



FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES FOR

OUTDOOR RECREATION and CONSERVATION PROJECTS

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GA DNR Grants Unit

State and Federal Grant Opportunities

Georgia Outdoor
Stewardship Program



Recreational Trails
Program



Land & Water
Conservation Fund



Grants Similarities



- ▶ ALL applicants must complete online grant application: project scope, project budget, preliminary site plan, partners
- ▶ ALL applicants are required to provide matching funds for all programs.
- ▶ ALL projects on a two-year timeline which starts the day the Project Agreement is signed.
- ▶ ALL programs are reimbursement-based.

RTP

- No minimum funding amount
- Maximum funding: \$200,000
- Minimum match: 20% of total project
- Examples of competitive project types:
 - Trail construction
 - Water Trails: Canoe/kayak launch construction
 - Rehabilitation of existing trails
 - Trailhead facilities
 - Trail Education
 - (Everything Trails-related)

GOSP

- **Minimum** funding: \$500,000
- **Maximum** funding: \$3,000,000
- **Minimum** match: 25% of total project
- Examples of competitive project types:
 - Critical habitat acquisition
 - Reforestation
 - Riparian zone restoration
 - Reservoir enhancements
 - Invasive species removal
 - Camp site construction
 - Canoe/kayak launch
 - Fishing Pier
 - Trail systems



LWCF

- **Minimum** funding: \$25,000
- **Maximum** funding: \$500,000
- **Minimum** match: 50% of total project
- Examples of competitive project types
 - Baseball/Softball/Soccer field construction
 - Restroom additions at existing parks
 - Splash pads
 - Playgrounds
 - Ball field parking lots /fencing/lighting
 - Picnic areas



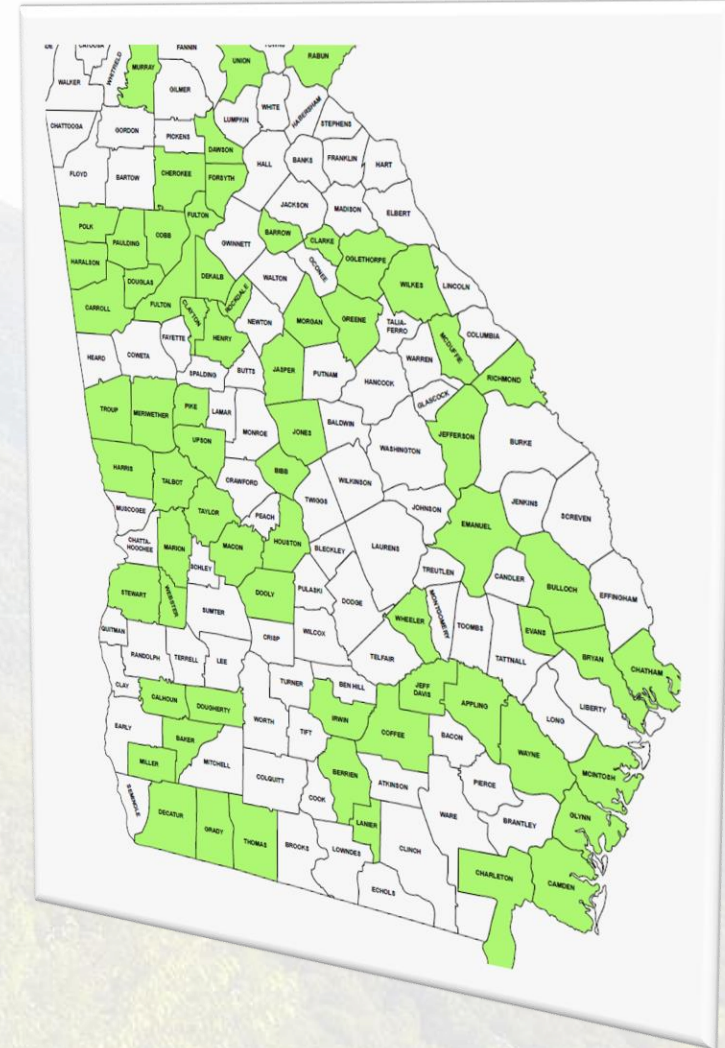
Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program

Funded by moneys received by the state from the sales and use tax collected by outdoor recreation equipment establishments

Supports stewardship of state parks, state lands, wildlife management areas, local parks & trails; and protects critical conservation land

Enacted in 2019 – Six successful funding cycles

- 74 projects funded
- 66 counties impacted
- \$142 M funds allocated
- 62,900 acres acquired



Who Can Apply?

