



Request for Proposals (RFPs) #14-107

Sunflower Trails: Improvements to Existing Community-Based Trails

Deadline: 5:00pm CST on Wednesday, July 9, 2014

The Sunflower Foundation invites communities and non-profit organizations working on behalf of communities to submit proposals for the Sunflower Trails funding initiative #14-107: Improvements and Enhancements to Existing Trails. The foundation is funding this program to support the concept of the “built environment” as a strategy to increase opportunities for physical activity in Kansas communities and therefore reduce the prevalence of obesity and improve overall health.

The Sunflower Foundation plans to award one-year grants up to \$20,000 for the purpose of improving and enhancing existing trails. Grants will be awarded based on the quality of the proposals as well as alignment with the current RFP criteria and foundation’s mission. Applicants must demonstrate a match of \$1 for every \$1 requested.

In order to better assist potential grantees, all applicants are required to speak with the Sunflower Trails program officer as the first step in the submission process. Applicants who are ready to proceed will receive the link to the online application after the initial conversation.

Summary of RFP Funding and Options #14-107	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Available Funding</i>
EXISTING TRAIL IMPROVEMENT	
Criteria: Existing trail must be 1/2 mile (2,640’) or longer	Maximum total funding = \$20,000*
Infrastructure and/or Enhancements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design & Safety (bridges, railings, culverts, etc.) • Trees for trail shading • Signage which includes distance 	Up to \$20,000 of the total budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any combination will be considered
<i>* Applicants must demonstrate a match of \$1 for every \$1 requested from the Sunflower Foundation</i>	

Table of Contents

A. Deadline & Submission Process.....2

B. Background.....2

C. Program Details.....2

D. Evaluation of Proposal6

E. Online Application Submission.....7

A. DEADLINE AND SUBMISSION PROCESS

1. Proposal Deadline

Proposals must be submitted online by 5:00pm CST on Wednesday, July 9, 2014.

2. Submission Process

- a. All applicants are required to speak with the Sunflower Trails program officer as the first step in the submission process. Please contact Elizabeth Stewart at estewart@sunflowerfoundation.org or call 785-232-3000 or 1-866-232-3020.
- b. After discussion(s) with the program officer, applicants who are ready to proceed will receive the link to the appropriate online application. All proposals must be submitted online. **In order to open an account, applicants must first speak to the program officer.**
- c. All applicants are encouraged to open an account and review the online application as early as possible. The foundation advises that applicants read through the entire application before beginning the proposal submission process.

3. Funding Announcements

For applications received by the Wednesday, July 9, 2014 deadline, funding announcements are expected by Friday, August 22, 2014.

B. BACKGROUND

The “built environment” of many Kansas communities influences opportunities for community members to be physically active. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) defines the built environment as the buildings, roads, fixtures, parks and other man-made entities that form the physical characteristics of a community. The CDC also notes that built environments influence patterns of daily living that, in turn, influence health. Enhancing elements of the built environment is one strategy to increase physical activity and reduce the prevalence of obesity. Communities need safe, attractive and accessible places for individuals and families to be physically active; building community-based trails is one way to create a built environment that encourages healthy behaviors. The Sunflower Trails program began in 2005 as part of the foundation’s Healthy Living initiative. Since then, the foundation has helped support more than 110 trail projects across the state.

C. PROGRAM DETAILS

1. Summary

The goal of this funding initiative is to improve the health of Kansans of all ages by offering support to enhance existing community-based trails that offer opportunities for physical activity. The trail must be at least one-half mile long and six (6) feet wide, appropriate for walking, jogging, cycling, etc. Trails that include use motorized devices/vehicles will not be considered. Applicants who wish to develop new trails/expand existing trails or build trail connector(s) should refer to RFPs #14-106 and #14-108, respectively. It is highly recommended that community applicants carefully review all three Sunflower Trails RFPs to determine which RFP is the best fit.

2. Eligible Organizations

Eligibility:

To apply for a Sunflower Trails Grant under this RFP, applicants must meet one of the following criteria:

- Demonstrate a tax-exempt status under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Service Code; or
- Be an instrumentality of state or local government.

Exclusions:

- Entities that have an active (i.e., current) Sunflower Trails Grant may not apply for funding under this specific RFP.
- Entities that apply for funding under this specific RFP may not apply for funding under any other open trail RFPs.

