

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
Department of Conservation and Natural Resources

Bureau of Recreation and Conservation (BRC)
Administrative Policy/Grant Guidelines

SUBJECT: Planning Grant Administrative Instructions and Process

EFFECTIVE DATE:

REVISED DATE: 10/7/15

Background: The following is an overview of the Bureau's grant process for implementing planning grant projects. The term "Grantee" refers to a grant applicant that has been awarded a grant.

Grant Administration Roles and Responsibilities

Local Project Coordinator

The Grantee designates the Local Project Coordinator. The Bureau considers this coordinator to be the official contact person on all matters related to the administration of the grant project. All official correspondence will be sent to the Local Project Coordinator. If the Grantee's Local Project Coordinator changes during the course of the project, the Grantee must provide the assigned Bureau Project Manager with written notification on Grantee's letterhead of the change, including the name, title, mailing and email addresses, and daytime telephone number of the new Local Project Coordinator.

Bureau Project Manager

The Bureau assigns a staff member to serve as the Project Manager to work with the Local Project Coordinator to successfully complete the grant project. It is the Bureau Project Manager's responsibility to provide information and assistance to the Grantee to ensure that the project is completed, that grant program requirements are met, and that the project can be successfully closed out. All correspondence and communications regarding the project should be directed to the Bureau Project Manager.

Grant Administration Process

It is BRC's intent to provide each Grantee with as much assistance as needed, on a step-by-step basis, to ensure a successful project. There are steps requiring the Grantee to wait for DCNR's review and approval before proceeding to the next step. The standard process for implementing a planning grant is as follows:

1. DCNR Award and Contracting Stage

- DCNR/Governor sends a "Notice-of-Selection"/Award Letter to the Grantee.

- DCNR conducts a pre-contracting call with Grantee to confirm the designated Local Project Coordinator, Cash and/or Non-Cash Match, Project Scope, Grant Agreement Dates and next steps in Grant Process.

Timeframe: Completed within 3 weeks after receipt of DCNR/Governor "Notice-of-Selection"/Award Letter.

- A fully executed copy of the Grant Agreement is returned to the Grantee by DCNR, signifying the beginning of the project management process.

Timeframe: Completed with 3 months of the pre-contracting call.

2. Initial Project Start-up Letter and Next Steps Instructions Stage

Note: This stage can be concurrent with the DCNR/Community Contracting Stage.

- Grantee receives a letter from their designated Bureau Project Manager providing application review comments and next step instructions including various attachments to assist the Grantee with project implementation. Grantee is requested to submit a draft study committee list, RFP, Scope of Work (SOW) and project budget for review and approval. Grantee is also provided an Initial Payment Request form (requesting up to 50% of the total grant amount).

Time-frame: Completed 4 weeks of the DCNR/Governor "Notice-of-Selection"/Award Letter to the grantee.

3. Initial Project Conference Call/Meeting Stage

- The Bureau Project Manager conducts a conference call/meeting with the Grantees designated Local Project Coordinator to review and discuss project scope of work and the "Initial Project Letter" contents to insure that the information provided is clearly understood and the project is ready to proceed. Meetings will be conducted by phone or face-to-face depending on complexity of projects.

Time-frame: Completed within 2 months of the "Initial Project Start-up Letter"

4. Request for Proposal (RFP) Approval Stage (if applicable)

- The Bureau Project Manager provides a letter granting approval of RFP and next step instructions for consultant selection. "RFP Guidelines" are provided with the "Initial Project Letter".

Timeframe: Completed within 3 weeks upon receipt of draft RFP.

5. Notice to Proceed with Planning Process Stage

- The Bureau Project Manager reviews and approves the project study committee (if applicable), selected consultant "Professional Services

Agreement”, SOW, project deliverables, budget, and timeline. “Certification of Title” is required for “Master Site Development Plan” projects only. Additional project payments may be requested after this step (may request up to 90% of the total grant amount).

- The Bureau Project Manager provides a letter granting approval to proceed with the planning process including next step instructions.

Timeframe: Completed within 3 weeks upon receipt of a complete submission.

6. Draft Plan/Deliverables Review Stage

- The Bureau Project Manager reviews the “Final Draft Plan” and related deliverables to ensure that contracted scope of work is completed and to provide professional feedback as appropriate. All plans must include a summary of the public participation process and prioritized recommendations for implementation including cost estimates as appropriate.
- The Bureau Project Manager will provide written draft review comments if necessary. Upon approval of the draft plan, the Bureau Project Manager will provide a letter indicating next steps to proceed with project closeout.

Timeframe: Completed within 6 weeks upon receipt of the draft plan/deliverables including maps (if applicable).

7. Close-out Stage

- DCNR review and approval of project closeout documentation for final payment.

To close out a Grant Agreement for a Planning Project, the Grantee is required to:

Submit a resolution passed by the governing body certifying that:

- a. The project was completed in accordance with the Grant Agreement;
- b. All project expenditures have been made and were in accordance with the Grant Agreement;
- c. The Plan and related materials are acceptable to the Grantee, and;
- d. The Plan and related materials will be used to guide future recreation and conservation decisions.

Provide to the Bureau:

- e. Three (3) printed and bound copies of the final study report.
- f. One (1) full-scale final Site Development Drawing (if applicable).
- g. One (1) electronic PDF copy of the final study report (as one complete document, not broken out by chapters, etc.)
- h. A Final Payment Request Form properly completed and signed.
- i. A letter from consultant/partners stating that the contract/professional services agreement has been paid in full (if applicable).

