



2026 Trails Manitoba Grant Program Application Writing Guide

Trails Grant for Manitoba

TRAILS MANITOBA GRANT PROGRAM

Application Writing Guide

This document has been developed as a resource tool to assist applicants with their application writing process. This document should be referenced along with the *Trails MB Grant Program Guide*. If you have additional questions that cannot be answered by these two guides, please contact us at info@trailsmanitoba.ca.

Pro Tips:

- Every application is independently reviewed and scored by three reviewers based on the information provided by the applicant; therefore, multiple applications for different projects, may be submitted from the same organization.
- All information should be clear, concise, and complete. Provide all the information needed to understand your project. There should be no guess work or interpretation required by the reviewers of your application.
- Incomplete applications are not fundable.
- All dollar amounts included in the application should make sense and be consistent throughout. Please re-check prior to submitting to ensure accuracy.
- The application does not have to be completed in one sitting. Provided that your email and contact information has been entered, you can click the 'Save' button located at the bottom of the page and you will receive an email with a link to continue your work at a later time.

The enclosed guidelines are presented as bullet points and questions (posed to the applicant), which are intended to assist with the application writing process.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Type of project

For the 2026 application intake, the Trails Manitoba Grant Program offers one consolidated grant: the Trails Grant for Manitoba.

Approximately \$220,000 will be available to fund projects under this program. Given this amount, individual funding requests will be capped at **\$15,000** per application. While funding will prioritize trail **maintenance**, **feasibility studies**, and **trail enhancements**, all project types will be considered if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Please use the following to help identify your type of project (choices available will vary depending on application stream):

- New Trail/Enhancement - new trails, extensions, enhancements (including re-surfacing, signage, benches, bridges, etc.)
- Maintenance – General trail maintenance including pruning, repairing holes, normal erosion/drainage repairs, clean-up, usual repairs (wayfinding signage, barriers, fencing, surfacing) and other maintenance tasks that are undertaken for upkeep of a trail.
- Study – master trail plan development, feasibility studies, etc.

In some circumstances, it may make more sense to submit 2 applications. In this situation, you must ensure that the matching ratios are independent of one another; you cannot use the same matching funds or in-kind gifts for more than one application.

Equipment purchases that do not fit within the basic ‘maintenance’ definition or exceed \$5000 in value should be requested under the ‘New Trail/Enhancement’ application stream.

Title of proposed project and phased projects

- Please create a clear, concise (aka brief) title that describes the type of project and associated location. Examples as follows:
 - *General trail maintenance – Centennial Trail*
 - *Phase 1: New multi-use trail development – Thunderhill*
 - *Bridge repair – Rossburn Subdivision Trail*
- Try to avoid using identical project titles used in previous granting applications.
- If funding will be requested for a later phase of a specific project (during subsequent grant intakes), please be sure to identify the specific phase # for the part of the project related to this application.

Paragraph summary of project suitable for a public audience

- This paragraph should be brief and provide a high-level description of the scope of the work being funded through the grant application.
- This paragraph may be shared with media, government officials, or other grant program stakeholders; therefore, it should be written with this in mind.
- Details should include the type of project, high-level project details, location, anticipated user type(s).

Number of kilometers directly impacted by this project

- Please only input km's affected by the project.
- Kilometers developed = new trail, new extensions, etc.
- Kilometers upgraded = resurfaced, or received an enhancement
- Kilometers maintained = received general trail maintenance (as per the definition above in the 'Type of Project' section).
- For statistic purposes, try to be as accurate as possible and ensure that the number of kilometers does not overlap between sections – it should be accumulative!
- *Example: The 3km project has two components – 2.5kms of new trail and 0.5kms of upgraded (resurfaced) trail.*
 - *Developed = 2.5*
 - *Upgraded = 0.5*

Background of organization

- This paragraph should be brief and provide a high-level description of the organization.
- Please include the following details as applicable:
 - Type and size of organization
 - Year of establishment
 - Recent projects taken on by the organization
 - Previous and/or ongoing partnerships
 - Ownership & management responsibilities (ref. trails)

Primary & secondary contacts

- It is very important that you provide two contacts for the project.
- Please ensure that both individuals are directly involved with and have a good understanding of the project.