Other Considerations:

- The Sunflower Foundation is committed to helping as many Kansas communities as possible develop and enhance trails. Thus, there will be times when funding may not be available to organizations with multiple past grants in the Sunflower Trails program.
- **The Trail Enhancements RFP is not intended for communities that were recently awarded (within 5 years) a Sunflower Trails grant and received funding for trail enhancements as part of that award.**

3. Requirements for Existing Trail Improvements

- a. Length & Width - This RFP seeks to fund the improvement/enhancement of existing trails that are a minimum of one-half mile (2,640 feet) in length and a minimum of six (6) feet across. Proposals for trails that do not meet these criteria due to local conditions/factors will be considered on a case-by-case basis only. Please speak with the program officer.
- b. Access - Public access to the existing trail is required, though hours may be restricted for user safety (e.g., daylight hours only). *Preference will be given to trails on public property.*
- c. Increasing functionality and/or usage of the trail – Narratives should clearly express how adding enhancements such as trees and signs will enhance the overall trail experience. In particular, applicants are encouraged to use creative signage to promote the local history and culture of the trail site and surrounding community, so long as the signs still include distance information.

4. Grant Awards & Use of Grant Funds for RFP #14-107 (may not exceed a total of \$20,000)

The grant limits for RFP #14-107 are directly related to improvements/enhancements on an existing trail (improvements designed to increase trail safety and enhance the user experience).

5. Allowable Expenses for Existing Trail Improvements/Enhancements

Please see table on page 4.

5. Allowable Expenses for Existing Trail Improvements/Enhancements

INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENHANCEMENTS

Up to a maximum of **\$20,000** (any combination of the options listed below):

Infrastructure for Design/Safety:

- Necessary features to ensure sustainability of the trail; e.g., culverts, pipes, drainage, etc.
- Necessary features to ensure safety of trail users; e.g., bridges, railings, fences, etc.
- Applicants must explain how the infrastructure expenses are essential to improving the safety and/or functionality of the existing trail.

Trees

- Trees should be varieties that will produce trail shading rather than merely ornamentation.
- Applicants must provide justification for tree selection, considering the following factors:
1) native species that are appropriate to the location, 2) durable, 3) long-lived and 4) disease and drought resistant.

Distance Signage

- Distance signage is intended to help users plan and keep track of trail usage.
- Trailhead signage will only be considered if trail distance/length information is included on the sign.
- Selection of materials and choice of marking distance is at applicant's discretion. Also, applicants are encouraged to use creative signage to promote the local history and culture of the trail site and surrounding community, so long as the signs still include distance information.

** All requested funding must be related to improvements and enhancements on existing trails; please review RFP #14-106 for information on developing new trails or expanding trails in length.*

* Although applicants are permitted to seek any combination of the above funds, the actual grant award will be considered in proportion to the length and location of the existing trail, the actual cost (as verified through bids), and the applicant's case that such enhancements will promote trail usage and safety. **Applications must include at least one bid or estimate for each requested expense (e.g., bid for fencing, bid for trees, and so forth.) The budget should be developed using these bids. Applications submitted without bids will not be reviewed.**

6. Matching Funding Requirement

Applicants must demonstrate a match of \$1 for every \$1 requested from the Sunflower Foundation.

- a. Monetary - Applicants must adequately describe additional sources of revenue for the RFP dollar match (e.g., letters of support or commitment from donors, description of fundraising efforts for future revenue, letters of commitment for a cash match by municipalities, etc).
- b. Donated Materials or Services – Based on review, the match may include the following items:
 - Materials specifically related to the trail enhancement items regarding safety or functionality (e.g. fences, railings, bridges, drainage tubes, etc.), distance signage and/or trail treescaping.
 - Labor services donated by a third party vendor to install the enhancements (excluding volunteer time, or work services by the organization directly seeking the funding).

NOTE: Donated materials or services must have a documented fair market value, as demonstrated through bids/estimates, in order to be considered as part of the cash match. Materials or services donated in-kind cannot be considered as part of the cash match.

The match may NOT include the following items:

- General operating or overhead/indirect expenses;
- Staff salaries/benefits;
- Volunteer time;
- Work services by the organization directly seeking the funding (e.g., a city seeking trail improvement funds may not include that city's time to install or implement the improvements as part of the dollar match. Such services may be considered an in-kind donation, but will not count towards the dollar match);
- Trail amenities that do not match allowable trail enhancements, such as exercise stations, playground equipment, benches, gazebos, general landscaping and so forth.

7. Grant Term

The grant term is not to exceed one year. The grant term will begin upon execution of the Letter of Agreement (LOA) between the grantee and the foundation. Bids to demonstrate fair market value are necessary to execute the LOA. It is expected that LOAs will be executed and projects will be underway within 90 days of the funding announcement.

8. Reporting Requirements

The reporting requirements and deadlines will be clearly stated in the Letter of Agreement between the grantee and the foundation. The grantee will be required to submit a progress report/financial report at approximately six months into the grant term and a final report/financial report at 12 months or upon completion of project. The grantee will be asked to download and use the forms provided on the Sunflower Foundation website.

D. EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS

1. Review and Selection Process

The foundation uses a combination of internal and external reviewers to evaluate and rate each proposal using a general set of criteria as well as distinguishing factors of consideration. All proposal sections, including the narrative, budget and supporting documents are reviewed and considered. In addition, foundation staff or others advising the foundation may conduct a site visit of the existing trail prior to funding. These visits will be pre-arranged at no cost to the applicant. Recommendations by the review committee are presented to the Sunflower Board of Trustees for final consideration and approval.

2. Criteria and Considerations

The following factors will be among those considered in determining funding decisions. Such factors may be described in the project narrative and supported through additional documents such as the budget narrative, expense bids, letters of support, plans for trail promotion and so forth. Well-developed proposals will include evidence, description, demonstration and documentation of the following:

- The proposed trail improvements/enhancements are a direct response to an expressed desire by community members and trail users. When possible, please use supporting data and information such as surveys, letters of support, local statistics and so forth;
- The proposed trail improvements/enhancements will increase usability of the trail. When possible, please use supporting data and information;
- Community/civic partnerships will help support and maintain the trail and its improvements for a minimum period of 10 years;
- There is a well-defined and continuous plan for promoting the trail through different methods of outreach, public relations, education, collaboration, and so forth.

In addition, the following criteria will be considered:

- The diversity of partners and scope of collaborative efforts, including local fundraising efforts, demonstrating a variety of stakeholders in the trail's success;
- The size of the community population and potential pool of trail users in proportion to the amount of funding requested;
- The ability of the existing trail to serve the needs of those in the community with low socioeconomic status and/or limited opportunities for outdoor physical activity;
- The inclusion of all requested documents and sections of the RFP application.*

*** NOTE:** *If your organization has an internal policy that does not allow the solicitation of bids before funding is awarded, please include a copy of this policy with the application in lieu of the bids. Please also include an explanation for the estimated trail enhancement costs.*

3. Funding Exclusions

Sunflower Foundation grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Improvements/enhancement of sidewalks;
- Trail amenities, such as exercise stations, playground equipment, benches, gazebos, general landscaping; and
- Improvements/enhancement of trails that prohibit public access and/or use. (Trail access may be partially restricted for reasons of user safety; e.g., daylight hours only).
- Trail enhancements for recently awarded Sunflower Trails projects (within 5 years) that received funding for enhancements at the time of the original grant.

E. ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

Applications must be submitted using our online application process. Instructions can be found on the Sunflower Foundation website.

1. Getting Started

After speaking to the Sunflower Trails program officer, applicants who are ready to take the next step will receive a link to the appropriate online application. The application will guide first-time applicants through the process of opening an account, while returning applicants may use their email address to re-open a previous account. Please note: returning applicants must speak to the program officer first to receive the link.

2. Hard Copy Application for Personal Use

Printing off a hard copy of the application will help you keep track of all required components. Look for the “printable version” tab at the top of the online application page.

3. Returning to the Application

Once you have started an application, you can use the one-step “quick link” at the bottom of the RFP page on the Sunflower Foundation website. The link will allow you to access your application in progress.

4. Writing the Narrative Offline

Printing off the application will also allow you to review the project description/narrative components and then create your responses offline. In order to avoid “losing” any data during the online submission process, it is strongly suggested that you maintain a separate copy of your completed proposal narrative and then copy and paste the required sections into the online application.

5. Components of the Online Application

Please see table on page 8.

5. Components of the Online Application

A. Online Fields

(suggested that applicant compose and save offline, then copy andpaste into application)

- Applicant Information (online fields)
- Contact Information (online fields)
- Project Description and Project Narrative (online fields)

B. Attachments - Sunflower Foundation Forms

(provided as part of the application or may be downloaded from Sunflower website; uploaded by applicant as part of final submission process)

- Sunflower Foundation Budget Narrative (MS word)
- Sunflower Foundation Budget Form (MS Excel)

C. Attachments – Additional Forms & Supporting Documents

(uploaded by applicant as part of the final submission process)

Mandatory Supporting Documents:

- Most recent audit OR a working link to audit online
- Current financial statements, including income statement and balance sheet
- Bids for trail improvement materials and services; e.g., signage, trees, etc. (or internal bid policy and estimation of costs)

Optional Supporting Documents:

- Schematics, photos or drawings of the proposed trail improvements
- Photos of the existing trail
- Letters of support or other applicable evidence of community commitment, collaboration and/or cash match pledges.

NOTE: Additional documentation may be requested during the application review process. If applicants have difficulty uploading attachments, please contact the foundation prior to the application deadline date.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

The Sunflower Foundation is subject to the Kansas Open Meeting Act (K.S.A. 75-4317 *etseq.*) and the Kansas Open Records Act (K.S.A. 45-215 through 45-223). Consequently, all materials received in this application process may be subject to public release pursuant to these statutes.