



## Summer Motorized Trail Pass Grant Program Grant Application Guidelines

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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Summer Motorized Trail Pass Grant Program (SMTP) is a new state grant program that provides funding for the development, renovation, and maintenance of motorized trails throughout Montana's public lands. The SMTP was authorized by House Bill 355 in the 2019 Legislative Session. Funding for the program comes from the sale of summer OHV trail pass decals.

The amount of available funding is approximately \$235,000 per year. This is an estimate and depends on how many summer motorized trail passes are sold every biennium. Projects may only occur on enrolled designated motorized trails on public lands.

### Eligible SMTP Projects

- Signage-Trail Markers
- Trail Maintenance
- Trail Improvements
- Trail Reroutes
- Mitigation of Motorized Resource Impacts
- Brushing and Delimiting of Trails
- Noxious Weed Control on Trail Corridors
- Club Hired Trail Steward to Clear and Maintain Trails

### Ineligible SMTP Projects

- Trailheads/parking areas
- Restrooms
- Motorized skill parks
- Equipment purchases
- For Profit Trails
- Private Trails

The SMTP is administered by Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks. The Program Manager is Seth McArthur and can be reached at [smcarthur@mt.gov](mailto:smcarthur@mt.gov) or 406-444-3753.

Application Period

**The OHV Grant Program grant cycle opens in the fall of each year.**

Applications must be submitted online through WebGrants ([www.funding.mt.gov](http://www.funding.mt.gov)). An organization can submit only one grant application per grant cycle.

## APPLICATION AND REVIEW TIMELINE ESTIMATE

- **Fall:** Application period open in WebGrants.
- **February:** Application period closed in WebGrants.
- **February through April:** Application review conducted.
- **April:** Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee meets to make funding recommendations.
- **May:** Proposed awards are announced via email and posted online. 30-day publiccomment period held for proposed awards.
- **June:** FWP issues final Decision Notice for all awards.
- **July:** Expected project start date.

### **Project Start**

Successful SMTP projects will begin in early July. FWP may retroactively approve reimbursement of grant project expenses which incurred before the project start date in July (when the Contract Agreement is signed). This will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the program manager.

### **Project Close**

The deadline for grantees to expend their SMTP funds and accrue match is October 15, three years from project start date. The final reimbursement request and Final Report are due on December 31. Grant sponsors may request an amendment and the amendment may be approved by the program manager.

## About the Summer Motorized Trail Pass Program

### **Reimbursement Program**

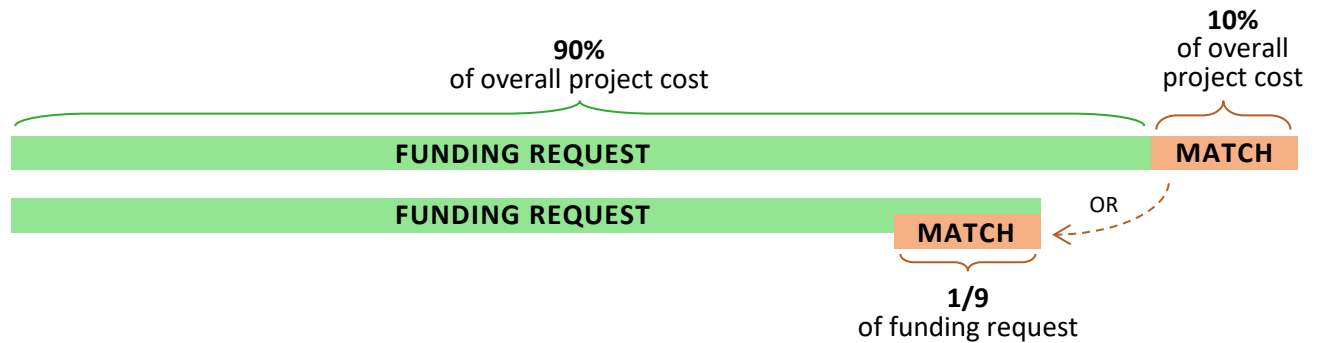
An entity may receive reimbursement only **after** the entity has expended funds on an eligible expense and submitted adequate documentation.

