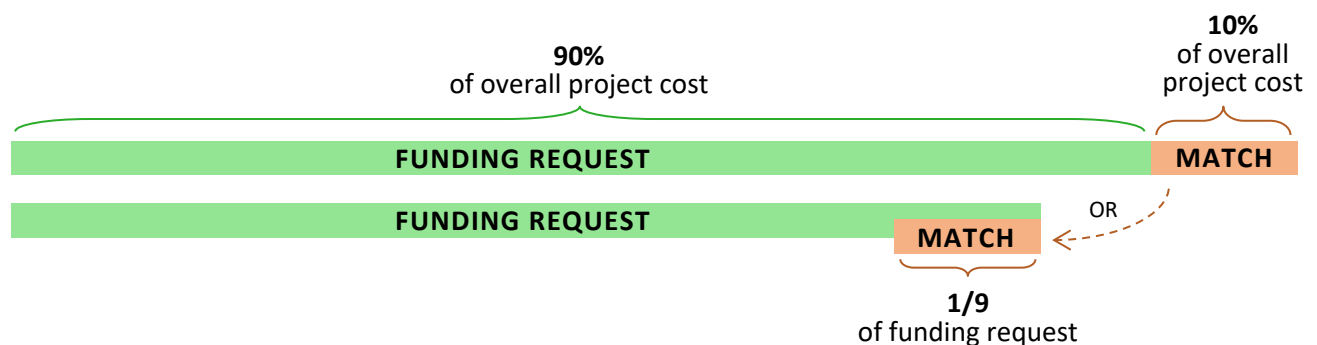
About the Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program

Reimbursement Program

An entity may receive reimbursement only **after** the entity has expended funds on an eligible expense and submitted adequate documentation. Project expenses incurred before the project start date (when the Contract Agreement is signed) are ineligible for reimbursement.

Match Requirement

Each project must have a ratio of 90% MTSGP funds to 10% matching funds. Another way to calculate the minimum match requirement is to multiply the funding request amount by 1/9 (see below).



The Funding Selection Process

All award decisions will be made in late Spring 2021 by FWP. The State Trails Advisory Committee, a group of ten individuals who represent diversified trail interests throughout Montana, reviews the applications and makes funding recommendations to FWP. Advisors to the State Trails Advisory Committee include agency officials from both State and Federal government.

See the [Application Review Process Section](#) for more information.

Eligible Applicants

Grant applicants may include federal, tribal, state, county, or municipal agencies (including school districts) and recreational associations and clubs. All organizations applying for FWP funding must be registered with the Secretary of State. The organization applying to the MTSGP must be the organization that will expend the funds and manage the grant; FWP does not allow Tri-Party Agreements.

Funding Request Limitations

Applicants may request funds between \$5,000 and \$50,000 each funding cycle. Any applicant wishing to request more than \$50,000 in one funding cycle should consider applying to the Recreational Trails Program (<http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/recTrailsProgram.html>).

Tips for Applying

- Read these Guidelines carefully and follow all instructions on the WebGrants application. This is a new program which differs from the Recreational Trails Program (see [Appendix D](#) for a one-page comparison of the two programs).
- Draft your responses to all application questions in a Word document (or other word processing software) and be sure to do the following:
 - Check spelling/grammar.
 - Conduct character counts (all responses have a character limit).
 - Ask others to proofread your application.
 - Save your application responses/data outside of WebGrants in case you have technical issues.
- Focus on details specific to your project and limit background information. Reviewers should be able to easily understand the details of your project (how much you are requesting, what you propose to expend funds on, etc.).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

Documentation of Project Support/Approval

Letters of Support are not required for all project types. Documentation of project support/approval is required in certain situations. Contact the Program Manager if you are unsure what is required for your project.

1. **If the applicant is a private organization/entity**, you must provide a copy of meeting minutes or a letter from the organization's leadership approving the project/application.
2. **If your proposed project takes place on land not owned by the entity applying for funding**, you must provide a current Collection Agreement, Land Use Agreement, or other such legal document demonstrating landowner permission to access and use the land. If the documentation is not current, you must provide a letter from the entity affirming their commitment to enter into such an agreement before the project start date.
3. **If your application references a match commitment from another entity** (cash, donation, volunteer labor, etc.), you must provide a current letter or other such documentation from the entity stating their commitment to this specific MTS GP project.
4. **If your application references any other type of commitment from another entity** (e.g. a commitment to maintenance), you must provide a current letter or other such documentation from the entity stating their commitment to this specific project.

No other documentation of support is required to apply although Letters of Support are accepted. If you choose to submit any Letters of Support, be sure they meet the following requirements:

- Letters are typed.
- Letters are from an organization, not an individual (unless an individual is expressing a commitment to the project or landowner is an adjacent, affected landowner).
- Letters signed and dated.
- Letters are current and reference the specific project/grant year for which you are applying.
- Letters are unique. Form letters are not acceptable.

