



## A.T. Landscape Partnership Action Fund Grants

The Appalachian Trail Conservancy (ATC), on behalf of the A.T. Landscape Partnership, is accepting proposals for land protection and organizational capacity building grants intended to support conservation work within the Appalachian Trail landscape. The Action Fund Grants Program will provide funding to qualified organizations working to advance conservation of the natural, ecological, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational and community values of the A.T. and its surrounding lands.

The Action Fund Grants Program is administered by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. Financial support is provided by The Volgenau Foundation.

### About the A.T. Landscape Partnership

The A.T. Landscape Partnership works to connect and conserve the values of the exceptional landscape associated with the Appalachian Mountain Range. The Partnership is a coalition of federal, state and local government agencies, nonprofit conservation organizations, and academic institutions. More information is available at [www.at-landscape.org](http://www.at-landscape.org).

### About the Action Fund Grants Program

The Action Fund Grants Program supports the following goals:

- Strengthen the A.T. Landscape Partnership and engage new partners to advance its mission
- Build and enhance capacity for strategic and targeted conservation activities throughout the A.T. landscape
- Strengthen collaboration among partners across the A.T. landscape
- Accelerate the pace of A.T. landscape conservation projects

The Action Fund Grants Program offers two potential funding opportunities: capital grants for land protection projects and grants for organizational capacity building.

### Land protection projects

Capital grants for land protection will be awarded to projects that:



- Contribute to the permanent protection and stewardship of the exceptional values of the A.T. landscape, including (but not limited to) the natural, cultural, historic, scenic, recreational and community values
- Attract additional revenue sources to leverage the Action Fund Grants

Funding may be used to acquire permanent conservation easements and/or fee land interests. Funding may also be used to cover transactional costs, including cost of appraisals, surveys, titles, environmental assessments and legal costs. Grant funds may not be used for organizational overhead and/or administration.

Preference will be given to projects that have been identified as a high priority in a local and/or regional conservation plan or to projects located within the [A.T. Landscape Focus Areas](#).

## Organizational capacity building

Grants for capacity building will be awarded to projects that will:

- Build capacity to implement new or existing strategic conservation plans
- Develop local or regional strategic conservation plans within the A.T. landscape
- Build capacity to sustain and steward the resources that define the A.T. landscape
- Increase public awareness of the resources that define the A.T. landscape

Preference will be given to projects that incorporate measurable outcomes that will assess the organization's success in achieving its objectives and deliverables; in addition, preference will be given to projects that also develop systems or practices that build organizational capacity and effectiveness and are likely to be sustained beyond the grant period.

## Project Evaluation

Projects for either funding opportunity should be concrete, defined and should have clear objectives, outcomes and deliverables. Competitive projects demonstrate broad community benefit, have a high likelihood of success and can be accomplished within the slated grant period. Projects with matching funding that is firmly secured will rank higher than projects with undetermined or unlikely funding.

**Land protection projects** will specifically be evaluated for:



- The threat and/or conservation opportunity presented
- The extent of significant natural habitat, cultural and/or historic sites, connections to existing conserved lands and/or community lands important to the A.T. landscape
- The likelihood of the project increasing the pace of land conservation in the organization's service area
- The emphasis on the A.T. landscape as a corridor of connectivity
- The ability of the project to catalyze other projects that will advance protection within A. T. Landscape Focus Areas
- Evidence of a sound stewardship plan and funding

Preference will be given to collaborative and multi-value projects between public and private sector entities or projects that connect existing conservation lands.

**Organizational capacity building projects** will be evaluated for:

- Sufficient organizational capacity and a commitment to complete the proposed activities
- Sound training and professional development opportunities for new and/or expanded staff
- The ability to match and leverage other funding sources

Projects should enable partnership, collaboration or community initiatives involving other conservation partners within the A.T. landscape that catalyzes local or regional open space protection; builds community support for and involvement in land conservation; advances an innovative model for collaboration, outreach, constituency-building, and/or community engagement; and advances climate smart initiatives, including efforts to integrate resilience (such as The Nature Conservancy [resiliency data](#)) and climate change science into conservation planning.

## Organization Eligibility

Organizations with a [mission](#) that aligns with that of the A.T. Landscape Partnership are eligible for Action Fund Grants. Organizations should broadly serve the needs of a geographic area within the A.T. landscape. Qualified conservation organizations, including 501(C)3 nonprofits and public agencies, are eligible for both funding opportunities within the Action Fund Grants Program.

## Award Information



The Appalachian Trail Conservancy expects to grant up to \$500,000 to **qualified land protection projects** in the first year. There is no minimum limit on land protection project grant size. Projects will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

For **organizational capacity building grants**, it is anticipated that single-year grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 will be awarded. Multi-year grants not exceeding three years may be considered. Up to \$150,000 is available for qualified projects.

Both funding opportunities require a cash or in-kind match. Matches will be considered on a case-by-case basis and may depend on the circumstances of the organization. Matches should be secure, well explained and verifiable.

## Application Process

To apply, please use [the application template](#) to provide the following:

- Project narrative not to exceed two pages that provides a project overview, goals and outcomes, and partner organizations and/or agencies
- Project budget that details allowable expenses, total project costs, sources of match and requested grant amount
- Location and project maps
- A letter of nonprofit status from the IRS, if appropriate

For more information or to submit a Letter of Interest, contact:

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**Proposals will be received and reviewed on a rolling basis during 2018 until all funds have been awarded.**

A small committee representing the A.T. Landscape Partnership will review and approve proposals.