### Advance Payment

Private clubs and NGOs may request up to 50% of the grant award as an advance payment for project work. To receive the advance, the entity must submit a request in Webgrants. The grantee must provide receipts for the expenditure(s) of the advance payment prior to submitting any subsequent requests for reimbursement or closing the project.

## Match Requirement

Each project must have a ratio of 90% SMTP funds to 10% matching funds. Another way to calculate the minimum match requirement is to multiply the funding request amount by 1/9 (see below).



## The Funding Selection Process

All award decisions will be made in late Spring by Montana FWP. The Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee, a group of individuals who represent diversified trail interests throughout Montana, reviews the applications and makes funding recommendations to Montana FWP. Advisors to the Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee include agency officials from both State and Federal government.

See the [Application Review Process Section](#) for more information.

## Eligible Applicants

Grant applicants may include off highway vehicle state organizations, associations and clubs (see MCA 23-2-113). The organization applying to the SMTP must be the organization that will expend the funds and manage the grant. Montana FWP does not allow Tri-Party Agreements.

## Funding Request Limitations

Typical project requests will be between \$10,000 and \$50,000 each funding cycle. Applications over \$50,000 are eligible for funding and will be evaluated on a case by case basis each grant cycle.

## Tips for Applying

- Read these Guidelines carefully and follow all instructions on the WebGrants application. This is a new program which differs from the longstanding state OHV Grant Program.

- Draft your responses to all application questions in a Word document (or other word processing software) and be sure to do the following.
  - Check spelling/grammar.
  - Conduct character counts (all responses have a character limit).
  - Ask others to proofread your application.
  - Save your application responses/data outside of WebGrants in case you have technical issues.
  
- Focus on details specific to your project and limit background information. Reviewers should be able to easily understand the details of your project (how much you are requesting, what you propose to expend funds on, etc.).

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

### Documentation of Project Support/Approval

**Letters of Support are not required for all project types.** Documentation of project support/approval is required in certain situations. Contact the program manager if you are unsure what is required for your project.

1. You must provide a copy of meeting minutes or a letter from the organization's leadership approving the project.
2. You must provide a current Collection Agreement, Land Use Agreement, or other such legal document demonstrating landowner permission to access and use the land. If the documentation is not current, you must provide a letter from the entity affirming their commitment to enter into such an agreement before the project start date.
3. If your application references a match commitment from another entity (cash, donation, volunteer labor, etc.), you must provide a current letter or other such documentation from the entity stating their commitment to this specific SMTP project.
4. If your application references any other type of commitment from another entity (e.g. a commitment to maintenance), you must provide a current letter or other such documentation from the entity stating their commitment to this specific project.

No other documentation of support is required to apply, although Letters of Support are accepted. If you choose to submit any Letters of Support, be sure they meet the following requirements:

- Letters are typed.
- Letters are from an organization, not an individual (unless an individual is expressing a commitment of some kind or landowner is an adjacent, affected landowner).
- Letters signed and dated.
- Letters are current and reference the specific project/grant year for which you are applying.
- Letters are unique. Form letters are not acceptable.

## APPLICATION REVIEW AND SCORING

### Application Review Process

**Preliminary Review:** Internal Review Panel members perform a technical review of each application and score each application based on the Scoring Criteria. Applications determined not to meet the following technical review criteria may not move forward for consideration.

1. The application is complete.
2. The project is an eligible use of funds.
3. The project is ready to proceed.

4. The match requirement has been met.
5. The environmental review requirement has been met.
6. The application includes:
  - a. Adequate landowner permission to allow for continuous public use/access.
  - b. Approval of the project from the applicant organization's leadership (if a private entity).
7. The applicant's current FWP grants are in compliance (if applicable).

**Off-Highway Vehicles Advisory Committee Review:** Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee members review all applications passing Preliminary Review.

**Funding Decision Meeting:** Off-Highway Vehicle Advisory Committee members and advisors meet to consider application scores, discuss project merit, and reach consensus on funding recommendations.