Landowner Permissions, Easements, and Public Access

The public must be assured legal access to trails and trail-related facilities developed or maintained with State funds. Applications without adequate landowner permissions will be considered incomplete and will not be considered for funding. The program places a higher value on a longer-term easements or agreements that have the potential of allowing for public access in perpetuity.

Private Property

- **On the application, you must include an owner-signed legal easement or lease agreement that will allow public access to the area/trail for a minimum of fifteen years.**

Winter Grooming Operations

- ▶ **On the application, you must include an easement or legal agreement from the landowner/land management agency that will be valid for a term of at least five years.**

Public Land

- ▶ **On the application, you must include documentation of approval for the project from the corresponding land management agency (e.g. a Collection Agreement or letter of support from the land management agency).**

In each case above, if the agreement will expire before the MTSGP project start date, the application should also include a letter/documentation from the landowner or land management agency stating its intent to reissue the agreement in time for project work to begin.

Right-of-Way, Railroad Certifications, and Public Utility Certifications

Each application must include all necessary public right-of-way, railroad, and/or public utility certifications or confirm that no such certifications are required for the project. All certifications must be guaranteed at the time of application for your project to be considered for funding.

If your project includes trail construction or improvements along any State Highway right-of-way, you must contact your local Montana Department of Transportation (MDT) office and follow all applicable requirements. Typically, applicants working along a State highway will need to submit an Encroachment Permit with the application or a Letter of Intent stating that the project has been approved by MDT.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND SCORING

Eligible project activities

1. New trail and shared-use path construction;
2. Rehabilitation and maintenance of existing trails and shared-use paths, including grooming of trails for motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation; and
3. Construction and maintenance of trailside and trailhead facilities, including but not limited to bridges, fencing, parking, bathrooms, latrines, picnic shelters, interpretation, trail signs, and trailside weed management.

Application Review Process

Preliminary Review: Internal Review Panel members perform a technical review of each application and score each application based on the Scoring Criteria. Applications determined not to meet the following technical review criteria may not move forward for consideration.

1. The application is complete.
2. The project is an eligible use of funds.
3. The project is ready to proceed.
4. The match requirement has been met.
5. The environmental review requirement has been met.
6. The application includes:
 - a. Adequate landowner permission to allow for continuous public use/access.
 - b. Approval of the project from the applicant organization's leadership (if a private entity).
7. The applicant's current FWP grants are in compliance (if applicable).

State Trails Advisory Committee Review: State Trails Advisory Committee members review all applications passing Preliminary Review. Committee members give each application an overall project score based on the Scoring Criteria.

Funding Decision Meeting: State Trails Advisory Committee members and advisors meet to consider application scores, discuss project merit, and reach consensus on funding recommendations.

Application Scoring Criteria

Internal Review Panel members will give each criterion a base score of 0-10 (10 being "Excellent or Very Strongly Agree"). The base score is then multiplied by the criterion weight, which yields the score for that criterion. The total project score is the average of all criteria scores (out of 10). State Trails Advisory Committee members give one overall score based on the Scoring Criteria.

1. Access and Connectivity (x1)

The proposed project is accessible by the public and improves the public's connection to existing trails and/or natural, cultural, historical, and recreational areas.

2. Recreational Opportunity (x2)

The proposed project provides expanded recreational opportunity(s) for a variety of user groups. Additional consideration will be given to projects providing increased recreational access for nontraditional trail users (e.g. persons with disabilities, senior citizens, etc.).

3. Need for Project (x2)

The application shows a clear need/demand for the proposed project. Need/demand may be demonstrated with planning documents, formal agreements, research/data, photos, letters of support, etc.

4. Benefits of Proposed Project (x2)

The application identifies and justifies unique benefits of the proposed project. Such benefits may include:

- a. Protection and enhancement of natural resources.
- b. Cultural or natural resource interpretation, ethics, safety, education, etc.
- c. Development of partnerships to carry out the project, future project maintenance.

5. Short- and Long-term Maintenance (x1)

The application demonstrates a commitment to short-term and long-term maintenance of the proposed project. The application describes a maintenance plan and identifies the party(s) responsible. If applicable, Letters of Support/Commitment are provided from any entity that will perform or share in the maintenance of the proposed project.

6. Application Quality/Clarity (x1)

The application provides a clear and complete overview of the proposed project, budget, and timeline. Responses are specific to the proposed project, grammar/spelling errors are minimal, and the budget is detailed and justified.

Additional Considerations

Other considerations that may affect the State Trails Advisory Committee's funding recommendation:

- The amount of funding available.
- The applicant's recent performance as an FWP grantee (if applicable).

