



**Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Preservation**

**NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program**  
***Unlocking the Potential of Grassroots Organizations***  
**Frequently Asked Questions**

**CONTENTS**

*Click on the link below to be taken directly to the section.*

- Eligibility
- Applying
- Examples of Projects
- Projects Involving Construction
- In-eligible Costs
- Funding Disbursement
- Fiscal Agent / 501(c)(3) Status
- Process
- Evaluations
- Organizational Match
- Organizational Assessment (Step-up Grants)
- Timeline / Due Dates
- Deliverables
- Promotion and Acknowledgement
- Application Assistance

**ELIGIBILITY**

Who is eligible to apply?

The Park and Trail Partnership Program is open to organizations whose primary mission is the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, environmental education, maintenance, and/or promotion of a specific New York State park, trail, historic site or public land under the jurisdiction of OPRHP or Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC). In addition:

1. An applicant must be a corporation formed pursuant to or subject to the NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.
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 have a current formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with OPRHP or current formal Use and Occupancy, Volunteer and Stewardship Agreement (VSA) or Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with DEC at the time the grant application is submitted.

Our Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with OPRHP or eligible agreement with DEC per above is about to expire. Will that affect our application or make us ineligible?

Applicants must have a current formal MOA with OPRHP or eligible agreement with DEC at the time the grant is issued. If your agreement has just expired or will expire between the time you apply and the time awards are announced (April 2018), you will need to provide a letter from agency staff stating that a new agreement is in progress and is expected to be signed. We will also need a copy of the new agreement once it is signed. Until that time, as part of your application, you must upload the most recent agreement with the agency.

If your agreement expires after the grant application is submitted, you will be asked to provide a new agreement or a letter from agency staff as part of your Interim Report.

## **APPLYING**

What information should we review before applying?

To prepare to apply, please review:

- Request for Applications
- Evaluation criteria
- These FAQs
- Resources for Applicants
- The application questions and required documents (once you register through the online grants system, you can print a Questions List)
- Bookmark the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program webpage and refer to it as often as needed

In addition, it will be helpful to participate in one of our application [webinars](#).

If you still have questions, contact Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-1583 or [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org).

What types of grants are available?

There are four types of capacity-building grants available to eligible organizations through the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program:

1. 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, in order to aid them in fulfilling their mission and to improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$35,000; a 15 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. 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: Grants up to \$7,500; a \$500 match is required, cash or in-kind. Award disbursed at contract signing.

3. Professional Development Grants: Professional Development Grants support the hiring of staff in order 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.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$75,000 encompassing a period of two years; a 25 percent match in cash 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.

4. 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 public land, which significantly enhances the organization's visibility and capacity.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$50,000; a 15 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.

#### How do we apply?

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program grant must create an account with our online grants system. Once registered, you will be able to see available grants and follow the steps to apply.

When creating an account, provide the email address of the person ultimately responsible for the grant administration. Parks & Trails New York will communicate all pertinent information to this email address.

To register and begin the application process, visit the [online application and reporting system](#).

If you need assistance with the registration process, please [watch this short tutorial](#) or [read these step-by-step instructions](#).

For additional information on how to use the online application, [watch this tutorial](#) or [check out our list of tips](#).

Can my organization apply for more than one grant in a given cycle?

Yes. Organizations may submit more than one application, either within the same grant category or in more than one category. However, given the limited funding available and pool of potential applicants, it is strongly recommended that organizations focus on the projects that are of the greatest priority to the organization and that can be accomplished within the grant period.

## **EXAMPLE PROJECTS**

### What types of projects may we apply for in each category?

Examples of projects for each category are listed below. This is not an exhaustive list.

#### *Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants*

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.
- 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 can cover initial software purchase or licensing, 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.

#### *Step-Up Grants*

Step-up Grants may be used to cover 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).

#### *Professional Development Grants*

These 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.

Note: 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 grant.

#### *Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants*

Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Public access or engagement improvements, such as interpretive kiosks, exhibits, signage, new trails with signage, and other activities that enhance public enjoyment and access to the public resource.
- Shared consultant services between more than one eligible organization.
- 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 and programs that promote outreach and public education and recreation resulting in greater public support and broader public involvement, especially from new and presently underserved audiences.
- Development and implementation of public resource marketing plans, especially if undertaken in partnership with local tourism promotion efforts.

Please note: if your Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grant application includes a project involving construction or rehabilitation, you will need to provide additional documentation (see Projects Involving Construction).

