

2023 South Mountain Partnership Mini-Grant Funding Round Overview and Application

Introduction:

The South Mountain Partnership (the Partnership) works to conserve the Landscape Resources that define the South Mountain landscape in south-central Pennsylvania. As a coalition of citizens, businesses, not-for-profits, academic institutions, and local and state government officials and agencies, the Partnership views the stewarding of the region's natural, cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources as critical to sustaining the quality of life, sense of place, and economic vibrancy of the region's citizens and communities.

The Partnership is one of seven Conservation Landscapes supported by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR). Funding is provided via DCNR's Community Conservation Partnerships Program (C2P2) and the Environmental Stewardship Fund to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, which administers the Mini-Grant.

Our Mini-Grants are single-year grants for projects or work taking place during 2024, ranging from \$2,500 to \$15,000. A 1:1 match (in-kind or cash) is required. Projects exceeding \$15,000 and up to \$25,000 may be considered for projects that demonstrate regional impact and integrate across multiple priority areas. Non-profit organizations with a 501(c)(3) status, municipalities, counties, and academic institutions are all eligible within the Mini-Grant. Projects must occur within Cumberland, Adams, Franklin, or York County.

Included in this Packet:

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At a Glance:

The Partnership Mini-Grant awards single-year grants to projects in Cumberland, Adams, Franklin, and York Counties that sustain, protect, and promote the South Mountain region's natural, cultural, and agricultural, and recreational resources.

Eligible applicants include authorized 501(c)(3) non-profits, municipalities, counties, and academic institutions.

Grant awards will be between \$2,500 and \$15,000 to projects taking place between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2024. A 1:1 match, whether in cash or in-kind, is required.

Pre-applications are due by May 26, 2023.
Accepted applicants will be invited to submit a final application in June 2023, due by July 28, 2023.
Grant award decisions will be made in September 2023, and grants will be formally awarded on September 29, 2023.

The Partnership aspires to foster a collective conversation about our future relationship to the landscape in which we live, and believes that this Mini-Grant is an effective way to translate this conversation into action.

Please join us in conversation and in action. See how you can "Get Involved" at southmountainpartnership.org.

2023 Deadlines (all deadlines are 4PM on the given day)

Pre-Application Deadline: May 26, 2023 Grant Award Decisions: September 2023 Project takes place: Jan-Dec 2024 Final Application Deadline: July 28, 2023 Formal Grant Awards: September 29, 2023 Project formally closed out: By December 31, 2024



OVERVIEW & FUNDING PRIORITIES

Purpose:

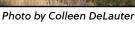
The Partnership Mini-Grant is designed to catalyze on-the-ground projects that sustain South Mountain's sense of place through the protection and promotion of the Partnership's four identified Landscape Resources:



natural



cultural





agricultural



recreational

The Partnership highly values interdisciplinary projects, or "nexus projects," that tend to all of these Landscape Resources, as these Landscape Resources are all interrelated.

Mini-Grant Goals:

The Partnership works to identify projects that strategically benefit the region – be it impacting the resources across the region or by creating a new approach for addressing an issue, with lessons that can be diffused throughout the region. Eligible projects meet these four goals:

- 1. Engage new partners to the Partnership to advance the mission of the Partnership.
- 2. Implement projects throughout the landscape to protect, promote, and/or build upon the South Mountain region's unique Landscape Resources.
- 3. Integrate thinking and approaches across disciplines; the Partnership strives to support "nexus projects" (see diagram, pg. 5) that recognize the region's interrelated Landscape Resources.
- 4. Build and strengthen collaboration amongst partners across the landscape.





Eligibility:

Non-profit organizations with a tax-exempt status 501(c)(3), municipalities, counties, and educational institutions are all eligible for the Mini-Grant. All projects must be within Cumberland, Adams, Franklin, or York County and have significant ties to the assets of South Mountain, the working lands that surround the mountains, and the communities tied to both. Non-profit organizations must provide a Federal 501(c)(3) registration number and a Pennsylvania Bureau of Charitable Organizations registration number.