Priority Project Areas

The State Trails Advisory Committee has identified the following priority project areas for funding this cycle. All projects will be reviewed based on merit before priority areas are considered.

- Projects involving direct, on-the-ground trail work (e.g. new trail and trailside facility construction, trail and trailside facility maintenance, winter trail grooming).
- Projects that can be maintained without future FWP funds and/or that have a sustainable maintenance plan clearly identified (see [Maintenance Plans](#) section).
- Projects that have a clear tie to enhancing public safety for a large population and/or multiple trail user groups.

ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The MTS GP administered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (FWP). Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program projects Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requirements to be eligible for funding.

Three-Year Timeframe

Applicants may upload environmental review documents from within a three-year timeframe. Any documents dated January 2018 and newer will be considered acceptable.

- **On the application, you must attach relevant environmental review documentation regardless of whether the documentation has been submitted with another program's application.**

Project Categories for Environmental Review

For entities not working on public land, use the categories and descriptions below to determine what project type(s) are associated with your project proposal.

1. Construction and Improvement

New construction and improvement of trails or trailside facilities:

- a. Any new trail tread proposed, including creation of a new trail or widening of an existing trail.
- b. Construction of new trail structures (e.g. new culverts/drainage structures, bridges).
- c. Construction of new trailhead/trailside structures (e.g. latrines, picnic areas, parking areas).
- d. Placement of sheds/structures beyond an established building footprint.

2. Maintenance and Repair

General maintenance and repair on established trails or trailside facilities:

- a. Grooming for cross-country ski areas on existing, approved groomed routes.
- b. Brushing, clearing of vegetation from previously established trail corridor.
- c. Repair of trail tread and trail structures (e.g. drainage structures) to their previous condition.
- d. Replacement of trail signage or placement of signage within an established trail corridor or trailhead/trailside facility.
- e. Other activities identified as "maintenance" in the landowner's management/maintenance plan.

3. Grooming for Snowmobile Areas on Existing Routes

Grooming on existing snowmobile routes as approved by the land management agency.

Environmental Documentation Requirements Based on Project Categories

Depending on your project type, the documentation described below must be included with your application for the application to be considered complete.

1. Construction and Improvement Projects

A proposed project that includes an action falling under the “Construction and Improvement” category (see above) must undergo a MEPA Environmental Analysis (EA). Applicants must complete all steps in the document. Other forms may be accepted if they include an analysis equal to or greater than what is found in FWP’s EA Form.

- **On the application, you must attach the Environmental Analysis Form located on the [Program Website](#).**

2. Maintenance and Repair Projects

A proposed project that includes an action falling under the “Maintenance and Repair” category (see above) may qualify for a Categorical Exclusion (CE). Applicants must complete all steps in the document. Other forms may be approved for use at the discretion of the Program Manager.

- **On the application, you must attach the one of the Categorical Exclusion Forms located on the [Program Website](#).**

A proposed project that includes any action falling under the “Construction and Improvement” category will not be considered for a Categorical Exclusion and must follow the Environmental Analysis procedure outlined above.

3. Snowmobile Area Grooming Projects

A proposed project that only includes grooming of **existing, approved routes** at a snowmobile area requires no environmental review. Such projects are exempt from environmental review under MEPA (23-2-657 (2), MCA).

A proposed project that includes any additional action(s) falling under the “Construction and Improvement” or “Maintenance and Repair” categories is not exempt from environmental review and must follow the environmental review procedures outlined above.

For example, if your proposed project scope includes snowmobile trail grooming and summer trail maintenance, you will need to follow the environmental review procedures for maintenance and repair projects.

Entities Working on a Public Lands

Except for those proposing only snowmobile area grooming, entities proposing work on public lands must consult the appropriate land management agency(s) for environmental documentation. It is the applicant’s responsibility to collect and review the documentation to ensure it is relevant to their proposed project and from within a three-year timeframe.

- ▶ **On the application, entities working on public lands must attach environmental documentation from the appropriate land management agency. Entities working on US Forest Service lands may utilize the US Forest Service Categorical Exclusion form located on the [Program Website](#).**

Tiering from Other Environmental Documents

When appropriate, a proposed project's environmental review may be tiered from an environmental review. Land management agencies, for example, often tier their documentation for proposed projects from more-encompassing environmental documents (e.g. a forest-level Environmental Analysis, Travel Plan, Decision Notice, etc.).

- **If you are tiering your environmental review from another document, attach a letter to your application and include the following information.**
 1. The name of the document from which your environmental review is being tiered. In addition, attach either the document itself to your application or, if it is available online, you may link to it in the letter.
 2. A summary of the project impacts as discussed in the document. Unless the document is specific to the proposed project, reference where in the document each discussion can be found.
 3. If any negative impacts were identified, include a summary of mitigation measures that will be taken to reduce negative impacts.
 4. If the environmental review document is not from within a three-year timeframe, include a statement of revalidation from the agency that conducted the original review.

