

# Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant in cooperation with the Kittatiny Coalition

## Important Information

- **Pre-Application Discussion Required**
- **Application Deadline: Ongoing**

To ask questions or schedule a pre-application meeting and/or telephone call, please call:

**Brooks Mountcastle,  
Appalachian Trail Conservancy**

Office: 717.258-5771

Email: [bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org)

## Purpose

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC) Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant Program is a competitive funding stream intended to stimulate sound local land use planning and conservation-related municipal actions that align with the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act of 1978, as amended by Act 24 of 2008. This important piece of legislation has the intent of preserving the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T.) in Pennsylvania by protecting the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources – the “sense of place” – along the Trail corridor and adjacent landscapes.

Mini-Grant projects are selected through a competitive process and should advance goals of protecting the A.T. experience for future generations of Commonwealth residents and visitors, using proven local strategies in communities along the A.T. in Pennsylvania. Priority will be given to municipal conservation assessment or land use action, and eligible projects must align with Community Principles referenced in A Conservation Guidebook for Communities Along the Appalachian National Scenic Trail (Conservation Guidebook), which provide a framework for successful conservation and trail-related awareness, planning, and protection strategies.

## Eligibility

**Who Is Eligible?** Local governing bodies in Pennsylvania within the 58 municipalities through which the A.T. passes are eligible to apply for the Mini-Grant. See Appendix A to view a list of eligible municipalities.

Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and educational institutions are also eligible to apply for the Mini-Grant, though it is *required that a municipality be a matching partner* to the grant application; providing in-kind or cash support.

**What Kind of Project Is Eligible?** All projects must be located within municipalities through which the A.T. passes in Pennsylvania.

Applicable A.T. and related resource protection measures will vary based on local conditions according to the Community Principles referenced below, local trail resources, and landscape features. **Mini-Grant funding cannot be used for land acquisition projects.**

Successful grant applications shall demonstrate how the project will protect the A.T. experience for future generations of residents and visitors. **Priority projects** (see *Ranking Criteria* on Pages 3-4) will be those that bring local zoning regulations and plans into compliance with the following Principles from the Conservation Guidebook:

1. **Local Recognition of the Trail and its Significance/Trail-Related Landscapes (see Principles 1.0 and 2.0).** Such projects could include *amending a Comprehensive Plan* to recognize the A.T. and its adjoining resources; conducting an *Environmental Resource Inventory* mapping a municipality’s natural, scenic, and cultural resources and their relationship to the A.T.; *forming an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)* and/or developing training for EAC members to advise them on the range of resources and impacts associated with the A.T.; and *adopting an Official Map* under Article IV of the PA Municipalities Planning Code, as well as displaying those existing and proposed public lands in the A.T. landscape.

2. **Zoning for Landscape Protection (see Principle 3.0).** Municipalities can amend their zoning ordinances to conserve natural resources by limiting disturbance to steep slopes, woodlands, and water resources. Natural Resource Overlay Districts, or standards that address individual features such as steep slopes, are examples of this technique.
3. **Zoning and SALDO Mandates and Incentives for Conservation Design (see Principle 4.0).** These standards apply to residential development, setting aside open space each time a property is developed. The resulting interconnected open space can add to local greenway networks and buffer the A.T. from the impacts of new development.
4. **Regulating Potentially High Impact Uses (see Principle 5.0).** Priority also will be given to zoning amendments that address high impact uses and the A.T., including light and noise pollution, wind turbines, power line and pipelines, cell towers, and buffering of adjacent incompatible development.

For more detailed information on identifying appropriate A.T. protection strategies in your municipality – as well as the requirements of the Pennsylvania Appalachian Trail Act, as amended by Act 24 of 2008 – consult the [Conservation Guidebook](#) available for download at this link: <http://www.appalachiantrail.org/Act24Implementation>, along with additional resources. For further guidance, contact Grant Administrator Brooks Mountcastle, ATC, at 717.258-5771 or [bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org).

