



Chester County
Parks + Preservation

EXPLORE NATURE, HERITAGE, COMMUNITY

PRESERVATION PARTNERSHIP GRANT PROGRAM

GRANTS TO MUNICIPALITIES AND
NONPROFIT LAND TRUSTS AND CONSERVANCIES

ROUND 34 POLICY MANUAL

**APPLICATION DEADLINE:
FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2022 BY 4:00 P.M.**

CHESTER COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS



How to Submit your Application

Email your application or a link to your application files to:
Judy Thomas at jthomas@chesco.org

OR

Submit one USB flash drive or one unbound hard copy to:
Judy Thomas
Chester County Parks + Preservation
601 Westtown Road, Suite 390
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

Application Deadline:
Applications must be received by 4 p.m. on February 25, 2022



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Section I

Preservation Partnership Grants Overview

The Commissioners of Chester County, Pennsylvania offer two distinct programs that provide funding to municipalities and nonprofit land conservation organizations to permanently preserve significant natural, recreational, agricultural, historic, and cultural land resources; enhance public access to those lands; provide public benefit; and implement County and municipal land use policies. The programs are administered by the Department of Parks and Preservation.

■ **Municipal Program**

- Acquisition Grants
- Park and Trail Improvement Grants

■ **Conservancy Program**

- Acquisition Grants
- Public Benefit Improvement Grants

Municipal Program:

The Municipal Program advances the County's Strategic Plan by awarding funds to local governments to assist them with providing parks, trails, and preserves for their citizens.

■ **Acquisition Grants**

Acquisition grants fund a maximum of 50% of the appraised value to buy land, conservation easements, or trail easements plus eligible transaction costs.

■ **Park and Trail Improvement Grants**

Park and Trail Improvement Grants fund park facility and trail construction costs at a maximum of 50% up to \$250,000 for parks of 20 or more contiguous acres, and a maximum of 25% up to \$100,000 for parks less than 20 acres.

Conservancy Program:

The Conservancy Program advances the County's Strategic Plan by awarding funds to nonprofit land conservation organizations to assist them with preserving land and connecting people to the land.

■ **Acquisition Grants:**

- **Natural Area Preservation** grants fund a maximum of 50% of the appraised value to buy land, conservation easements, or trail easements plus eligible transaction costs.
- **Farmland Preservation** grants fund up to the lesser of \$3,000 per acre or 33% of the appraised value, plus eligible transaction costs for easement purchases and up to the lesser of \$5,000 per acre or 33% of the appraised value, plus eligible transaction costs for fee simple purchases

■ **Public Benefit Improvement Grants:**

Public Benefit Improvement Grants fund up to 50% of eligible costs with a \$50,000 maximum for the construction of publicly accessible trails and trail-related amenities, and

Section I Preservation Partnership Grants Overview

for nature-based improvements on permanently preserved land that will benefit water quality or contribute to habitat restoration.

Contact Information:

For assistance with any aspect of the Preservation Partnership Grants please contact Judy Thomas, Preservation Programs Coordinator, Chester County Department of Parks and Preservation (jthomas@chesco.org or 610-344-5499).

Application Submittal Information:

- Applications must be received by 4 p.m. on February 25, 2022

Email your application or a link to your application files to:
Judy Thomas at jthomas@chesco.org

OR

Submit one USB flash drive or one unbound hard copy to:
Judy Thomas
Chester County Parks + Preservation
601 Westtown Road, Suite 390
West Chester, PA 19380-0990

Section II - Program Details Municipal Acquisition

A. Municipal Acquisition Grants

1. Eligible Applicants

- A. Chester County municipalities (individual or joint applicants)
- B. Land-owning municipal recreation authorities

2. Eligible Projects

- A. Fee simple acquisition of privately owned land for public access and benefit.
- B. Acquisition of conservation easements with provisions for public access.
- C. Acquisition of right-of-way easements for public recreational use (i.e. trails).
- D. Fee simple acquisition of eased or restricted property, if ownership will significantly increase public access and recreational opportunities on the property.
- E. Fee simple acquisition of land owned by non-County governmental agencies, if ownership will significantly increase public access and recreational opportunities on the property.
- F. Transaction costs associated with eligible projects involving the full donation of land or easement to the municipality, up to the limits established by this program. To be eligible, the project must conform to all Preservation Partnership Grant requirements and the County must retain a legal interest in the land or easement.

3. Ineligible Projects

- A. Parcels whose preservation is not consistent with the applicant's or County's adopted policies.
- B. Projects concluded by a signed deed before the County Commissioners have awarded a grant, unless a Waiver for Retroactivity has been granted (see #4 below.)
- C. Leases, term easements, or other legal instruments where the acquisition is not in perpetuity.
- D. The purchase of any structure of monetary value and its appurtenant land, regardless of its proposed use, including storage sheds, garages, and barns.
- E. A parcel that is known or suspected to be contaminated with hazardous substances or hazardous waste unless it has received DEP Act 2 clearance for the proposed use.
- F. Facade easements.
- G. Private rights-of-way.
- H. Lands under County ownership or where Chester County has a legal interest in the property.

4. Waiver for Retroactivity Request

If an applicant anticipates purchasing a property or an easement or incurring costs on a project before the 2022 grants are awarded, a written request for a waiver for retroactivity from the County must be submitted at least six weeks prior to settlement and must be approved by the County prior to settlement. The granting of a waiver ensures that funding requests for projects which are properly submitted before the application deadline remain eligible for consideration by the County Commissioners, even though work on the project has already begun.

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Municipal Acquisition

Waiver for retroactivity requests should be submitted to the Preservation Programs Coordinator. The request should provide a description of the project, parcel number(s), appraised value and amount of County funds likely to be requested, acres to be preserved, and why the waiver is needed.

The granting of a waiver does not guarantee any County funds, nor is any preferential consideration implied. The grant application will be weighed against all other grant applications received.

5. Funding Levels and Eligible Transaction Costs

Acquisition. This program will reimburse a maximum of 50% of the appraised value for fee-simple land acquisition or conservation easement purchases.

Eligible Transaction Costs.

