

Recreational Trails Program Florida Fact Sheet



What is the Recreational Trails Program (RTP)?

The federally funded Recreational Trails Program of the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) provides competitive, matching-grant funds to renovate, develop, or maintain recreational motorized, nonmotorized, and mixed-use trails and trailside facilities.

The Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) of 1991 included the National Recreational Trails Fund Act (NRFTA) established the National Recreational Trails Funding Program. The National Highway System Designation Act of 1995 (NHS Act) amended and revived the NRFTA. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century (TEA-21) established the current Recreational Trails Program (RTP), and codified it in Federal statute (23 U.S.C. 206). In 2005 the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users (SAFETEA-LU) revised the program, providing the current legislative text. In 2012 the Moving Ahead for Progress in the 21st Century Act (MAP-21) reauthorized funding for the RTP as a set-aside of Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) funds (extended through May 2015), but did not change the program. Florida Statute 260.016 and Rule 62S-2 Florida Administrative Code (F.A.C.) provides specific application requirements, processing and evaluation criteria. RTP is administered by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection's (DEP) Land and Recreation Grants section within the Office of Operations.

Project Proposals may address the Following Recreational Trail Interests: motorized trails; mixed-use projects (which facilitate diverse recreational trail use within a recreational trail corridor), trailside, or trailhead. Trail planning is NOT an eligible expense for this Program (62S-2.072(4)(e) F.A.C.)

Project Proposals may address the Following Recreational Trail Needs: Construction of new recreational trails (with restrictions for new trails on Federal lands); maintenance and restoration or renovation of existing recreational trails; development and rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities; and recreational trail linkages.

What is a "Recreational Trail"?

A thoroughfare or track across land or water, used for recreational purposes such as bicycling, hiking/jogging/running or similar activities, equestrian activities, overnight and long-distance backpacking, roller skating, in-line skating, non-motorized aquatic or water activities including canoeing and kayaking, and vehicular travel by motorcycle, four-wheel drive or all terrain, off-road vehicles, or dune buggies.

Who may apply for RTP Funds?

Municipal, county, state, or federal governmental agencies, recognized state and federal Indian tribal governments, and organizations registered as active Florida nonprofit corporations, which have an agreement with a governmental agency to develop public lands and the project.

Note: Nonprofit corporations must provide documentation from the public landowner or manager stating that they support the project and will abide by compliance requirements.

How Do I Apply?

During the submission period: Applicants must submit a completed Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant Application. Applicants may submit only one application. Applications must involve only one project site. A grantee with two incomplete RTP projects by the closing date of the application submission period is not eligible to apply. The application is available on the [RTP webpage](#).

Recreational Trails Program Florida Fact Sheet



What is the Maximum Grant Amount?

The maximum permissible request for nonmotorized single-use is \$400,000. The maximum permissible request for nonmotorized mixed-use projects is \$500,000. The maximum permissible request for motorized single-use projects is \$1,000,000. Match requirements apply.

What are the Match Requirements?

All grant awards must be matched. "Match" means the provision of cash or in-kind services by the grantee in addition to the RTP funds. Value of real property or inmate labor are ineligible match sources. The RTP grant is provided on a 50:50, 60:40, or 80:20 (Program/Grantee) matching basis. The more match provided, the more points awarded. For example, with a \$100,000 project, your match could be:

<u>Total Project Cost</u>	<u>RTP Grant</u>	<u>Local Match</u>	<u>Point Value</u>
\$100,000	\$50,000	\$50,000	5
\$100,000	\$60,000	\$40,000	3
\$100,000	\$80,000	\$20,000	1

Please indicate in the Project Description (Application page 7) if the trail is part of a larger Master Plan. If so, include an estimated timeline for completion of the entire plan.

For the Financial Information (Application page 8), only the elements that can be completed with the available funding, including match, should be shown. Also ensure the Matching Ratio (Application page 13) matches the Financial Information.

Note: Federal agencies may match grant funds with federal funds up to 95% of total project cost.