### Funding

Funding for the ATC Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant comes from the National Park Service Appalachian Trail Park Office and is provided to ATC through a Cooperative Agreement\* (see below). For the 2018 round, \$40,000 is available. **The grant request should not exceed \$17,500.** A minimum of 20% cash or in-kind match must be provided by the applicant or project partners. Calculation of the 20% match is based on the total project budget.

Grant awardees will be notified approximately one month after application submittal. Once selected, awardees will enter into a contract with ATC requiring all project tasks and deliverable products to be completed by a pre-determined date depending on the type of project. Proposed project activities may be undertaken by the municipal staff, county staff, an outside consultant or team of consultants, or some combination of the above as appropriate. If desired, consultant selection may be discussed with successful applicants *during the required Pre-Application Meeting*. See *Pre-Application Requirements* below.

### Pre-Application Requirements

*You are required to schedule a pre-application meeting and or telephone call* with Grant Administrator Brooks Mountcastle to discuss your project prior to submitting a formal grant application. During this time, the Grant Administrator can determine if your proposed project is eligible for grant funding, discuss consultant selection (if applicable), and review requirements for the grant application and program.

You should be ready to discuss the information listed below:

- A brief high-level description of your project (e.g., the project’s goal, what the project will accomplish, etc.) and anticipated deliverables;
- Identification of one or more of the five Community Principles (see *Eligibility* on Pages 1-2) most closely aligned with your project;
- Demonstration of how your project will increase protection for the A.T. and Kittatinny Ridge’s “sense of place” / anticipated value-added of finished project;
- Total estimated project cost;
- Estimated grant funding request;
- Estimated amount of matching funds to be secured for your project (minimum 20%) and identify partner(s) providing the required match; and
- Indication of how soon your project can begin after funding is awarded.

### Application Submittal Information:



Please email all application documents (in Word format using a font not less than 11 point; **please no PDF documents**) to Grant Administrator Brooks Mountcastle, ATC, at [bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org).

\*\*For funding purposes, grantees are considered sub-recipients of the Cooperative Agreement and must comply with the applicable terms and conditions including 43 CFR 12, Subparts D, E, and F. The applicable Circulars are: A-110 (Uniform Administrative Requirements), A-122 (Cost Principles), and A-133 (Audit Requirements). For more specific information on these terms and conditions, contact the Grant Administrator ([bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org); 717-258-5771).

### **Ranking of Formal Application Proposals**

The Mini-Grant Review Committee reviews and ranks projects based on set criteria (see below and on Page 4), reserving the right to request additional proposal information if it believes such information is crucial to the ranking process. Projects are ranked out of 100 (with additional bonus points available). The ranking details are as follows:

#### **Criteria A: Sufficient Project Scope**

10 points.....The project description has sufficient detail in explaining the scope, deliverables if applicable, budget, timeline, ATC update schedule, and description of matching funds.

#### **Criteria B: Satisfies Goals of ATC and Related Kittatinny Ridge Resource Protection**

20 points.....The project is *directly* tied to municipal conservation assessment or land use action (See *Priority Projects* above).

20 points.....The intent of the project aligns with goals of preserving the A.T. as a public resource and its related natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic values along the Kittatinny Ridge.

10 points.....The project is located within the 58 municipalities through which the A.T. passes.

#### **Criteria C: Multi-Municipal or Partner Collaboration**

20 points.....Multi-municipal or partner collaboration is strongly encouraged! Higher points will be given to those with more partners involved. *Letter of support and statement of cash or in-kind match is required. Please ONLY list partners that are matching with in-kind contributions or cash.*

#### **Criteria D: Aligns with Recommendations of Municipal or County Plans**

10 points.....The project aligns or overlaps with recommended conservation-related actions referenced in municipal or county comprehensive or open space, recreation and greenway plans.

#### **Criteria E: Measurable Success**

10 points.....Completion of the project has a measurable outcome or will create measurable opportunity once completed. Measurements of success should have quantifiable outcomes that can be reviewed to determine success in the short and long term.