Qualified Local Governments

Constituted Recreation Authorities

State Agencies

Nongovernmental Entities *

* Must be primarily concerned with the protection and conservation of land and natural resources

Eligible Projects

All projects must have the primary purpose of one of the following conservation objectives:

To support state parks and trails

To support local parks and trails of state and regional significance

To provide stewardship of conservation land

To acquire critical areas

Funding Types

What type of entity may apply?

Local Parks and Trails of State & Regional Significance

Local Governments, Recreation Authorities, Nongovernmental entities

State Stewardship

State agencies and Nongovernmental entities

State land Acquisition

State agencies and Nongovernmental entities

Funding Facts

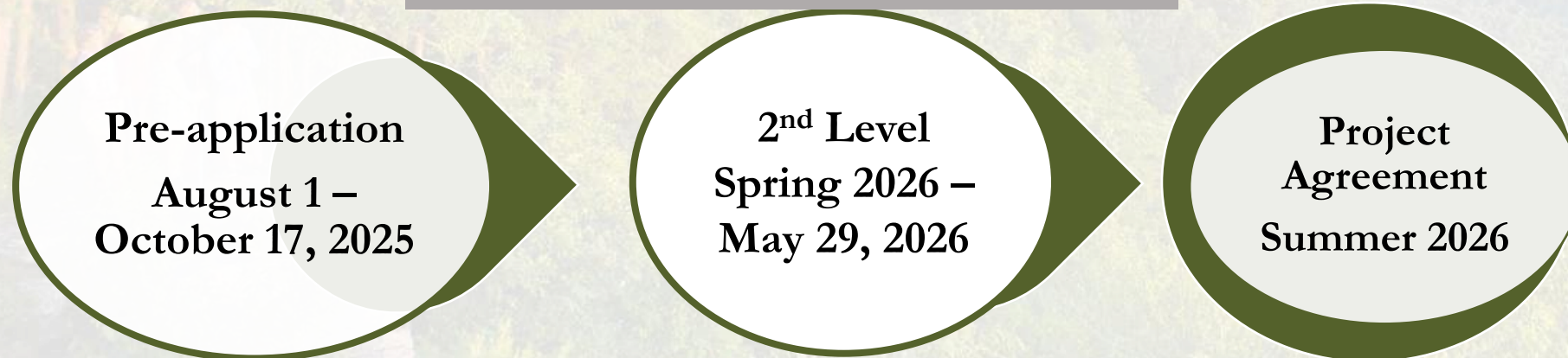
- ❑ \$500,000 - \$3,000,000 grant request
- ❑ Minimum match requirement of 25% of project cost
- ❑ Reimbursement based - grantee pays the costs and request for reimbursements
- ❑ 25% is held in retainage until project completion
- ❑ Grant term: 24 months

GOSP Application Process



- **Annual** Funding cycles
- Applicants may submit one proposal per cycle
- Pre-application is completed online – organizational information, evaluation criteria, and required documents
- **Pre-application is competitive**; projects are reviewed and ranked based on eligibility and evaluation criteria
- Approval Process
- Successful projects invited to **non-competitive Second-level Application phase**
Detailed project elements, surveys environmental reviews

2025-2026 GOSP Funding Cycle Timeline



What makes a good project for GOSP?

Funding available to acquire and/or improve state lands, local parks, trails and conservation lands.

Conservation & Stewardship Aspects

Nature-based Recreation Opportunities

State and Regional Significance of the Project



Conservation & Stewardship

- ❑ Permanent protection of conservation land and wildlife habitats; acquisition or conservation easements
- ❑ Protection of historic and cultural sites/resources
- ❑ Wildlife habitat management; reforestation, native tree planting, removal of invasive species, prescribed burns
- ❑ Reservoir and stream bank stabilization and restoration
 - ❑ Improving quality of Georgia's rivers, streams, lakes, etc.



Nature-based Recreation

Boating, Hiking, Camping, Fishing, Hunting, Jogging, Biking, Walking, or similar outdoor activities.