Compliance with Existing Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Ordinances

All projects seeking funding from the MTSGP must comply with existing federal, state, and jurisdictional laws, regulations, and ordinances. If applicable, such compliance should be discussed and demonstrated on the project's environmental review documentation.

FWP encourages public involvement in all proposed MTSGP projects, especially those located in populated areas. The MTSGP does not require applicants to post a legal notice and conduct a 30-day public comment period to apply to the program. At the time of application, however, the applicant should be able to demonstrate it has involved the public, adjacent landowners, and other interested parties in the proposed project planning/approval. Public participation may be promoted through newspaper articles and any other means available (public meetings, municipal plans/planning efforts, press releases, newsletters, TV programs, radio announcements, etc.).

BUDGET AND MATCHING FUNDS

Creating a Budget in WebGrants

When applying for MTSGP funding in WebGrants, you will be instructed to fill out two budget forms: The Budget Form and the Funding Strategy Narrative Form. The WebGrants Budget Form should summarize your budget numbers. The WebGrants Funding Strategy Narrative Form should detail budget line items and provide short narratives about your funding strategy.

- **On the application, be sure the information on your Budget and Funding Strategy Narrative Forms is clear, detailed, and justified. Budget line items for project expenses and match should be detailed to the extent possible. Additional information (e.g. contractor quotes) may be attached.**

From these forms, those reviewing your application should understand precisely what your organization is proposing to do with the requested funds and how your organization will match the requested funds. It should be clear how you came up with your numbers and how you calculated your request and match numbers.

All applicants should be aware of FWP Purchasing Guidelines if proposing to use program fund or match purchase any materials and/or services from a single vendor over \$5,000. For more information, see the [Purchasing Guidelines Section](#) for more information.

Match Requirements

Entities must ensure matching funds meet FWP requirements. Applications not including the minimum amount of match may not move forward from technical review for further consideration.

To meet FWP requirements, matching funds must:

- Be an eligible MTSGP activity.
- Be clearly tied to the proposed project scope.
- Be incurred after the project start date (except design/engineering costs which may be incurred up to twelve months before the project start date).
- Be guaranteed at the time of application.
- Have a total value of at least 10% of the total project cost (funding request plus match).

Match items should be categorized as Sponsor Funds or In-Kind Contributions, according to the descriptions below.

- **Sponsor Funds:** The cash an entity has guaranteed to spend on the proposed project, including materials and salary it has/will paid for that it will use on the proposed project.
- **In-Kind Contributions:** The value of volunteer labor (calculated at a rate of \$20/hour), donated professional services, donated materials, etc.

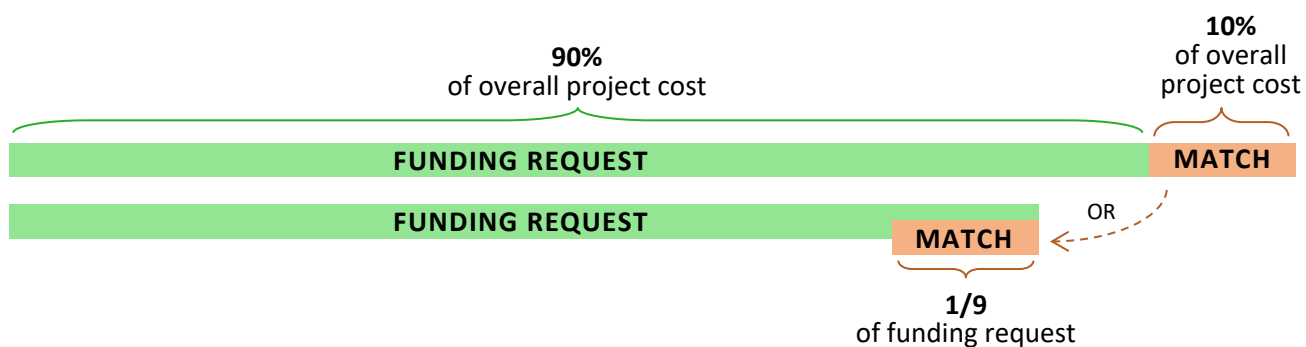
- **On the application, you must clearly identify your match. Like project expenses, your match should be detailed and justified. All match must be guaranteed at the time of application.**

Project Cost-Share (90% MTSGP funds/10% applicant funds)

Each application must include match equaling or just exceeding 10% of the total proposed project cost (funding request plus match).

Calculating Match

The minimum amount of match shown on an application must be 10% of the total project cost (funding request plus match), which is equal to 1/9 of the funding request (see below).