Single-year grant requests for a minimum of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$15,000 are considered; at the discretion of the review committee projects exceeding \$15,000 and up to \$25,000 may be considered for projects that have demonstrable regional impact and integrate across multiple priority areas. Applicants must match (at a 1:1 ratio) these funds with additional funding and/or eligible non-cash (in-kind) services. For larger projects with grant requests exceeding the maximum Mini-Grant amount (examples: land acquisitions and trail construction), we encourage interested parties to apply directly to DCNR's C2P2.

Note: This Mini-Grant is funded through a DCNR Bureau of Recreation and Conservation grant. The Partnership identifies four priority Landscape Resources (natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources), and we welcome project proposals that protect and promote this diversity of resources. Due to the original DCNR funding source, applicants with projects that address cultural and/or agricultural resources must make a strong connection to the natural and/or recreational significance of the proposed project in order to be eligible.

Application Submission Information:

Pre-applications can be submitted here-properties. We recommend you use a Google account for submission as it allows you to save your work. If you have any concerns or questions about using this digital form, please contact Julia Chain at jchain@appalachiantrail.org.



SMP Mini-Grant Pre-Application Form 2023

The South Mountain Partnership's Mini-Grant Program stimulates on-the-ground projects that further the Partnership's mission to conserve Landscape Resources that enrich the quality of life and sense of place of the citizens and communities of the South Mountain region.

Eligible applicants include 501(c) 3 non-profit organizations, municipalities, counties, and educational institutions. All projects must be within Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, or York County. Single-year grant requests are considered, ranging in size from \$2,500 to \$15,000, with a 1:1 match (cash or in-kind) required.

*Note: the Partnership's Mini-Grant Program is funded through a Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Bureau of Recreation and Conservation grant. The Partnership identifies four priority Landscape Resources - natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources - within the South Mountain region, and we welcome project





PRE-APPLICATION REVIEW: PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Pre-applications are reviewed by staff for eligibility and appropriateness for the Partnership Mini-Grant. Pre-application review does not assess or rate how proposals compare to one another. Applicants with strong pre-applications will be invited by mid-June to submit a final application by the end of July.

Applicants should review the Funding Priorities and the Final Application prior to completing the pre-application to understand how projects will be scored and prioritized.

Final Application questions and scoring are previewed below. The Partnership will release a digital format for final submission. Do not complete a final application until you have been invited to do so.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The 2023 Mini-Grant prioritizes work in the spirit of our ongoing State of the Region Project. This includes:

- 1. Collaborative projects involving multiple partners and community members
- 2. Projects that support identifying or measuring the health of theregion
- 3. Projects that align with conservation and preservation elements of county or municipal comprehensive plans





FINAL APPLICATION REVIEW: PROCESS AND CRITERIA

Final applications are reviewed by a small committee of current Partners. The review committee reserves the right to request additional information to supplement a submitted application as needed. Applications are ranked using the following criteria:

<u>Criteria A: Detailed and Complete Project Narrative (Section II)</u>

10 points... Project description; deliverables, objectives and timeline/scope-of-work are described with sufficient detail to demonstrate that the project is feasible and ready-to-go.

Criteria B: Budget (Section III)

20 points... Project budget clearly demonstrates the total project cost, the source(s) of appropriate match, and the requested grant amount and how these funds will be expended. Projects with matching funding that is firmly secured as of the application deadline will rank higher than projects with undetermined or unlikely funding. Refer to the DCNR C2P2 <u>guidelines</u> for match guidelines. Volunteer time and labor can be valued up to the amount published by <u>the Independent Sector</u>. Work performed by individuals under the age of 18 will be valued at the Commonwealth's minimum wage rate.

<u>Criteria C: Alignment with Partnership (50 points)</u>

30 points... Advances Mission and Goals – Project advances the Partnership's mission of "conserving Landscape Resources to enrich the quality of life and sense of place of the South Mountain region's citizens and communities," and addresses each one of the Partnership's goals:

- (1) Conservation of Landscape Resources (10 pts) sustain and steward the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;
- (2) Promotion of Landscape Resources (10 pts) increase public awareness of the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;



Integration - Projects in the center combine aspects of many sectors and are "nexus projects."