Creating new water access for fishing, kayaking, canoeing, boating

Providing new opportunities for hunting and/or wildlife viewing

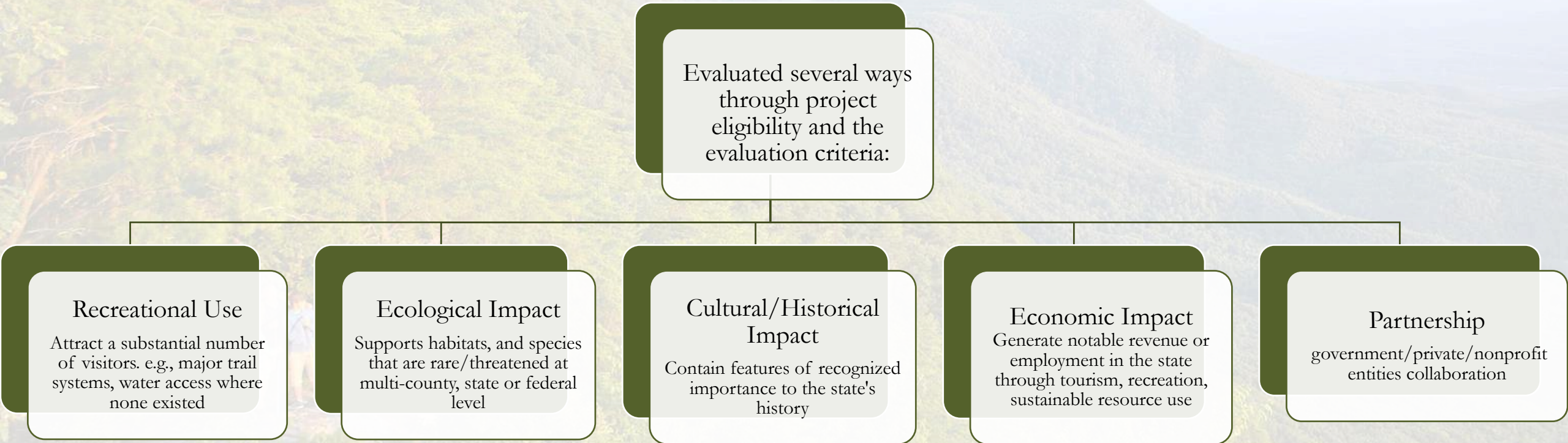
Campsite construction

Trail systems



State and Regional Significance

Projects that enhance nature-based outdoor experiences and conserve or improve the quality of natural resources. State and regionally significant projects provide meaningful ecological, recreational, cultural, and economic benefits to communities beyond the local area.



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Land and Water Conservation Fund Act (LWCF) provides funds for development, rehabilitation and/or acquisition of land for outdoor recreation.

All LWCF assisted properties must be retained and used as **ONLY** outdoor recreation **IN PERPETUITY**.



A formula is applied to revenue from oil and gas lease sales, which generates Georgia's Appropriation Amount each year.

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

- Reimbursement Program
- 50% Match Required
 - Grant Request Minimum = \$25,000
 - Grant Request Maximum = \$500,000
- Ways to Match - *All items must be associated with the project*
 - Cash or Cash Donations
 - In-Kind Labor
 - Equipment Rental or Materials
 - Donations of Labor from Private Orgs/Individuals
 - Discounts Recorded as Donations



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Funding cycle opens biennially

(Next funding opportunity will begin in Fall of 2026)

Typically, 2 years of appropriation available for project funding



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Pre-Application Required Documents

- ❑ Project Narrative
- ❑ Project Budget/Cost Estimate
- ❑ Boundary Map
- ❑ Location Map
- ❑ Site/Development Plan
- ❑ Resolution
- ❑ Transmittal
- ❑ Completed online application

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

PROJECT TYPES

Development
Rehabilitation
Acquisition

Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

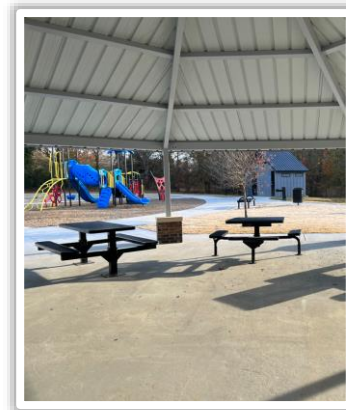
Development Projects - construction of public outdoor recreation and support facilities

Eligible Examples

- Baseball, Football and Soccer Fields
- Tennis, Pickleball and Basketball Courts
- Playgrounds
- Concession and Restroom Buildings
- Trails
- Pools and Splashpads

Ineligible Examples

- Gyms
- Senior Centers
- Professional/Semi-Professional Arena



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Rehabilitation Project – renovation of existing public outdoor recreation facilities into the same or different.

