



Application Guidelines



About the Program

The National Park Service (NPS) manages some of our nation's most historic sites, scenic resources, and critical natural areas. NPS also provides assistance to locally-led natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects through the Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program. RTCA staff work in urban, rural, and suburban communities to help applicants conserve rivers, preserve natural areas, and develop trails and greenways. Our staff help on a variety of natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation projects including multi-use trails, single-purpose trails, greenways, water trails (also called blueways), river corridor conservation, land protection, and park planning.

RTCA staff help with partnership-building to achieve community-set goals, through organizational development, assessing resources, developing concept plans, public education and participation, and identifying potential sources of funding. The project applicant may be a state or local agency, tribe, non-profit organization, or citizens' group. Federal agencies, including the National Park Service, may apply only in collaboration with a non-federal partner. RTCA does not provide financial assistance to support project implementation.

Applicants should discuss their project with RTCA staff before applying for assistance. It can be helpful to schedule an advance field visit by our staff to best understand how RTCA can be of assistance.

Please return your completed application to the Program Manager for the region in which your project is located. Contact information is available under "[Contact Us](#)" on our website. You may also contact Charlie Stockman, NPS RTCA Program Manager at 202-354-6900 or charlie_stockman@nps.gov

For further information about RTCA and the work we are doing around the country with nearly 300 communities, please visit our national web site at <http://www.nps.gov/rtca>.

Project Selection Criteria

Please make applications brief (generally no more than 2 pages, see attached application form). Applications are evaluated according to the following criteria:

1. The project has specific, partner-defined goals and results expected in the near future (*miles of trail or protected river, acres of open space, etc.*)
2. The project protects or improves important natural resources or enhances outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. Roles and contributions of project partners are substantive and well-defined.
4. There is evidence of broad community support for the project.
5. The anticipated role for RTCA is clear and appropriate.

Current strategic themes for RTCA:

- provide physical connections among resources;
- include *both* natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation;
- partner with an NPS area and/or connect to NPS areas*;
- partner with a health organization;
- engage youth

Applications are due by **August 1st** for assistance beginning the following fiscal year (October 1st through September 30th). Assistance is for one year and may be renewed for a second year upon request. Project selection is generally announced in early November after passage of the federal budget.

* NPS areas include: National Parks and Monuments, National Heritage Areas, National Trails and Wild & Scenic Rivers



Application for NPS RTCA Assistance

Steps for applicant:

- ✓ Contact RTCA staff at least two weeks before applying for assistance;
- ✓ Send Applicant Information and Project Description to RTCA_Application@nps.gov by August 1 or by U.S. Mail to appropriate Program Manager postmarked by August 1;
- ✓ Recommend sending maps, large background documents and support letters by U.S. Mail to appropriate Program Manager postmarked by August 1.

Applicant Information

- ✓ Project name:
- ✓ Project location and description:
A map showing project area and identifying relevant natural and outdoor recreation resources may be useful in describing your project.
- ✓ City, county, state, and congressional district(s):
- ✓ Applicant organization:
- ✓ Primary contact, title, address, email, and daytime phone:

Project Description

1. Describe the goals of your project and any tangible conservation or outdoor recreation results expected. Quantify the expected results in terms of miles of trail or protected river, acres of open space, parkland, habitat, etc. Briefly describe any prior activity or history, if any, on the project and its current status: What aspects of projects are going well, aspects you think need the most help. Include expected completion date if known.
2. Describe how your project will protect or improve important natural resources and/or enhance outdoor recreation opportunities.
3. List the partners involved and describe how they are actively and substantively involved in the project. Identify those partners that embrace any of the current strategic themes for RTCA. Briefly summarize the existing or anticipated role and contribution of each.
Because partnerships are key to the success of community-based projects a minimum of three support letters from partners are required. Letters should identify the type of commitment, cooperation, and cost-sharing each partner will offer the project. Support letters should explicitly note if they are a health, youth, or NPS related partner.
4. Provide other examples of support for the project including: supporting language in local, regional and state plans, endorsements from elected officials and boards, supportive votes or public survey results, other grants or awards received, or examples of media coverage. *Letters of support are welcome.* Describe public participation, if any, in the project so far, and any future public participation plans.
5. Describe the kind of assistance you are seeking from RTCA staff. *For examples of the kinds of assistance RTCA staff can provide, go to ["What we do"](http://www.nps.gov/rtca) on our website, www.nps.gov/rtca.*

Current strategic themes: *(several may apply)*

- Project provides physical connections among resources;
- Project includes both outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation goals;
- Project partners with an NPS area and/or connects communities to NPS areas *NPS areas include: National Parks and Monuments, National Heritage Areas, National Trails and Wild & Scenic Rivers.*
- Project partners with a health organization (active and substantial);
- Project engages youth partners.

Regional RTCA Contact Information

National Office

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Washington, D.C. 20005
Fax : 202-371-5179

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(202) 354-6900

Charlie Stockman, RTCA Program
Manager
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(202)354-6900

Alaska Region

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Anchorage, AK 99501
Fax (907) 644-3807

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Pacific West Region

ID, OR, WA
RTCA National Park Service
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CA, HI, NV

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Fax (510) 817-1505

Barbara Rice, Program Manager
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Intermountain Region

**AZ, CO, MT, NM, OK,
TX, UT, WY**
RTCA National Park Service
P.O. Box 25287
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Midwest Region

**IL, IN, MI, OH, WI, ND, SD
AR, IA, KS, MN, MO, NE**
RTCA National Park Service
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David Thomson, Program Manager
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Southeast Region

**AL, FL, GA, KY, LA, NC, SC, TN, US
Virgin Islands**
RTCA National Park Service
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Northeast Region

CT, MA, ME, NH, NY, RI, VT
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DC, DE, MD, NJ, PA, VA, WV

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National Capital Region

**Washington D.C. and
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RTCA National Park Service
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