What is Site Control? ***IMPORTANT***

Applicants must have, and demonstrate that they have, adequate control of project sites and are able to construct, operate, and maintain the area for the term required by RTP and the grant agreement. For RTP projects on land owned by the applicant, that term is 99 years; for sites owned by someone other than the applicant, that term is at least 25 years past the project completion date.

Proper site control, as required in Chapter 62S-2, F.A.C., may be documented in several ways, including, but not limited to the following instruments:

- Warranty Deed (fee title land ownership),
- A lease,
- Use agreement,
- Easement,
- Title commitment or title policy.

Property Appraiser report cards, surveys, and maps are not sufficient evidence of site control.

Submittal of any of these bulleted instruments does not automatically guarantee that the applicant has properly demonstrated site control for the proposed project site. RTP staff will thoroughly review submitted site control documents for sufficiency, noting any deficiencies.

Recreational Trails Program Florida Fact Sheet

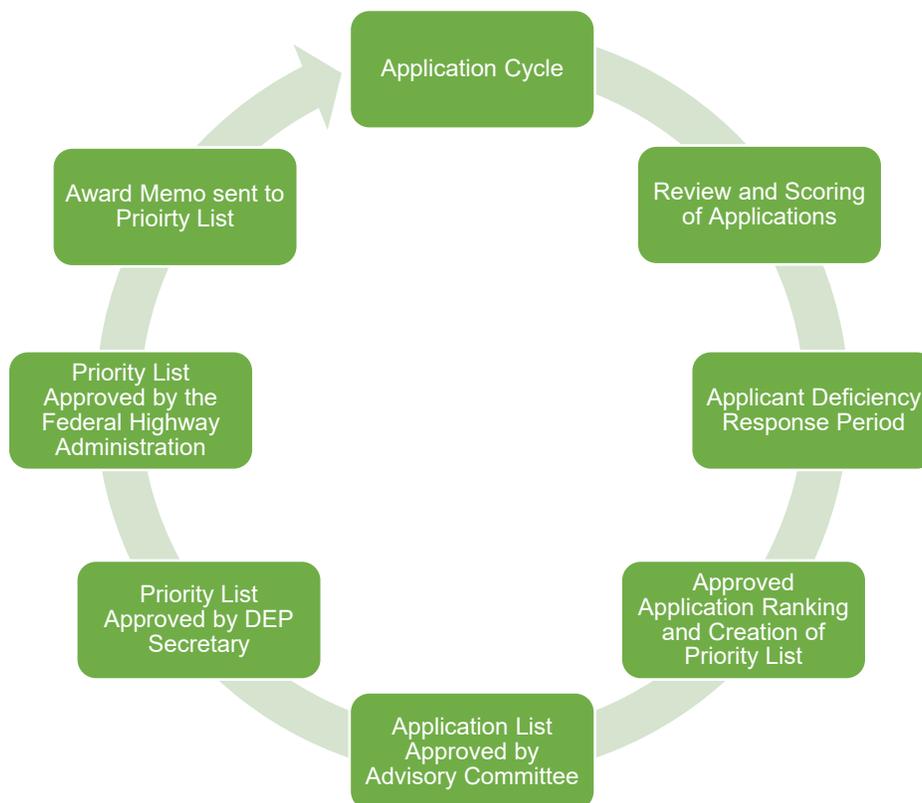


Site control documents must include an adequate legal description of the parcel(s) comprising the project site, such that RTP staff can compare same with the boundary map submitted with the application and evaluate whether the applicant is able to adequately control the project site. For site control less than fee simple, the instrument must not be revocable at will; must extend for twenty-five (25) years after project completion date; and must contain a clause that enables the grantee to dedicate the land for a twenty-five (25) year period, pursuant to Rule 62S-2.076(1), F.A.C.

Adequate site control must be in place **prior** to the close of the application cycle.