### Application Scoring Criteria

Internal Review Panel members will give each criterion a base score of 0-10 (10 being "Excellent or Very Strongly Agree"). The base score is then multiplied by the criterion weight, which yields the score for that criterion. The total project score is the average of all criteria scores (out of 10). State Trails Advisory Committee members give one overall score based on the Scoring Criteria.

#### **1. Nature of Trail Project: (x2)**

- How much total use of this project is there likely to be (e.g. annual visits)
- Trail maintenance miles (if applicable)
- What types of Motorized use will the trail support (single track, 50 in, or > 50 in)
- Does the project provide physical connections between resources? Does it link existing trails
- Is this a phased project

#### **2. Partnerships/Volunteer Support: (x2)**

- Does project demonstrate coordinated partnerships among clubs and the land management agency

#### **3. Budget/Cost: (x2)**

- Is there sufficient budget detail
- Is the source of all funding shown and does it total the requested dollar amount
- Does the match come from the project sponsor directly (to demonstrate investment)
- Do all items listed qualify for funding under this program
- Are contingencies reasonable (e.g., 10% or less)
- Does overall cost seem reasonable

#### **4. Schedule: (x1)**

- Does schedule appear feasible
- Will work begin sooner than the grant application would be approved

- Will work be completed within Three years of the grant application's approval

#### 5. Other Factors: (X1)

- Are there photos demonstrating proposed project scope, existing portion(s) of project, etc.
- Is there a map providing sufficient detail (not too much/ not too little) for location and/or route
- How clear and complete is the overall application
- Other: (Factors unique to the proposed project)

## ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW REQUIREMENTS

The SMTP projects, administered by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, must be reviewed and meet the Montana Environmental Policy Act (MEPA) requirements to be eligible for funding.

### Three-Year Timeframe

Applicants may upload environmental review documents from within a three-year timeframe.

- ▶ **On the application, you must attach relevant environmental review documentation regardless of whether the documentation has been submitted with a previous year's application.**

### Entities Working on Public Lands

Entities proposing work on public lands must consult the appropriate land management agency(s) for environmental documentation. It is the applicant's responsibility to collect and review the documentation to ensure it is relevant to their proposed project and from within a three-year timeframe.

- ▶ **On the application, entities working on public lands must attach environmental documentation from the appropriate land management agency. Entities working on U.S. Forest Service lands may utilize the U.S. Forest Service Categorical Exclusion form located on the [Program Website](#).**

### Tiering from Other Environmental Documents

When appropriate, a proposed project's environmental review may be tiered from an environmental review. Land management agencies, for example, often tier their documentation for proposed projects from more-encompassing environmental documents (e.g. a forest-level Environmental Analysis, Travel Plan, Decision Notice, etc.).



- **If you are tiering your environmental review from another document, attach a letter to your application and include the following information.**
  1. The name of the document from which your environmental review is being tiered. In addition, attach either the document itself to your application or, if it is available online, you may link to it in the letter.
  2. If any negative impacts were identified, include a summary of mitigation measures that will be taken to reduce negative impacts.
  3. If the environmental review document is not from within a three-year timeframe, include a statement of revalidation from the person/agency who conducted the original review.

### Compliance with Existing Laws, Regulations, Policies, and Ordinances

All projects seeking funding from the SMTP must comply with existing federal, state and jurisdictional laws, regulations, and ordinances. If applicable, such compliance should be discussed and demonstrated on the project's environmental review documentation.

FWP encourages applicants to consider ways to share project accomplishments in their communities. Applicant must involve the land management agency in the proposed project from its inception. Public participation and education may be promoted through newspaper articles and any other means available (e.g. press releases, newsletters, TV programs, radio announcements, etc.).

## BUDGET AND MATCHING FUNDS

### Creating a Budget in WebGrants

When applying for SMTP funding in WebGrants, you will be instructed to fill out two budget forms: The Budget Form and the Funding Strategy Narrative Form. The WebGrants Budget Form should summarize your budget numbers. The WebGrants Funding Strategy Narrative Form should detail budget line items and provide short narratives about your funding strategy.