Use either formula to calculate your match requirement:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Minimum Match} &= (\text{Funding Request} / 0.90) - \text{Funding Request} \\ \text{or} \\ \text{Minimum Match} &= \text{Funding Request} \times (1/9) \end{aligned}$$

Using Volunteer Hours as Match

The MTSGP allows volunteer hours to be used as match with proper documentation. The amount of volunteer hours shown on your application must be guaranteed and/or justified based on the amount of volunteer labor your organization utilized on similar projects.

Also, if funded, all volunteer hours used as match must be documented using the most current volunteer log (which requires volunteer and volunteer manager signatures). Volunteer hours will not be accepted as matching funds if documentation is missing information required on FWP's volunteer logs.

Using Other FWP Grant Programs' Expenses as Match

MTSGP applicants may include expenses/reimbursement from other FWP grant programs as match in their project budgets. For example, expenses from a Recreational Trails Program award may be used as match on your proposed MTSGP project. For such match to be eligible, the work that will be reimbursed through another grant program:

1. Must fall under your MTSGP project scope.
2. Must take place during your MTSGP period of performance.

All match must be guaranteed at the time of application. Therefore, you cannot include match from a grant which has not yet been approved on your application.

- **It is recommended you contact the Program Manager if considering including match from another grant program in your application.**

PURCHASING GUIDELINES

Entities planning to purchase services or materials from a single vendor over \$5,000 in value with grant funds must follow state procurement procedures before selecting a vendor. Documentation is not required at the time of application. However, if awarded funding, the procurement process must be adequately documented on the corresponding reimbursement request(s) or the expense may not be claimed for reimbursement or match.

The Limited Solicitation Process (see ARM 2.5.603)

If you are planning to use grant funds/match to reimburse the purchase of a service valued between \$5,000 and \$24,999 or a supply valued between \$5,000 and \$49,999, you must obtain a minimum of three viable quotes, if available, before selecting a vendor. The selected vendor should be the lowest acceptable quote.

The Competitive Bid Process (see ARM 2.5.601)

If you are planning to use grant funds/match to reimburse the purchase of a service greater than or equal to \$25,000 or a supply greater than or equal to \$50,000, you must undergo a 21-day solicitation for bids. A request for bids must be placed in a newspaper of general circulation in your area. The selected vendor should be the lowest acceptable bid.

CONSIDERATIONS FOR SPECIFIC PROJECT TYPES/EXPENSES

ADA Accessibility

The MTSGP strives to improve access for people with different abilities and access impediments whenever possible. Trail designers should seek opportunities to incorporate accessible features and elements. The MTSGP does not require all projects to meet ADA requirements; however, preference is given to applications that incorporate accessible features and elements.

For example, where appropriate, MTSGP projects should:

- Provide the required level of accessibility and be served by an accessible route where trail-related facilities such as parking lots, shelters, toilets, drinking fountains, and other features are provided on or along an accessible trail site.
- Include trail routings that meet accessibility criteria to ensure that there are recreation opportunities for a variety of trail users, both traditional and non-traditional.
- Account for people experiencing disabilities that may arrive at trail facilities by horse, OHV, or snowmobile, with assistance, or by other means.

See [Appendix B](#) for more information on ADA Accessibility requirements.

Administrative Cost Rate for Grantees

Administrative costs are those that support the entire organization and are not specific to the proposed project. The MTSGP allows grantees to use an administrative cost rate (up to 7% of the grant request) to cover such expenses.

- **Applicants may propose to use up to 7% of the grant funds on administrative costs. The administrative cost rate must be included in the budget at the time of application. The administrative cost rate must be included as a project expenses and may not be used as match.**

For example, if you are requesting \$10,000 in MTSGP funds, you may include a line item of up to \$700 ($\$10,000 \times 7\%$) for administrative costs.

If the administrative cost rate is in the grantee's approved budget, it must be applied consistently on reimbursement requests throughout the project period. No documentation is required to substantiate the administrative cost rate once the budget documents are approved by the Program Manager.

Administrative costs may include:

- Accounting, auditing, contracting, budgeting, and general legal services
- Facility occupancy costs (e.g., rent, utilities, insurance, taxes, and maintenance)
- General liability insurance that protects the organization
- Depreciation on building and equipment
- Office supplies
- General and administrative salaries/wages

Constructing or Resurfacing a Trail

Applicants proposing to build or resurface a trail should justify the chosen trail-surface type in their application. There are pluses and minuses to each trail surface type (gravel, asphalt, concrete, etc.). See [Appendix C](#) for a comparison of trail surface type considerations.

Regardless of trail surface, construction costs and maintenance costs vary widely for each surface type. Applicants should therefore reach out to potential contractors for a quote(s) to develop the most detailed, accurate budget for their proposed project. Applicants may also consider reaching out to trail groups/communities that have undertaken similar projects to get more information.