- A. **Appraisals.** The County may reimburse 100% of the cost of one appraisal up to \$3,000 for a successfully completed project. To be eligible for reimbursement, the appraisal must follow the County's [Appraisal Policy](#) and be approved by the County. Only one appraisal will be reimbursed for any approved and completed project.

- B. **Title Insurance.** The County requires that the full value of the rights being acquired be insured. Title insurance is required for fee simple acquisitions and the acquisition of conservation easements. The County may reimburse 100% of the cost of a title insurance policy issued by a title insurance company authorized to conduct business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania based on a County approved appraisal.

- C. **Surveys.** The County requires a boundary survey to be completed for each project, performed by a professional land surveyor registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For successfully completed projects, the County may reimburse 100% of surveys that cost \$7,000 or less. For surveys that cost more than \$7,000, three price quotes are required. The County may reimburse 100% of the lowest price quote or 100% of the actual cost of the survey; whichever is less. This reimbursement policy will be followed regardless of the vendor chosen by the applicant.

The surveyor must visibly mark all property corners with monuments. The applicant must provide the County with the survey plan (with the signature and seal of the surveyor) and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.

- D. **Consultant Costs.** While in-house services and staff time are not eligible for reimbursement, the County may reimburse 100% of eligible consultant costs for a successfully completed project up to a maximum of \$2,000. An itemized, dated invoice, signed by the consultant must be submitted to the County in order for the County to release funds granted to the municipality for this purpose.

Section II - Program Details

Municipal Acquisition

- E. **Transaction Costs Associated with Donation.** This program may fund up to a maximum of 33% of the appraised value of the property or easement to help cover the transaction costs associated with projects involving a full donation of land or easement, up to the limits established by this program (outlined above in A. through D.).

6. Ineligible Costs

- A. Any costs in excess of the grant contract amount.
- B. Costs incurred after the contract termination date.
- C. Costs incurred after reimbursement of County funds.
- D. Any costs not included as “County Funds Requested” on the Financial Summary form in the grant application.
- E. In-house services and staff time.
- F. Demolition costs.
- G. Site clean-up (removal of trash, for example.)
- H. Acquisition cost of any structures of monetary value and their appurtenant property.
- I. Mortgage or loan interest.
- J. Costs associated with an appraisal that the County determines is not in compliance with its appraisal guidelines.
- K. Any other costs not specifically noted as eligible for grant reimbursement.

7. Eligible Sources Matching Funds

- A. Cash
Municipalities are encouraged to use 100% of the County grant funds to leverage federal, state, local, and private funds. Please refer to the Chester County Planning Commission’s [Municipal Grant Opportunities](#) guide, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s [Funding Opportunities](#) web page, and the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition’s [Finding the Green](#) for potential sources of matching funds.
- B. Non-Cash
Landowner donation of value is an eligible source of matching funds. When a landowner is willing to sell their land or development rights (in the case of a conservation easement) for less than the approved appraised value, the difference between the sale price and appraised value can be used as a match for the County’s Preservation Partnership grant funds.

8. Grant Application Limits

- A. A municipality may submit one Municipal Grant Application (whether Acquisition or Park and Trail Improvement) per grant round. (On a case-by-case basis, submitting two applications may be permitted.)
- B. A municipality may have only two outstanding Municipal Grants at a time. For example, if a municipality has two open Municipal Grants in any combination, the County will not consider additional grant requests until one of the open/in-process

Section II - Program Details Municipal Acquisition

grants has been completed and the municipality has received its final reimbursement from the County.

- C. Grants awarded to a multi-applicant project will not count against the limit of outstanding grants or grant submittals.

9. Grant Award Process

The timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners. (Please refer to Grant Process Step by Step on page 25.)

10. Grant Payments

All County grant funds awarded through this program are provided on a reimbursement basis only. Funds are dispersed after the project is complete and after the applicant submits the required documentation.

Reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than 60 days after the contract termination date. County grant funds are only available for expenses incurred prior to the contract date if the County has granted a Waiver for Retroactivity.

The County of Chester requires approximately 30 days to process complete reimbursement requests and generate a check payable to the municipality (grantee). Checks from the County of Chester can only be made payable to the grantee and cannot be made payable to any third party, including title companies.

11. Contract Length

The contract length is three (3) years from the date the grant is awarded.

12. Appraisals Requirements

In order to establish the current value of the property or easement, an Appraisal Report must be submitted with the grant application. If grant funding is awarded for the project, the County, at its sole discretion, may require the applicant to obtain a technical review of the original appraisal or a second appraisal to confirm the original valuation conclusion, prior to the reimbursement of any funds. Please click on the following link for the County's appraisal requirements: [Appraisal Policy](#)

13. Required Permanent Land Restrictions: Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions; and Conservation Easements

A. Fee Simple Acquisition

As a condition of funding reimbursement for fee-simple acquisition projects, the County approved [Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#) (Declaration) must be placed on the property once it is purchased by the municipality to ensure the perpetual preservation of the land for public benefit.

Substantive changes to the pre-approved Declaration are not acceptable. Any minor changes proposed must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed

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Municipal Acquisition

changes (e.g. underlining, redline/strikeout, highlighting, etc.) If the final language submitted is not acceptable, the County will not reimburse the municipality for any costs it incurs relative to this project.

The municipality will coordinate with the County to determine the appropriate land area to be encumbered by the Declaration. Land area excluded from the Declaration is not required to be subdivided. The required survey will identify and describe the area subject to the Declaration and will be recorded along with the Declaration.

B. Conservation Easements

Municipalities that are awarded funds for conservation easements shall use the County approved [Conservation Easement](#) language as a template. Substantive changes to the pre-approved easement language are not acceptable. The municipality must submit draft language that is consistent with the County language and that is only changed to reflect the unique characteristics of the proposed project (e.g. trail corridors and public access, any retained development rights, etc.) Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining, redline/strikeout, highlighting, etc.) from the language provided by the County.

The timeframe for the County to complete its easement review will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but could take as long as one month. If the final language used by the municipality is not acceptable to the County, it will not reimburse the municipality for any costs it incurs relative to the project.

