2026 RTP Application Instruction Manual

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Sponsor Eligibility

Grants can be awarded to private non-profits, municipal agencies, state agencies, federal agencies, tribal governments, and other governmental entities.

Public Benefit Requirement:

Projects must be accessible and open to the general public. Facilities cannot be restricted to certain residents or club members only. Fees, if charged, must be reasonable and not restrict access.

Match Requirement
- RTP funds will not exceed 80% of the total project cost.
- Sponsor must provide at least 20% match, which can include:
    - Cash
    - Value of volunteer labor, equipment, and materials (at fair market value)
    - Other grants (must be approved before being counted as match)
- If federal funds are used as match, combined RTP + Federal share cannot exceed 95% of the total cost and at least 5% must come from non-federal sources.

Environmental Requirements
- Compliance with NEPA and other federal environmental laws is mandatory.
- If selected for funding, no earth-disturbing activities can occur until clearances are secured. Awardees may be required to hire an archaeologist for a Level III Archaeological Survey (estimated cost: $3,000) – this may be included in your project budget.

Buy America Requirements
- Equipment purchased with RTP funds must meet Buy America standards:
- All steel and iron must be domestically manufactured and assembled in the U.S.
- Vendors must provide written certification.
- Waiver applies if total federal assistance is below $250,000 (effective August 16, 2023).

Project Narrative Tips
- The narrative you provide by answering the survey questions is critical—funding decisions rely heavily on it. Be clear, concise, and accurate—avoid unnecessary information.

GETTING STARTED WITH SURVEY 123: How to complete the application

Accessing the Application
- The RTP application will be completed online using Survey123.
    - RTP Online Application - https://arcg.is/0C8PPH1
- The link to the application can also be found on the SDGFP Partnerships webpage: (https://gfp.sd.gov/partnerships/)

Saving Progress

Suvey123 saves your progress if you need to return to the application later. To save:
- Do not clear your browser history or cookies
- Reopen the application using the same browser and device
- Your previous responses will remain available for editing until submission

Browser Recommendations
- Use a modern browser such as Google Chrome, Microsoft Edge, or Firefox
- Avoid using private/incognito mode, as it will prevent saving progress.

DOCUMENTS TO PREPARE BEFORE STARTING

To make the process smoother, gather the following documents before beginning your application
- **Proof of Ownership or Legal Control**
  - Deeds, long-term leases, easements, or other agreements in PDF format)
- **Color Map of the Project Area**
- Showing:
  - Park boundaries
  - Proposed project site and trail route
  - Contractor staging areas
  - All maps compiled into one PDF format for 8.5" x 11")
- **Detailed Project Budget**
  - Itemized costs for materials, labor, equipment and services (combined into one PDF)
- **Letters of Support**
  - From partners, stakeholders, or organizations (combined into one PDF)
- **Additional Supporting Documentation**
- Such as:
  - Contractor quotes
  - Engineer estimates
  - Maintenance Agreements
  - Resolutions of Support
  - Intergovernmental agreements
  - (all combined into one PDF)

OTHER INFORMATION TO GATHER BEFORE STARTING

It would be beneficial to read through the narrative-type questions associated with your project in advance to understand the type of responses that will be required. You will need the following details:
- **Applicant Information**
  - Organization name
  - Address
  - Unique Entity Identifier (UEI)
  - Census Population
  - Contact Information for applicant contact, mayor, and finance officer
- **Project Information**
  - Project name
  - park/trail name
  - legal property location (Section, Township, Range)
  - project type
- **Trail Details**
  - Length
  - Width
  - surface type
- **Budget Information**
  - Total project cost & RTP funds requested
  - non-RTP funding sources and status
- **Project Timeline**
  - Anticipated start and end dates
- **Environmental and Cultural Considerations**
  - Any impacts to wetlands, floodplains, historic resources, etc.

IMPORTANT NOTES

- Attachments must be in PDF format and combined as instructed
- Archaeological surveys are not required at the time of application but may be required if selected for funding.
- Ensure all information is accurate and complete before submission
- Applications must be submitted by end of day, April 10, 2026.

