



GUIDELINES

2025 Round B: DEP projects must be completed by October 31, 2027.

2025 Round B: DCNR Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund only qualified projects – work must be completed by October 31, 2027.

SECTION 1. PURPOSE

The primary goal of the Northwest Regional Planning and Development Commission's Greenways Block Grant Program is to facilitate the implementation of the natural systems greenway recommendations contained in the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan (NPGP) and the resulting individual eight county plans. As well as advance recreation, conservation and heritage initiatives throughout the region. This will be accomplished by supporting the completion of those smaller projects not eligible or unable to compete for alternative funding methods that will benefit from the speed and agility afforded by the Greenways Block Grant (GBG) Program.

This program leverages grant funds through the partnership of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) and the Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). This method of incorporating cooperative consideration and funding by the public agencies of joint projects will implement the NPGP and meet DCNR and DEP's statewide and regional goals and priorities.

SECTION 2. ELIGIBILITY

A. Applicant Eligibility

1. **DEP Projects:** Eligible applicants for DEP funding through the GBG Program consist of all county or municipal governments, conservation districts, incorporated watershed associations, Councils of Governments, 501C3 tax exempt corporations, educational institutions, municipal authorities, and conservancies within the northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Region of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties.

2. **DCNR Projects:** The source of DCNR's funding for the GBG Program is both the Environmental Stewardship Fund (GG1) and the Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund.
 - Eligible applicants for DCNR's Environmental Stewardship Fund (GG1) consist of all county or municipal governments, council of governments, conservation districts, land trusts, school districts, college/universities, non-profit organizations, housing/redevelopment authorities and designated heritage areas within the Northwest PA counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties.

 - Eligible applicants for DCNR's Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation Fund consist of all county or municipal governments, council of governments and conservation districts within the Northwest PA counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties.

| Eligible Applicant | DEP Funding | DCNR Funding (Environmental Stewardship) | DCNR Funding (Keystone Recreation, Park and Conservation) |
|--|-------------|--|---|
| County Governments | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Municipal Governments | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Conservation Districts | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Council of Governments (COGs) | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Incorporated Watershed Associations | ✓ | ✓ | |
| 501c3 Tax Exempt Corporations | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Educational Institutions | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Municipal Authorities | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Non Profits: Conservancies, Rivers, Trails | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Housing/Redevelopment Authorities | | ✓ | |
| For-Profit Enterprise | | | |
| | | | |

B. Applicant Responsibility

To ensure the potential project is qualified and eligible for funding, the applicant is responsible for discussing the project with DEP and/or DCNR agency representatives prior to making application for funding. Agency contact information is included in Section 7 of these guidelines.

Applicants are also responsible for submitting all required documents with the application. Those documents include letters of match commitment, a Pennsylvania National Diversity Inventory (PNDI), and Landowner Agreement for development projects. PNDI policy is available at the following link:

http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/d_001284.pdf.

SECTION 3. ELIGIBLE PROJECT CATEGORIES

A. Project Eligibility

Projects eligible for funding must fall within the Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways counties of Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, and Warren and will be identified as Developmental, Planning, or Technical Assistance projects that support the vision and goals of the regional/local Northwest Pennsylvania Greenways Plan(s). Special consideration will be given to projects that involve opportunities for funding collaboration by DEP and DCNR.

B. Examples of Development, Planning and Technical Assistance Projects

1. Developmental Projects

- Protection and/or improvement of existing natural areas primarily for ecological health and preservation of wildlife habitat near State Game Lands;
- Creation of recreational opportunities for residents through preservation and connection of existing open spaces;
- Adoption of municipal open space and land use regulations to protect land and water resources;
- Restoration and enhancement of riparian buffers and the creation of wetlands;
- Implementation of non-point source pollution reduction activities such as agricultural and stormwater best management practices projects, specifically in impaired waters;
- Reforestation and restoration of tree canopy in urbanized communities that have an Urban Forest Management Plan;
- Conservation education through workshops/training.
- Creation of recreational opportunities through the development of trail corridors, trailside facilities, boat launches and other recreational amenities.

2. Planning Projects

- Land Based & Water Trail feasibility studies;
- Trail Town master planning;
- Natural systems greenways corridor implementation strategies;
- Park Master Site Development Plans
- Municipal open space and greenways/trail plans.

3. Technical Assistance

- Education, outreach & marketing for specific project.

SECTION 4. FUNDING

A. Maximum Request

Grant requests may not exceed \$40,000 for a DEP project and \$25,000 for a DCNR project.

B. Applicant Match

Depending on the eligible funding source(s), you must identify cash and/or in-kind match commitment for the total project cost as outlined in the chart below. For example, a \$25,000 DCNR grant request requires a \$25,000 match commitment, representing \$50,000 in total project costs. All match must be directly related to the approved scope of work and may be used only once. A cash commitment receives favorable consideration in project evaluations.

| Match Requirements | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| DEP Funding Only | DCNR Funding Only | DEP/DCNR Joint Funding |
| 10% | 50% | 50% * |

*For eligible applicants and projects, DEP funding may be used as a portion of the required match not to exceed 40%

C. Cost Reimbursement

The project applicant does not receive a check upon the approval of their project.

DCNR funding allows for a 50% advanced payment to cover the project's initial costs. Once the initial funding is expended and/or professional or construction contracts are executed, the Northwest Commission may approve a second partial payment up to 90% of the total project costs. At least 10% of the grant funds will be withheld until the project is completed and all final paperwork is submitted to the Northwest Commission.