(3) Connections across the Landscape (10 pts) – emphasize the interconnectedness of the resources to create a community of collaboration amongst a critical mass of public agencies, non-profit and community organizations, businesses, and citizens.



10 points... Partner Collaboration - Project builds and sustains collaboration with other organizations and/or partners; more weight will be given to truly collaborative projects that engage diverse partners.

10 points... <u>Integration</u> – Project benefits multiple types of priority Landscape Resources to become a "nexus project" (see diagram on page 5).

O points... Connection to Partnership Activity or Outcome Project is directly related to outcomes or actions identified at a past Partnership workshop or meeting; while not numerically scored, projects with these direct connections will be prioritized.

Criteria D: Project Evaluation & Sustainability (20 points)

10 points... Evaluation - The project incorporates measurable outcomes that will assess the project's success in achieving its objectives and deliverables in both the short term and long term. Example: quantifiable data.

10 points... Sustainability – Applicant demonstrates a strong plan for ensuring the long term up-keep and maintenance of the project and for sustaining partnerships and collaborations. Funding may not be considered for projects that do not clearly address this concern.





FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Partnership Mini-Grant is intended to catalyze on-the-ground projects that align with the goals of the Partnership. The Mini-Grant targets projects that sustain South Mountain's sense of place by protecting and promoting our region's Landscape Resources. The Partnership strives to highlight the interrelated nature of these resources on the South Mountain landscape, and thus prioritizes nexus projects that integrate across resources to produce the greatest benefit. The following offers answers to frequently asked questions about the Mini-Grant:

- What does a strong Mini-Grant look like? The Mini-Grant emphasizes collaboration with other organizations and professionals; we believe that such connections have the potential to outlast any specific project and continue to benefit the region into the future. In particular, we aspire to build collaboration across the priority Landscape Resources by targeting "nexus projects" projects that positively impact multiple Landscape Resources: natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources. We see great value in addressing concerns and opportunities in an integrated fashion across the region. The Partnership looks to identify projects that strategically benefit the South Mountain region be it by impacting the resources across the region or by creating an example or innovative approach for addressing challenges and/or opportunities, with lessons that can be diffused throughout the region.
- Who can apply? Municipalities, municipal agencies, counties, academic institutions, and authorized non-profit organizations are all eligible applicants. Authorized organizations must be both tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code and registered with the PA Department of State Bureau of Charitable Organizations.
- When is the deadline for the application? Please see page 1.
- What are the Mini-Grant request limits? Applicants may submit proposals that range in size from a minimum of \$2,500 to a maximum of \$15,000. At the discretion of the review committee, projects exceeding \$15,000 and up to \$25,000 may be considered for projects that have demonstrable regional impact and integrate across multiple priority areas.
- What kinds of projects are eligible? All projects must be within Cumberland, Adams,
 Franklin, or York counties and have significant ties to the assets of South Mountain, the
 working lands that surround the mountain, or the communities tied to both. Multi-year
 funding is not considered within this program; awarded grants close out at the end





of the calendar year following the year in which the grant is awarded. Projects funded as part of the 2023 grant cycle take place between January and December 2024 and must be formally closed by the Grantee by December 31, 2024. Please note: The Mini-Grant is intended to be project-specific; applications should be for concrete, defined projects that have clear objectives, outcomes, and deliverables. The Mini-Grant is not intended to support organizational capacity efforts (printing membership brochures or promotional brochures, for instance, or to facilitate fundraising efforts for the organization) nor provide general operating support for organizations.