APPLICANT CHECKLIST

Before starting your application, confirm you have:

- ☐ Access to Survey123 link and a compatible browser.
- ☐ Proof of ownership or legal control document (PDF).
- ☐ Color map of project area (PDF).
- ☐ Detailed project budget (PDF).
- ☐ Letters of support (PDF).
- ☐ Additional supporting documentation (PDF).
- ☐ Applicant and project information ready (names, addresses, UEI, contact details).
- ☐ Trail details (length, width, surface type).
- ☐ Budget details and funding sources.
- ☐ Project timeline and environmental considerations.

REFERENCE ONLY
This is a list of applications questions
NOT the application itself.

South Dakota Recreational Trail Program Application

This application is used to apply for Recreational Trails Program (RTP) funding administered by South Dakota Game, Fish and Parks (SD GFP). Applicants will be asked to provide information about the proposed project, including project type, location, scope, budget, environmental considerations, and anticipated benefits.

The application is structured so that certain sections are displayed based on the project type selected. Applicants are only required to complete the sections that apply to their proposed project.

For additional guidance, definitions, and detailed instructions, applicants are encouraged to review the **Application Manual** available on the **SD GFP Partnerships Page**. The Application Manual includes a **summary of application questions**, and applicants may find it helpful to gather the required information and supporting materials prior to beginning the application.

Application Organization

Project Name:
Application Name:
> Name of Political Unit or Organization
> Example, Miller, Belle Fource, Hughes County,

Type of Applicant
- *City / Municipality*
- *Townships*
- *County*
- *School District*
- *Non-Profit*
- *Other*

Address:
Grantee UEI:
> A 12-character alphanumeric code issued by SAM.gov that identifies organizations, businesses, or individuals applying for or receiving federal grants.

Census Population:

Application Contact

First Name:
Last Name:
Title:
Office Phone:
Cell Phone:
Email Address:

Mayor Contact Information
> Mayor First Name:
> Mayor Last Name:
> Mayor Phone:
> Mayor Email:

Finance Officer Contact Information
> Finance Officer First Name:
> Finance Officer Last Name:
> Finance Officer Phone:
> Finance Officer Email:

Park Information

Park / Trail Name:
Park Street Address:
+4 Zip Code:
Legal Property Location
> Section: Township: Range:

Project Location:

REFERENCE ONLY
This is a list of applications questions
NOT the application itself.

Property is controlled by:
- *Fee Simple* → *Estimate Acquisition Date*
- *Lease* → *Lease Begin / End*
- *Easement* → *Easement Begin / End*
- *Other*

Proof of Ownership – attach document

Applicants must submit documentation verifying ownership of, or adequate legal control over, the project site. Documentation may include deeds, long-term leases, easements or other legally binding agreements sufficient to ensure the applicant's ability to implement, operate, and maintain the property.

Document must be a PDF

Project Details

Project Information

Please indicate the type of user groups that will benefit from this trail project:

- ☐ Walkers
- ☐ Hikers
- ☐ Joggers & Runners
- ☐ Nature Viewers
- ☐ Bicyclists
- ☐ Equestrian Users
- ☐ Winter Recreation (skiers / snowshoers)
- ☐ ATV Users
- ☐ Snowmobile Users
- ☐ Other

RTP Use Classification

Which Recreational Trail Program (RTP) funding category is this project applying under?
- Non-Motorized Trail
- Motorized Trail
- Mixed Motorized and Non-Motorized Trails

Eligibility Category

Check the box that most closely describes the type of project proposed. Please refer to the application packet for detailed definitions of these eligibility categories. Must only chose one.

> *Note: Your project type selection will determine which sections of the application you are required to complete. Please review the eligibility categories carefully and select the option that best describes your proposed project. Applicants will be required to complete only the sections that apply to the selected project type. These sections are below with Blue Headings.*

A. Maintenance and restoration of existing trails
B. Development and rehabilitation of trailside facilities and trail linkages
C. Purchase and lease of recreational trail construction and maintenance equipment (must meet Build America and Buy America as described in the RTP Manual.
D. Construction of new recreational trails
   ➡ Is this construction an addition or extension to an already existing trail?
      - Yes
      - No
E. Acquisition of easement and fee simple title to property
F. Trail accessibility assessment
G. Operation of educational programs to promote safety and environmental protection.