Lighting Replacement

Swimming Pool Converted to Splash Pad

Trail Resurfacing

Converting Tennis Courts to Pickleball Courts



Land & Water Conservation Fund Program

Acquisition Projects – acquisition of undeveloped land for outdoor recreational development or non-public recreation land.

LWCF only assists with appraised land value

NOT:

- Appraisals
- Appraisal Reviews
- Attorney Fees
- Title Searches



Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

- ❑ Federal grant program administered by the Federal Highway Administration.
- ❑ Funds are allocated to Georgia from the Federal Highway Trust Fund from motor vehicle fuel excise taxes.
- ❑ Federal Highway provides essential support in financial and environmental matters.
- ❑ Funding is available for trail construction, trail maintenance, trail amenities, and trail education

Through this collaboration
RTP has funded....

2019-2023 RTP Grant Awards

RTP has
awarded
\$11,277,799.00
in funding for
50 trail projects



RTP ' Education Grant
has provided
\$47,174.00
non-profit
organizations for the
purposes of trail safety
and environmental
protection.

Purpose of RTP



RTP supports on the ground trail projects.

RTP provides funds for trail projects that could not be completed.

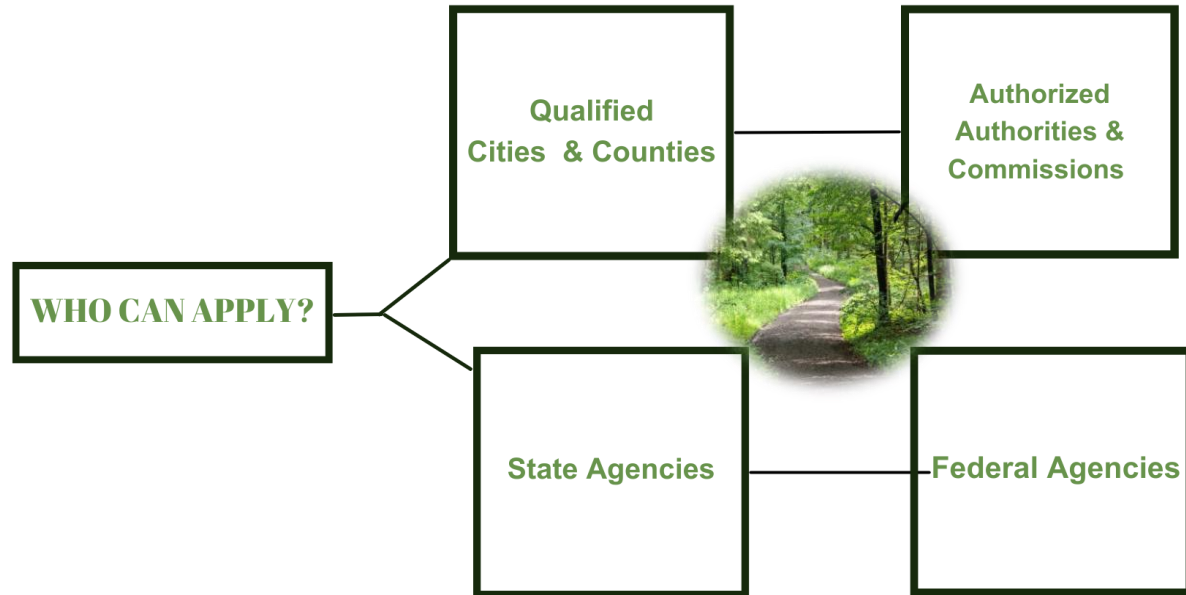
RTP seeks to improve outdoor recreational access in local communities across Georgia.

RTP Eligibility & Funding

- ✓ Cities & Counties can apply according to Department of Community Affairs (DCA)
- ✓ Authorities documented through state or local legislation.
- ✓ Commissions
- ✓ State and Federal Agencies



- ✓ Non-profit organizations can partner with a qualified governmental entity or agency for trail projects.
- ✓ A non-profit organization can apply for RTP education grants.