C. Document Recording

For fee simple acquisition, at the time the deed is recorded at the Chester County Recorder of Deeds, the municipality shall also record the Declaration. For conservation easements, the municipality shall record the easement no later than 30 days after receiving the fully executed easement from the County.

D. Municipalities acquiring lands that have been previously restricted by a third party through a conservation easement or any other instrument may be required to secure the written approval of all signatory parties to extinguish the previous conservation easement and replace it with the County Conservation Easement or Declaration. In all cases, the municipality must secure the approval of the third party, acknowledging the County Easement or Declaration and making provisions for ensuring that the property will be accessible and usable to the public.

14. Environmental Hazards

The applicant shall inform the County of any concerns it has regarding the suspected, possible, or probable existence of any hazardous or toxic waste on the proposed project site. A complete copy of any reports pertaining to this issue must be provided to the County as soon as the applicant becomes aware of such reports. The applicant must immediately notify the County if any existing or additional information on this issue

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becomes known by the applicant during the course of the project. The County reserves the right to require the completion of any tests, reports or assessments it deems prudent.

15. Acknowledgement Sign

Prior to reimbursement, public acknowledgement of County funding assistance shall be provided in the format of a permanent sign or plaque at the project site. The placement of the sign should be such that it is visible to the public and/or visitors. If other place name or acknowledgement signage already exists, the County acknowledgement sign should be similarly located. Grantees are encouraged to present the information in a manner that is harmonious with the surrounding area, both in materials and design. Letters must be a minimum of 5/8" high. The sign shall read as follows:

**Funds provided by the Municipal Grant Program, Commissioners of Chester
County, Pennsylvania**

16. Cooperative Projects

Joint applicants shall prepare an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, to be executed by all parties, detailing the financial contributions of each applicant and the responsibilities for the project's future management and operation. The applicants shall include statements to that effect in the Agreement and in the recorded Declaration. Each of the applicants is required to make a significant financial contribution for the project to qualify as a cooperative project. The County reserves the right to review, request alterations, and approve the Agreement, Declaration, and all other documentation.

17. Endorsement Resolution for Land-Owning Municipal Recreation Authority

Land-owning municipal recreation authorities shall submit an endorsement resolution adopted by the elected governing bodies of the municipalities that have representation on the authority. Endorsement resolutions must be included with the grant application.

Section II - Program Details

Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

B. Municipal Park and Trail Improvement Grants

1. Eligible Applicants

- A. Chester County municipalities (individual or joint applicants)
- B. Land-owning municipal recreation authorities

2. Eligible Projects

- A. Construction of recreational facilities within parks such as athletic fields and courts, trails, playgrounds, nature study areas, and pavilions; and site amenities associated with and supporting the recreational improvements. On a case-by-case basis, site amenities as stand-alone projects may be eligible.
- B. Small-scale, nature-based improvements within parks that will benefit water quality or contribute to habitat restoration, such as riparian buffer plantings, native plantings, and rain gardens.
- C. Construction of off-road trails (other than trails within parks.)

For All Park and Trail Improvement Projects

The property on which the improvements will be made must be owned free and clear or under permanent public use easement by the municipality.

All improvements made under this grant program must be properly maintained. Recreational facilities, site amenities, and trails must be open to the public, and depending on the type of project, must improve access for people of all abilities and comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act and associated regulations.

3. Ineligible Projects

- A. Projects that are not consistent with the applicant's or County's adopted policies.
- B. Projects where recreational facility construction has begun before the County Commissioners have awarded a grant, unless a Waiver for Retroactivity has been granted (see #4 below.)
- C. Construction of or improvements to memorials, community centers, meeting and activity rooms, concession buildings, maintenance structures, and like buildings.
- D. Rehabilitation of existing recreational facilities that have deteriorated due to lack of proper maintenance.
- E. Feasibility studies, planning studies, and master site development plans.
- F. On-going maintenance and enforcement.

4. Waiver for Retroactivity Request

If an applicant anticipates incurring County-eligible costs (see number 6. below) on a project before a grant is awarded, a written request for a waiver for retroactivity must be submitted to the County and approved by the County prior to beginning work. The

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Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

granting of a waiver ensures that funding requests for projects which are properly submitted before the application deadline remain eligible for consideration by the County Commissioners, even though work on the project has already begun.

Waiver for retroactivity requests should be submitted to the Preservation Programs Coordinator. The request should provide a description of the project, parcel number(s), amount of County funds likely to be requested, and why the waiver is needed.

The granting of a waiver does not guarantee any County funds, nor is any preferential consideration implied. The grant application will be weighed against all other grant applications received.

5. Funding Levels

- A. Parks that are 20 or more contiguous acres are eligible for up to \$250,000 in County funds with a maximum of 50% of the total project cost in County funding.
- B. Parks that are less than 20 acres are eligible for up to \$100,000 in County funds with a maximum of 25% of the total project cost in County funding. There is a \$250,000 maximum cumulative County contribution for these smaller more localized parks.

6. Eligible Project Costs

The Total Project Cost for County grant purposes consists of:

- A. Material purchases and equipment rentals.
- B. Costs of approved construction contracts with private firms.
- C. Value of donated materials, equipment, and labor. (Cost of donated volunteer non-skilled labor is capped at \$10.00 per hour.)

7. Ineligible Project Costs

- A. Administrative and in-house costs incurred by the municipality including staff salaries (e.g. public works/road crews).
- B. Costs unrelated to the actual construction or installation of the project (professional services such site planning, facility design, engineering, topographic surveys, permits, and site testing, for example.)
- C. Donated value of any or all interests in land owned by the applicant.
- D. Sales taxes on materials purchased.
- E. Any costs incurred prior to the grant award, unless a Waiver for Retroactivity has been granted.

8. Eligible Sources of Matching Funds

- A. Cash

Municipalities are encouraged to use 100% of the County grant funds to leverage federal, state, local, and private funds. Please refer to Chester County Planning Commission's [Municipal Grant Opportunities](#) guide, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's [Funding Opportunities](#) web page, and the Pennsylvania

Section II - Program Details

Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

Growing Greener Coalition's [Finding the Green](#) for potential sources of matching funds.

