Updated October 2026

GRANT GUIDELINES - WHO AND WHAT WE FUND

The Mat-Su Trails & Parks Foundation (MSTPF) partners with entities on projects and efforts that expand and enhance the valley's trail network and parks. The foundation considers applications for financial assistance on a competitive basis each quarter as funding availability allows. Before applying, potential partners are encouraged to learn more about our priorities by reviewing recent activities on our blog page or contact staff directly to discuss your project.

1. Grant applications are accepted throughout the entire calendar year. Applications will be reviewed by the Grants Committee. Successful applications will be presented to the Board of Directors in February and September for final approval and grant award.

2. MSTPF Trails and Parks Grants provide the opportunity for eligible organizations to apply for grants up to $100,000.00. Organizations need to provide cash and in-kind match. While matching funds are not required at all levels, we highly encourage match, and match improves the application's overall ranking. Where match is required for grants above $20,000, applications that do not meet this requirement will not be reviewed.

The grant categories are below:

A. **$20,000 and below:** No match required; however, the match is encouraged.

B. **$20,001 - $50,000 – Minimum Match of 3:1 is required:** Cash or in-kind. MSTPF may fund up to 75% of the total eligible project cost. Applicants must provide at least 25% of the total project cost as match. In-kind match may not exceed 50% of the match. *Ex: a $40,000 total project budget would mean the applicant provides $10,000 cash and in-kind match. Half of the match must be cash totaling at least $5,000.* In-kind grantee volunteer hours are limited to the rate set by Independent Sector at time of application. If paid staff labor is a match item, then the rate is set by the applying organization and needs to be defined in the budget narrative. Contractors willing to donate time not associated with the grantee may do so at the rate they normally charge.

C. **$50,001 - $100,000 – Minimum Match of 2:1 required**: Cash and in-kind match accepted. MSTPF may fund up to 66.67% of the total eligible project cost. Applicants must provide at least 33.33% of the total project cost as match. In-kind match may not exceed 50% of the total match—same in-kind terms as above. **Applicants requesting more than $50,000 are strongly encouraged to discuss their proposed project with MSTPF staff at least 30 days prior to the application deadline due to the competitive nature of available grant funding.**

3:1 Example

Total Project Amount (100%)	Total Grant Funds (75%)	Matching Funds Total (25%)	Cash Amount of match

Request + Match	Round to the nearest dollar	Cash/In-kind	Cash must be >50%
30,000	22,500	7,500	3,750

2:1 Example

Total Project Amount (100%)	**Total Grant Funds (50%)**	**Matching Funds Total (50%)**	**Cash Amount of match**
Request + Match	Round to the nearest dollar	Cash/In-kind	Cash must be >50%
90,000	60,000	30,000	15,000

A note on project budgets and match: please apply for the amount that the project needs to be a successful and lasting asset to our community. We sometimes see applicants apply for too low of an amount to succeed because they can't meet the required match. Please get in touch with us if you have questions or concerns about meeting the matching requirement.

Proactive Grantmaking
MSTPF staff may seek applicants whose work aligns explicitly with our current grantmaking strategy and invite them to apply. Match requirements may be waived pending approval by the MSTPF Board of Directors for these exceptional circumstances.

Who We Fund:

Prospective grantees must be legal entities, provide services or benefits to Mat-Su area residents, and have a tax identification number (EIN) to qualify for grants:

- Non-profit
- Alaska Native organization
- Federally recognized tribe
- Government entity or community council
- Religious organization
- Service organization

Who We Do Not Fund:

- Individuals
- For-profit organizations
- Private foundations

- Organizations with a significant purpose of influencing legislation or supporting candidates for political or appointed office
- Organizations that discriminate because of race, religion, gender, national origin, or political orientation

Who Receives Priority:

MSTPF supports organizations and collaborative efforts that advance community health through quality trails, parks, and outdoor recreation in the Mat-Su Borough. The MSTPF is particularly interested in supporting organizations that:

- Have track records of project and grant performance
- Demonstrate a high degree of organizational capacity
- Have a strong and engaged board, staff, and volunteer leadership

What Types of Projects We Fund:

- New trails and parks
- Physical improvements or development of trails and trailheads, parks, and recreation sites
- Trail, park, and playground amenities, equipment, and signage
- Planning and surveying
- Don't See Your Type of Project? Please contact our office at (907) 746-8757 to discuss your project further to determine eligibility.

What Types of Projects We Do Not Fund:

- Private trails or parks
- Projects on private property without legal easement or a legal instrument guaranteeing public access for the long-term future.
- Loans
- Endowments
- Fundraising events or tournaments
- Reimbursement for items in a completed project or items already purchased
- Ongoing operations or program funding
- Indirect rates or costs not associated with the proposed project

What Receives Priority:

- Projects that enhance connectivity within the Mat-Su area trail and park system
- Projects that fit criteria of land manager's plans or community council's plans
- Proposals that include a plan for maintenance
- Proposals providing direct and in-kind match
- Opportunities to leverage resources amongst organizations and user groups
- Urgent need or importance identified by community stakeholders
- Projects that improve community health through increased access to outdoor recreation, recreation opportunities, and enhanced quality of life

How to Apply

Apply through our online grants portal: matsutrailsandparksfoundation.grantplatform.com

Eligible organizations should submit a full application by the due date for each grant cycle. An organization may only have one grant awarded during a specific grant cycle. At the discretion of the review committee, only one project from each organization may move forward to the board during the grant process within each funding cycle.

If you have a question about the eligibility of your organization or other granting guidelines, or to request a Grant Application form, please get in touch with us at info@matsutrails.org or 907-746-8757 See more at: www.matsutrails.org.

Multiple Open Grants:

An applicant may not apply for funding for a project that is currently under a grant agreement with MSTPF for the next phase of the same project. However, an applicant currently receiving grant funds may apply for a different project not related to the currently funded project. Applications will only be considered from eligible entities whose existing projects are on schedule, current with their reporting, and within the 18-month project timeline. Any deviations or extenuating circumstances must be documented in writing for board review before submitting an inquiry or application.

An applicant may apply for funds for a previously funded project (i.e., Phase II) once the existing grant has been closed. The applicant can request a variance from this policy; however, consideration of such a request is at the sole discretion of the MSTPF Board of Directors.

Other Important Information:

- *Payment schedule:* When an application has been awarded, the payment schedule for grants $10k and above is 80%. Payments are made by check or ACH and are usually produced within 30 days after the signed agreement. The final 20% is paid after the final narrative and expenditure report have been submitted. Thus the 20% payment is essentially reimbursed. In the case of equipment purchases below $10k, the payment will be 100%.
- *Agreement length:* The grant agreement begins at the date found in the grant agreement. The length of a project agreement for most projects is 18 months. The length for equipment purchases only is 6 months.
- *Reporting requirements:* The grantee will submit a simple interim report nine months after the agreement begins. The final report will be due 30 days after the agreement ends.
- MSTPF generally expects the applicant to complete the intended project with the funds that are granted. If the applicant is waiting on other sources of funding to complete the project, MSTPF will make a “contingent” grant where the funds will be obligated but not paid until the applicant has received all the needed funding.
- For equipment purchases, organizations may apply for small equipment (under $20,000) once every three years, and for larger equipment (over $20,000) once every 5 years.