Funding

Nonmotorized Trails
Up to \$200,000.00
20% match

Motorized Trails
Up to \$1,000,000.00
20% match

Education Grant
Depending on
Available Funding
20% match

Types of Trail Projects

Development of New Trails

Acquisition

Rehabilitation of Existing Trails



SINGLE &
MULTI-USE
TRAILS



EQUESTRIAN
TRAILS



MOTORIZED
TRAILS



WATER
TRAILS



TRAILHEAD
FACILITIES

Trail projects funded under the RTP program must be open and accessible to the public for 25 years

Ineligible for RTP

Tracks around fields,
walking tracks,
walking tracks around buildings.



Sidewalks,
walking tracks, or trails around
recreation including
playgrounds, basketball courts,
golf courses, etc.

RTP Application Process



- ❑ **Bi-Annual** Funding Cycles
- ❑ Applicants may submit one proposal per cycle
- ❑ Pre-application is completed online
- ❑ **Competitive Phase**; projects are submitted for review and ranked based on eligibility and evaluation criteria
- ❑ Approval Process
- ❑ Successful projects invited to **formal application (Environmental Evaluation)** reviewed and cleared by **FHWA**.
- ❑ **Financial Workshop Session**
- ❑ **Project Agreement**

RTP Pre-Application

COMPETITIVE STAGE APPLICATION.

PROJECTS ARE SCORED BASED ON COMPLIANCE CRITERIA

SUCCESSFUL PROJECTS WILL BE INVITED TO THE SECOND-LEVEL APPLICATION

Helpful Tips when planning your trail project

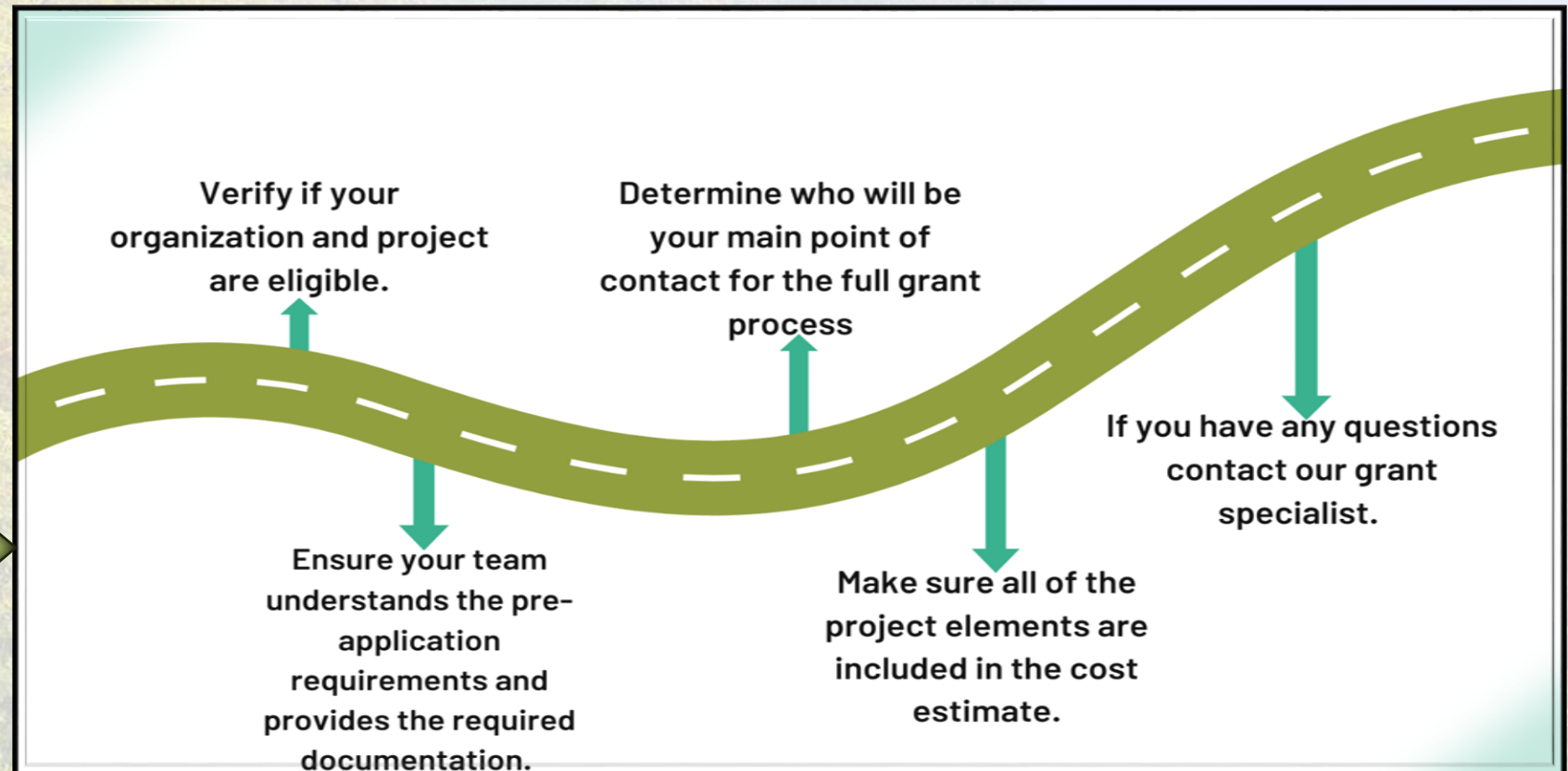
Verify if your organization and project are eligible.