Existing Trails – Complete this section for Eligibility Categories A, B, D (if "yes") and F.

Existing Trail Length
Existing Trail Width
Surface Type – what is the primary surface of the trail?
- Natural Surface (soil, dirt, grass)
- Crushed Aggregate (limestone, granite, gravel)
- Stabilized Aggregate (binder-treated or fines)
- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Boardwalk / Bridge (wood, composite, or steel decking)

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A. Maintenance and Restoration of Existing Trails:

Complete Existing Trails section above

Which of the following best describes the primary purpose of your proposed project?

o **Maintenance and restoration of an existing trail → Complete Maintenance Section**
Work that repairs or restores the existing trail tread, surface, drainage, structures, or alignment.

o **Trail Improvements (not maintenance or restoration) → Complete Improvements Section**
Projects focused on amenities or enhancements such as lighting, signage, benches, trailheads, or other support facilities.

Maintenance

Which specific physical deficiencies currently exist along the trail (check all that apply)

o Erosion or washouts
o Poor or failing drainage
o Surface deterioration (rutting, cracking, loose material)
o Vegetation encroachment
o Structural issues (bridges, boardwalks, retaining walls)
o Signage or wayfinding deficiencies
o None
o Other

Are the identified issues localized to specific segments or present throughout the trail?

o *Localized* → Please list and describe the locations and approximate lengths affected
o *Throughout*

Are there known safety hazards that pose risk to trail users?

o *Yes* → Please describe
o *No*

Proposed maintenance and/or restoration work.
Describe the work proposed and explain how it will correct the identified issues or improve the trail.

Urgency and Consequences
Explain why this work is needed now and what impacts may occur if the work is not completed.

Project Labor and Staffing
Who will complete the work on the project?

☐ Staff
☐ Contractors
☐ Volunteers
☐ Other – Explain:

Project Implementation
Describe how the work will be completed, including roles, responsibilities and oversight.

Long-Term Maintenance Plan
Describe how the trail will be maintained after project completion to prevent recurrence of the identified issues or to maintain the improvements for longevity.

Improvements

Project Description and Location
Briefly describe the proposed trail improvement or amenity and its location in relation to the existing trail (e.g., lighting, signage, benches, trailhead features).

Purpose & User Benefit
What need does this improvement address, and how will it improve safety, accessibility, or the overall user experience for trail users?

Ownership, Operations, and Maintenance
Who will own and maintain the proposed improvement after installation, and how will ongoing maintenance and operating costs be funded?

B. Development and Rehabilitation of trailside Facilities

Complete Existing Trails section above

Project Description and Location
Describe the trailside facility/trail linkage being developed or rehabilitated and its location within the trail system

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Connectivity and User Benefit

Explain how the proposed project improves trail connectivity, access, or continuity

Ownership, Operations, and Maintenance

Who will own, operate, and maintain the trailside facility or linkage after the project completion, and how will ongoing maintenance be funded?

C. Purchase of Equipment

Equipment Description and Purpose

List the equipment proposed for purchase or lease and describe how each item will be used for recreational trail construction or maintenance

Need and Use

Explain why this this equipment is needed and identify the trails or trail system(s) on which it will be used. If applicable, include current limitations due to lack of equipment.

Ownership

Who will own or lease the equipment and who will be responsible for the storage and maintenance?

BABA Requirements

Will this purchase meet the BABA requirements at outlined in the Application Manual?

D. Construction of New Recreational Trails

**If the trail is an extension or addition to existing trails, complete the Existing Trail Section above. **

Project Overview

Describe the proposed new recreational trail, including overall purpose, setting, and how it fits in within the existing trail system or community or provides connectivity.

Trail Location and Alignment

Describe the proposed trail alignment and location, including any important context not evident on the project maps, such as connectivity, access points, or constraints that influenced the alignment.

Trail Length & Trail Width

Surface Type – What is the primary surface of the new trail?