- ▶ **On the application, include as detailed as a budget as possible for trail surfacing. You will also need to justify the chosen trail surface type and describe your plan for maintaining the trail surface.**

Proposals for Asphalt or Concrete Trails

The MTSGP can be used to fund asphalt or concrete trails. Due to the high upfront cost of these mediums, applicants must answer additional questions on the application to justify the need for asphalt/concrete. A detailed maintenance plan and parties responsible must also be identified.

Maintenance Plans

- ▶ **Any applicant proposing to construct or resurface trails must include a detailed maintenance plan on the application. A detailed maintenance plan should:**
 - **Identify the entity(s) which will perform both short- and long-term maintenance;**
 - **An explanation of how the maintenance will be funded;**
 - **The maintenance activities which will take place; and**
 - **The anticipated timeline for performing maintenance.**

It is recommended you contact the Program Manager to discuss the level of detail needed on your application if you are proposing paving or resurfacing a trail. The MTSGP will not fund projects for trail construction/resurfacing that do not have an adequate maintenance plan identified.

Winter Grooming Costs

The MTSGP uses a snowmobile trail groomer reimbursement methodology that employs an hourly rate based on average groomer expenditures. These rates are used in lieu of receipts for trail groomer expenses. For projects using the trail grooming reimbursement rates, the included expenses (see below) may not be reimbursed for exact cost or used as match.

Expenses covered by the grooming reimbursement rate:

- Fuel
- Oil
- General maintenance and repairs (including labor)

Hourly Rates:

- Utility sled used for trail grooming: \$20.00 per hour (does not include operator labor)
- Large groomers (e.g. PistenBully): \$120.00 per hour (does not include operator labor)

MTSGP funds may be used to reimburse groomer expenses, according to the groomer type and record of hours. Grooming hours and mileage must be documented using daily grooming logs and monthly summary sheets. Examples of these sheets can be found on the [Program Website](#).

- **On the application, show the math you used to calculate your overall grooming cost. Include a breakdown of expected hours by month.**

Expenses Not Included in the Reimbursement Rates

Grooming-related costs may be reimbursed with MTSGP funds or used as match based on exact expenditures.

Expenses not covered by the grooming reimbursement rate:

- Grooming machine operator labor
- Costs not associated with actual operation of the equipment (e.g. signs, weed spray)

Salaries/Labor Costs

Proposed salary/labor costs must be associated with on-the-ground trail efforts. For salaries/labor costs to be considered for MTSGP funding, the application must identify the following:

- The title of each position proposed to be funded with MTSGP funds.
- The number of hours each position will work on this project and an overview of the work they will perform.
- Each position's hourly rate of pay and/or how you've calculated the value of the salary(s) you are proposing for reimbursement.

Trail Steward Positions

Trail Steward positions may be an eligible MTSGP expense. The application must include a compelling explanation as to the need for the position and how it uniquely benefits various trail user groups. Approved grant funding for Trail Steward projects will cover salaries and travel per diem only. Enforcement activities are not an eligible use of MTSGP funds.

Project Design and Engineering Costs

Due to the limited funding available in the MTSGP, the program will not reimburse project design and engineering costs.

- **Design and engineering costs directly related to your proposed project may be used as match and may be incurred up to twelve months before the start of the project period.**

When applicable, applications should include project design and engineering information as supplemental documentation to demonstrate the project is ready to proceed. Consult the Program Manager if you are unsure about the eligibility of your proposed expenses/match.

Travel-Related Costs

Certain project types (e.g., backcountry trail crews) may include travel-related expenses in their proposed project expenses or match. If funded, the state rates applicable during the period of performance must be used for reimbursement. Any entity considering including travel-related expenses in their proposed project budget should contact the Program Manager to ensure the expenses' eligibility.

Current state rates for this biennium are shown below for mileage, per diem, and use of personal property. Use the rates below to build your project budget on your application, bearing in mind the rates may have been updated once you submit a reimbursement request.

Allowable types of travel reimbursement are below.

- Vehicle mileage
- Meal allowance (per diem)
- Use of personal property (trailers, stock, etc.)

Consult the Program Manager for details about allowable travel costs and documentation requirements.

Vehicle Mileage

MTSGP funds can reimburse miles driven to or from an MTSGP project site at the current, approved state rate. The state rate to be used on the application is \$0.58 per mile³. The current Travel Form must be used to document the miles being reimbursed; that form will include the current state rate at the time of reimbursement.

Meals by Receipt (at Real Cost)

Meals by receipt are the most common way to claim meal expenses for MTSGP projects. A grantee organization may be reimbursed for groceries purchased for MTSGP-funded trail crew meals. In this case, all itemized grocery receipts and proof of purchase(s) must be included with the reimbursement request.

³ If you are seeking reimbursement for more than 1,000 miles driven by one individual in a calendar month, the reimbursement rate for the miles driven over 1,000 miles lowers to \$0.55 per mile.