Trails grant amount being requested

- This is the amount that you are requesting as part of the grant application.

- Ensure that this number remains consistent throughout the application, especially in the budget section, and aligns with the minimum matching ratios outlined in the Grant Program Guide.
- The maximum amount that can be requested per application for the *Trails Grant for Manitoba* is **\$15,000**.

List of partners involved in project

- Please provide a list of all partners involved (whether secured or pending) that will have a direct impact on the project.
- Do not list donors or funding partners – this will be asked in a later section.
- Examples of partnerships may include Indigenous engagement, programing, mentorship, construction, etc.
- Beside each partner, please identify the type of partnership generated. Examples may include:
 - *Consultant (provide name) – Indigenous engagement*
 - *Public golf courses (provide name)– land access*
 - *Community organization (provide name) – volunteer contributions*

GRANT OBJECTIVES - Trails Grant for Manitoba

- Only comment on the objectives that are applicable to your project.
- At least one objective must be met to be considered eligible for funding.
- Please provide clear, concise rationale and justification for how your project directly addresses these objectives as applicable.

Provide new trail opportunities

- New recreational trail opportunities may include extending or improving existing trails, developing new trails, and addressing trail gaps and barriers.
- Clearly identify new opportunities that will be presented because of this project. Why is this project important for the area/location? For the community?

Improve the quality of the existing trail network

- Clearly identify how the existing trail will be improved through this project. Will the trail be improved through re-surfacing or addition of amenities?

Improve the user's experience

- Improving the user's experience may include safety improvements, signage, wayfinding, trailhead amenities, and removing barriers to access.
- How will the user's trail experience be enhanced through the completion of this project?

Perform trail maintenance

- Maintenance of the recreational trail network includes pruning, repairing holes, normal erosion/drainage repairs, clean-up, usual repairs (signage, barriers, fencing, surfacing) and other maintenance tasks that are undertaken for upkeep of a trail.

IMPACT CONSIDERATIONS

It is vitally important to address each impact consideration.

Promote health, physical activity, and physical literacy

- How does this project promote healthy living?
- How will the project motivate, inspire people to get outdoors?
- What benefits are anticipated because of this project?
- Are there design attributes that help to developing people's physical literacy?

Provide adequate safety

- Are there design safety considerations: e.g., lighting, signage, safety railings where necessary?
- Will education and communication be part of this project to mitigate user conflicts?
- Ideally your answer should be reflective of this project; however, if some safety design aspects will be part of a subsequent phase, please feel free to briefly outline these plans and indicated it as future work.

Sustainable design & environmental conservation/protection

- Project considerations could include trail design best practices, land sustainability, and external stewardship (through programming and education) of the affected natural environment.
- Core elements of a sustainable trail are one that protects the environment, meets user needs and expectations, and one that requires little maintenance.

Support the local economy, socio-economic development and/or tourism

- Are local contractors being sought after?
- Will this project lead to a tourist draw for the area – how can this trail be marketable?
- Will the trail be part of a larger trail network, thus leading to further tourism and potential recreational programming opportunities?

Inclusion

- Is the trail space designed with inclusivity in mind? How have barriers been removed to maximize participation by all ages and abilities? Do you strive to make your trails and/or related programming as widely accessible as possible?
- What opportunities will be provided to underserved and underrepresented community members? Does the organization have representation from some of these groups?