DEP funding is strictly on a reimbursement basis. All costs are paid by the applicant and a reimbursement request is submitted to the Northwest Commission for payment upon receipt of all necessary documentation.

SECTION 5. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

A. Application Form

The GBG Program application and guidelines are available on the Northwest Commission's Greenways Block Grant webpage at the following link: [Greenways Block Grant Program](#)

It may also be requested by contacting Jennifer Feehan by email at jenniferf@northwestpa.org or by phone at 814-677-4800 x106.

B. Scope of Work

A brief description of the project detail or scope of work is to be included with your application. This should be limited to no more than a two page summary. Include the answers to the following in your description but do not limit your response to only these items.

- Does the project coincide with your county’s Greenways Plan? List the name of any plan(s) where the project is referenced.
- Describe any match contribution (cash and/or in-kind)
- Budget detail.
- Projected time frame for the project.

C. Required Attachments to Application

1. Scope of Work

2. Letters of Cash or In-Kind Match Commitment

3. Pennsylvania National Diversity Inventory (PNDI)

The PNDI is the Environmental Review function of the Pennsylvania Natural Heritage Program. It is set up to help identify impacts to threatened, endangered or rare plants, animals, natural communities, and geologic features throughout Pennsylvania. The online PNDI Environmental Review and Project Planning Tool information can be accessed at the following link:

<https://conservationexplorer.dcnr.pa.gov/content/environmental-review> and is a required attachment to your application for all Planning and Development Projects.

4. Landowner Agreement/Certificate of Title or Ownership

Ownership and control of property must be guaranteed by a Landowner Agreement or Certificate of Title or Ownership depending on the awarded funding source. This document is a required attachment to any Development or Master Site Plan application.

| Property Ownership Document | DEP Funding Only | DCNR Funding Only | DEP/DCNR Joint Funding |
|---|------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| Landowner Agreement - https://greenport.pa.gov/elibrary/GetFolder?FolderID=963132 | ✓ | | ✓ |
| Ownership & Control Policy - http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/d_001282.pdf | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Certificate of Title or Ownership - http://www.docs.dcnr.pa.gov/cs/groups/public/documents/document/dcnr_003685.doc | | ✓ | ✓ |

D. Closing Date

Applications must be signed and received at the Northwest Commission Office in Oil City by 4:00 p.m., June 8, 2026, either by electronic or hard copy to be considered.

SECTION 6. EVALUATION

A. Review Process

The Project Selection Committee will participate in the selection of DCNR projects to be awarded and may be comprised of representatives or support staff of any or all of the following organizations and agencies: the Northwest Commission, DCNR, DEP, PennDOT, County Planning Directors, County Conservation Districts, Environmental/Trail Groups, and Local/County Government. Agencies submitting applications which request DCNR funds may not serve on the Selection Committee.

B. Project Evaluation Criteria

| | | Max./Min. Values |
|--|---|------------------|
| 1. Project Description | | |
| | Application thoroughly describes the proposed project | 10 |
| | Application description is confusing/inaccurate/incomplete | 0 |
| 2. Project consistent with local and regional Greenways Plans using EXCEPTIONAL PRIORITY designations to rank | | |
| | Project is derived from/consistent with local and/or regional Greenways Plans | 15 |
| | Project is not derived from/consistent with local and/or regional Greenways Plans | 0 |
| 3. Budget Information | | |
| | Detailed budget included with application | 10 |
| | Detailed budget not included with application | 0 |
| 4. Matching Funds | | |
| | Matching funds secured and documentation included with application | 10 |
| | Unsure of source/availability of matching funds and no documentation included | 0 |
| 5. Project Partner Documentation | | |
| | Project application includes Project Partner documentation | 10 |
| | Project application lacking Project Partner documentation | 0 |
| 6. "Ready to Go" - Time frame consistent with grant cycle | | |
| | Project can be completed within grant cycle | 10 |
| | Project cannot be completed within grant cycle | 0 |
| 7. Multiple agency project (DEP and DCNR involvement) | | |
| | Project is a multi-agency project | 20 |
| | Project is not a multi-agency project | 0 |
| 8. Discussed Project with Agency Representative | | |
| | Project has been discussed with DCNR and/or DEP Representative(s) | 15 |
| | Project has not been discussed with DCNR and/or DEP Representative(s) | 0 |

SECTION 7. RESOURCES

A. Contacts

Potential applicants are strongly urged to contact the DEP and/or DCNR representatives to discuss the project under consideration before making application.

The NWC partner will serve as the lead agency and will be the coordinating organization. Partner will also be available during the application process to answer questions pertaining to program guidelines, procedures, timelines, and any other program questions.

Questions can be directed to the following contacts:

| | | | |
|---|--|--|---|
| Northwest Commission Jennifer Feehan, Economic Development Manager 395 Seneca Street Oil City, PA 16301 814-677-4800 x106 jenniferf@northwestpa.org | DEP Jacob Moore, Water Program Specialist 230 Chestnut Street Meadville, PA 16335 814-332-6139 jacmoore@pa.gov | DCNR Katie Wickert, Northwest Regional Advisor <i>Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Mercer, Venango, and Warren Counties</i> 230 Chestnut Street, Meadville, PA 16335 814-226-2329 kwickert@pa.gov | DCNR Adriene Smoczek, Recreation and Conservation Adviser <i>Lawrence County</i> Piatt Place, Suite 324 301 Fifth Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15222 412-565-7803 asmocek@pa.gov |
|---|--|--|---|

B. Web Resources

DCNR and DEP policies, forms, and guidance materials may be found at the eLibrary at the following links: [Home Page - DCNR eLibrary](#) and [- DEP eLibrary](#)