- ▶ **On the application, be sure the information on your Budget and Funding Strategy Narrative Forms is clear, detailed, and justified. Budget line items for project expenses and match should be detailed to the extent possible. Additional information (e.g. contractor quotes) may be attached.**

From these forms, those reviewing your application should understand precisely what your organization is proposing to do with the requested funds and how your organization will match the requested funds. It should be clear how you came up with your numbers and how you calculated your request and match numbers.

## Match Requirements

Entities must ensure matching funds meet FWP requirements. Applications not including the minimum amount of match may not move forward from technical review for further consideration.

To meet FWP requirements, matching funds must:

- Be clearly tied to the proposed project scope.
- Be incurred after the project start date.
- Be guaranteed at the time of application.
- Have a total value of at least 10% of the total project cost (funding request plus match).

Match items should be categorized as Sponsor Funds or In-Kind Contributions, according to the descriptions below.

- Sponsor Funds: The cash an entity has on-hand to spend on the proposed project.
- In-Kind Contributions: The value of volunteer labor, calculated at a rate of \$20/hour and including donated professional services, donated materials, etc.
- Current state and federal grants may be used as match so long as the project scope and grant period is the same.

- ▶ **On the application, you must clearly identify your match. Like project expenses, your match should be detailed and justified.**

## Project Cost-Share (90% SMTP funds/10% applicant funds)

Each application must include match equaling or just exceeding 10% of the total proposed project cost.

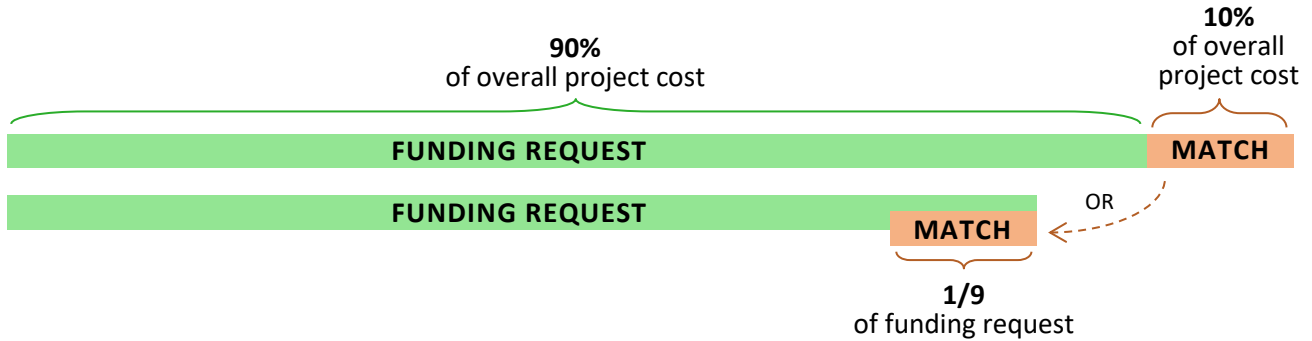
### Using Volunteer Hours as Match

The SMTP allows volunteer hours to be used as match with proper documentation. Any volunteer hours shown on your application must be guaranteed/justified based on your experience from previous years and/or with similar projects.

Also, if funded, all volunteer hours used as match must be documented using the most current volunteer log (which requires details including volunteer and volunteer manager signatures). Volunteer hours will not be accepted as matching funds if documentation is missing from the volunteer logs.

## Calculating Match

The minimum amount of match shown on an application must be 10% of the total project cost (funding request plus match), which is equal to 1/9 of the funding request (see below).



Use either formula to calculate your match requirement:

$$\text{Minimum Match} = (\text{Funding Request} / 0.90) - \text{Funding Request}$$

or

$$\text{Minimum Match} = \text{Funding Request} \times (1/9)$$

## Requesting Administrative Fees

Applicants may not request administrative fees in their proposed project budgets.

**No Indirect Cost Rates Apply:** Applicants may not include indirect costs in their project budget request.

## PURCHASING GUIDELINES

Entities planning to purchase services or materials with grant funds are encouraged to follow limited solicitation procedures before selecting a vendor. FWP also encourages sponsors to use vendors in their communities, near project sites, or in Montana if possible. No documentation is required for the application.