- In accordance with the Grant Agreement, the Final Payment Form and close-out documents are to be supplied by the Grantee within 60 days of project completion. Upon receipt and satisfactory review of the “Final Payment Request” form and associated documentation, the Bureau Project Manager will provide the Grantee with a written final payment letter, authorizing the final payment allocation due the Grantee. This will close-out the project.

Timeframe: Completed 2-3 weeks upon receipt of all required close-out documentation.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Study Committee

Public participation requirements include the appointment of a Study Committee. Names and affiliations of the Study Committee members must be provided to the Grantee’s Bureau Project Manager for our review and approval. Refer to The Bureau’s Public Participation Guide for guidance on suggested Study Committee composition and techniques. Typically, the Study Committee should be appointed and functioning before the project begins.

Control of Property

For Master Site Development Plans and facility rehabilitation Feasibility Studies the applicant must own or control the property that will be planned for and eventually developed or rehabilitated. Grantees will be required to provide a Certification of Title form signed by an Attorney/Solicitor. Property that is not owned in fee simple must be controlled through a permanent easement or a long-term lease agreement (minimum of 25 years) to protect facilities for their useful lifetime. Depending on the type of Feasibility Study, applicants may be required to have control of the site, either through ownership or a long-term lease agreement and provide evidence of this control.

Grant Payments

See the Payment Request Processing Policy

Billable Rate

For planning projects that include In-House Professional Costs (Section VI of the Final Payment Form) or Donated Professional Services (Section VIII of the Final Payment Form), personnel costs should be recorded as a “billable rate” which is equal to the employee’s established hourly wage rate or the employee’s hourly rate plus fringe benefits and operational overhead costs. Fringe benefits and overhead costs include but are not limited to employee insurance, retirement benefits, and paid time off. The “billable rate” must be preapproved by DCNR and occurs when DCNR provides approval to proceed for the project. See Section VI of the final payment form for additional details or contact the Bureau Project Manager for specific questions on eligible costs.

Interest Income

With the exception of Growing Greener Bond Fund, all grant funds must be maintained in a separate interest bearing account. Upfront grant payments and any interest or other

accumulations earned by this grant must be separately identifiable in the accounting of funds received under the Grant Agreement. Grantee should invest and reinvest grant funds and any interest on other accumulations earned on such funds, to gain the maximum yield. Subject to prior written approval of the Bureau, the Grantee may use the interest or other accumulations earned on grant funds for grant activities. Income earned and expended shall be recorded as part of the closeout documentation. Any unused interest or other income remaining at the completion of project activities shall be returned to the DCNR.

Request for Proposal (RFP) Waiver Requests

For planning projects, consultants must be selected using a competitive Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Upon written request from the Grantee, the Bureau may, at the Bureau's sole discretion, waive the required RFP process. Waivers will be considered for requests that meet the following conditions:

- (1) The consulting firm must meet the Bureau's General Consultant Qualifications for planning grant projects
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/planningforms/index.htm>.

Specifically, at least one member of the consulting team must have documented, prior experience conducting studies of the project type being undertaken.

- (2) The consulting firm must have documented prior experience with completion of other related recreation and conservation planning projects within the study area.

- (3) The consulting firm must propose a project cost that is realistic and competitive for the project type being undertaken.

Project Changes/Grant Agreement Amendments

If there is a need to modify the consultant contract, scope of work, deadlines, budget, title of grant project, amount of grant funds, grant agreement period, project scope, etc., such changes should be discussed with the Bureau Project Manager and, if applicable, the consultant. The Bureau Project Manager will advise the grantee of the process for requesting an amendment consistent with the Bureau's Amendment Request Standard Operating Procedure.

DCNR Acknowledgement

The Plan/deliverables must acknowledge Keystone or Environmental Stewardship Funding by including the following citation on the Plan's acknowledgment page: *"This project was financed in part by a grant from the Community Conservation Partnerships Program, {Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund and/or Environmental Stewardship Fund}, under the administration of the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation."*

Record Keeping

It is the Grantee's responsibility to maintain original records that support and validate the summary information certified to the Bureau. It is important that you maintain records of all types of approved cash and non-cash costs throughout the planning process. For In-House Staff, Donated Professional and Volunteer Services, it is recommended that you create a spreadsheet including the following information: Name of Person Performing

Work, Day and Date of Work, Description of Work Performed, Hours Worked, Hourly Rate, and Total Value of Work Performed.

For all projects, this will include:

- All project-related invoices and records of payment.

Additional documentation may include:

- Original payroll and accounting records relative to In-House Professional Services.
- Activity logs and time sheets relative to Donated Professional and Volunteer Services.
- Signed letters from firms, groups, or persons providing donated professional and/or volunteer services describing the type and amount (i.e. hours and rates) of services provided.

All original records related to the project shall be maintained for a period of three (3) years from the date of the final payment and made available for a possible program audit. Any costs presented in the summary information, not verifiable by an audit, may be disallowed as an eligible project cost.

All planning forms, guidance documents, and policies may be obtained at the following links:
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/elibrary/forms/planningforms/index.htm>
<http://www.dcnr.state.pa.us/brc/grants/grantpolicies/index.htm>

This policy remains in effect until revised or rescinded.