- What types of projects have been funded in the past? Land-use planning efforts at the
 municipal level (i.e., updating comprehensive plans or drafting zoning or subdivision
 and land development ordinances) are an acceptable and encouraged use of Mini-Grant
 funding. Visit the Partnership Mini-Grant website and the Mini-Grant Map for locations
 and descriptions of past projects. Examples of past projects include trail and outdoor
 recreation infrastructure development (including signage); habitat restoration efforts;
 ecological research projects (targeting specific, defined management challenges);
 regional resource promotion and guides; resource interpretation; historical preservation;
 adaptive reuse feasibility studies; education programming and development; and
 planning and revitalization studies and supportive efforts.
- How will you decide what applicants receive funding? Please see Final Application Review: Process and Criteria on page 5.
- Who decides what applications are awarded funding? A small committee of Partnership
 partners representing diverse interests and geography review and rank the proposals.
 Participation in the committee is on a voluntary basis, and the committee membership
 changes yearly; partners serving on the committee in any given year may not apply for
 funding in that year's Mini-Grant funding round.
- Should I contact the Partnership leads <u>Tyler Semder</u>, <u>Julia Chain</u>, or <u>Katie Hess</u> to let them know I might be interested? Yes, we encourage you to contact us so we expect your application and can help ensure its completeness. You can contact us through e-mail by clicking on our names.
- Does this Grant program require a match? Yes. A 1:1 match is required.
- When do we have to have the cash match available? Your cash match should be available when you list this match on your grant application. Your grant application





MUST include a support letter from the partner organization(s) that notes the agreed upon donation amount or value. Please also see Criteria B: Budget.

- Can a non-cash match be used? Yes. Non-cash match can include donated materials, professional time, volunteer time, donated land value, and services conducted in-house for which the grantee organization does not receive compensation. Please also see Criteria B: Budget.
- Can I match the Mini-Grant to a DCNR grant? No. The Mini-Grant is funded through a DCNR funding source, and you cannot match DCNR funds to DCNR funds. Please see the PA DCNR Partnerships Eligible and Ineligible Grant Project Activities, Costs, and Match guidelines.
- If awarded a Mini-Grant, how much money would we get up front? Terms can vary, but generally you would receive 90% of the amount through a first invoice and the remaining when the project is closed out.
- What are the terms and conditions of the grant agreement if I am awarded a Mini-Grant? Mini-Grant funds originally come from the PA DCNR as part of the Environmental Stewardship Fund Program. ATC is the grant administrator but requires recipients to comply with the standard DCNR terms and conditions. See our grant contract here.





TIMELINE AND CHECKLIST

Note: Items in red are to be completed by the applicant/grantee and items in gray are to be completed by South Mountain Partnership.

May/June 2023
Applicants submit DIGITAL pre-application
South Mountain Partnership sends letters to applicants
Applicants that are invited to submit a full application should schedule a time to meet and plan with the Partnership for their full application
July 2023
Applicants submit grant full application
August and September 2023
Mini-Grant committee reviews applications
September 2023
Final awards are determined and letters are sent to all applicants
Grantees must fill out and promptly submit the New Vendor Form
November – December 2023
South Mountain Partnership drafts Grant Agreements based on applications
Grantee reviews and makes any needed edits to the contract in coordination with South Mountain Partnership. The Grantee confirms that the Grant Agreement budget is correct.
South Mountain Partnership meets with grantees to review agreement, explain terms and conditions, and discuss any further concerns.
South Mountain Partnership finalizes grant agreements and sends to grantee
Grantee signs the Agreement signature page and sends to South Mountain Partnership to begin project
Grantee must issue a press release about project and copy South Mountain Partnership



November 2023 through Duration of Grant	
Grantee begins implementation of project after the final grant agreement is signed both parties	by
Grantee submits 1st invoices for 90% of the grant award	
Grantee sends periodic updates to South Mountain Partnership	
Grantee must include Acknowledgment of Assistance language in project materials these must be approved by South Mountain Partnership before production	and
Grantee maintains records on all invoices and time spent on project, including partn matches	er
Project Close-out (Must occur by December 31, 2024)	
Grantee must coordinate a press release or event with project completion	
Grantee must complete and submit as a package the four project closeout items whi includes detailed reporting on direct project expenses and time invoices (document available for download <u>here</u>):	
Project Closeout Form	
Project Accomplishments Report	
Success Story Template	
Final Invoice	

CLICK HERE TO FILL OUT THE DIGITAL PRE-APPLICATION FORM







FINAL APPLICATION PREVIEW

SOUTH MOUNTAIN Mini-Grant: 2023 Funding Round Deadline: July 28, 2023

Please note: The following questions will be available digitally for submission. This preview contains the same questions/scoring so you can familiarize yourself with them.

