

Many town forest recreation enhancement strategies and projects require financial resources. Luckily, there are many grants and alternative funding sources that can help provide the necessary funding. Below is a list of grants and funding sources that may be able to assist in moving a project forward.

## Federal and State Grants and Programs

### Land and Water Conservation Fund State and Local Assistance Program (LWCF)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) state assistance program provides matching grants to help local communities enhance the outdoor recreation resources on public land. LWCF funding has benefited nearly every county in America, supporting over 40,000 projects. The grants create parks and open spaces, protect wilderness and forests, and provide outdoor recreation opportunities. Eligible projects include acquisition of land for parks and public outdoor recreation or development and/or renovation of existing facilities for outdoor recreation. This 50:50 matching program is the primary federal investment tool to ensure that families have easy access to public, open spaces. In Vermont, LWCF is administered by Vermont Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation.

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/land-and-water-conservation-fund>

### Surface Transportation Block Grant Program (STBG)

The State Surface Transportation Program (STP) is the main program of Federal Transportation Funds, managed by VTrans, for transportation improvements on state highways. Possible projects include recreational trails, pedestrian and biking enhancements, sidewalks, and signed routes.

<https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/specialfunding/stp/>

### USDA Rural Development Loan and Business Development Grant Assistance (RD)

USDA Rural Development (RD) forges partnerships with rural communities (defined as towns and villages with less than 20,000 inhabitants), funding projects that bring housing, community facilities (including trails and active transportation facilities), business guarantees, utilities, and other services to rural America. This program provides funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community. Relevant to this plan, possible projects include transportation facilities, parks, and community gardens.

<http://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program>

<https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/rural-business-development-grants/vt>

## National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance Program (RTC)

The National Park Service Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTC) program supports community-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects across the nation. Their national network of conservation and recreation planning professionals can partner with community groups, nonprofits, tribes, and state and local governments to design trails and parks, conserve and improve access to rivers, protect special places, and create recreation opportunities. Current projects include trail rehabilitation, interpretive trails, connector trails, trail master plans, trails collaborative, and rail trail connectors. Please note- this is not a monetary grant. This program offers assistance to get projects done.

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/rtca/index.htm>

## Recreational Trails Program (RTP)

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds to communities for development and maintaining recreational trail projects. Grants are awarded to well-planned projects that help to develop, protect, and maintain trails and trail systems that improve connections in the community, livability, user-ability, and are maintained for public recreational use. RTP funds support a wide range of trail activities including hiking, mountain biking, walking, running, cross-country and backcountry skiing, nature-based interpretive trail use, equestrian, snowmobiling, and off-road motorized recreation. Funds can be used for the following types of projects: construction of new trails or trail connections; construction of new trailhead areas/parking facilities; construction of trailside facilities; maintenance, renovation, or restoration of trails; improvements to signage or trail structures along the trail; assessments of existing trail conditions for accessibility and improvements; equipment; and trail-related educational projects (i.e., information about trail safety, appropriate trail use, environmental protection, etc.). The program is a federal assistance program of the United States Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) administered at the state level by the Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and in cooperation with the Vermont Agency of Transportation.

<https://fpr.vermont.gov/recreational-trails-program>

## Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP)

The Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP) is a grant program administered by VTTrans that provides funding for programs and projects defined as transportation alternatives, including on- and off-road pedestrian and bicycle facilities, sidewalks, and bicycle infrastructure. These funds will cover a maximum of 80% of the project with the remaining portions most likely coming from the project-sponsoring organization or town.

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/transport-alt>

## VTrans Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (BPP)

The Vermont Bicycle and Pedestrian Program (BPP) provides funds managed by VTTrans for scoping, design, and construction of bike and pedestrian facilities, sidewalks, shared-use paths, and bike lanes. A local match is required but varies based on the type of project. Learn more at

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/highway/local-projects/bike-ped>

## Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP)

The Vermont Community Development Program provides Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) to all Vermont towns and cities, aside from Burlington. The grant provides financial and technical assistance to identify and address local needs in housing, economic development, public facilities, public services, and handicapped accessibility modifications. The four types of grants are Accessibility Modification Grants (AM), Implementation Grants (IG), Planning Grants (PG), Scattered Site Grants (SS). These grants must primarily benefit persons of low and moderate incomes.