- Natural Surface (soil, dirt, grass)
- Crushed Aggregate (limestone, granite, gravel)
- Stabilized Aggregate (binder-treated or fines)
- Asphalt
- Concrete
- Boardwalk / Bridge (wood, composite, or steel)
- Other

Additional Details

If necessary, provide any other details regarding the physical attributes of the trail.

Site Conditions and Constraints

Describe existing site conditions, including topography, soils, vegetation, waterways, wetlands, floodplains, or other constraints that influence trail design or construction.

Design Standards and Accessibility

Describe the planning and design considerations that informed the proposed project, including how safety, feasibility, accessibility standards, environmental factors, and other relevant considerations were addressed in the project design.

Construction Methods and Phasing

Describe how the trail will be constructed, including construction methods, sequencing, and phasing (will this project be completed in phases or is this project one phase of an overall master plan?)

Who will complete the work on the project?

- ☐ Staff
- ☐ Contractors
- ☐ Volunteers
- ☐ Other – Explain:

Project Implementation

Describe how the work will be completed, including roles, responsibilities and oversight.

Ownership, Operations and Maintenance

Who will own and maintain the proposed improvement after installation, and how maintenance and operating costs be funded?

E.   Acquisition of Easement and/or Fee Simple Title to Property

Complete Existing Trails section above

Type of Acquisition – Identify the type of property interest being acquired.
- o   Fee Simple Title
- o   Permanent Easement
- o   Term Easement → Term Begin / End

Purpose of Acquisition

Explain why the acquisition of this property is necessary for the proposed trail project and how it will support trail development, access, or connectivity.

Current Ownership

Is the current property owners willing to sell or enter into an easement agreement?
- o   Yes
- o   No
- o   To be determined – please explain

Appraisal and Valuation Status

Has an appraisal been completed for the property?
- o   Yes
- o   No
- o   Other – please explain

Control, use, and Long-term Management

Describe how the acquired property will be used, who will own and manage it after acquisition, and how long-term stewardship will be ensured.

F.   Trail Accessibility Assessment

Assessment Area

Identify the trail or trail segment(s) to be assessed, including approximate length and location

Assessment Method

Describe how the accessibility assessment will be conducted and identify any standards or guidelines that will be used.

Need for Accessibility Assessment

Explain why an accessibility assessment is needed at this time including any known or suspected accessibility barriers, user concerns, or compliance gaps that the assessment is intended to address.

Assessment Outcome

Explain how the results of the accessibility assessment will be used (e.g., to identify improvements, support future projects, or inform planning)

G.   Operation of Education Programs to Promote Safety and Environmental Protection

Program Description and Audience

Describe the educational program and identify the target audience

Program Delivery and Content

Describe how the program will be delivered and the safety and/or environmental topics it will address

Expected Outcomes and Evaluation

Explain the intended outcomes of the program and how its effectiveness will be evaluated

Project Timeline

Provided successful applications will have access to grant funds by spring 2027, what is the anticipated timeline for the project.

Project Begin:

Project End:

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Project Significance and Community Impact

Project Importance
Describe why this project is important to the applicant and the community it will serve.

Community Need and Support
Explain the community need for this project and describe any public interest, support, or demand that has informed the project.

Overall Impact
Describe the anticipated overall impact of the project, including benefits to trail users, community quality of life, safety, access, recreation, or connectivity.

Need for RTP Funding
Explain why Recreational Trail Program (RTP) funding is being requested and how-RTP funds are critical to advancing or completing the project.

Additional Project Information
Please provide any additional information about the project that you feel is important for consideration and was not addressed elsewhere in the application.