Indigenous

- Will there be Indigenous consultation for this project? Are there community Indigenous champions or Indigenous trail builders that will be consulted?
- How will the project incorporate the following:
 - Indigenous language – placemaking, rediscovering the original names of the affected spaces and species? Has there been a land acknowledgement created that is meaningful to this specific area? And, how will it be shared?
 - Truth & reconciliation – what are the next steps as an organization/community/region? What has been learned? And what will be done moving forward in reconciliation? What type of reconciliation is being accomplished through this project: Symbolic, Easy, Impactful, or Transformative (ref. <https://yellowheadinstitute.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/03/How-Do-You-Like-Your-Reconciliation-YI-TRC-2022-1.pdf>)
 - Relationships – how are relationships with local Indigenous peoples? Have their stories been heard, and knowledge shared? How is this being done through this project?

Diversity

- How does this project lead to greater diversity in the community? Diversity of users?
- Will there be programs created to assist with diversity?
- Are there costs needed to participate (e.g., equipment)? If so, will there be programs put in place to remove said barriers?
- How will stakeholders be engaged to allow for diversity? What does this look like?
- Have you created a safe, ethical space for people to join in!

Multi-use activities

- If this project is a multi-use trail system, please indicate it as such.
- Please also identify intended users:
 - Motorized (snowmobile, ATV, ORV, etc.), non-motorized (mountain bikers, fat bikers, trail runners, hikers, skiers, snow shoers, etc.)

Summer and winter use

- Can the respective trails be accessed in both summer and winter seasons?
- Will the specific trails be groomed in the winter months (identify specific uses)?
- Are there any limitations for seasonal use? (e.g., winter trails are groomed for classic cross-country ski only!)

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- Conflicts that must be disclosed are ones where finances can be distributed in a manner which are not transparent and perhaps unethical. For instances, hiring a company that you own to perform trail maintenance **MUST** be disclosed. This would also extend to relatives or close family friends. Another example would be to declare that a Trails Manitoba board member is involved with the project.
- DO NOT include information related to conflicts with the weather, different user groups, animals, etc.

Perceived conflicts

- Any entity (vendors, consultants, organizations, etc.) involved with the project that could be perceived as a conflict should be disclosed.
- How are these conflicts managed and/or mitigated?

Actual conflicts

- Any entity (vendors, consultants, organizations, etc.) involved with the project that will pose as a conflict should be disclosed.
- Are there any organizational board members involved in the project on a professional level?
- How are these conflicts managed and/or mitigated?

WORKPLAN

Background or history for the proposed project

- Please provide a short background on the project that may not be apparent from the details shared thus far. Details may include:
 - Background decision making for the project; importance of location and type; entities/organizations that were previously involved but no longer, etc.
- Background paragraph can help to highlight project significance to the area and local communities.
- If the application is only for a specific phase of a larger project, further details about the other phases would be appreciated.

Workplan for the proposed project

- This section is one of the more important sections of the application, as it provides a snapshot of the project from start to finish.
- Please provide clear, concise details of the proposed work (project activities) along with associated dates. High level bullet points are recommended for an organized timeline.
- Rough dates for each phase are preferred, along with associated tasks and activities. Example:
 - June-July – complete detailed design drawings for trail project
 - July-August – send out a *Request for Quotes* (RFQ) for trail construction
 - August-November – contract selection and construction of trails
 - April-May – final touch ups
- While the above example is brief, it is recommended that all aspects of the proposed project (e.g., construction, signage, etc.), even if overlapping, are identified in this section.

Has the project been reviewed with all relevant regulatory agencies

- Regulatory agencies may consist of, but are not limited to, landowners (private landowners, municipal councils, parks/crownland, school district, Indigenous lands, etc.) and government organizations, where permits will be required (Department of Fisheries & Oceans, Crown Lands, MB Transportation & Infrastructure, etc.).

List all secured approval processes

- Identify all entities that have provided approval for this project.
- Approvals should be in writing.

List all pending approval processes required

- Identify any approvals still outstanding.

- For any pending approvals, please provide any brief details that would help detail a clear picture for the reviewers (e.g., has a request been made to the approving entity? Next steps?)

List all direct funding sources and amounts

- Please identify all direct funding sources and amounts, both secured and pending.
 - It is recommended that you state which sources are secured and which ones are pending.
 - Donations and fundraised contributions may be combined under one heading.
- All monetary values must match up to those listed in the budget section.