[http://accd.vermont.gov/strong\\_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp](http://accd.vermont.gov/strong_communities/opportunities/funding/vcdp)

## State Grants and Programs

### Vermont Urban and Community Forestry Program Caring for Canopy Grant Program

The Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation's Urban & Community Forestry Program (VT UCF), in partnership with the University of Vermont Extension, offers grants to support municipalities in taking the necessary actions to develop and sustain a community-wide tree program, including tree plantings, inventories, maintenance, and planning. Typically, there are two grant categories, Caring for the Canopy (up to \$5,000) and Canopy Mini (up to \$500). The grant requires a 50% match.

<https://vtcommunityforestry.org/programs-0/financial-assistance/caring-canopy-grants>

## Municipal Planning Grant Program (MPG)

The Municipal Planning Grants (MPG) are Vermont State grants for a wide range of municipal planning projects including land use plans, zoning, and subdivision bylaws, trail networks and walking and biking improvements, resiliency planning, economic plans, and village and neighborhood planning. The range of the grants is from \$2,500 to \$20,000 with a required 10% match.

<http://accd.vermont.gov/community-development/funding-incentives/municipal-planning-grant>

## Recreational Facilities Grants Program (RFG)

The Recreational Facilities Grants (RFG) program provides matching state grants for capital costs associated with the development and creation of community recreational opportunities. This program provides last gap funding for shovel ready projects and does not support any ongoing fundraising initiatives. The program requires a 100% match and awards are capped at \$25,000.

<https://bgs.vermont.gov/commissioner/building-communities-grants>

## ANR Ecosystem Restoration Grant Program (ERG)

The ANR Ecosystem Restoration grant program gives grants for design and construction projects that target nonpoint sources of pollution that cause or contribute to the state's surface waters.

<http://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/cwi/grants#Ecosystem%20Restoration>

## Northern Border Regional Commission Regional Forest Economy Partnership Grants (NBRCG)

The Northern Border Regional Commission invests in community and economic development projects that assist rural communities in transitioning from a dependence on the forest-based economy to discovering new opportunities for economic diversity, independence, and innovation. The NBRC seeks to invest in opportunities to strengthen and expand the regional workforce to support a diversified local economy, develop vibrant communities, through infrastructure improvements, where people want to live, work and visit, and invest in the emerging outdoor recreation economy.

<http://www.nbrc.gov/content/Regional-Forest-Economy-Partnership>

## Better Connections Program (BCP)

The Better Connections Program seeks to align state and local investments to increase transportation options, build resilience, and strengthen economic vitality in Vermont's community centers, through an annual grant program administered by Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD). Municipalities annually compete for approximately \$180,000 in project funds. A 10% local cash match is required. The program supports implementation-focused, municipal planning initiatives that: provide safe, multi-modal and resilient transportation systems that support the Vermont economy; support downtown and village economic development and revitalization efforts, and lead directly to project implementation. The program has been used for trails and active transportation master plans, village connection planning and other multi-modal planning efforts.

<http://vtrans.vermont.gov/planning/projects-programs/better-connections>

## VOREC Community Grant Program

The Vermont Outdoor Recreation Collaborative (VOREC) is launching a community grant program for outdoor recreation in Vermont municipalities. The grant is designed to help communities leverage their local outdoor recreation assets and applying communities must have completed some prior planning or mapping of outdoor recreation assets, have identified outdoor recreation as a component of their local economy through previous plans, and have a dedicated staff and/or volunteers to ensure long-term success of the project. The funds can be used for consultants, small scale outdoor recreation infrastructure improvements, materials or equipment to support outdoor recreation programs, marketing relating expenses, community-based outdoor recreation planning, and securing public access through the acquisition of land, easements, or rights-of-way. Communities are also responsible for making products and deliverables that could be adapted and reproduced by other communities in the state. The program is administered by FPR in partnership with ACCD and VOREC and offers grants between \$10,000 and \$100,000.

