

# Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program Guidelines

The Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is a reimbursement program funded by the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and administered by the Southern Alleghenies Planning & Development Commission (SAP&DC). The information below provides important guidance for the successful completion of your grant application. Please read and follow the instructions carefully.

## Section 1 – Purpose

The Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is intended to provide funding for projects that support the implementation of goals identified in two regional plans:

- ◆ The Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan (2007)
- ◆ Southern Alleghenies Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan (2022)

### Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan

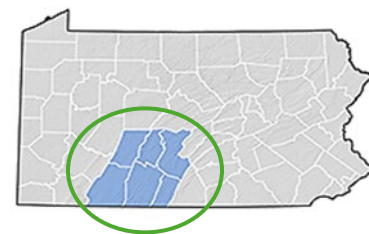
<b>Goal 1</b>	Conserve important natural resources
<b>Goal 2</b>	Expand recreation opportunities
<b>Goal 3</b>	Celebrate cultural heritage
<b>Goal 4</b>	Bolster economic development
<b>Goal 5</b>	Increase pedestrian safety and bicycle mobility
<b>Goal 6</b>	Promote healthy lifestyles

### Southern Alleghenies Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

<b>Goal 1</b>	Bolster the region's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure so that it is safe to use and enjoy.
<b>Goal 2</b>	Ensure our region's bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure is well-maintained.
<b>Goal 3</b>	Continue planning for bicycle and pedestrian initiatives.
<b>Goal 4</b>	Educate our region's stakeholders, elected officials, and public at-large of key regional initiatives involving bicycle and pedestrian transportation.
<b>Goal 5</b>	Maximize the benefits of transportation investments in the region.

## Section 2 – Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for funding, projects must be located within one of the six counties that make up the Southern Alleghenies region: Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, or Somerset.



***Any applicant that currently has a project open through the Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is NOT ELIGIBLE to apply for funding until that project is completed.***

The current round of funding for this program will utilize the **Environmental Stewardship Fund** and the **Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund** from DCNR.

### Applicant Funding Eligibility




Funding Source/Applicant	Environmental Stewardship Fund	Keystone Recreation, Park, and Conservation Fund
<b>Municipality</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Council of Governments (COG)</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Conservation District</b>	Yes	<b>No</b>
<b>Land Trust</b>	Yes	<b>No</b>
<b>Non-Profit Organization</b>	Yes	<b>No</b>
<b>For-Profit Entity</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>No</b>
<b>Housing/Redevelopment Authority</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Designated Heritage Area</b>	Yes	<b>No</b>

## Eligible Project Types: Greenways and Open Spaces

The following table describes examples of the types of projects that are eligible for the Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program, categorized by their relevancy to the Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan.

The list of project examples listed below is not comprehensive. The selection committee will score and recommend projects based on its established evaluation criteria, which can be found in **Section 6**. DCNR reserves the right to finalize the project approval process and the distribution of awards.

### Greenways and Open Space Network Plan




Project Type	Project Examples
<b>Development</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Protection or improvement of existing natural areas, primarily for ecological health and preservation of wildlife</li> <li>◆ Creation of recreational opportunities for residents through preservation and connecting existing trails and open spaces</li> <li>◆ Development of recreational trails or facilities</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Applications for development projects must be submitted with design and engineering cost estimates along with the budget</p>
<b>Planning</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Land-based or water trail feasibility studies</li> <li>◆ Trail town master planning</li> <li>◆ Pedestrian and bicycle feasibility studies</li> <li>◆ Greenway planning</li> <li>◆ Master site plans</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Assistance</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Outreach and marketing for a specific recreation or conservation event/project</li> <li>◆ Initiatives to educate residents and/or stakeholders on the value of recreation, trails, parks, or heritage/cultural resources and facilities</li> </ul>

**Ineligible project items include land acquisition, pavilion construction, and playground construction.**

## Eligible Project Types: Bicycle and Pedestrian

The following table describes examples of the types of projects that are eligible for the Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program, categorized by their relevancy to the Southern Alleghenies Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan.

The list of project examples listed below is not comprehensive. The selection committee will score and recommend projects based on its established evaluation criteria, which can be found in **Section 6**. DCNR reserves the right to finalize project approval process and the distribution of awards.

Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan	
Project Type	Project Examples
<b>Development</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Bicycle and pedestrian sandwich board signs in downtown areas, as well as areas with heavy biking or foot traffic</li> <li>◆ New or existing trail development</li> <li>◆ Installation of bike racks in downtowns, trailheads, and other heavily-traveled areas</li> <li>◆ Bicycle signage for on- and off-road trails</li> </ul> <p><b>Note:</b> Applications for development projects must be submitted with design and engineering cost estimates along with the budget</p>
<b>Planning</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ On- and off-road trail feasibility studies</li> <li>◆ Development of municipal/county-level bicycle and pedestrian plans</li> </ul>
<b>Technical Assistance</b> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Incorporation of bicycle and pedestrian promotion flyers at trailheads</li> <li>◆ Educational workshops to educate drivers about cyclists and relevant rules of the road</li> <li>◆ Walking and bicycling maps for trail users</li> <li>◆ Community walking/biking programs</li> </ul>

**Ineligible project items include land acquisition, pavilion construction, and playground construction.**

## Section 3 – Applicant Responsibilities and Guidance

Project sponsors must confirm their project's eligibility with the DCNR representative for the Southern Alleghenies region before submitting their application to SAP&DC. The Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program is coordinated and administered by SAP&DC staff, who are available to field any questions or concerns regarding program guidelines and procedures. The relevant contact information can be found below:

### **Lindsay Baer**

Regional Advisor

Phone: (717) 858-1185

Email: [libaer@pa.gov](mailto:libaer@pa.gov)

Applicants may also contact SAP&DC for assistance:

### **Matthew Bjorkman**

Transportation Program Manager

Phone: (814) 949-6553

Email: [mbjorkman@sapdc.org](mailto:mbjorkman@sapdc.org)

### **Tyler Schurr**

Transportation Planner

Phone: (814) 949-6510

Email: [tschurr@sapdc.org](mailto:tschurr@sapdc.org)

### **Additional Online Resources**

DCNR policies, forms, and other guidance materials are available through the DCNR eLibrary:

<https://elibrary.dcnr.pa.gov/>

Information regarding the Southern Alleghenies Greenways and Open Space Network Plan and the Southern Alleghenies Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan can be found on SAP&DC's website:

<https://sapdc.org/plans-reports-and-publications/>

***Applicants are responsible for submitting all required documents with their application, as well as ensuring that their project and project costs conform to all Pennsylvania DCNR Community Conservation Partnership Program (C2P2) guidelines.***

## Section 4 – Grant Guidelines

### Minimum/Maximum Requests for Funding

- ◆ Keystone Recreation/Environmental Stewardship Fund:
  - Grant requests must be a minimum of **\$3,000** and cannot exceed **\$30,000**.

### Applicant Match Requirements

- ◆ Keystone Recreation/Environmental Stewardship Fund:
  - All grantees must be able to provide a cash and/or eligible non-cash (in-kind) contribution of at least **50%** of the total project cost.
  - **Cash match** commitments receive higher consideration during evaluation.

***In-kind match contributions can make up no more than 50% of the applicant's total match. Funding may not be used to fulfill match requirements for other DCNR-funded grant projects, nor can other DCNR funding be used as a match for the Mini-Grant Program.***

### Cost Reimbursement

- ◆ The project sponsor **does not** receive a check upon the approval of their project.
  - Once a sub-contract is executed, the applicant can request an advance payment of up to 50% of the awarded amount to cover initial project costs. Once that initial 50% of the awarded amount is expended and/or professional or construction contracts are executed, SAP&DC may approve a second partial disbursement up to an additional 40% of the awarded amount.
  - For **development projects only**, up to 15% of the total construction cost is allowable for design preparation, construction drawings, specifications, and professional fees.
  - SAP&DC retains 10% of the total grant award until the project has been completed and all final paperwork has been reviewed and approved. The final 10% will be released after a final inspection of the development site.

### Project Scheduling

All projects **must be completed** no later than **August 31, 2026**. Final documentation, inspections, and project closeout will be completed no later than **September 30, 2026**.

### Land Ownership

- ◆ For development projects or plans that include a Site Development Drawing, proof of ownership or control of the site to be master planned is **required**. If the property is leased, the lease must be for a minimum of 25 years and will be subject to review by SAP&DC.
- ◆ Property must be under the control of a municipality, council of governments (COG), conservation district, non-profit organization, or a redevelopment authority.

***If the applicant is not the property owner, a signed agreement between all involved entities must be included with the application.***

## Section 5 – Application Process

### Application Form

The Southern Alleghenies Regional Greenways Mini-Grant Program application can be found and submitted at <https://arcg.is/1mGGmT0>.