B. Non-Cash

- Donated materials
- Donated equipment
- Donated skilled labor from contractors
- Donated volunteer non-skilled labor at \$10.00 per hour.

Non-cash contributions may only be attributed to the grantee match. The Grantee may not make a profit by being reimbursed beyond their out-of-pocket costs. Donations that exceed the required match will simply serve to reduce the County funding contribution.

The value and specific type of all donations must be properly documented.

9. Grant Application Limits

- A. A municipality may submit one Municipal Grant Application (whether Park and Trail Improvement or Acquisition) per grant round. (On a case-by-case basis, submitting two applications may be permitted.)
- B. A municipality may have only two outstanding Municipal Grants at a time. For example, if a municipality has two open Municipal Grants in any combination, the County will not consider additional grant requests until one of the open/in-process grants has been completed and the municipality has received its final reimbursement from the County.
- C. Grants awarded to a multi-applicant project will not count against the limit of outstanding grants or grant submittals.

10. Grant Award Process

The timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners. (Please refer to Grant Process Step by Step on page 30.)

11. Grant Payments

- A. All County grant funds awarded through this program are provided on a reimbursement basis only. A maximum of two reimbursement requests will be accepted - one partial reimbursement and a final reimbursement once the project is complete, provided that the corresponding matching funds are also available.
- B. To be eligible for reimbursement, all purchased materials, rentals and/or contracted work must be received and paid for directly by the municipality and acquired in accordance with local, state and federal laws.
- C. County grant funds are only available for expenses incurred prior to the contract date if the County has granted a Waiver for Retroactivity.

Section II - Program Details

Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

- D. Final reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than 60 days after the contract termination date.
- E. The County of Chester requires approximately 30 days to process complete reimbursement requests and generate a check payable to the municipality (grantee). Checks from the County of Chester can only be made payable to the grantee and cannot be made payable to any third party.

12. Contract Length

The contract length is three (3) years from the date the grant is awarded.

13. Site Ownership; and Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions

- A. The property to be improved must be owned or permanently controlled by the applicant. The completed [Certificate of Title](#) must be submitted with the application, certifying ownership by the applicant.
- B. As a condition of funding reimbursement, the County approved [Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#) (Declaration) must be placed on the property to be improved to ensure the perpetual preservation of the land for public benefit.

Substantive changes to the pre-approved Declaration are not acceptable. Any minor changes proposed must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining, redline/strikeout, highlighting, etc.) If the final language submitted is not acceptable, the County will not reimburse the grantee for any costs it incurs relative to this project.

- C. If there is an existing recorded Declaration on the property proposed for improvements, the municipality must submit a copy of it with their grant application.
- D. If the existing Declaration is out of date, or if there is no Declaration currently on the property, the applicant will be required to record the most current version of the Declaration prior to the first request for reimbursement.

14. Environmental Hazards

The applicant shall inform the County of any concerns it has regarding the suspected, possible, or probable existence of any hazardous or toxic waste on the proposed project site. A complete copy of any reports pertaining to this issue must be provided to the County as soon as the applicant becomes aware of such reports. The applicant must immediately notify the County if any existing or additional information on this issue becomes known by the applicant during the course of the project. The County reserves the right to require the completion of any tests, reports or assessments it deems prudent.

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Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

15. Acknowledgement Sign

Prior to reimbursement, public acknowledgement of County funding assistance shall be provided in the format of a permanent sign or plaque at the project site. The placement of the sign should be such that it is visible to the public and/or visitors. If other place name or acknowledgement signage already exists, the County acknowledgement sign should be similarly located. Grantees are encouraged to present the information in a manner that is harmonious with the surrounding area, both in materials and design. Letters must be a minimum of 5/8" high. The sign shall read as follows:

**Funds provided by the Municipal Grant Program, Commissioners of Chester
County, Pennsylvania**

16. Cooperative Projects

Joint applicants shall prepare an Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement, to be executed by all parties, detailing the financial contributions of each applicant and the responsibilities for the project's future management and operation. The applicants shall include statements to that effect in the Agreement and in the recorded Declaration. Each of the applicants is required to make a significant financial contribution for the project to qualify as a cooperative project. The County reserves the right to review, request alterations, and approve the Agreement, Declaration, and all other documentation.

17. Endorsement Resolution for Land-Owning Municipal Recreation Authority

Land-owning municipal recreation authorities shall submit an endorsement resolution adopted by the elected governing bodies of the municipalities that have representation on the authority. Endorsement resolutions must be included with the grant application.

Section II - Program Details Conservancy Acquisition

C. Conservancy Acquisition Grants

1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants are nonprofit land conservation and preservation organizations that:

- A. have a primary purpose of conservation and preservation of open space, parklands, or natural areas for public benefit;
- B. are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
- C. are registered with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations within the Pennsylvania Department of State;
- D. are pre-qualified by the Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) as eligible to receive Land Trust acquisition grants;
- E. and have been in existence for at least 5 consecutive years.

2. Eligible Projects

- A. Fee simple acquisition of privately owned land that provides significant public benefit.
- B. Acquisition of conservation easements that provide significant public benefit.
- C. Farmland Preservation Projects: Fee simple purchases of agricultural land or the acquisition of conservation easements on agricultural land if the project meets the following criteria:
 - i) Minimum 15 net acres of farmland (must net out a minimum of 2 acres around existing residences and support structures as well as access to these areas and any other excluded areas.)
 - ii) Minimum 50% of the parcel in agricultural use.
 - iii) Parcels with less than 15 net acres of farmland with at least 50% of the parcel in agricultural use will be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- D. Acquisition of right-of-way easements for public recreational use (i.e. trails.)
- E. Fee simple acquisition of eased or restricted property, if ownership will significantly increase public access and recreational opportunities on the property.
- F. Fee simple acquisition of land owned by non-County governmental agencies, if ownership will significantly increase public access and recreational opportunities on the property.
- G. Transaction costs associated with eligible projects involving the full donation of land or easement to the nonprofit, up to the limits established by this program. To be eligible, the project must conform to all Preservation Partnership Grant requirements and the County must retain a legal interest in the land or easement.

