



Mercer County Trail Grant Program Policy

The Mercer County Trail Grant Program provides funds to facilitate the creation of new trails and rehabilitation of existing trails throughout Mercer County. Rehabilitation projects are only intended to improve design or surface type of existing trails, to accommodate more users, or to make trails ADA compliant. Applications will be accepted on January 1, 2026 through September 1, 2026 and reviewed on a rolling basis, until funds are expended.

Funding:

- Grants will match 50% of eligible project costs, up to the following funding caps:
 - Up to \$25,000 per project for a Feasibility Study
 - Up to \$50,000 per project for Design & Permitting
 - Up to \$100,000 per project for Rehabilitation
 - \$500,000 cap for New Construction
 - Projects proposed in urban areas¹ may qualify for a higher percentage of eligible project costs

- Eligible project costs include:
 - Materials
 - Required equipment purchases and rentals
 - Contracted work (labor, engineering, permitting, consulting)

Project Eligibility:

- Trails on public land: owned by municipalities within Mercer County
- Trails on private and nonprofit land: eligible for grants with proof that land and future trails are and will be permanently available to the public, such as a recorded public access easement (not required for a Feasibility Study). An exception may be made for properties leased for 25 years or more.

Applicant Eligibility:

- Municipalities of Mercer County
- Non-profits (registered 501c3) whose mission goals include the planning, construction, and rehabilitation of trails

Limitations:

- No project/trail will be awarded more than one grant within a funding period

¹ "Urban areas" include those within the City of Trenton as well as other urbanized and under-served municipalities, characterized by high population density, low income, and limited access to existing trail usage.

- No recipient will be eligible for more than one grant of the same project type (Feasibility Study, Design & Permitting, Rehabilitation & New Construction) at a time.
- Funding awarded on a rolling basis. If multiple applications are received at the same time and exceed designated funding, priority will be given to new trails that connect to existing trails, parks, urban areas, or places of employment and other amenities. Rehabilitation funding will be prioritized for older, poor condition trails with high use.
- Final determination of eligibility subject to County staff discretion.

Time Limits:

- Time limits for projects are based on project type:
 - Feasibility Studies: 2 years
 - Design & Permitting: 3 years (with opportunity for six-month extension)
 - Rehabilitation & New Construction: 2 years (with opportunity for six-month extension contingent on size of the project)