



**Request for Proposals (RFPs) #14-109
Sunflower Trails: School-Based New Trails**

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

The Sunflower Foundation invites schools and school districts to submit proposals for the Sunflower Trails funding initiative #14-109: School-based New 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. Specifically, this RFP aims to improve the health of students, faculty, families and communities by supporting school-based walking trails.

The Sunflower Foundation plans to award one-year grants up to \$25,000 for the purpose of constructing new school 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 #14-109	
<i>Item</i>	<i>Available Funding</i>
NEW SCHOOL-BASED TRAILS CRITERIA	Maximum total funding = \$25,000*
Minimum Length: 1/4 mile (1,320 feet long) Minimum Width: 5-6 feet wide (wider is always encouraged)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surface Materials and/or Construction • Necessary infrastructure for design/safety (e.g., bridges, culvert, railings, fencing) • Trailside treescaping for shade • Distance signage 	Applicants are permitted to allocate the funding as needed, keeping in mind the overall scope of work and construction budget for the trail itself.
* Applicants must demonstrate a match of \$1 for every \$1 requested from the Sunflower Foundation	

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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 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 and schools need safe, attractive and accessible places for students, faculty and families to be physically active; building school-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, including three dozen school-based trail projects.

C. PROGRAM DETAILS

1. Summary

The goal of this funding initiative is to support Kansas schools and school districts interested in building a trail on school property, thus giving students, faculty, families and communities a safe and accessible place to obtain physical activity. 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 (#14-109) is intended to fund the construction of new trails at least 1/4 mile in length on school property.**

If you are interested in building, expanding or enhancing a community-based trail, please review RFPs #14-106 and #14-107. If you are interested in *connecting* a community-based trail to a school-based trail, please review RFP #14-108 (Trail Connectors).

2. Eligible Organizations

Eligibility:

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

- Be a school or school district serving Kansas students within the K-12 grade span.
- Be a tax-exempt organization 501(c)3 partnering with a school or school district to build a trail on school property.

Exclusions:

- Schools that have a current Sunflower Trails grant may not apply for funding under this specific RFP.

Other Considerations:

- The Sunflower Foundation is committed to helping as many Kansas schools as possible develop and enhance trails. Thus, there will be times when funding may not be available to school districts with multiple past grants in the Sunflower Trails program. **This is a competitive grant program.**

3. New Trail/Trail Expansion Construction Requirements

- a. Length -This RFP seeks funding applications for trails that will be a minimum of one-quarter mile (1320 feet) in length. Proposed trails that are less than one-quarter mile because of local conditions/factors will be considered on a case-by-case basis only.
- b. Width -The width of the proposed trail will depend on the scope of the project and site limitations, though a minimum of 5-6 feet is expected, and wider trails are always encouraged as local conditions permit.
- c. Access -Public access to the trail is required, though schools may restrict hours based on school schedules (e.g., trail is open before and after school and all day on weekends). Hours also may be restricted for user safety (e.g., daylight hours only). *Preference will be given to trails on public school property.*

NOTE: We realize some schools have enough land to build a school-based trail longer that meets the community trail criteria of ½ mile. Please speak to the program officer for consideration of alternative funding options for a longer school trail.

4. Grant Awards & Use of Grant Funds for RFP #14-109 (may not exceed a total of \$25,000)

The grant limits for RFP #14-109 are directly related to building a new trail or trail expansion 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 School-Based New Trail Construction

Up to a maximum of **\$25,000** based on the following variables:

SURFACE MATERIALS AND/OR CONSTRUCTION EXPENSES

- Trail length: minimum one-quarter mile (1320 feet).
- Trail width: minimum of 5-6 feet is expected; wider is always encouraged.
 - The selection of surface materials (concrete, asphalt, crushed rock, etc.) is at the applicant's discretion, but should be described in the application narrative.
 - Trail construction costs calculated at \$3.00 per square foot.*
 - Construction expenses may include the cost of labor, and/or materials directly related to preparation of the trail site (e.g., grading), and/or to install the trail.

**Total cost of trail 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 FOR SAFETY/DESIGN

- Necessary features to ensure sustainability of the trail; e.g., culverts, pipes, drainage, etc.
- Necessary features to ensure safety; e.g., bridges, railings, fences, etc.

TRAIL ENHANCEMENTS

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 information is included on the sign.
- Selection of materials and choice of marking distances is at applicant's discretion.

Trail Treescaping

- Trees should be varieties that will produce trail shading rather than 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.

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

Applicants are permitted to allocate the funding as needed, keeping in mind the overall scope of work and construction budget for the trail itself. Applications must include at least one bid or engineering estimate for each requested expense (e.g., bid for concrete installation, 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 directly related to the trail, including surface materials, essential infrastructure items (e.g. fences, railings, bridges, drainage tubes, etc.), distance signage and/or trail treescaping;
- 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 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 trail 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 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/trail expansion is a direct response to an expressed desire for the trail by the school and surrounding community; e.g., students, faculty, administration, and families (when possible, please use supporting data and information such as community health assessments, surveys, letters of support, local statistics and so forth);
- The proposed trail/trail expansion is preferably part of a well-developed school-wide plan to create a built environment conducive to physical activity and healthy living (if no such plan exists but the proposed trail is one of the first steps in such a direction, please explain);
- There is a well-defined and continuous plan for maintaining the trail;
- There is a well-defined and continuous plan for promoting the trail through different methods of outreach, public relations, education, collaboration and so forth. Special consideration will be given to schools with existing or planned programs to promote regular student use of the trail;
- There is a well-defined and continuous plan for evaluating trail usage (e.g., trail counters, surveys);
- 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 all estimated trail costs.*

3. Funding Exclusions

Sunflower Foundation grant funds cannot be used for the following:

- Traditional city or neighborhood sidewalks, curbs, street crossings;
- Trail amenities, such as exercise stations, playground equipment, benches, gazebos, general landscaping (see section on allowable trail enhancements); and
- 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
- Bids for trail materials and services, signage, trees (or internal bid policy and estimation of costs)
- Schematic or drawing of the proposed trail or trail expansion

Optional Supporting Documents:

- Photos of the site of the proposed trail or trail expansion
- Letters of support or other applicable evidence of school/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.