[https://fpr.vermont.gov/VOREC\\_Community\\_Grant](https://fpr.vermont.gov/VOREC_Community_Grant)

## State Organizations

### Vermont Community Foundation – General Grants (VCF)

A variety of grants are available to support projects to improve environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, social justice, historic preservation, and vitality of Vermont communities. The different types of grants offered include Place-Based Grants, Arts Endowment Fund, Special and Urgent Needs, and Nonprofit Capacity Building (see below). Each place-based grant is only available to a

specific region of the state. For information about which grants are available for your community, please see the website below.

<http://www.vermontcf.org/Nonprofits/AvailableGrants.aspx>

## Vermont Community Foundation – Nonprofit Capacity Building (NPCB)

The Nonprofit Capacity Building program is small grants to support the cost of consultants to facilitate discussions related to strategic planning, financial sustainability funding, or facilitating a merger. These grants are meant to supplement other funding. This grant is available to both nonprofits and municipalities.

<https://www.vermontcf.org/NonprofitsGrants/AvailableGrants/NonprofitCapacityBuilding.aspx>

## VHCB Local Conservation Projects (VHCP)

The Vermont Housing and Conservation Board provides funding to conserve natural areas, recreation lands, and historic properties. For public outdoor recreation projects, VHCB provides loans to enable the project to leverage other funds or grants in cases where local efforts to obtain sources of funding have been exhausted. The available funds vary based on whether the parcel has statewide significance. For conserving locally-significant land, other sources must provide 1/3 of the project funding. VHCB also provides funding for feasibility analysis, project-specific capacity (i.e., engineering work, historic preservation analysis, and hazardous materials analysis).

<https://vhcb.org/our-programs/conservation/apply-for-funding>

## Lintilhac Foundation (LF)

The foundation's central purpose is to support organizations that are making a sustainable, positive change for Vermont's environment and its people. Grants are available in three core giving areas, water quality, energy, and conservation. The conservation giving is primarily to backcountry recreational access to lands and integrative land use planning.

<http://www.lintilhacfoundation.org/application-guidelines/>

## Vermont Arts Council Animating Infrastructure Grant (AIG)

The Animating Infrastructure Grant (AIG) funds projects that integrate public art into existing or proposed infrastructure improvements, which could include buildings, recreational paths, parks, bridges, small-scale renewable energy projects, and water treatment facilities.



<http://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants-and-services/organizations/animating-infrastructure>

## Ben & Jerry's Foundation (BJF)

The Ben & Jerry's Foundation funds multiple grants programs to help communities in Vermont. The Vermont Economic Justice Program gives grants to non-profits working to address the economic, social, and environmental impacts of poverty. The Vermont Community Action Team Grant is a small grant awarded to non-profits, schools, and municipalities. Community Action Teams (CAT) provide general or project support. The CATs fund the following types of community programs: social services organizations, cultural, recreational, arts programs, and community celebrations.

<https://benandjerrysfoundation.org/vermont-grant-programs.html>

## National Organizations

### PeopleforBikes Community Fund (PBCG)

The PeopleforBikes Community Grant Program (PBCG) provides funding for important and influential projects that build momentum for bicycling in communities across the U.S. These projects include bike paths and rail trails, as well as mountain bike trails, bike parks, and large-scale bicycle advocacy initiatives. PeopleforBikes will fund engineering and design work, construction costs, and reasonable volunteer support costs. The maximum grant award is \$10,000, and the grant cannot make up more than 50% of the total project budget.

<http://www.peopleforbikes.org/pages/community-grants>

### Robert Wood Johnson Foundation Grants (RWJF)

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (RWJF) provides grant funds to improve the health and health care of all Americans. For town forest projects, RWJF awards grants for projects creating healthier communities. This funding has gone towards walking and bicycling facilities and upgrading underutilized green space.

<https://www.rwjf.org/en/how-we-work/grants-and-grant-programs.html>

### Trails Connecting People with Nature (TCPN): A program of the Sierra Club's Nearby Nature Initiative

Trails Connecting People with Nature is a Sierra Club initiative that works to ensure that access to the outdoors is increasingly equitable and available to all communities. The Sierra Club Foundation awards one-year trail grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$20,000 towards trail creation or maintenance

projects that engage new leaders and provide opportunities for communities to connect with nature.

<https://content.sierraclub.org/ourwildamerica/nearby-nature>

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