CCC / WPA Resources

CCC / WPA Resources
> Are there any type of Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) or Works Progress Administration (WPA) structures or landscapes located in the park?
> - *Yes* → Please describe
> - *No*

Facilities Older than 50 Years
> Are there any facilities and buildings older than 50 years that are located on or adjacent to your project?
> - *Yes* → Please describe
> - *No*

Impacts to Cultural or Historic Resources
> Are Cultural or historical resources exist on or adjacent to the project site?
> - *Yes* → Please describe
> - *No*

Removal or Renovation of Structures
> Are there any buildings, facilities, or structures to be removed or renovated?
> - *Yes* → Please describe
> - *No*

Archaeological Survey Status
> Have any archeological surveys been completed on or adjacent to your project site?
> *Note: Archeological surveys are not required at the time of the application. However, if the project is selected for funding, one will be required. The initial records search will be arranged by the GFP office. If the records search indicates that a field archaeological survey is required, the survey must be completed at the sponsor's expense before funding can be finalized.*
> - *Yes* → Please describe, and list Survey Completion Date
> - *No*

Project Budget and Funding

Total Project Cost

RTP Funds Requested

Project Budget – Complete the section to provide a detailed cost estimate / itemized description

Budget Description Item	Amount
TOTAL:	

Non-RTP Funds Committed to Date

Source(s) of Funds

Repeat as Necessary

Amount of Funding

Funding Source
- *Applicant general funds*
- *Local government funds*
- *Fundraising*
- *Donations*
- *Private foundation or grant*
- *Other State or Federal Grant Funds*

Status of Non-RTP Funds
- *Fully Secured*
- *Partially Secured*
- *Anticipated, but not yet secured. Describe:*

Budget Readiness

Are sufficient funds available to begin the project if awarded?
- *Yes*
- *No* → Explain the details of the remaining amount of Non-RTP funding to be secured.
- *Partially* →

Need for Grant Funding

Describe the applicants need for grant funding and explain what would happen to the project if an award is not made.

Environmental Review

Social and Cultural Environment	No Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Access Control - Will the project change access to adjacent properties by closing access points, relocating entrances, or altering traffic patterns?			
Archaeological Resources - Will the project disturb ground in areas with known or potential archaeological resources?			
Bicycle and Pedestrian - Will the project affect bicycle or pedestrian travel by altering access, modifying routes, or causing conflict?			
Churches - Will the project affect nearby churches or places of worship by changing access, parking availability, noise levels, or visual conditions?			

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Controversy - Is the project known or reasonably expected to generate public controversy or substantial community concern based on past input or anticipated reactions?			
Cultural Resources - Will the project affect cultural resources, including traditional cultural properties or sites important to local or Tribal communities?			
Handicapped - Will the project affect access for individuals with disabilities by improving accessibility, altering accessible routes, or creating new barriers?			
Historic Resources - Will the project affect historic buildings, structures, or sites that are listed or eligible for listing on historic registers?			
Parks and Recreation - Will the project affect parks or recreational facilities by changing access, use patterns, capacity, or compatibility with existing recreation?			
Public Safety - Will the project affect public safety through changes to traffic conditions, crossings, visibility, emergency access, lighting, or security?			
Relocation - Will the project require the relocation of residences, businesses, or community facilities?			
Right of Way - Will the project require acquisition or use of additional right-of-way or easements beyond what is currently available?			
Schools - Will the project affect nearby schools by changing access, traffic patterns, student safety conditions, or use of school facilities?			
Sensitive Groups - Will the project affect sensitive populations such as children or individuals with disabilities through changes in access, safety, or proximity to facilities?			
Transportation - Will the project affect transportation systems or travel patterns by altering roads, trails, crossings, traffic flow, or multimodal connections?			
Visual Quality - Will the project affect visual quality by changing scenic views, landscape character, structures, lighting, or overall visual contrast?			
Additional Impact Details - If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, please describe the nature of the impact(s), the location where they may occur, and any avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that are planned or anticipated.			

Explain – If you answered yes to any of the above, please describe the nature of the impact(s), the location where they may occur, and any avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that are planned or anticipated.

Economic	No Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Construction - Will the project result in construction-related economic impacts such as temporary disruptions to businesses, changes in access during construction, increased construction costs, or short-term effects on local economic activity?			
Energy - Will the project affect energy use or demand through construction activities, long-term operations, or changes in transportation or maintenance requirements?			
Excess Materials - Will the project generate excess or waste materials requiring disposal, reuse, recycling, or off-site transport during construction or operation?			