3. Ineligible Projects

- A. Parcels whose preservation is not consistent with the County's adopted policies.
- B. Projects concluded by a signed deed before the County Commissioners have awarded a grant, unless a Waiver for Retroactivity has been granted (see #4 below.)
- C. Large parcels of land predominantly comprised of class one prime agricultural soils with no public access that are better suited for the agricultural preservation programs administered by the Agricultural Land Preservation Board.

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Conservancy Acquisition

- D. Leases, term easements, or other legal instruments where the acquisition is not in perpetuity.
- E. The purchase of any structure of monetary value and its appurtenant land, regardless of its proposed use, including storage sheds, garages, and barns.
- F. A parcel that is known or suspected to be contaminated with hazardous substances or hazardous waste unless it has received DEP Act 2 clearance for the proposed use.
- G. Facade easements.
- H. Private rights-of-way.
- I. Lands under County ownership or where Chester County has a legal interest in the property.

4. Waivers for Retroactivity Requests

If the nonprofit anticipates purchasing a property or an easement or incurring costs on a project before the 2022 grants are awarded, it must request a waiver for retroactivity from the County at least 6 weeks prior to settlement. The granting of a waiver ensures that funding requests for projects which are properly submitted before the application deadline remain eligible for consideration by the County Commissioners, even though work on the project has already begun.

Waiver for retroactivity requests should be submitted to the Preservation Programs Coordinator. The request should provide a description of the project, parcel number(s), appraised value and amount of County funds likely to be requested, acres to be preserved, and why the waiver is needed.

The granting of a waiver does not guarantee any County funds, nor is any preferential consideration implied. The grant application(s) will be weighed against all other grant applications received.

5. Funding Levels and Eligible Transaction Costs

Acquisition. The direct financial cost to the nonprofit to purchase an interest in property in the following amounts:

- A. Natural Area Preservation projects may receive up to 50% of the appraised value of the land or easement.
- B. For Farmland Preservation projects, fee simple purchases may receive the lesser of \$5,000 per acre or 33% of the appraised value of the land, and conservation easement purchases may receive the lesser of \$3,000 per acre or 33% of the appraised value of the easement.

Eligible Transaction Costs.

- A. **Appraisals.** The County may reimburse 100% of the cost of one appraisal up to \$3,000 for each successful project. To be eligible for reimbursement, the appraisal must follow the County's [Appraisal Policy](#) and be approved by the County. Only one appraisal will be reimbursed for any approved and completed project. Because these funds are only provided for successful projects, the earliest they are available is at settlement.

Section II - Program Details Conservancy Acquisition

- B. **Title Insurance.** The County requires that the full value of the rights being acquired be insured. Title insurance is required for fee simple acquisitions and the acquisition of conservation easements. Because these funds are only provided for successful projects, the earliest they are available is at settlement. The County may reimburse 100% of the cost of a title insurance policy issued by a title insurance company authorized to conduct business in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania based on a County approved appraisal.
- C. **Surveys.** The County requires a boundary survey to be completed for each project, performed by a professional land surveyor registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. For successfully completed projects, the County may reimburse 100% of surveys that cost \$7,000 or less. For surveys that cost more than \$7,000, three price quotes are required. The County may reimburse 100% of the lowest price quote or 100% of the actual cost of the survey; whichever is less. This reimbursement policy will be followed regardless of the vendor chosen by the applicant.

The surveyor must visibly mark all property corners with monuments. The nonprofit must provide the County with the survey plan (with the signature and seal of the surveyor) and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.

- D. **Consultant Costs.** While in-house services and staff time are not eligible for reimbursement, the County may reimburse 100% of eligible consultant costs for a successfully completed project up to a maximum of \$2,000. An itemized, dated invoice, signed by the consultant must be submitted to the County in order for the County to release funds granted to the nonprofit for this purpose.
- E. **Monitoring and Enforcement:** The County may contribute funds to the applicant to monitor and enforce conservation easements and open space covenants at the time those parcels are acquired or eased. This component of the program is not retroactive to previously protected parcels. The County may compensate the nonprofit up to \$3,000 to monitor and enforce the Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions for each fee simple purchase made with County grant funds and up to \$4,000 to monitor and enforce the terms of each conservation easement acquired with County grant funds.
- F. **Transaction Costs Associated with Donation.** This program may fund up to a maximum of 33% of the appraised value of the property or easement to help cover the transaction costs associated with projects involving a full donation of land or easement, up to the limits established by this program (outlined above).

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6. Ineligible Costs

- A. Any costs in excess of the grant contract amount.
- B. Costs incurred after the contract termination date.
- C. Costs incurred after reimbursement of County funds.
- D. Any costs not included as “County Funds Requested” on the Financial Summary form in the grant application.
- E. In-house services and staff time.
- F. Demolition costs.
- G. Site clean-up (removal of trash, for example).
- H. Acquisition cost of any structures of monetary value and their appurtenant property.
- I. Mortgage or loan interest.
- J. Costs associated with an appraisal that the County determines is not in compliance with its appraisal guidelines.
- K. Any monitoring and enforcement costs for parcels that are not part of the grant application.
- L. Any other costs not specifically noted as eligible for grant reimbursement.

7. Eligible Sources of Matching Funds

A. Cash

Nonprofit organizations are encouraged to use 100% of the County grant funds to leverage federal, state, local, and private funds. Please refer to the Chester County Planning Commission’s [Municipal Grant Opportunities](#) guide, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission’s [Funding Opportunities](#) web page, and the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition’s [Finding the Green](#) for potential sources of matching funds.

B. Non-Cash

Landowner donation of value is an eligible source of matching funds. When a landowner is willing to sell their land or development rights (in the case of a conservation easement) for less than the approved appraised value, the difference between the sale price and appraised value can be used as a match for the County’s Preservation Partnership grant funds.

8. Grant Award Process

The timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners. (Please refer to Grant Process Step by Step on page 35.)

9. Grant Payments

This program is typically a reimbursement program. Funds are dispersed after the project is complete and after the applicant submits the required documentation. However, in certain cases, funds may be dispersed before the project is complete if the applicant requires the funding to be in hand in order to complete the real estate transaction.