Determine who will be your main point of contact for the full grant process

If you have any questions contact our grant specialist.

Ensure your team understands the pre-application requirements and provides the required documentation.

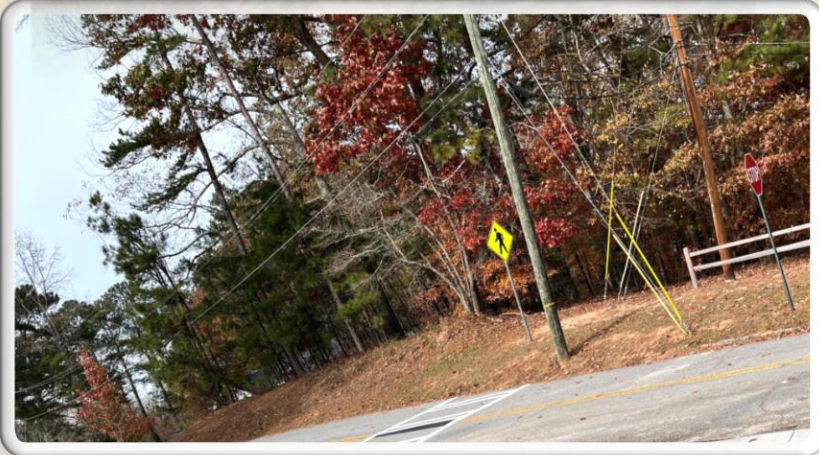
Make sure all of the project elements are included in the cost estimate.



Example of RTP Projects



RECREATIONAL TRAILS PROGRAM



Recreational Trails Education Grant



- ✦ ✦ ✦ ✦ A direct relationship with one or more recreational trails is required. Projects receiving funding must be finalized within the federal fiscal year.

The Educational grant is designated for projects promoting safety and environmental protection.

Examples:

- Safety and environmental protection programs.
- Educational publications related to trails.
- Trail-related displays, videos, audio, apps, and other media.

Funding is received at 5% of annual apportionment.

For more information, contact the RTP Grant Coordinator.

Upcoming Funding Opportunities

2025-2026

GOSP



Pre-application period: August 1 - October 17, 2025
Second-level period (by invitation only): Spring 2026 – May 29, 2026
Final Approval (anticipated): Summer 2026

RTP



Pre-application period: September 1 - November 1, 2025
Second-level period (by invitation only): March – May 2026
Final Approval (anticipated): Winter 2026

The next LWCF funding cycle will open: Fall 2026.

Turning Opportunity Into Action



Visit our website www.gadnr.org/grants and sign up for email updates



Watch tutorial videos for GOSP, RTP, and LWCF available on our webpages



Check your eligibility – ensure your organization and project are eligible before you start your application



Already have a project in mind? Contact us!



Not ready for this year? Talk to your authorizing officials who will sign-off on this project to start the process of obtaining their approval and finding match dollars





Contact Us

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