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Farmlands - Will the project affect farmland through land acquisition, conversion of agricultural land, changes in access, or interference with ongoing agricultural operations?			
Land Use - Will the project be inconsistent with existing or planned land uses by changing how land is used, limiting future development, or conflicting with adopted plans or zoning?			
Minerals - Will the project affect mineral resources by restricting access, altering extraction activities, or interfering with known or potential mineral deposits?			
Additional Impact Details - If you answered "Yes" to any of the questions above, please describe the nature of the impact(s), the location where they may occur, and any avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that are planned or anticipated.			

Explain – If you answered yes to any of the above, please describe the nature of the impact(s), the location where they may occur, and any avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that are planned or anticipated.

Natural and Physical Environment	No Impact	Minor Impact	Major Impact
Air Quality - Will the project affect air quality through construction activities, increased or decreased vehicle use, dust generation, or long-term operational emissions?			
Bridges, Culverts & Bat Habitat - Will the project involve construction, modification, or removal of bridges or culverts that could affect bat habitat through disturbance, roosting disruption, or changes to structure use?			
Earth Borne - Will the project involve earth-borne activities such as excavation, grading, or soil disturbance that could affect stability, erosion, or sedimentation?			
Endangered Species - Will the project affect federally or state-listed endangered or threatened species or their habitats through disturbance, habitat modification, or changes in use?			
Floodplain - Will the project be located within or affect a floodplain by altering flood storage, flow patterns, or floodplain function?			
Geology - Will the project affect geological resources or conditions such as bedrock, soils, slope stability, or erosion potential?			
Ground Water - Will the project affect groundwater resources through excavation, dewatering, changes in recharge, or potential contamination?			
Noise - Will the project generate noise impacts during construction or long-term operation that could affect nearby land uses or sensitive receptors?			
Stream / River Modifications - Will the project involve modifications to streams or rivers, including crossings, channel alterations, bank stabilization, or changes to flow or aquatic habitat?			
Wetlands - Will the project affect wetlands through direct disturbance, filling, hydrologic changes, or indirect impacts from construction or operation?			
Wild and Scenic Rivers - Will the project affect designated or eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers or their associated corridors through proximity, access, or physical impacts?			

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Environmental Constraints

Will the trail cross be adjacent to, or impact any of the following? (select all that apply)

☐ Wetlands   ☐ Steep Slopes   ☐ Sensitive habitats

☐ Floodplain   ☐ Waterways   ☐ None of the above

☐ Woodland habitats   ☐ Bridges / Culverts

Explain – If you answered yes to any of the above, please describe the nature of the impact(s), the location where they may occur, and any avoidance, minimization, or mitigation measures that are planned or anticipated.

Attachments

Color Maps

> Please Upload a color map of the project area that clearly shows the following:
> - the general vicinity of the park
> - Park Boundaries
> - The Site location of the proposed project, including the trail route and any other areas of potential affect
> - Contractor Staging areas
>
> The required information may be shown on a single map or on multiple map pages. All maps must be compiled into one PDF that is formatted to print on an 8.5" x 11" paper.

Detailed Budget

> In addition to the information provided in the application, you **may** upload a detailed project budget that itemizes all anticipated project costs. It should include:
> - Individual cost items (e.g., materials, labor, equipment, professional services)
> - Estimated cost for each item
> - Total project cost and total RTP funds requested
>
> All budget documents should be combined into a single PDF for upload.

Letters of Support

> Please upload letters of support for the proposed project from partners, stakeholders, or organizations that demonstrate community support, coordination, or involvement in the project.
> Letters may be from, but are not limited to:
> - local governments
> - trail groups
> - landowners
> - schools
> - nonprofit organizations
> - other community partners.
>
> All letters should be combined into a single PDF for upload.

Additional Supporting Documentation

> Please upload any additional documentation that may strengthen the application, such as:
> - Contractor quotes
> - Engineer Estimates
> - maintenance agreements
> - resolutions of support
> - intergovernmental agreements
> - memoranda of understanding
> - or similar materials.
>
> All documents should be combined into a single PDF for upload.

Application Submission

Applicant Certification

> By checking the box below, the applicant certifies that all information provided in this application, including all statements, responses, and attachments, is true, accurate, and complete to the best of their knowledge.