



Overview & Priorities

The South Mountain Partnership and the Appalachian Trail Conservancy have funding available to support initiatives within our community that further the goals of the Partnership and advance the capacity of partners throughout the region. This small-scale funding opportunity is intended to support projects not traditionally eligible for the SMP Mini-Grant program. In addition to supporting the SMP mission and goals, priority will be given to ideas that support all communities' ability to access and enjoy the South Mountain Region.

Example projects and initiatives are shared below; however, all projects with connections to conserving, promoting, or connecting people and organizations with common conservation goals are encouraged to apply. Projects that impact the greatest number of people are most competitive.

The Partnership identifies four priority Landscape Resources - natural, cultural, agricultural, and recreational resources (for example: working farms and farmlands, historic places, water and air quality, habitat and wildlife, and trails and parks) - within the South Mountain region, and we welcome project proposals that protect and promote this diversity of resources. Applicants are encouraged to think creatively on how to use these funds to support current needs or encourage these values in our future generations.

Awards from \$1000- \$2000 will be considered, and any requests must be separate from projects submitted through the 2026 SMP Mini-Grant program. **Applications are due June 26, 2026.**

Example projects and initiatives:

Educational Funds

- ✓ Cash prize for K-12 art contest showcasing "what conservation means to me"
- ✓ Sponsor field trip for students to visit a landscape resource (farm, forest, etc.)
- ✓ Support for underserved students to participate in local conferences or trainings

Local business and economy

- ✓ Increasing accessibility of underserved audiences to healthy and local foods
- ✓ Support for a local micro business that focuses on landscape resources or outdoor recreation
- ✓ Marketing materials to advertise a local art collective
- ✓ Creation of a story map or app to highlight regional farmers markets and farm stands

Professional Development

- ✓ Attending conferences, events, and training
- ✓ Apprenticeships, internships, or training programs
- ✓ Professional certifications or continued education

Infrastructure

- ✓ Installation of green, sustainable, solar or EV infrastructure
- ✓ Supplies to develop a school or community garden to promote sustainability and resiliency
- ✓ Building a roadside stand to support food distribution in rural community



Eligibility And Reporting

The South Mountain Partnership's Flex-Grant Fund 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, educational institutions, community groups, and businesses. All projects must be within Adams, Cumberland, Franklin, or York County. Applicants may not apply to both the SMP Mini-Grant Program and Flex Grant funds. Requests up to \$2000 will be considered; match will be considered, but is not required. The South Mountain Partnership's Flex-Grant Fund is funded through private donations to the South Mountain Partnership. 2026 Flex Grants may NOT be used as a match for the SMP Mini-Grant Program.

Scoring:

Applications are reviewed by a small committee of current South Mountain Partnership partners.

Applications will be ranked based on three categories:

1) Alignment with Partnership: 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 at least one of the Partnership's goals

- (1) Conservation of Landscape Resources – sustain and steward the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;
- (2) Promotion of Landscape Resources – increase public awareness of the resources that define the South Mountain landscape;
- (3) Connections across the Landscape – 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.

2) Partner Collaboration - Project builds and sustains collaboration with other partners and/or ideas that support all communities' ability to access and enjoy the South Mountain Region.

3) Project Need: Applicant demonstrates funding would meet an immediate need, such as, expanded access to services, engaging new audiences, allowing exploration of a new idea, or meeting an immediate funding gap

Please ensure that your project application addresses how your project aligns with one or more of these three priorities.



FLEX GRANT PROGRAM 2026

Application and Timeline:

Funds will be available for use in Fall 2026 and all grants must be closed out by December 31, 2027. Grant recipients will need to incorporate an acknowledgment of assistance to SMP in their project. Recipients are required to submit close-out documents detailing how the funds were spent and the impact created through the grant. We will use these documents to celebrate and promote your successes.

Application Submittal Information:

APPLY ONLINE HERE: The form will save your progress in the same browser via your IP address. All questions should be directed to Julia Chain at jchain@appalachiantrail.org. Application due date: June 26, 2026.

Funding Source:

The South Mountain Partnership's Flex-Grant Fund is funded through private donations to the Friends of South Mountain Partnership Fund. The Friends of the South Mountain Partnership has been a Project of The Foundation for Enhancing Communities, fiscal sponsor. This grant is administered by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. The South Mountain 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.