## **PROJECTS INVOLVING CONSTRUCTION**

What is considered "construction"?

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

If our project includes construction (as defined above), what will we need to provide?

If your Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grant application includes a project involving construction or rehabilitation, please include the following documents with your application:

- 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.

## **INELIGIBLE COSTS**

NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program grant funds may not be used to cover:

- Project costs incurred before date of signed grant contract
- General operating support
- Purchasing interest in lands or buildings
- Endowment funds
- Travel or lodging
- Lobbying or political activities

## **FUNDING DISBURSEMENT**

How are grant funds disbursed?

Grant funds will be disbursed as follows:

- Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants: 50 percent of the grant award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.
- Step-up Grants: Award disbursed at contract signing.
- Professional Development Grants: 50 percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory one-year progress report.
- Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants: 50 percent of the grant award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.

Grantees must document that they have the required match in-hand at the time the grant is awarded before funds can be disbursed.

Please note: all grant awards are contingent upon release of State funds.

## **FISCAL AGENT / 501(c)(3) STATUS**

Our organization is not a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization. Can we still apply?

Organizations that do not have 501(c)(3) status may apply using a fiscal agent. As part of the application process, you will need to provide the name of the fiscal agent, a copy of your Memorandum of Understanding with the fiscal agent, and a copy of the fiscal agent's financial statements (as well as your own organization's financial statements).

Please also note: When completing the registration process, you must use the EIN (Tax Identification Number) of your fiscal agent.

What happens if our organization receives 501(c)(3) status after we register? How can we change our EIN?

Please contact PTNY at [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583. We will be able to make the change to the EIN in the online grants system for you.

## **PROCESS**

What happens once our application is submitted?

When you submit your application, you will receive an automatic email confirmation that it has been received.

Applications will first be reviewed for completeness. Organizations may be asked to clarify or resubmit a response or document at that time.

Complete applications will be reviewed against the [evaluation criteria](#) for each grant category.

Professional Development Grant applicants who are asked to submit a full application proposal will also be asked to participate in a one-hour interview with PTNY staff as part of the grant application review process.

Grant awards are expected to be announced March 2018. Grant recipients will have 30 days following the award notification to sign an electronic grant agreement and provide documentation of the required organizational match and other follow up documents.

## **EVALUATIONS**

How will our application be evaluated?

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

## **ORGANIZATIONAL MATCH**

How do I calculate the required organizational match?

The NYS Park and Trail Partnership 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 and Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants

*Grants may cover up to 85 percent of total project budget. A minimum 15 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 \$21,250 (85 percent of \$25,000) and your organization will need to provide a match of at least \$3,750 (15 percent of \$25,000), \$1,875 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 \$20,000 in grant funds. [Divide the amount you expect to raise by .15 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

<b>Total Project Budget (100 percent)</b>	<b>Grant Request (85 percent)</b>	<b>Organizational Match (15 percent)</b>
\$25,000	\$21,250	\$3,750 (half may be in-kind)
\$23,000	\$20,000	\$3,000

Professional Development Grants

*Grants may cover up to 75 percent of total project budget encompassing a period of two years. A minimum 25 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 \$75,000 and your organization will need to provide a match of \$25,000, 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 \$30,000 in grant funds. [Multiply the amount you expect to raise by 3 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

<b>Total Project Budget (100 percent - 2 yrs)</b>	<b>Grant Request (75 percent)</b>	<b>Organizational Match (25 percent)</b>
\$100,000	\$75,000	\$25,000 (all cash)
\$40,000	\$30,000	\$10,000

What funds may qualify as matching funds?

Applicant organizations must match the grant with non-State funds. Cash match may come from a variety of sources, such as individuals, foundations, corporations, and federal and local grants. Other



state grants or state funds can be included in your overall project budget but do not count toward the match requirement.

If operating funds or reserve funds are to be used as cash match, a board-approved statement indicating that these specific funds are available and will be dedicated for the required match is required. Note: staff time, if paid by grantee on grant-related activities, is considered a cash donation.

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).

Volunteer services must be quantifiable and the applicant needs to have a way of tracking volunteer hours. The rate per hour must adhere to the [national standard for New York](#) (current is \$26.86, but this is subject to change). A sample volunteer time-tracking tool is available under Resources for Applicants.

Volunteer time does not include board members participating in regular board activities. If a board member contributes professional services above and beyond his or her regular board activities, or if a board member contributes as a volunteer to perform above and beyond grant-related work (e.g., trail construction, administrative functions), this may count as in-kind match.