* * *

APPLICATION OVERVIEW

APPLICANTI	NFORMATION					
Organization Name:						
Physical Address:						
Mailing Address (if different from physical):						
Non-Profit (yes/no)? Tax EIN:						
PA Charitable Organizations Number:						
Project Manager/Contact Person:						
Email Address:Phone Number:						
Brief Organization Description:						
PROJECT IN	IFORMATION					
Project Title:						
Total Project Budget:	Anticipated Project Start Date:					
Amount of the Mini-Grant Request:	Anticipated Project Completion Date:					
How many people will this project impact?						



COLLABORATION INFORMATION

ONLY list those project partners that are directly involved in providing cash or non-cash match; letters of support (pdf required) for each partner should be attached to the end of the application.

Organization Name:		
Contact Person:	Email Address:	
Phone Number:		
Organization Name:		
Contact Person:	Email Address:	
Phone Number:		
Organization Name:		
Contact Person:	Email Address:	
Phone Number:		

Please add additional collaborative organizations as needed:



SECTION I: PROJECT NARRATIVE [10 POINTS]

SECTION I-A – BRIEF PROJECT DESCRIPTION. Briefly (one to two paragraphs) describe the proposed project.

SECTION I-A | Answer:

SECTION I-B – FINAL PROJECT DELIVERABLES and PROJECT OBJECTIVES. Explicitly identify and describe the direct deliverables of the project, as well as how these deliverables advance larger, longer-term objectives of your organization and the Partnership.

SECTION I-B | Answer:

SECTION I-C – PROJECT TIMELINE AND SCOPE OF WORK. Outline the anticipated scope of work for the project in a clear, step-by-step manner. Each step in the scope of work should be listed in chronological order, with a target completion date (month and year, example: May 2020) identified for each step. A thorough timeline and scope of work will clearly communicate that the proposed project is ready to go.

SECTION I-C | Answer:

SECTION II: BUDGET [20 POINTS]

SECTION II-A -PROJECT BUDGET. Explain the breakdown of the project budget using the table below.

- 1. Outline the overall budget for project completion; structure this budget around concrete, defined tasks (which should correspond to the timeline created above), with specific costs and labor inputs identified as line items under each task; include billable rates and time for any labor costs or in-kind services.
- 2. List how each line item will be funded. GRANT FUNDS – Which tasks will be paid by this Mini-Grant if the project is funded?CASH MATCH – Which tasks will be paid by applicant or partner funds? NON-CASH MATCH – Which tasks will be covered by donated materials, services, or labor?
- 3. List the match status and funding source.
 MATCH STATUS List "S" for match that is already secured and list "P" for match that is pending.
 FUNDING SOURCE Name the organization providing the funding for each line item.
- 4. Show the total cost of each Task.TOTAL COSTS Add the line items under each task and display in this column.

Note: Total amount of match must be at least 50% of total project cost. Volunteer hourly rate calculated at \$27.20. Donated Professional Services calculated at individual's professional hourly rate. Volunteers under 18 years of age or those who are incarcerated use PA minimum wage of \$7.25 per hour.





Final Application Preview South Mountain Partnership

Mini-Grant: 2023 Funding Grant Round

Total Overall Budget = \$	COSTS		MATCH STATUS	FUNDING SOURCE	TOTAL COSTS	
TASK	GRANT FUNDS	CASH MATCH	NON CASH MATCH			
Task 1: Description						\$
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$	"S" or "P"	Organization	
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$			
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$			
Task 2: Description						\$
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
Task 3: Description						\$
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
Task 4: Description						\$
Insert Task Line Item (e.g. XX hrs x XX \$/hr.)	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
	\$	\$	\$			
Add additional Tasks as needed.						\$
	\$	\$	\$			



SECTION II-B – MATCH STATUS: Provide an explanation of those match sources that are pending and indicate when confirmation is anticipated.