Meals by Meal Allowance (Per Diem)

MTSGP funds can reimburse meals by allowance at the current, approved state rate. To be eligible for a meal allowance while traveling to/from a MTSGP project, an individual must be in a travel status for more than three continuous hours within one of the following time ranges. The individual must also be at least 15 miles from the organization headquarters or home, whichever is closer. The current Travel Form must be used to document the meal allowances being requested; that form will include the current state rate at the time of reimbursement.

Time Range	Meal Allowed	State Rate
12:01am to 10:00am	Morning Meal	\$7.50
10:01am to 3:00pm	Midday Meal	\$8.50
3:01pm to Midnight	Evening Meal	\$14.50

If the individual travels each day from headquarters or home to a specific MTSGP work site(s) within the vicinity of their headquarters or home, they are not in a travel status.

Use of Property

If an individual uses the property listed below specifically for a MTSGP project, you may claim the appropriate amount for property expenses. The current Travel Form must be used to document the property expense(s) being requested; that form will include the current state rate at the time of reimbursement.

Type of Property	State Rate (per day in use)
Motorized OHV or Boats	\$15.00
Horse Trailer	\$15.00
Other Trailer	\$5.00
Horse (Pack Animal)	\$16.00

APPENDIX A: ELIGIBLE/INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES AND ACTIVITIES

MTSGP funds can only reimburse project expenditures incurred after the project start date and identified in the approved Funding Strategy Narrative and Budget forms.

Not all activities are eligible for MTSGP reimbursement or match. The following is a list of eligible and ineligible project types.

ELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The following **are eligible** to be used as project expenses or match.

- Development of urban trail linkages near homes and work places.
- Providing features to assist individuals with disabilities.
- Construction of new trails and shared-use paths.
- Rehabilitation and maintenance of existing trails and shared-use paths, including grooming of trails for motorized and nonmotorized winter recreation.
- Construction and maintenance of trailside and trailhead facilities, including but not limited to bridges, fencing, parking, bathrooms, latrines, picnic shelters, interpretation, trail signs, and trailside weed management.
- Restoration of areas damaged by trail use.
- Trail projects on routes legally designated or otherwise appropriately approved by the land managing agency.
- Trails projects on trails that are not currently under litigation in a court of law.

INELIGIBLE PROJECT TYPES

The following **are not eligible** to be used as project expenses or match.

- Purchase of equipment (an article of nonexpendable, tangible property having a useful life of more than five years and with an acquisition cost that exceeds \$1,000).
- Purchase of small tools, including such items as shovels, rakes, chainsaws, backpack sprayers, hard hats, axes, pulaskis, etc.
- Development of trail information and ethics education programs/materials.
- Acquisition of easements and property for trails.
- Facilities (shelters, toilets, picnic tables, benches, etc.) located in park settings which are not clearly and solely for the benefit of trail users (versus an enhancement for park users).
- Feasibility studies and planning.
- Law enforcement activities.
- Projects managed as profit-making entities.
- Trail projects on routes not legally designated by the appropriate land managing agency.
- Projects that displace fish and wildlife species, reduce habitat effectiveness, cause irreparable damage to vegetation, soils, water and wild public lands, and/or substantially increase conflicts.
- Trails, or any project pertaining to that trail, currently under litigation in a court of law.
- Projects that have the potential to substantially alter legal use patterns or make the trail substantially less desirable for the spectrum of current users.

APPENDIX B: ADA ACCESSIBILITY

The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) prohibits discrimination against people based on disability. While specific technical standards have not yet been finalized for recreation facilities (including recreational trails), state and local government trail developers and operators nevertheless have statutory responsibilities to provide opportunities for the participation of people experiencing disabilities. Federal laws that affect the design, construction, alteration, and operation of trail facilities include the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968 (ABA), the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the ADA.

Current regulations implementing these statutes contain requirements that apply to existing trail construction and program operations and adopt technical standards to guide new trail construction and alterations of existing networks:

- Buildings and facilities newly-constructed or altered with Federal funds are subject to the accessibility requirements contained in the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards (UFAS), the standard currently referenced in the ABA.
- Accessibility in federally-assisted programs is governed by the requirements of the USDOT regulations (49 CFR part 27) implementing Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act (29 U.S.C. 794).

At the time of latest revision of this document, the ADA is the newest legislation intended to improve access for people experiencing disabilities. The U.S. Department of Justice's (DOJ) title II implementing regulations (28 CFR part 35) describe the obligations of state and local governments for existing facilities and program operations, and require title II entities (public entities) to comply with either UFAS or the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) developed by the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (the Access Board) when newly constructing or altering facilities. Private sector entities, including lessees, concessionaires, and contractors to State and local governments, are governed by the DOJ title III implementing regulations, which adopt ADAAG as the standard for accessible design.