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Conservancy Acquisition

In all cases, the County of Chester requires approximately 30 days to process complete reimbursement requests and generate a check payable to the nonprofit conservation organization (grantee). Checks from the County of Chester can only be made payable to the grantee and cannot be made payable to any third party, including title companies.

10. Contract Length

The contract length is three (3) years from the date the grant is awarded.

11. Appraisal Requirements

In order to establish the current value of the property or easement, an Appraisal Report must be submitted with the grant application. If grant funding is awarded for the project, the County, at its sole discretion, may require the applicant to obtain a technical review of the original appraisal or a second appraisal to confirm the original valuation conclusion, prior to the reimbursement of any funds. Please click on the following link for the County's appraisal requirements: [Appraisal Policy](#)

12. Required Permanent Land Restrictions: Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions; and Conservation Easements

- A. **Fee Simple Acquisition:** For fee-simple acquisition projects, the County approved [Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#) (Declaration) must be placed on the purchased property to ensure the perpetual preservation of the land for public benefit. Substantive changes to the pre-approved Declaration are not acceptable. Any minor changes proposed must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining, redline/strikeout, highlighting, etc.) If the final language submitted by the nonprofit is not acceptable, the County will not disburse funds.
- B. **Natural Area Conservation Easements:** Nonprofit organizations applying for funds for conservation easements for natural area preservation projects, shall use the County approved [Conservation Easement](#) language as a template. Substantive changes to the pre-approved easement language are not acceptable. The nonprofit must submit draft language that is consistent with the County language and that is only changed to reflect the unique characteristics of the proposed project (e.g. trail corridors and public access, any retained development rights, etc.) Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining, redline/strikeout, highlighting, etc.) from the language provided by the County.

The timeframe for the County to complete its easement review will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but could take as long as one month. If the final language used by the nonprofit is not acceptable to the County, it will not reimburse the grantee for any costs it incurs relative to the project.

- C. **Farmland Conservation Easements:** Nonprofit organizations applying for funds for farmland preservation easements may (but are not required to) use the County's easement template for Natural Area preservation projects. However, if the nonprofit

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chooses to draft its own easement language, it must incorporate the following principles:

- The County will function as a Co-Grantee or Beneficiary with secondary right of enforcement.
- The County will have the right of access annually for the purpose of monitoring.
- The County will be able to access the property at any time if a violation has occurred, is in the process of occurring, or is expected to occur if action is not taken.
- Nothing in the easement shall preclude the right of the landowner to grant, sell, or otherwise convey the right of the public to access the property for public purposes including passive and active recreational use.
- The landowner must have clear title, subordinate the mortgage to the easement, or satisfy the mortgage at the time of settlement.
- The landowner agrees to comply with all federal, state, and local laws regarding the agricultural use and practices on the property.

The timeframe for the County to complete its easement review will be determined on a case-by-case basis, but could take as long as one month. If the final language used by the nonprofit is not acceptable to the County, it will not reimburse the grantee for any costs it incurs relative to the project.

- D. **Document Recording:** For fee simple acquisition, at the time the deed is recorded at the Chester County Recorder of Deeds, the nonprofit shall also record the County's Declaration. For conservation easements, the nonprofit shall record the easement no later than 30 days after receiving the fully executed easement from the County.
- E. Nonprofit organizations acquiring lands that have been previously restricted by a third party through a conservation easement (or any other instrument) may be required to secure the written approval of all signatory parties to extinguish the previous conservation easement and replace it with the County Conservation Easement or Declaration. In all cases, nonprofit must secure the approval of the third party, acknowledging the County Easement or Declaration and making provisions for ensuring that the property will be accessible and usable to the public.

13. Environmental Hazards

The applicant shall inform the County of any concerns it has regarding the suspected, possible, or probable existence of any hazardous or toxic waste on the proposed project site. A complete copy of any reports pertaining to this issue must be provided to the County as soon as the applicant becomes aware of such reports. The applicant must immediately notify the County if any existing or additional information on this issue becomes known by the applicant during the course of the project. The County reserves the right to require the completion of any tests, reports or assessments it deems prudent.

14. Acknowledgement Sign

Prior to reimbursement, public acknowledgement of County funding assistance shall be provided in the format of a permanent sign or plaque at the project site. (On a case-by-

Section II - Program Details Conservancy Acquisition

case basis, this requirement may be waived if site conditions do not allow for the practical placement of a sign.) The placement of the sign should be such that it is visible to the public and/or visitors. If other place name or acknowledgement signage already exists, the County acknowledgement sign should be similarly located. Grantees are encouraged to present the information in a manner that is harmonious with the surrounding area, both in materials and design. Letters must be a minimum of 5/8" high. The sign shall read as follows:

**Funds provided by the Conservancy Grant Program, Commissioners of
Chester County, Pennsylvania**

15. Transfer of Legal Interests in Land Acquired Using County Funds

If a nonprofit intends to transfer any fee simple or partial (conservation easement) interest in land that it acquired with County grant funds, the nonprofit shall submit a written request and a copy of the deed of transfer to the County for its approval at least 60 days prior to the proposed transfer. This requirement does not apply to any land rights retained by the landowner after selling an easement to a nonprofit even if that easement was acquired using County funds. The nonprofit shall not finalize transfer arrangements unless the County has provided written approval of the transfer request. Nonprofits may resell legal interests in land that have been acquired with Chester County grant funds with the following conditions:

- A. Any proposed changes to the County's standard language for Conservation Easements or Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions must be submitted in writing and approved by the County prior to any sale.
- B. The availability of public access shall remain the same or increase.
- C. Establishing an acceptable sale price is at the sole discretion of the nonprofit and the buyer. The County shall receive a percentage of the proceeds from the sale that is equal to the percentage of the County's contribution to the initial acquisition.

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Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

D. Conservancy Public Benefit Improvement Grants

1. Eligible Applicants

- Eligible applicants are nonprofit land conservation and preservation organizations that:
- A. have a primary purpose of conservation, preservation, and stewardship of open space, parklands, or natural areas for public benefit;
 - B. are tax-exempt under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986;
 - C. are registered with the Bureau of Charitable Organizations within the Pennsylvania Department of State; and
 - D. have been in existence for at least 5 consecutive years.
 - E. own or have a legal interest in the land on which the improvements will be made (with the exception of projects on land preserved through the County Agricultural Land Preservation Program as described below in 2.F.)

