



**NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program**  
***Unlocking the Potential of Grassroots Organizations***

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**  
**September 2015**

*If you have questions about the information provided below, contact PTNY at [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583.*

**Overview**

Parks & Trails New York (PTNY) and the NYS Office of Parks, Preservation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP), with support from Governor Cuomo and the NYS Legislature, are pleased to announce the first round of competitive grants through the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program. The program is administered by PTNY, in partnership with OPRHP.

The Park and Trail Partnership Program is a \$500,000 capacity-building matching grants program funded through the NYS Environmental Protection Fund. The program is designed to:

- Enhance the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance and promotion of New York State parks, trails and state historic sites.
- Increase the sustainability, effectiveness, productivity, and volunteer and fundraising capabilities of not-for-profit organizations that promote, maintain, and support New York State parks, trails and state historic sites.
- Promote the tourism and economic development benefits of outdoor recreation through the growth and expansion of a connected statewide network of parks, trails and greenways.

**All final applications must be submitted by December 4, 2015.** Award decisions are expected to be announced March 2016. [Note: grant awards are contingent upon release of State funds.]

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to:

1. Review all materials on the [NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program website](#), including the FAQs and Evaluation Criteria;
2. Attend an upcoming Regional Friends Gathering in October and/or participate in an upcoming webinar; and
3. Consult with PTNY staff if there are any questions about the program.

## **Eligibility**

The Park and Trail Partnership Program is open to Friends organizations whose primary mission is the preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance, and/or promotion of a specific New York State park, trail or historic site (or multiple such sites) under the jurisdiction of OPRHP. In addition:

1. An applicant must be a corporation formed pursuant to or subject to the NYS Not-for-Profit Corporation Law.
2. An applicant must be classified by the IRS as a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization or have a Memorandum of Understanding with a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt fiscal agent.
3. An applicant must have a current formal Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with OPRHP at the time the grant is issued.

## **Award Categories and Matches**

There are four types of capacity-building grants available to eligible organizations through the Park and Trail Partnership Program.

### **1. Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants**

Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants strengthen the capacity and expertise of individual Friends organizations that support New York State Parks and Historic Sites, or a partnership involving more than one such organization, in order to aid them in fulfilling their mission and to improve their reach, effectiveness, and impact. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Development of a multi-year strategic plan or major fundraising/capital or marketing campaign plan.
- Board/staff training and development, including facilitated retreats.
- Website and email newsletter design and development, graphic design, and printing and distribution of digital or print brochures, newsletters and other promotional materials.
- Efforts to expand the organization's membership and broaden the diversity of support for the organization.
- Software to improve fundraising/development/donor relations, bookkeeping, or recordkeeping. Grant funds may cover initial software purchase or licensing, not license renewal.
- Development and implementation of activities that will provide a future ongoing revenue source.
- Development and implementation of a volunteer program.
- Development of partnerships to promote new or strengthen existing collaboration with more than one organization and/or local government to increase public support for and/or participation in the planning, development, promotion or stewardship of the park/trail/site.
- Hiring of temporary contractors, staff or interns to support the organization's capacity-building work.
- Shared consultant services between more than one eligible organization.

Awards & Match: One-year grants up to \$35,000; a 15% match of the total project budget is required, up to 50% of which may be in-kind. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.

## 2. Step-Up Grants

Step-up Grants assist Friends organizations with the administrative and legal fees needed to secure 501(c)(3) status, along with the costs associated with completing a consultant-facilitated organizational assessment and resulting plan(s).

Awards & Match: One-year grants up to \$7,500; a \$500 match is required, cash or in-kind. Award disbursed at contract signing.

## 3. Professional Development Grants

Professional Development Grants support the hiring of staff in order to advance Friends organizations to a higher and sustainable level of professionalism, fiscal and administrative stability, and community outreach that in the future they will be able to sustain on their own. Professional Development Grants may be used to support:

- First Staff Hire: hiring the organization's first permanent employee, full- or part-time.
- Additional Staff: hiring an additional full- or part-time permanent staff member to fill a critical administrative, outreach or development need, or other key function.
- Upgrade to Full-time Staff: increasing a part-time executive director, or other key staff position to full time.
- Shared Staff: hiring a staff person to be shared by two or more eligible organizations.

Professional Development Grants are meant to support permanent increases in staffing capacity. If an organization is interested in hiring temporary contractors or staff to support the organization's work, this request would fall under a Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grant or a Stewardship and Public Access Capacity grant.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$75,000 encompassing a period of two years; a 25% match in cash of the total project budget is required. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory one-year progress report.

**Organizations interested in a Professional Development Grant must first submit a Letter of Inquiry (LOI) by October 14, 2015.** Full applications are by invitation only. Organizations will be notified early-November if they are invited to submit a full proposal application, due December 4, 2015.