A Regulatory Negotiation Committee reported to the U.S. Architectural and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) on September 15, 1999. The Committee developed Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG) for picnic and camping facilities, beach access routes, and trails. For more information see: <http://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards>.

APPENDIX C: COMPARISON OF TRAIL SURFACE CONSIDERATIONS

GRAVEL

Gravel has a natural look and is the least expensive trail surface to install. It requires considerable maintenance, especially if it is intended to meet ADA surface standards. It is hard to maintain consistent surface quality and gravel erosion can cause environmental damage.

Pros

- Considered by some to be more natural looking.
- Good for flat areas out of flood plains.
- Softer on joints (running).
- Cheaper initial installation cost.
- Not affected as much by the freeze/thaw cycle.

Cons

- High ongoing maintenance costs.
- Difficult to maintain consistent surface quality.
- Environmental damage caused by gravel erosion.
- More difficult to use in winter due to soft, wet, and dirty conditions.
- Gravel migrates on steep trail slopes.
- Difficult to ride bikes on steep slopes and in loose gravel.
- Difficult to remove silt deposits after heavy rains.
- A dirty surface during and many days after rains.
- More difficult to meet ADA surface standards.
- Less stability for running and walking in loose gravel.

ASPHALT

Asphalt is sturdier than gravel but less expensive in initial cost than concrete. An asphalt trail surface requires considerable long-term maintenance. A complete overlay is needed every 8 to 10 years. Crack-filling or sealcoating applications should be expected to extend the life of the asphalt trail.

Pros

- Best initial surface (smooth, no cracks)
- Slightly cheaper than concrete in initial cost.

Cons

- Edges crack with vegetation. If you want a 10' wide trail, install a 12' wide asphalt trail.
- Constant maintenance of crack filling and sealing with our clay soils.
- Must be completely overlaid approximately every 8-10 years.
- Little structural strength to span over soil problems below.
- Requires greater initial excavation (harming trees) to provide the required rock base depth.
- Impervious surface.

CONCRETE

Concrete stays consistent over time and requires minimal maintenance needs. Concrete is the most expensive trail surface to install.

Pros

- Best ADA surface long term.
- Best longevity. Should last 20+ years.
- Best consistency of surface. Does not wash or break apart.
- Does not wash in flood areas or on steep slopes.
- Steel in concrete keeps it from deflecting preventing tripping hazards or barriers for wheel chairs.
- Cleaner surface during and after rains. Keeps commuters clean as well as less wear and tear on bikes.
- Does not require gravel base rock so impact on trees is less than asphalt.
- We don't have to put tons of gravel in our creeks and natural areas every time it rains.

Cons

- More expensive (initial installation).
- Harder on joints (running).
- Less natural looking than gravel.
- Impervious surface.

APPENDIX D: COMPARISON OF THE MTSGP AND THE RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM

Montana State Parks administers the following grant programs for activities related to the construction and maintenance of and trail-related facilities. More information will be posted on the Montana State Parks website in October 2020: <http://stateparks.mt.gov/recreation/>

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The RTP is a federally funded grant program. The RTP is funded through the Federal Highway Trust Fund. Its funds represent a portion of the motor fuel excise tax collected from nonhighway recreational fuel use. This grant program awards about \$1.5 million annually.

Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program (MTSGP)



The MTSGP is a new, state-funded grant program authorized by the Montana State Legislature in 2019. The MTSGP is funded through a portion of Montana's light vehicle registration fee. This program is expected to award approximately \$1.25 million this funding cycle.

	Eligible Funding Areas	Eligible Applicants	Application Period	Maximum Award	Match Requirement	Award Term	Other Important Requirements
Recreational Trails Program (RTP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Development or maintenance of motorized and non-motorized trails or trail-related facilities Winter trail grooming Purchase of trail equipment Purchase of land for trail development Development of trail education or ethics programs 	Any private club, NGO, or city, county, state, federal, or tribal government entity	Nov 2, 2020 through Feb 1, 2021 (apply at funding.mt.gov)	\$100,000	20% of total project costs	Up to two years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grantees must submit a reimbursement request every 8 months during grant cycle. Grantees must maintain an active SAM registration. Buy America requirements must be met. State procurement procedures must be followed.
Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program (MTSGP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> New trail and shared-use path construction Rehabilitation and maintenance of trails and shared-use paths, including winter grooming Construction and maintenance of trailside and trailhead facilities 			\$50,000	10% of total project costs	Up to three years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> State procurement procedures must be followed. Grantees to use up to 7% of grant funds on administrative costs. Funds may not be used on safety/education activities or equipment purchases

Recreational Trails Program Manager:

Carissa Beckwith | (406) 444-3343 | carissa.beckwith@mt.gov

Montana Trail Stewardship Grant Program Manager:

Michelle McNamee | (406) 444-7642 | michelle.mcnamee@mt.gov