2. Eligible Projects

- A. Construction of publicly accessible trails.
- B. Construction of trail-related amenities such as trailheads, trail-side facilities, parking areas, and signs.
- C. If pre-approved by the Department of Parks and Preservation for inclusion in the grant application, improvements such as restrooms, water fountains, and construction of or improvements to structures and buildings that make a significant contribution to the benefit the trail provides to the general public. (Pre-approval for inclusion in the application does not guarantee or imply funding or approval by the County Commissioners.)
- D. Improvements that facilitate access and use of trails by persons with disabilities.
- E. Restoration or rehabilitation of trails, including rerouting or repair of areas damaged by trail use, flooding, or erosion; rehabilitation of trail tread and other facilities that have deteriorated over time.
- F. Small-scale, nature-based improvements on permanently preserved land that will benefit water quality or contribute to habitat restoration, such as riparian buffer plantings, native plantings, and rain gardens. (For projects on land preserved through the County Agricultural Land Preservation Program, the nonprofit is not required to own or hold a legal interest in the site of the improvement.)

For trail and trail related projects, the site must be open to the general public at regularly scheduled and posted days and times and the land upon which the trail and any accessory structures are proposed must be permanently designated for public use prior to the release of any County funds.

3. Ineligible Projects

- A. Projects not consistent with adopted County policy.
- B. Projects where construction has begun before the County Commissioners have awarded a grant, unless of Waiver for Retroactivity has been approved (see #4 below.)
- C. Routine maintenance and enforcement.

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Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

- D. Trails not open to the general public.
- E. Trails that are restricted to club members or that are only open during scheduled events.
- F. Planning and feasibility studies.
- G. Educational or interpretive brochures or handouts.

4. Waiver for Retroactivity Requests

If an applicant anticipates incurring County-eligible costs on a project before a grant is awarded, a written request for a waiver for retroactivity must be submitted to the County and approved by the County prior to beginning work. The granting of a waiver ensures that funding requests for projects which are properly submitted before the application deadline remain eligible for consideration by the County Commissioners, even though work on the project has already begun.

Waiver for retroactivity requests should be submitted to the Preservation Programs Coordinator. The request should provide a description of the project, parcel number(s), amount of County funds likely to be requested, and why the waiver is needed.

The granting of a waiver does not guarantee any County funds, nor is any preferential consideration implied. The grant application will be weighed against all other grant applications received.

5. Funding Levels

The County will consider requests to fund up to 50% of eligible project costs with a \$50,000 maximum.

6. Eligible Project Costs

The Total Project Cost for County grant purposes includes:

- A. Material purchases and equipment rentals.
- B. Costs of approved construction contracts with private firms.
- C. Value of donated materials, equipment, and labor. (Cost of donated volunteer non-skilled labor is capped at \$10.00 per hour.)

7. Ineligible Project Costs

- A. Administrative and in-house costs of the applicant.
- B. Costs unrelated to the actual construction or installation of the project (professional services such as site planning, facility design, engineering, topographic surveys, permits, inspections, and site testing, for example.)
- C. Any costs incurred prior to the grant award, unless a Waiver for Retroactivity has been granted.

Section II - Program Details

Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

8. Eligible Sources of Matching Funds

A. Cash

Municipalities are encouraged to use 100% of the County grant funds to leverage federal, state, local, and private funds. Please refer to Chester County Planning Commission's [Municipal Grant Opportunities](#) guide, the Delaware Valley Regional Planning Commission's [Funding Opportunities](#) web page, and the Pennsylvania Growing Greener Coalition's [Finding the Green](#) for potential sources of matching funds.

B. Non-Cash

- Donated materials
- Donated equipment
- Donated skilled labor from contractors
- Donated volunteer non-skilled labor at \$10.00 per hour.

Non-cash contributions may only be attributed to the grantee match. The Grantee may not make a profit by being reimbursed beyond their out-of-pocket costs. Donations that exceed the required match will simply serve to reduce the County funding contribution.

The value and specific type of all donations must be properly documented.

9. Grant Application Limits

A nonprofit may submit one Public Benefit Improvement grant application per grant round and may have a maximum of two Public Benefit Improvement projects open at any one time.

10. Grant Award Process

The timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners. (Please refer to Grant Process Step by Step on page 40.)

11. Grant Payments

- A. All County grant funds awarded through this program are provided on a reimbursement basis only. A maximum of two reimbursement requests will be accepted - one partial reimbursement and a final reimbursement once the project is complete, provided that the corresponding matching funds are also available.
- B. To be eligible for reimbursement, all materials, rentals, and contracted work must be received and paid for by the nonprofit and acquired in accordance with applicable law.
- C. County grant funds are only available for expenses incurred prior to the contract date if the County has granted a Waiver for Retroactivity.
- D. Final reimbursement requests must be submitted no later than 60 days after the contract termination date.

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Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

E. The County of Chester requires approximately 30 days to process complete reimbursement requests and generate a check payable to the nonprofit. Checks from the County of Chester can only be made payable to the grantee and cannot be made payable to any third party.

12. Contract Length

The contract length is 24 months.

13. Acknowledgement Sign

For trail projects, prior to reimbursement, public acknowledgement of County funding assistance shall be provided in the format of a permanent sign or plaque at the project site. The placement of the sign should be such that it is visible to the public and/or visitors. If other place name or acknowledgement signage already exists, the County acknowledgement sign should be similarly located. Grantees are encouraged to present the information in a manner that is harmonious with the surrounding area, both in materials and design. Letters must be a minimum of 5/8" high. The sign shall read as follows:

**Funds provided by the Conservancy Grant Program, Commissioners of
Chester County, Pennsylvania**

For water quality improvement projects, signage is appreciated but not required.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Acquisition

A. Municipal Acquisition

Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting or Site Visit with Program Administrator

- Contact Judy Thomas, Preservation Programs Coordinator at 610-344-5499 or jthomas@chesco.org as early as possible in the project development process to schedule the mandatory project meeting or site visit (as conditions permit.)

