

July 10, 2025

# **Trail Grant Available - Apply by 7/18**



**The Northern Forest Center seeks proposals for projects that improve the quality and sustainability of Vermont's recreation trails.** Funding is provided by the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

The program is open to non-profit and public applicants responsible for managing formal trail networks in the state of Vermont. Projects on private lands may be eligible if long-term public access agreements are in place, but grants to for-profit entities are not. We anticipate making 3-5 awards of between \$15,000 to \$25,000 for eligible, "shovel-ready" projects. The total amount of funding available is \$75,000.

## **What does this program fund?**

This program funds work on existing trails that decrease soil erosion. The program has two priorities but can fund other types of projects. The priorities are projects that:



- replace undersized culverts or bridges with stream or river crossings with either larger, naturally bottomed culverts or bridges that allow for more water passage underneath and decreased bank erosion, and
- rehabilitate existing trails that are highly erosion prone.

## How does my community apply?

Applications are due by **July 18, 2025**.

The application is fairly simple. In addition to a cover page, it includes 5 questions, your project budget, and a few attachments.

## What will make our application competitive?

- Projects must be "shovel-ready" (ready for construction) and be completed by 05/31/26. Grantees must secure all necessary state and local permits required for their project.
- Projects that provide significant environmental benefits and serve multiple user groups will score very well.
- Projects that serve as connectors to other recreation assets, link to other trail systems, connect to village centers, and/or engage community members will score well.
- An applicant's plan for long-term trail maintenance will be considered.
- Local match (cost sharing) is not required but will be scored more favorably.



- Trail work for projects funded through this grant must be completed by qualified professionals.

## **How can my community learn more?**

The Request for Proposals (RFP), which includes the application question and guidance, is available at <https://northernforest.org/resources/resources/grants-available/>.

After reviewing the RFP, prospective applicants can contact Joe Fox at [jfox@northernforest.org](mailto:jfox@northernforest.org) or (802) 751-9205 with questions.

## **Where can my community find help with grant writing or management?**

VLCT published a resource, [\*Increasing Municipal Capacity for Grants\*](#), that offers ideas for assistance with grants. Many of the capacity builders also provide project management services. Hiring experienced project management assistance can increase the speed of project development and help avoid cost, permitting, and other development surprises.

