



**Request for Proposals (RFPs) #14-108  
Sunflower Trails: Connectors for Existing 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 #14-108: Connectors for 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 \$30,000 for the purpose of constructing trail connectors. 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 #14-108	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Available Funding</i>
<b>TRAIL CONNECTORS</b>	<b>Maximum total funding = \$30,000*</b>
<b>Criteria: Will be less than ½ mile. Connector must clearly link existing trails; or provide new access point(s) or improve access point(s) to an existing trail.</b>	
Surface Materials and/or Construction <i>(To be used only for building connector portion of trail)</i>	Up to \$15,000 of the total budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Calculated at \$3.00 per square foot</li> </ul>
Infrastructure and/or Enhancements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Design &amp; Safety (bridges, railings, culverts, etc.)</li> <li>• Trees for Trail Shading</li> <li>• Distance Signage</li> </ul>	Up to \$15,000 of the total budget <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Any combination will be considered based on scope of work</li> </ul>
<b>* Applicants must demonstrate a match of \$1 for every \$1 requested from the Sunflower Foundation</b>	

**Table of Contents**

A. Deadline & Submission Process.....2  
 B. Background.....2  
 C. Program Details.....2  
 D. Evaluation of Proposal .....6  
 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. After reading the entire RFP, please contact Elizabeth Stewart at [estewart@sunflowerfoundation.org](mailto: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 build trail connectors that will improve access to existing trails and expand trail user options via linkages or access points. The trail may be used for walking or multi-use (e.g., cycling, jog strollers), but cannot include use by motorized devices or vehicles. **Please note this particular RFP (#14-108) is intended to fund the construction of trail connectors less than ½ mile in length and intended to link existing trails and/or increase and improve access points.**

Applicants who wish to build or expand new trails more than ½ mile in length or improve existing trails should refer to RFPs #14-106 and #14-107, respectively. It is highly recommended that applicants carefully review all the 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 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.

## 3. Trail Connector Construction Requirements

- a. Length -This RFP seeks funding applications for trail connectors that will be less than one-half mile (2,640 feet) in length. Proposals for trails that are one-half mile in length (or longer) should respond to RFP #14-106 for New Trails.
- b. Width -The width of the proposed trail connector will depend on the scope of the project and site limitations, though a minimum of six (6) feet is expected.
- c. Access -Public access to the 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.*
- d. Materials – The choice of materials are left to the discretion of the applicant; however, the proposal should explain why certain materials were chosen and provide the necessary bids and/or engineering estimates to document the fair market value of the materials.

## 4. Grant Awards & Use of Grant Funds for RFP #14-108 (may not exceed a total of \$30,000)

The grant limits for RFP #14-108 are directly related to building a trail connector in order to increase opportunities for physical activity. Grant awards are based upon the scope of work and the bids or engineer estimates submitted with the application. Applications submitted without at least one bid for each requested expense will not be reviewed.

## 5. Allowable Expenses for Trail Connectors.

Please see table on page 4.

## 5. Allowable Expenses for Trail Connectors

### SURFACE MATERIALS AND/OR CONSTRUCTION EXPENSES

Up to a maximum of **\$15,000** based on the following variables:

- Selection of surface materials (concrete, asphalt, crushed rock, etc.) is at the applicant's discretion, but it should be described in the application narrative.
- Trail construction costs are calculated at \$3.00 per square foot.\*
- Construction expenses may include the cost of labor and/or materials directly related to preparation of the connector (e.g., grading, drainage), and/or to install surface materials.
- Applicants must make the case that the proposed trail connectors will facilitate increased use of an existing trail or trails.

Please note: Expenses related to the aesthetics of the surrounding area such as grass, mulch, irrigation systems, and so forth are not covered.

*\*Total cost of trail connector construction (materials & installation) is calculated at \$6.00 per square foot; Sunflower will pay up to 50% of total costs (\$3/square foot), not to exceed grant award.*

### INFRASTRUCTURE AND ENHANCEMENTS\*

Up to a maximum of **\$15,000** based on the following variables:

#### Infrastructure for Design/Safety:

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

#### Distance and/or Directional Signage

- Distance signage is intended to help users plan and keep track of trail usage.
- Directional signage is intended to help users plan their route and safely connect from one trail to another, or from the trail to an access point.
- Trailhead signage will be considered if the connector now creates a new access point, and the trailhead sign also includes distance.

*\* Although applicants are permitted to seek any combination of the infrastructure/enhancement funds listed above, the amount of these expenses will be considered in proportion to the overall scope of work.*

All requested enhancement funding must be related to the construction of trail connectors; please review RFP #14-106 for the construction of new trails or trail expansions. **Applications must include at least one bid or engineering estimate for each requested expense (e.g., bid for concrete installation, bid for fencing, 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 connector, including surface materials, essential infrastructure items (e.g. fences, railings, bridges, drainage tubes, etc.), and signage.
  - Labor services donated by a third party vendor (excluding volunteer time, or work services by the organization directly seeking the funding), directly related to the construction of the trail connector and/or enhancements.

**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 funds may not include that city's time to construct the connector as part of the dollar match. Such services may be considered an in-kind donation, but will not count for the dollar match);
- Trail amenities, such as exercise stations, playground equipment, benches, gazebos, general landscaping and so forth (see section on allowable trail enhancements);

## 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 proposed trail connector site 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 connector is a direct response to an expressed desire for the connector by community members and other users (when possible, please use supporting data and information such as surveys, letters of support, local statistics and so forth);
- The proposed trail connector is preferably part of a well-developed community plan to create a built environment conducive to physical activity and healthy living (if no such plan exists but the proposed trail connector is one of the first steps in such a direction, please explain);
- Community/civic partnerships will help support and maintain the existing trail and proposed trail connector 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;
- There is a well-defined and continuous plan for evaluating trail usage (e.g., trail counters, surveys);
- **The trail connector fills an existing gap in the current trail system that will increase trail usage and improve the user's experience.**

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/proposed connector 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 connector costs.*

### 3. Funding Exclusions

Sunflower Foundation grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Sidewalks and related infrastructure (crosswalks, reflective paint, traffic signs or lights);
- Trail amenities, such as exercise stations, playground equipment, benches, gazebos, general landscaping (see section on allowable trail enhancements); and
- Connectors to trails that prohibit public access and/or use. (Trail access may be partially restricted for reasons of user safety; e.g., daylight hours only).

## E. ONLINE APPLICATION SUBMISSION

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

### 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” 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 and paste 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
- Copies of bids for trail connector materials and services, signage (or internal bid policy and estimation of costs)
- Schematic or drawing of the proposed trail connector, clearly showing through visuals how the connector will link trails and/or access points

#### Optional Supporting Documents:

- Photos of the site of the proposed trail connector
- Letters of support or other applicable evidence of community commitment and collaboration

**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 *et seq.*) 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.