SECTION II-B | Answer:

SECTION III: ALIGNMENT WITH THE PARTNERSHIP [50 POINTS]

SECTION III-A – CONNECTION TO PARTNERSHIP MISSION. Describe how the proposed project advances the mission and goals of the Partnership by advancing the Partnership's mission of "conserving Landscape Resources to enrich the quality of life and sense of place of the South Mountain region's citizens and communities." Specifically, how does your project address each one of the Partnership's goals:

- (1) How does your project Conserve Landscape Resources? (10 pts) conserve, preserve, and/or sustain the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;
- (2) How does your project Promote Landscape Resources? (10 pts) increase public awareness of the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;
- (3) How does your project Create Connections across the Landscape? (10 pts) how will this project emphasize the interconnectedness of the landscape resources and create collaboration amongst a critical mass of public agencies, non-profit and community organizations, businesses, and citizens?

SECTION III-A | Answer:

SECTION III-B – PARTNER COLLABORATION. (10 pts) (1.) Explain how this project will build and sustain collaborating partnerships; more weight will be given to truly collaborative projects that engage diverse partners. (2.) How will participating partners contribute to the project? Partner actions should be described here in sufficient detail so that we can clearly understand each partner's role in the project in addition to information presented in the Budget. (3.) Letters of support (PDF required) from each partner should be attached to the end of this application. Support letters should be written on official letterhead and include:

- The main contact person that will be collaborating, including contact information;
- A description of the partner's role and match contribution (cash or in-kind) to the project.

SECTION III-B | Answer:





SECTION III-C – CONNECTION TO AND INTEGRATION OF LANDSCAPE RESOURCES. (10 pts) How does the project connect with each of the Landscape Resource types (i.e. natural, cultural, recreational, and agricultural resources)? Projects that take action to address multiple Landscape Resources become a "nexus project" (see diagram on page 5) and will receive priority.

- (1) How does your project address Agricultural resources?
- (2) How does your project address Cultural resources?
- (3) How does your project address Natural resources?
- (4) How does your project address Recreational resources?

SECTION III-C | Answer:

SECTION III-D – CONNECTION TO PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES or OUTCOMES. (0 pts but prioritized) Direct connection to a past Partnership activity is not required for a project to be funded, but priority may be given to projects that arise as the result of the Partnership meeting or workshop. Please list any South Mountain Partnership workshop, meeting, and/or activity out of which the proposed project emerged. Examples of workshops or meetings include but are not limited to: Spring/Fall Partnership Meetings, South Mountain Speaker Series, Trail Summit, Water Workshop, or Annual "Power of the Partnership" Celebration.

SECTION III-D | Answer:

SECTION IV: PROJECT EVALUATION & SUSTAINABILITY (20 points)

SECTION IV-A – EVALUATION. (10 pts) How will you know if your deliverables are effective? How will you measure the project's success in achieving its objectives and deliverables, in both the short term and long term? Identify metrics that will assess the effectiveness of the project in both the short and long term. Example: quantifiable data.

SECTION IV-A | Answer:





SECTION IV-B – SUSTAINABILITY. (10 pts) Explain the plan for ensuring that this project and the associated partnerships and collaborations will be sustained well into the future. Provide a detailed explanation of the long-term anticipated needs, the estimated costs, and how those costs will be covered.

SECTION IV-B | Answer:

<u>Acknowledgment of Terms and Conditions:</u> By typing your name below, you acknowledge that you have reviewed a sample agreement that would occur between your organization as the grantee and ATC as the grantor, if the project is selected to receive funding. These required terms and conditions come from the PA DCNR. <u>Click here</u> to view a sample agreement with terms and conditions.

You acknowledge that you understand and are aware of the standard Terms and Condition contained within the agreement.

Please type your name here:

Attachment of Non-profit Status: (Required For Non-profits)

Please attach in your final submission proof of non-profit status (501(c)(3) with the Internal Revenue Service and registration with the Pennsylvania Department of State Bureau of Charitable Organizations).