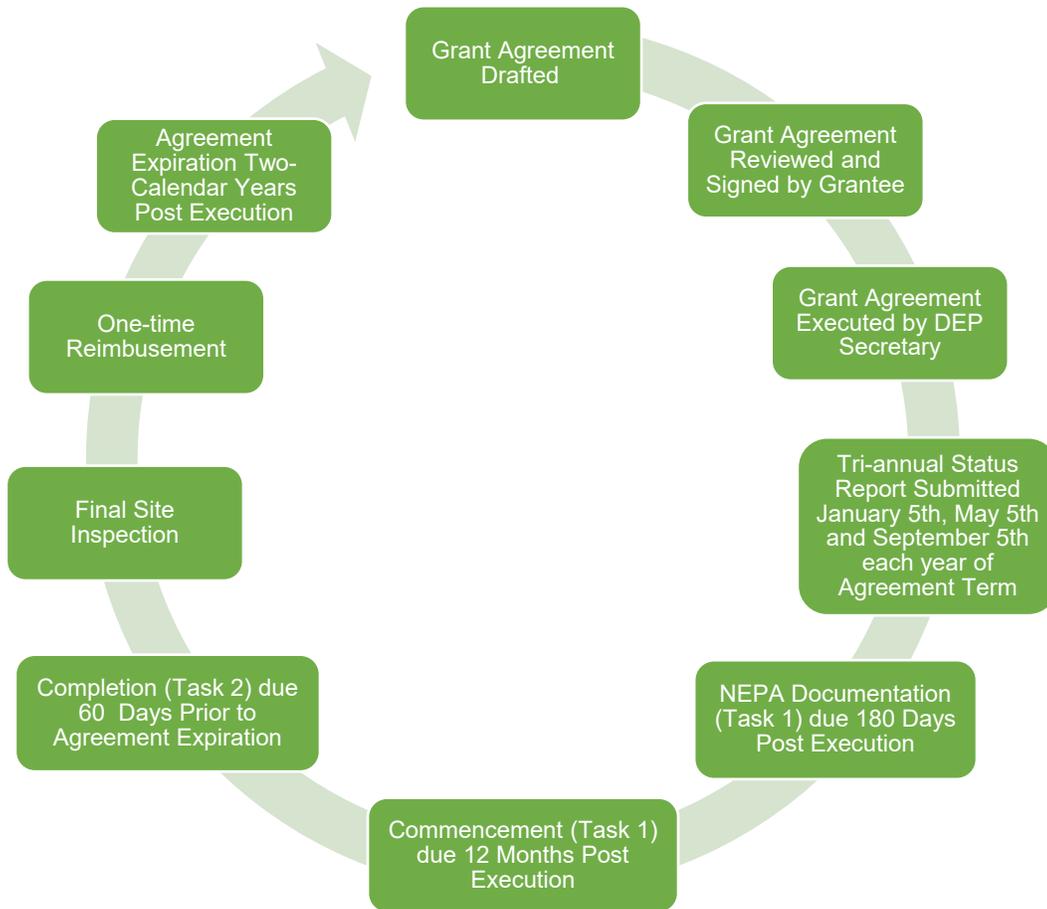
How are RTP Grants Awarded?

Evaluation criteria are established pursuant to 62S-2, F.A.C. Each application is reviewed to determine eligibility. Following the initial review, applicants will be notified of deficiencies. Applicants must submit the requested deficiency information within fifteen working days of the notification. Following the RTP grant cycle, staff will score the applications based on the evaluation criteria, discuss projects with FHWA and draft a RTP priority-funding list based on project scores. A recommended priority list and related materials in digital form will be provided to the Advisory Committee for the program, for consideration. They will review the draft RTP priority-funding list and related materials then submit recommendations for funding to the DEP Secretary. Once finalized by the Secretary or their designee the priority list will be submitted to FHWA for funding consideration. If the project is funded, a two-year grant agreement will be executed between the sponsor and DEP.



Project Agreement. Following FHWA approval of submitted applications, the Department and grantee shall enter into a grant agreement that sets forth the responsibilities and duties of each party regarding administration of the **approved project as outlined in the Application**, pursuant Rule 62S-2.075(1) F.A.C. The grant agreement shall contain terms and conditions particular to each project.

Recreational Trails Program Florida Fact Sheet



For More Information, Whom Should I Contact?

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