## 4. Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants

Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants may be used to assist Friends organizations with the stewardship, interpretation, promotion, education, and public access of a New York State Park or Historic Site, or a partnership involving more than one such organization, which significantly enhances the organization's visibility and capacity. Examples of projects include, but are not limited to:

- Public access or engagement improvements, such as interpretive kiosks, exhibits, signage, new trails with signage, and other activities that enhance public enjoyment and access to the park/trail/site.
- Shared consultant services between more than one eligible organization.
- Development and implementation of a community outreach plan to enhance community access to and enjoyment of the park/trail/site and awareness of the organization's role in its preservation, stewardship, interpretation, maintenance and/or promotion.

- Community and constituency-building initiatives and programs that promote outreach and public education and recreation resulting in greater public support and broader public involvement, especially from new and presently underserved audiences.
- Development and implementation of park/trail/site marketing plans, especially if undertaken in partnership with local tourism promotion efforts.

Awards & Match: Grants up to \$50,000; a 15% match of the total project budget is required, up to 50% of which may be in-kind. Fifty percent of award is disbursed at contract signing; remainder disbursed after submission of satisfactory six-month progress report.

## **Match Guidelines**

### How to calculate the match

The Park and Trail Partnership Program is a matching grants program. Other than Step-up Grants, which require a flat \$500 match, all grant categories require organizations to contribute a percentage of the total project cost (not the total grant request). Below are some examples of how to calculate the required match.

#### Capacity and Organizational Effectiveness Grants and Stewardship and Public Access Capacity Grants

*Grants may cover up to 85% of total project budget. A 15% match is required, up to 50% of which may be in-kind.*

If your organization's total project cost is \$25,000, you may apply for a grant of \$21,250 (85% of \$25,000) and your organization will need to provide a match of at least \$3,750 (15% of \$25,000), \$1,875 of which may be in-kind.

Alternatively, if your organization expects to raise no more than \$3,000 in matching funds, both cash and in-kind, then you should not apply for more than \$20,000 in grant funds. [Divide the amount you expect to raise by .15 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

#### Professional Development Grants

*Grants may cover up to 75% of total project budget encompassing a period of two years. A 25% match (cash) is required.*

If your organization's total project cost is \$100,000, you may apply for a grant of \$75,000 and your organization will need to provide a match of \$25,000, all of which must be cash.

Alternatively, if your organization expects to raise no more than \$10,000 in matching funds, then you should not apply for more than \$30,000 in grant funds. [Multiply the amount you expect to raise by 3 to come up with the total grant you may request.]

### Matching funds

Applicant organizations must match the grant with non-State funds. Matching funds must be verifiable at the time of application (full-application stage for Professional Development Grants). Documentation of matching funds is required before funding for awarded projects can be disbursed.

In-kind match contributions must be quantifiable and documented and may include:

- donation of professional and construction services (legal, facilitation, consultation, etc. as well as the donation of travel costs from that individual);
- donation of goods (meeting rooms, equipment, printing costs, food or refreshments, construction materials); and
- donation of unskilled/general labor from volunteers (trail work, administrative work, construction work).

### Evaluation Criteria

Please see the [evaluation criteria](#) for each grant category.

### How to Apply

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a Park and Trail Partnership Program grant must first create an account with our online application and reporting system. Once registered, you will be able to see available grants and follow the steps to apply. To register and begin the application process, visit the [online application and reporting system](#).

### Regional Gatherings and Webinars

Eligible organizations interested in applying for a Park and Trail Partnership Program Grant are strongly encouraged to attend an upcoming Regional Friends Gathering in October and/or participate in an upcoming webinar. Friends groups will receive an invitation via email. If you do not, please contact PTNY at [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583.

#### **Regional Gatherings**

##### **October 8**

Central, Chittenango Landing Canal Boat Museum

##### **October 15 (Note date change)**

Western, Letchworth State Park

##### **October 22**

Long Island, Bethpage State Park

##### **October 27**

Saratoga/Capital, Saratoga Spa State Park

##### **October 30**

Hudson Valley, Staatsburgh State Historic Site

*NYC Friends groups are encouraged to attend the Long Island gathering. If you are unable to attend, please contact PTNY.*

#### **Webinars**

##### **October 1 | 1:00pm-2:30pm**

Webinar for prospective Professional Development Grant applicants only

##### **November 12 | 1:00pm-2:30pm**

Webinar for prospective applicants  
*The same webinar is being offered twice.*

##### **November 18 | 10:00am-11:30**

Webinar for prospective applicants  
*The same webinar is being offered twice.*

### Contact

If you have questions about the NYS Park and Trail Partnership Program, contact Parks & Trails New York at [grants@ptny.org](mailto:grants@ptny.org) or 518-434-1583. Visit us online at: [www.ptny.org](http://www.ptny.org).