### Required Application Materials

#### 1. Map of the project area

#### 2. Letters documenting match commitment

#### 3. Detailed, itemized budget documentation for all components of the project

- i. The project budget should be prepared in consultation with a professional who is experienced with similar types of projects, or applicants should demonstrate that inquiries were made to companies for cost estimates.
- ii. For **development projects**, the budget should consider the potential for any additional costs that could appear when construction is adhering to ADA standards. Additional information from DCNR can be found [here](#).

#### 4. Letters of support from local agencies, governments, property owners, etc.

- i. Applicants are encouraged to obtain at least one letter of support each from their respective County Commissioners and Planning Commissions.

#### 5. Pennsylvania Natural Diversity Inventory (PNDI)

- i. The PNDI is the Environmental Review Function of the PA Natural Heritage Program and helps identify any potential impacts to threatened, endangered, or rare plants, animals, natural communities, and geologic features in PA.
- ii. The PNDI Conservation Explorer can be found [here](#). Attaching the obtained results is a **mandatory** aspect of this application process.

#### 6. Landowner Agreement/Certificate of Title or Ownership

- i. Ownership and control of property must be guaranteed by a Landowner Agreement or a Certificate of Title/Ownership. This documentation is required for **Development** or **Master Site Plan** applications.

#### 7. Any existing feasibility studies, surveys, site plans, etc. related to the project.

### Closing Date

Applications **must** be signed and received by SAP&DC's Transportation Program Manager, Matthew Bjorkman, by end of business (4:00 p.m. EST) on **May 30, 2025**. Both electronic and hard copy versions of the application will be accepted. (see Section 3 for contact information)

***Late or incomplete applications will not be accepted.***



## Section 6 – Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

The project review committee consists of representatives from SAP&DC and representatives from the Planning Commissions of Bedford, Blair, Cambria, Fulton, Huntingdon, and Somerset Counties. Each organization represented in the committee will have one vote during project scoring and ranking, regardless of the total number of representatives from each organization. Projects are scored based on a 100-point set of ranking criteria. The criteria can be found below:

	Criteria	Score
1	<b>PROJECT DESCRIPTION</b> - (0-10) Project scope is <u>well-defined</u> and includes a list of activities to be funded with program funds.	
2	<b>PROJECT COMPLETION</b> - (0-5) Project is well-developed and prepared to commence and finish within the required timeframe. Project timeline is well-defined and realistic.	
3	<b>LOCAL SUPPORT</b> - (0-10) Letters of support from local agencies, governments, property owners, user groups, etc. All applicants are encouraged to obtain a letter of support from their respective County Commissioners and Planning Commissions. There is no known opposition to the project.	
4	<b>PROJECT WILL RESULT IN SIGNIFICANT COMMUNITY, RECREATION, AND/OR ECONOMIC BENEFITS</b> - (0-20) The applicant has clearly demonstrated the project need. The project connects critical trail gaps, connects to a trail town, or connects to a "hub." The project will enhance local or regional recreational opportunities. The project will help benefit the local economy through an increase in visitors. The project has good value for money spent and a high benefit to cost ratio.	
5	<b>PROJECT SUPPORTS GOALS OUTLINED IN THE BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN PLAN AND/OR THE GREENWAYS AND OPEN SPACE NETWORK PLAN</b> - (0-20) Project is specifically identified as one of the priority corridors or is related to the goals identified in the plans: conserve important natural resources; expand recreation opportunities; celebrate cultural heritage; bolster economic development; increase pedestrian and bicycle mobility; promote healthy lifestyles; etc.	
6	<b>PROJECT SUPPORTS SUSTAINABLE AND GREEN PRACTICES</b> - (0-10) The applicant clearly demonstrates, with specific examples, how their project supports sustainable and green practices relating to water, landscaping, connecting people to nature, and environmental stewardship.	
7	<b>DETAILED BUDGET</b> - (0-10) A detailed budget is included with the application. Project budget is realistic. The project budget was prepared in consultation with a professional with relevant project experience, or the applicant demonstrated that inquiries were made to companies for cost estimates.	
8	<b>MATCHING FUNDS</b> - (0-15 total) Matching funds are secured and commitment letters are included. Preference should be given to projects with a committed cash match over an in-kind match <b>Secured match WITH commitment letters included</b> - (0-10) <b>Preference is given to projects with more cash match</b> - (0-5)	
<b>Total (Maximum 100 Points)</b>		