#### What if we are unable to raise the required match by the time of the grant award?

Organizations will have 30 days from the award announcement to sign a grant agreement and provide documentation of the required matching funds. If your organization is unable to secure the required match by the deadline, you may request an extension. In order to do that, contact PTNY to have an Extension Request Form assigned through the online application and reporting system. Upon receipt of this completed Extension Request Form, PTNY may, at its discretion, offer a limited extension.

### **ORGANIZATIONAL ASSESSMENT (STEP-UP GRANTS)**

#### What type of organizational assessment should be completed as part of the Step-up Grant?

Organizations must engage with an independent consultant to facilitate the organizational assessment. Following the facilitated assessment, the consultant should prepare a report and plan(s) to guide the next steps for the organization based on the results of the assessment.

PTNY has developed an [Organizational Self-Assessment and Visioning Tool](#) that may be used; however, organizations are not required to use this specific tool.

#### Do we have to use PTNY's Organizational Self-Assessment and Visioning Tool?

No. Organizations may use a comparable self-assessment tool. The consultant may have a tool he/she uses, or other options may be found online or in print publications.

## **TIMELINE / DUE DATES**

### When is the application deadline?

Applications are due by **December 8, 2017**.

### When are Letters of Inquiry for Professional Development Grants Due? When will we find out if we have been invited to submit a full application?

Letters of Inquiry (LOI) are due by October 11, 2017. Organizations will be notified by early-November if they have been invited to submit a full application.

Organizations that submit a full application proposal for Professional Development Grants will be asked to participate in a one-hour interview with PTNY staff as part of the grant application review process.

### When will decisions be announced?

Grant awards are expected to be announced March 2018.

## **DELIVERABLES**

### Do I submit a final budget?

ALL grantees must provide a final budget and supporting documentation verifying project costs, matching funds and expenditure of NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program Grant funds (i.e., invoices, receipts).

### What other deliverables are needed, does it depend on grant category?

In addition to documenting how grant and matching funds are spent, grantees are expected to provide documentation of key deliverables. Below is a sample list by category.

#### **Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants**

- Copy of completed strategic plan, fundraising plan, marketing plan, etc.
- Copies of minutes from meetings with consultants for board development, organizational development work
- Roster of attendees (board/staff trainings, workshops, conferences)
- Screen shots from website and links to website
- Copies of materials developed such as brochures, flyers, etc.
- Print and digital publications
- Press clippings

#### **Step-up Grants**

- Copy of tax-determination letter from IRS
- Copy of final organizational assessment report and any plans developed by consultant
- Copies of minutes from meetings with consultant

- Print and digital publications
- Press clippings

### **Professional Development Grants**

- Interim Report:
  - Documentation that grantee has completed the [Partnership Roadmap](#) in collaboration with public resource staff.
- Final Report:
  - Bio/CV/resume of employee hired with grant
  - Hiring notices
  - Print and digital publications
  - Press clippings

### **Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants**

- Photographs and description of public access or engagement improvement
- Copy of community outreach or public resource marketing plan
- Organization newsletter
- Press clippings

## **PROMOTION & ACKNOWLEDGEMENT**

In all written and electronic materials produced with this grant funding, we encourage you to refer to the following language:

“The [Project Name] project was supported with funding from the New York State Park and Trail Partnership Program and New York’s Environmental Protection Fund. The Park and Trail Partnership Program is administered by Parks & Trails New York, in partnership with the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation.”

Publications can include newsletters, outreach and communications materials, maps, displays, plans, websites, signage, and kiosks. Parks & Trails New York and the NYS Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation should also be listed as a funder in annual reports and/or other publications recognizing financial contributions to the organization’s work.

## **APPLICATION ASSISTANCE**

[Where can I get help with the online application?](#)

If you need assistance with the registration process, please [watch this short tutorial](#) or [read these step-by-step instructions](#).

For additional information on how to use the online application, [watch this tutorial](#).

If you need assistance with the online application, please contact Parks & Trails New York at 518-434-1583 or [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org).

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

**Webinars**

**September 28 | 1:00pm-2:00pm**

Webinar for prospective Professional Development Grant applicants only

**November 1 | 1:00pm-2:00pm**

Webinar for prospective applicants

*The same webinar is being offered twice.*

**November 9 | 10:00am-11:00am**

Webinar for prospective applicants

*The same webinar is being offered twice*