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CAROLINA
THREAD TRAIL.

CAROLINA THREAD TRAIL IMPLEMENTATION GRANT PROGRAM

Grant Guidelines Rolling Application Period

INTRODUCTION

The Carolina Thread Trail is a regional network of trails that connects 2.9 million people in 15 counties in North and South Carolina. The Thread Trail is an example of unprecedented regional collaboration that works to connect people and communities to nature and each other by providing over 1,600 miles of trails, greenways, and blueways. Unlike many endeavors of this type, private funds are serving as a catalyst for creating the Carolina Thread Trail. Local communities and partners in the 15-county area participate in planning and building the Thread Trail. Communities and partner organizations are empowered through financial and technical support from the project to create and implement their own community-based trails. The communities may apply for grants from the private pool of capital that can serve as catalytic funding and help attract public funding sources.

The rolling application period has no specific application deadline. Eligible partner agencies and non-profits may apply for a Carolina Thread Trail Implementation Grant at any time, as may be beneficial in relation to compatible opportunities and budget planning. **Discuss your project and its funding needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff before filling out a grant application.**

GRANT PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

- Help local communities plan and implement trail or greenway projects (including water trail projects), with a focus on creating these in key corridors
- Build the capacity of local communities to develop future trail, greenway, and blueway projects
- Promote collaboration among community partners and neighboring communities
- Increase public support and awareness of the benefits of trails and land conservation
- Reach diverse segments of the population across the 15-county region, including those of differing socio-economic status, age, ability, and ethnicity

ELIGIBILITY

The eligible entities in the rolling grant program are local governments (municipal or county) and non-profit organizations partnering with local governments in the 15 counties that constitute the Carolina Thread Trail footprint. The footprint covers the following counties:

- **Within North Carolina:** Anson, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Union
- **Within South Carolina:** Cherokee, Chester, Lancaster, and York

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The Carolina Thread Trail Implementation Grant Program is made possible by the generosity of various foundations, organizations, businesses, and individual donors. Some larger donations have been restricted by the donor to specific counties, cities/towns, or corridors. In the rolling grant program, potential applicants should contact Carolina Thread Trail staff to discuss the proposed project, its funding needs, and the availability of Thread Trail funding in the specific area. See contact information at the end of these guidelines.

PROJECT TYPES

- **Trail Construction**
 - **Objective:** Complete construction of segments of the Carolina Thread Trail that may include varying trail types, such as natural surface, unpaved aggregate or stone material, boardwalk, and asphalt or concrete pavement. The alignment where trail will be constructed must have been previously secured through acquisition, donation, or easement.
 - **Maximum Grant Request:** There is no strict maximum. Funding is limited by the amount available for use in your specific area at the time of application. Discuss your project needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff.

- **Trail Project Design**
 - **Objective:** Conduct site due diligence, permitting, and construction budgeting and drawing for segments of the Carolina Thread Trail. Project design costs include engineering and soil analysis, as applicable.
 - **Maximum Grant Request:** There is no strict maximum. Funding is limited by the amount available for use in your specific area at the time of application. Discuss your project needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff.

- **Land Acquisition**
 - **Objective:** Acquire land or purchase easements or development rights for segments of trail that align with the Carolina Thread Trail Master Plan. Land acquired may include open space for viewsheds, riparian buffers, wildlife habitat, or recreation along the trail.
 - **Requirement for consideration:** The applicant must include in the application a letter of intent from the prospective land owner(s).
 - **Maximum Grant Request:** There is no strict maximum. Funding is limited by the amount available for use in your specific area at the time of application. Discuss your project needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff.

- **Detailed Corridor Planning**
 - **Objective:** Identify specific trail alignment for a segment of the Carolina Thread Trail, recommend cross-sectional design(s) and materials, and develop preliminary cost estimates.
 - **Maximum Grant Request:** There is no strict maximum. Funding is limited by the amount available for use in your specific area at the time of application. Discuss your project needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff.

- **Canoe/Kayak Launch Construction**
 - **Objective:** Complete construction of canoe or kayak launches into designated Carolina Thread Trail Blueways (Catawba River, South Fork River, Rocky River, Pee Dee River), or into other rivers in the Thread Trail footprint that have potential to become a viable blueway.

- **Maximum Grant Request:** There is no strict maximum. Funding is limited by the amount available for use in your specific area at the time of application. Discuss your project needs with Carolina Thread Trail staff.

SELECTION OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

- **Grant Application Process**

1. Potential applicants should contact Jane Love, Community Coordinator (contact information below), or the coordinator with whom you already work in your area, to discuss the project and its funding needs.
2. After determining with Thread Trail staff that funding is available for your area, download the Grant Application Form and the required budget sheet template (at <https://www.carolinathreadtrail.org/resources/grant-program-funding-sources/>) and fill them out.
3. Gather all other supplemental materials: project location map (required), letters of intent from landowners (required for acquisition grant requests), and any letters of endorsement or support (optional).
4. Submit the completed application with all supplemental materials, either electronically or in hard copy. The complete application package should include only the requested material. **INCLUDE ONLY: 1) application form; 2) location map; 3) project budget table; 4) letters of recommendation (optional); and 5) letters of intent from landowners (if your project type is land acquisition). DO NOT INCLUDE copies of planning documents or any other material not requested in the application.**
 - For electronic submissions, email to Jane Love at jane@carolinathreadtrail.org
 - For hard copy submissions, mail to:
 - Carolina Thread Trail
 - Attn: Jane Love, Community Coordinator
 - 2400 Park Road, Suite 1
 - Charlotte, NC 28203.

- **Grant Decisions**

- The Carolina Thread Trail Committee makes grant award recommendations to the Board of Directors, which makes final decisions on grant awards.
- The degree to which the proposed project meets the "Grant Program Objectives" (see page 1) will be the most important selection factor considered by the Board of Directors.
- Applicants may submit more than one application at a given time.

- **Grant Awards**

- Grant awardees are required to sign a grant agreement.
- The agreement includes a requirement for participation in implementing the Carolina Thread Trail signage package, as appropriate for the project, once constructed.
- Grants funds must be spent within two years of the executed agreement.
- Throughout the duration of the project, applicants will be required to provide interim and final progress reports to the Carolina Thread Trail.
- For acquisition projects, grants can only be considered if the application includes a letter of intent from the land owner(s) and funds may only be disbursed once an awardee produces a fully-executed easement or acquisition agreement.

For more information, please call Jane Love at 704-342-3330 ext. 2224 or jane@carolinathreadtrail.org.