### **Bonus Points:**

#### **Project located within the Lehigh Gap region, a priority conservation area of the Kittatinny Ridge.**

10 points.....A project so designated will receive bonus points. Lehigh Gap municipalities are as follows: *East Penn Twp. (Carbon), Lower Towamensing Twp. (Carbon), West Penn Twp. (Schuylkill), Heidelberg Twp. (Lehigh), Washington Twp. (Lehigh), and Lehigh Twp. (Northampton).*

#### **Municipal applicant is designated A.T. Community™ Partner or Audubon PA Bird Town**

10 points.....A designated A.T. Community™ Partner or Audubon PA Bird Town will receive bonus points. For more information on these programs, visit <http://appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/community-engagement> (A.T. Community™ Program) and <http://pa.audubon.org/bird-town> (Audubon PA Bird Town).

#### **OR Project has direct relation to designated A.T. Community™, participating Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) School, or Audubon PA Bird Town**

5 points.....Any project related to a designated A.T. Community™, participating TTEC school or Audubon PA Bird Town or the intent of protecting, developing or promoting related assets will receive bonus points. For more information on these programs, visit the links listed above, as well as <http://appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/youth-education/trail-to-every-classroom>.

### Formation / Enhancement of a municipal EAC

5 points.....Any municipality proposing the formation of a new EAC or development of training/workshops for an existing EAC will receive bonus points. Substance of training/workshops must be detailed in the Project Scope section of the application.

## Frequently-Asked Questions:

### **Who can apply?**

Local governing bodies within the 58 municipalities through which the A.T. passes in Pennsylvania are eligible to apply for the Mini-Grant. See Appendix A to view a list of eligible municipalities. Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and educational institutions are *also eligible* to apply for the Mini-Grant, though it is *required that a municipality be a matching partner* to the grant application; providing in-kind or cash support.

### **When is the application deadline?**

The Mini-Grant program deadline is ongoing.

### **What are the grant request limits?**

There is a grant request limit of \$17,500.

### **What kinds of projects are eligible?**

The Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant Program funds projects that enhance existing or develop new planning and zoning tools that protect trail values and align with the Community Principles referenced on Pages 1-2 of the application instructions and explained in greater detail in the Conservation Guidebook. All projects must be within the 58 municipalities through which the A.T. passes in Pennsylvania and have significant ties to the A.T. or assets of the Kittatinny Ridge, to the communities tied to these assets, and to the working lands surrounding it. As part of your application, please submit a list of all participating partners who would benefit or participate in the project.

### **How will you decide which applicants to award?**

A diverse committee made up of several partnering organizations and interests will rank the applications based on the following criteria:

- Has sufficient project scope
- Satisfies goals of ATC and related Kittatinny Ridge resource protection
- Demonstrates multi-municipal or partner collaboration
- Aligns with recommendations of municipal or county plans
- Shows potential for measurable success
- Bonus points for projects that involve formation / enhancement of municipal EACs and / or are connected to designated A.T. Communities™, participating TTEC schools, or designated Audubon PA Bird Towns

### **Who decides what applications are awarded?**

The Mini-Grant Review Committee will decide who will be awarded the grants based on the criteria.

### **Should I contact the grant coordinator to let them know I might be interested?**

Yes! You are encouraged to contact Grant Administrator Brooks Mountcastle at [bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org) or 717-258-5771. Applicants are required to schedule an in-person or conference call pre-application meeting with the Grant Administrator to discuss potential projects and ensure application completeness. Please refer to the Pre-application Requirements section on Pages 2-3 for the information that you should be prepared to discuss at this meeting. You may feel free to contact the Grant Administrator at any point in the application process with your

questions.

### **Does this grant program require a match?**

Yes. A minimum 20% local match – cash or in-kind – is required. This 20% is calculated based on the total project budget.

### **When do we have to have the cash match available?**

Your cash match should be available when you list it on your formal grant application. **Your application HAS TO include a support letter from any partnering organization(s) or municipality that notes the agreed-upon donation amount – whether cash or in-kind.**

### **Can a non-cash match be used?**

Yes. Non-cash match can include donated materials, professional time, volunteer time, and services conducted in-house for which the grantee organization does not receive compensation.