List all in-kind contributions and amounts

- Please identify all in-kind contributions along with their monetary values (based on fair market value), directly associated to the project.
 - In-kind contributions may include professional services, equipment usage, materials, volunteer labour, etc.
 - If donated land or rights to use land for trail purposes is included as part of the matching requirement, the applicant **MUST** provide adequate supporting documentation and rationale for its given evaluation. Only the portion of land used for trail use will be considered and must be reflective in the provided evaluation.
 - Insufficient supporting documentation will disqualify its use for matching funds.
 - Due to this highly scrutinized process, as an alternative, it is recommended that the landowner be included as a partner to the project only.
- All monetary values must match up to those listed in the budget section.

2:1 matching requirement explanation

- Please identify in simple language how the 2:1 matching ratio has been met.
 - To receive a Trails Manitoba Grant of \$15,000, the applicant must have secured a matching investment (can be a combination of funds and in-kind gifts) of \$30,000. In this example, total project cost would be greater or equal to \$45,000.
- This matching ratio is reduced for general trail maintenance-based projects. Please refer to the Grant Program Guide for further details regarding this.
- All monetary values must match up to those listed in the budget section.

How will the project be deemed a success

- Successes can be determined in a variety of ways by different organizations. Success metrics can be quantitative or qualitative.
 - Regardless of chosen metrics, predefined goals should be identified.
 - Examples may include trail counter data or other means to identify usage numbers, user surveys/interviews/focus groups, social media mentions, project within budget, etc.

BUDGET

- A strong application (scoring-wise) is determined by a strong budget; therefore, it is critical that applicants provide a clear and detailed budget.
- Budget values must be consistent with values previously provided throughout the application. Reviewers should not be surprised by **new** information provided only on the budget!
- Flexibility regarding budget format is provided to the applicant; however, the following budget attributes should be considered:
 - Detailed line-item budget, showing all expenses applicable to the project.
 - Suggested line-item headings include *Personnel/Admin, Equipment, Construction/Engineering/Software, Other*. Please refer to the application for details related to each heading.
 - A break down of expenses and revenues (to include in-kind if applicable).
- Honorariums and paying of volunteers are NOT considered eligible expenses; however, honorariums for indigenous translation, etc. will be considered. Please seek confirmation if there are any questions.
- Any equipment purchase, or accumulation of equipment purchases over \$5,000 must be provided with a detailed rationalization.
 - The requested funding for equipment should be directly related to the proportion of use of the equipment to the trail (e.g., a transport carrier would have to be 100% devoted to that trail if the applicant is requesting 100% funding coverage).

MATCHING SUMMARY

Funding sources

- The totals inputted in this table are mandatory and should be both consistent and accurate with previous sections. These numbers help to illustrate that the 2:1 matching ratio has been achieved.
 - Total amount provided in-kind – please ensure that all in-kind values have been included.
 - Total amount provided by other funders – this amount will include all direct funding, to include other grants, donations, and fundraising activities.
 - DO NOT include the Trails Grant Program amount being requested by this application within this total.
 - Total amount being requested from Trails Grant Program – please list the total grant amount being requested by this application.
 - This value must match the amount listed in the *General Information Section* and be consistent throughout the application.

Total project cost

- Total project cost equates to the total cost for this specific project (based on the application request). If this application is only for a specific phase of a larger project, then the total project cost must only cover the specific phase. Additional costs not associated with this project may be inputted in the 'Background or history of the proposed project' section if applicable.
 - Example: a multi-trail park project is anticipated to cost \$1.5 million. This application is only for a specific portion of the overall project, in this case signage – equating to \$250,000. Therefore, total project cost equates to \$250,000.

APPENDICIES

- In addition to a detailed budget, applicants are strongly encouraged to provide a map (satellite view) of the proposed project site, as well as a brief maintenance plan for the trail being discussed.
- Other attachments recommended for inclusion are approval letters, project quotes, matching fund contribution letters, and support letters.