

Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

Grant Manual Updates Effective for the 2026 Grant Cycle

Scoring Criteria

Revised policy: Section 4 of the Grant Manual has been updated with new scoring criteria categories, descriptions, and guidance. Application questions have been updated accordingly.

Description of change: scoring criteria categories have been updated to align with the [2026 Statewide Trails Plan](#).

Grant Manual Reference: Section 4

FHWA Form 1273

Revised policy: this federal form has been removed from the Grant Manual and is no longer required to be included in grant agreements and grantee contracts.

Description of change: while much of FHWA Form 1273 was not applicable to RTP, it was previously required to be included in OPRD's grant agreements and grantee contracts for work. The requirement has been rescinded by a [federal rule change](#).

Grant Manual Reference: References removed from Section 5 and the grant agreement appendix

Retainage Amount

Revised policy: the retainage amount has been lowered from 25% to 10%.

Description of change: OPRD holds retainage until a project has been verified as complete. This means that while we issue reimbursements through the life of a project, 10% of grant funds are held until project completion.

Grant Manual Reference: Sections 2.1, 5.3B, and the grant agreement appendix

Prevailing wage:

Revised policy: additional clarification has been added to emphasize that RTP is exempt from Davis-Bacon unless the project is within the road right-of-way of a federal aid highway, and that BOLI prevailing wages apply if already required by law.

Description of change: no change, clarification only.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 5.4

Notable updates made prior to the 2026 grant cycle that remain in effect:

2025: Non-Motorized Maximum Grant Request

Revised policy: The recommended maximum grant request amount for non-motorized project proposals is \$200,000.

Description of change: the recommended maximum was increased from \$150,000 to \$200,000. It remains a recommended maximum, meaning applicants can request more than \$200,000. The

non-motorized application includes a question to explain why more funding is needed, if applicable. There is no maximum for motorized proposals.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.1

2025: Eligibility of Staff Costs

Revised policy: Nonprofit grant applicants/recipients may budget and charge staff costs for direct project implementation to the RTP grant.

Description of change: prior to this change, staff costs for regular positions could only be counted as match, and RTP funds were limited to paying for temporary or seasonal staff hired to complete an RTP project. This change allows nonprofit grantees to charge staff costs for direct project implementation to the grant, regardless of whether it is a regular or temporary/seasonal position. See the manual for a description of what types of activities are considered direct implementation. The change does not apply to government agencies. **Note:** RTP policy still does not allow for overhead or indirect costs to be charged to the grant or counted as match.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.3B

2025: Eligibility Clarifications: trail restoration, trailheads, and trail assessments

Revised policy:

- The eligibility descriptions of the trail restoration and improvements, trailhead facilities, and trail assessment categories were expanded to include more examples of eligible projects and elements.
- For trail assessments, the \$20,000 max per project and 5% funding limitation were removed.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.3A

2024: Environmental Review for Projects on Non-Federal Land

Revised Policy:

- Applicants proposing work on non-federal land must attach a copy of an IPaC report (Information for Planning and Consultation report) for the project location to the RTP application. Run the report at this link: <https://ipac.ecosphere.fws.gov/location/index>
- The RTP Environmental Screening Form has been updated. Information about the form was updated accordingly in Section 2.6A.

Description of Change: These changes were made in consultation with FHWA, as they are the lead agency for environmental review of projects on non-federal land.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.6A, under the Non-Federal Lands section

2024: Buy America

Revised Policy: Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Buy America and the 2021 Build America, Buy America Act (BABA) requirements have been waived for RTP projects when the total federal financial assistance included in the project budget, including RTP funds, is less than \$500,000. The waiver is effective for projects obligated on or after August 16, 2023.

Description of Change: The underlined text was changed to incorporate FHWA's clarification that the \$500,000 threshold applies to the amount of federal funds in the project budget, not the total project cost as previously stated.

Grant Manual Reference: Sections 2.3A and 2.4

2023: Procurement Methods

Revised Policy:

- The Small Purchases threshold is for goods or services not exceeding \$25,000.
- The Intermediate Purchases threshold is for goods or services exceeding \$25,000 and not exceeding \$250,000.
- Procurement for contracts exceeding \$250,000 must follow either the Competitive Sealed Bids or Competitive Sealed Proposals requirements.

Description of Change: Effective January 2024, state procurement thresholds increased. The cap for small purchases increased from \$10,000 to \$25,000. The cap for intermediate purchases increased from \$150,000 to \$250,000. Competitive sealed bids or proposals are required for contracts exceeding \$250,000, increased from contracts exceeding \$150,000. At a minimum, RTP grant recipients must follow state procurement requirements.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 5.4

2023: Reimbursement Requests

Revised Policy:

- Requests for reimbursement must be submitted at least every six months following Notice to Proceed.
- Advance payments will be considered by OPRD on a case-by-case basis. Contact the RTP grant coordinator for information about advance payment options and restrictions.

Description of Change:

- The first bullet reflects a change in ODOT and FHWA's financial process that requires payments to be submitted every six months from the date of Notice to Proceed. Previously, there was not a timeline for the first payment. Grantees must take this into account when planning the project budget and timeline. *There are no exceptions to the first bullet.*
- The second bullet incorporates OPRD's authority under federal financial regulations to consider advance payments on a case-by-case basis. There are many limitations to this policy that can be discussed with the RTP Grant Coordinator. Advance payments may be needed for projects that will not have a reimbursable expense within the first six months as required by the first bullet. If approved, advances are typically processed on an invoice basis, not for working capital.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 5.3B

2022: Section 106 (Cultural Resource Review) process for projects on Non-Federal Land

Revised Policy:

- Grantees managing projects on non-federal land must incorporate an Inadvertent Discovery Plan (IDP) into contracts, subcontracts, and other agreements in place with partners or organizations performing on-site work. If the grantee doesn't have their own IDP, use the template provided on [SHPO's website](#). It is further recommended to review IDP protocols with any staff, volunteers, or other individuals working on the project that are not covered by a contract or agreement.
- SHPO, FHWA, and/or tribal governments may request a cultural resources survey in advance of final project approval. Applicants proposing projects on non-federal land are recommended to

budget for an archaeological survey as a pre-agreement match expense, or for additional measures to avoid, minimize, or mitigate adverse effects to cultural resources and historic properties.

Description of Change: The first bullet changed language from a recommendation to a requirement and aligns with IDP requirements already included in grant agreements for projects on non-federal land. The second bullet is in response to an increase in requests from SHPO, FHWA, and/or tribal governments for cultural resource surveys prior to project implementation, as well as best practices for cultural resource protection. OPRD and FHWA staff may work with applicants on a case-by-case basis to help determine whether a survey, project monitoring, and related budget revisions are recommended for the project.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.7

2022: Project Eligibility: Grant Reporting

Revised Policy: Time spent completing RTP progress reports and reimbursement requests is not eligible as match or for reimbursement, as these activities are not directly attributed to project implementation.

Description of Change: This policy was added to clarify eligible project and budget elements.

Grant Manual Reference: Sections 2.3C

2022: Ownership and Public Access: User Fees

Revised Policy: RTP legislation does not prohibit charging use fees, permits, or parking fees. Land managers may charge use fees at RTP-assisted sites as permitted under their normal policies and procedures.

Description of Change: The Grant Manual was previously silent on user fees. This update incorporates the RTP federal guidance. Refer to the Public Access section of this policy for additional guidance on public access requirements. The RTP federal guidance also allows states and their RTP advisory committees to negotiate fees if they are determined unreasonable or are set so high that they restrict general public access.

Grant Manual Reference: Section 2.5