### **Can I match the Mini-Grant to another grant?**

Yes. Our mini-grant funding can be matched with grants from any source.

### **If awarded a grant, how much money would we get up front?**

You will receive 50% of the amount up front, 40% toward the end of the project, and the final 10% upon approval of submitted project final reporting and close-out documents. Upon project close-out, the Grant Administrator will send you a letter officially closing out the project, and then you are to invoice ATC for the final 10% amount to be paid.

### **What is the timetable for the review and approval process?**

See *Program Checklist* on Pages 6-7.

# Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant Program Checklist

Note: **Items in black are to be completed by the applicant** and items in gray are to be completed by the Mini-Grant Review Committee or the Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC).

## Pre-Application Process

- Applicants schedule Pre-application Meeting or Telephone Call with Grant Administrator.

## Application Submittal

- Applicants email grant application to Grant Administrator.

## Application Review Process (Two months)

- Mini-Grant Committee reviews application and determines initial project rankings.
- Mini-Grant Committee may follow up with grantee to clarify items on application.
- Final awards are determined.
- Award letters or letters of non-award sent out to all applicants.

## Grant Award Process

- Grantees must fill out a new vendor form provided by ATC to be returned to ATC promptly.
- ATC drafts Grant Agreements based on applications.
- ATC meets with grantees via phone to review agreement, explain terms and conditions, and discuss any further concerns.
- ATC finalizes grant agreements and sends to grantee both in hardcopy and via email.
- Agreement signature page **must** be sent and received by ATC to begin project.
- Grantee begins implementation of project.
- Grantee sends ATC first invoice once agreement is signed.
- Grantee **must** issue a press release about project and copy ATC on said press release. Verbiage acknowledging ATC and the National Park Service as funders **must** be included in the press release.
- Grantee **must** have a kick-off stakeholders meeting with an ATC Representative in attendance.

## After Project Kick-Off through Duration of Grant

- Grantee **must** send periodic updates to ATC.
- Any materials that require citation language must be approved by ATC before production.
- Grantee maintains records on all invoices and time spent on project, including partner's match.

## Project Close-out (Date will vary depending on type of project)

- Grantee must coordinate a press release or event with project completion. All press and promotional activities must acknowledge ATC and National Park Service as funders.
- Grantee must fill out project closeout form that includes detailed reporting on:
  - Direct project expenses and time invoices
  - Project Accomplishments Report

# APPLICATION

## Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant

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Instructions: Please send all applications electronically (in a Word document using a font not less than 11 point; please No PDF documents) to Brooks Mountcastle, ATC, at [bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org](mailto:bmountcastle@appalachiantrail.org).

Application should be **no more than five pages double-sided or eight pages single-sided**. Please do not change this template's current format. No additional attachments will be accepted unless applicant notifies grant administrator for permission (see above).

### Municipality / Organization Applicant Name:

Date:

Project Coordinator:

E-mail:

Address:

Phone Number:

### Title of Project:

Title:

### List of Partnering Organizations: ONLY include those who are offering a match

(Please add more organizations if needed)

### Criteria Ranking

The Mini-Grant Review Committee will rank your project on the five criteria listed below. Please describe why your project meets these criteria.

#### Criteria A: Sufficient Project Scope

**SCOPE:** Please provide the goal(s) of your project, as well as a detailed description of the project's scope. Your response to A.1 should not be longer than one paragraph.

A.1- | Answer:

**BUDGET:** (A.2) Explain the breakdown of the project budget using the below form. Please give as much detail as possible related to how requested grant amount and match will be budgeted. Please include billable time for any labor costs or in-kind services. The latest figures for calculating volunteer time per hour can be found at [https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer\\_time](https://www.independentsector.org/volunteer_time) (when typing the website into a web browser, an underscore is needed between the words “volunteer” and “time”).

