



FRIENDS GROUP PARTNER *GRANTS*

Field Trip Grants – Overview

A. Grant Program Overview

Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota is proud to offer a grant program designed to support Friends Groups with the implementation of onsite youth engagement projects in state and regional parks and trails.

Parks and trails play an important role in engaging youth with the natural world. By facilitating meaningful outdoor connections for youth, we can help promote the next generation of environmental stewards. Friends Groups are uniquely positioned to assist in these efforts thanks to their commitment to stewardship, their working relationships with park staff and the community at large, and their existing efforts to actively connect people to public lands.

In 2024, this grant program will award up to \$1,000 to qualifying Friends Groups with appropriate projects.

B. Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be a Friends Group that directly supports a Minnesota park or trail. See the P&TC definition of Friends Groups on the website [here](#). Applicants must also be a member of Parks & Trails Council of Minnesota. Annual membership starts at \$35/year.

C. Timeline

- **June 3, 2024:** Grant announcement
- **July 19, 2024:** Draft application deadline
- **August 2, 2024:** Application and Budget due to P&TC
- **August 16, 2024:** P&TC issues award decisions
- **September 3, 2024:** Signed award agreements due & funding disbursed
- **September 3, 2024 – June 30, 2025:** Project implementation period
- **Midpoint of project timeline:** Interim Report due
- **One month after completed field trip:** Final Report due

D. Grant Program Goals

These projects should focus on engaging and educating youth at a natural area, and should also include a field trip or other active engagement by a defined group of youth.

Project examples:

- Field trip to the park/trail for the local Boys and Girls Club
- Securing a speaker for an educational program
- Organizing an interpretive activity at the park/trail for a Girl Scout Troop
- Engaging an elementary school class in a hands-on citizen science project at a park

The Friends Group should lead the planning and implementation of the project. For example, depending on the project, the Friends Group would initiate contact with school groups, arrange transportation, secure speakers, and attend/lead the group at an event.

Project criteria:

- Project must include an engaging outdoors experience.
 - For example: birdwatching, identifying plants and animals, maple syruping, learning about weather and seasons, collecting aquatic insects from a creek, organizing an outdoor scavenger hunt, etc.
- For this grant program, youth is defined as kids in grades K-12. The project may engage school classes, after-school programs, youth groups, religious groups, etc.
 - Project should ideally focus on youth demographics who are usually underrepresented in park and trail visitation.
 - Project should help cultivate relationships between the Friends Group and schools or other youth-serving organizations.

- **F. Partners**

During the application process, the Friends Group should work closely with their land management agency representative to identify and develop a project scope. The agency representative should provide a letter of approval, and the Friends Group should draft and submit the application.

Parks & Trails Council will serve as the grant issuer and will remain available and engaged as needed through the grant planning and implementation process. The main contact is Phoebe Ward, Friends Group Program Manager (friends@parksandtrails.org or 651-370-7907).

G. Budget and Financial Accounting Procedures

Selected grant recipients will be awarded up to \$1,000 to complete their specified project.

The supporting budget (see template) will include a line-item breakdown for the project. Applicants are encouraged to work with Friends members and agency staff in developing the budget.

Eligible expenses

- Transportation: bus or other transportation costs
- Contract fees: speaker or program fees
- Project materials: anything used directly for activities

Ineligible expenses

- Materials not used directly for this project
- DNR staff time

Distribution

Our Friends Group Partners include a variety of organization types, and the method of funding distribution varies accordingly:

1. For **fiscal clients** of P&TC, grant money will be distributed on a reimbursement basis.
1. For applicants with **501c3 status**, grant money will be issued in the form of a check.
2. For **unincorporated associations** (i.e., groups that are neither fiscal clients nor 501c3 nonprofits), please contact P&TC's Friends Group Program Manager to discuss options.

H. Reporting

Grant recipients will submit a final report at the end of the project implementation period. A template for the report will be issued to the selected grant recipients at the time of award notification.

Report content will include:

- **Measurable data:** number of students engaged, number of activities developed, etc.
- **Narrative:** descriptions of the activities, quotes from volunteers or speakers, lessons learned, etc.
- **Photo/video documentation:** group shots, candid pictures or video, pictures of the activities created, etc.
- **Financial information:** how the grant money was expended. Receipts and invoices should be saved to aid in documenting expenditures.

I. Application Process

Selection criteria

Projects will be selected using criteria that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Friends Group demonstrates adequate capacity to implement such a project.
- Project plan is thorough and convincing.
- Project highlights achievable tasks achieved along a reasonable timeline.
- Detailed budget that meets the project's needs.
- Project establishes clear methods of collaboration among partners.
- Project demonstrates short- and long-term positive impacts on the youth engaged, Friends Group, and park and/or trail.
- Special consideration will be given to projects that engage with a population of youth underrepresented in park and trail visitation.

Application documents

- **Application**
- **Budget Template**
- **Approval Letter** from the park or trail site staff (template included with the application).

Submission

If you have any questions about your project idea, financial plan, or anything else before submitting, please contact the Friends Group Program Manager, Phoebe Ward, to discuss.

Please submit the Application, Budget, and Letter of Project Approval to the Parks & Trails Council by **August 2, 2024**. These documents can be submitted via email to friends@parksandtrails.org. Accommodations can be made for different methods of submission, if needed. Please reach out if your group is experiencing any difficulties with the file formats or submitting the documents.