Budget Item or Task	Cash Match	In-Kind Match	Total
<b>GRANT MATCH/ INCOME</b>			
Type Organization's Name Here			
<b>Example: Trail Guide Post Installation</b>			
Example: 3 people x 7.5 hrs. each x \$30 / hr.	\$	\$	\$
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>TOTAL MATCH:</b>			\$
Type Organization's Name Here			
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>TOTAL MATCH:</b>			\$
Type Organization's Name Here			
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$	\$	\$
<b>TOTAL MATCH:</b>			\$
<b>GRANT EXPENSES (USE OF GRANT FUNDS)</b>			
Appalachian Trail Conservancy Conservation Assistance Mini-Grant			
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$		
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$		
<b>Item / Task</b>			
cost (XX hrs. x \$XX / hr.)	\$		
<b>TOTAL GRANT REQUEST:</b>			\$
	\$		<b>TOTAL CASH MATCH</b>
		\$	<b>IN-KIND MATCH</b>
	\$		<b>TOTAL CASH (MATCH + GRANT REQUEST)</b>
<b>\$X,XXX</b>		<b>Total Project Cost</b>	

**TIMELINE:** Please create an outline of your project's schedule using phases. Please give the major milestones towards the project's completion using months as milestones. Please be as detailed as possible without setting specific date deadlines.

A.3- | Answer:

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### Criteria B: Satisfies Goals of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy & related Kittatinny Ridge resource protection

**Priority Projects:** Is your project *directly* tied to municipal conservation land use action or costs for professional assistance in implementation? For list of Priority Projects, see page 2 of grant instructions.

B.1- | Answer:

Please explain how your project would advance the goals of preserving the A.T. in Pennsylvania and protecting, promoting, or building on the natural, scenic, historic, and aesthetic resources – the “sense of place” – along the Kittatinny Ridge. *Please use no more than one page for this.*

B.2- | Answer:

**Location within Appalachian National Scenic Trail & Kittatinny Ridge Corridor:** Is your project located within one of the municipalities listed in Appendix A?

B.3- | Answer:

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### Criteria C: Multi-Municipal or Partner Collaboration

C. 1: Explain how other partners will be involved on this project. Actions of your partners should be detailed enough in A.2 (Budget) so that we understand their match. Listed partners on this application **are required to have a cash or in-kind match** to be included. Please attach application letters (PDF preferred) from each of your matching partners at the end of this application.

C.1- Answer:

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### Criteria D: Aligns with Recommendations of Municipal or County Plans

D.1: Explain how this project aligns or overlaps with recommended conservation-related actions referenced in municipal or county comprehensive or open space, recreation and greenway plans.

Answer:

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## Criteria E: Measurable Success

E.1 Explain what success will look like overall when this project is completed. Please give a few paragraphs on this.

**E.1- Answer:**

E.2 Give several measurements for how we can gauge the success of your project. Establish short and long-term measurement of success. **Use of metrics such as number of people, acres, etc., is required.**

**E.2- Short term measurements:**

**Long term measurements:**

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### Bonus Points:

**Priority Area - Lehigh Gap Region:** Is your project located within one of the following municipalities? *East Penn Twp. (Carbon), Lower Towamensing Twp. (Carbon), West Penn Twp. (Schuylkill), Heidelberg Twp. (Lehigh), Washington Twp. (Lehigh), Lehigh Twp. (Northampton)*

**Bonus | Answer:**

Please explain how your project is related to a designated Appalachian Trail Community™, participating Trail to Every Classroom (TTEC) School, or Audubon PA Bird Town or the intent of protecting, developing, or promoting related place-based assets. For more information on these programs, visit <http://appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/community-engagement> (A.T. Community™ Program), <http://appalachiantrail.org/what-we-do/youth-education/trail-to-every-classroom> (TTEC), and <http://pa.audubon.org/bird-town> (Audubon PA Bird Town).

**Bonus:**

For municipal applicants, please indicate below whether you intend to *form an Environmental Advisory Council (EAC)* or enhance an existing EAC through training/workshops.

### **Attachment of Non-profit Status: (Required For Non-profit Organizations)**

Please attach in your final submission proof of non-profit status [501(c)(3) with the IRS and registration with the PA Department of State Bureau of Charitable Organizations].