Step 2: Submit Complete Application

- Submit the Grant Application package to the Department of Parks and Preservation by 4:00 p.m. on February 25, 2022. A complete Grant Application package consists of the following forms (items 1 – 6) and applicable supporting documentation (items 7 –21).

Forms to Complete:

1. [Grant Application Checklist](#)
2. [Application Summary and Certification](#)
3. [Financial Summary](#)
4. Responses to [Grant Application Questions](#)
5. [Grant Application Resolution](#)
6. [Landowner Letter of Understanding](#)

Supporting Documentation to Include:

7. Signed and attested [grant contract](#) signature page
8. Appraisal Report
9. Copy of any deed or other restrictions currently on the land, if applicable, and a project approval letter from any entity named in that document
10. Agreement of Sale, if available at time of application
11. For conservation easement projects, draft easement language or summary of easement restrictions
12. Current photographs of the site
13. Copy of Capital Improvements Program (CIP), if one has been adopted by the municipality and/or appropriate documentation of budgeting for future recreational and open space needs (one of these two must be submitted)
14. Copy of Resolution adopting CIP or Budget (one of these two must be submitted)
15. Map(s) showing proposed project location, size of parcel(s), public access, the land use and protection status of adjacent parcels, and any other pertinent information
16. Copy of Municipality's Official Map (if one has been adopted) showing property proposed for acquisition
17. For cooperative projects - copy of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement
18. For land-owning municipal recreation authorities - copy of the Endorsement Resolutions
19. Review/Support letter from municipal planning commission

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Acquisition

20. Review/Support letter from municipal parks/recreation/open space commission or committee
21. Letters of funding commitment from all sources contributing to the project

Step 3: County Review of Application

- Application review will begin upon receipt of a complete application, based on the Project Evaluation Criteria shown in Section IV of this document.

Step 4: County Notification of Grant Award to Municipality

- Timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners.
- The County Commissioners will award the grants in a public meeting after the application deadline, and the County Department of Parks and Preservation will return one fully executed copy of the grant contract to the applicant. The contract will specify the maximum amount of funds the County will provide as well as the contract term.
- The County Department of Parks and Preservation will notify applicants that are not awarded grants.

Step 5: Proceed with acquisition

- Proceed with the acquisition, contacting the Preservation Programs Coordinator with any questions or technical assistance needs that arise.
- Provide status reports or additional information as requested by the County at any time during the contract term.

Ongoing: Survey

- The County requires a boundary survey to be completed for each project, performed by a professional land surveyor registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The surveyor must visibly mark all property corners with monuments. The applicant must provide the County with the survey plan (with the signature and seal of the surveyor) and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.
- For successfully completed projects, the County may reimburse 100% of surveys that cost \$7,000 or less. For surveys that cost more than \$7,000, three price quotes are required. The County may reimburse 100% of the lowest price quote or 100% of the actual cost of the survey; whichever is less.
- Submit the survey plan and legal description, three price quotes if applicable, a copy of the invoice, and a copy of the cancelled check during the reimbursement process.

Ongoing: Prepare the Conservation Easement or Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions

- Keep the County informed on the progress of these documents. Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved County language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (such as redline/strikeout or color differences, for example.)

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Acquisition

- For cooperative projects, the governing agencies shall submit unsigned drafts of their Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions, and Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement to the County at least two months prior to settlement for review, potential alterations, and approval.

Ongoing: Prepare the Baseline Documentation Report

- Baseline Documentation Reports are required for easement acquisitions. The report should include the items listed in the [Baseline Documentation Report Checklist](#).

Ongoing: Title Insurance

- Obtain a Commitment for Title Insurance. The County requires title insurance, at a minimum, in the amount of the full value of the land or easement as stated in the appraisal submitted with the grant application.
- 100% of the cost of title insurance is eligible for County funding. For reimbursement, the municipality is required to submit the title commitment and a settlement sheet that shows the actual cost of the title insurance and the value on which it was calculated or an invoice from the title company stating the same information.

Step 6: Technical Review of Appraisal or Second Appraisal Submission to County

- If required by the County, submit a technical review of the original appraisal or a second appraisal to confirm the original valuation conclusion. Please refer to the [Appraisal Policy](#).

Step 7: Submit Draft Agreement of Sale

- Submit the Agreement of Sale to the County for approval prior to execution, if not already submitted with application. The County will review the document to determine its consistency with the Declaration or easement, and the grant application.

Step 8: Submit Final Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions Language or Conservation Easement Language

- Submit the final Conservation Easement or Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions language for County review and approval. Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved County language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining redline/strikeout, or highlighting, etc.) The time frame for easement review will vary and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Completing an easement review may take as long as one month.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Acquisition

Step 9: Prepare for Settlement

- Settlement is the sole responsibility of the municipality and may not occur prior to completing all steps outlined above (unless you have obtained a Waiver for Retroactivity to purchase the property or easement prior to the grant award.)
- **County Easement Signatures/Number of Easement Copies:** Submit original copies of the easement for County signature and notarization. The number of copies to be executed is up to the municipality, taking into account that one fully executed copy will be retained by the County and one will be recorded.
- **County Easement Signatures after Settlement:** If the municipality proceeds with settlement before obtaining the County signatures on the easement, the municipality shall submit copies of the signed easement (each with original signatures) to the County for signing within five working days of settlement.

Step 10: Document Recording

- The deed; the Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions; and the Conservation Easement must all be recorded at the Chester County Recorder of Deeds office.
- For fee simple land acquisition, record the deed transfer documents first, followed by the Declaration.
- For Conservation Easements, record the easement no more than 30 days after the County has executed it.

Step 11: Municipal Reimbursement Request to County

- Requests for the release of County grant funds cannot be processed until all required documentation has been received, reviewed, and accepted. The following items must be submitted 30 days prior to anticipated reimbursement date:
 1. A completed [Reimbursement Request Form](#).
 2. A copy of the final settlement sheet and a copy of the canceled check or certification from the Settlement Agent that the money was received (e.g. via money wire/transfer).
 3. A copy of the recorded deed and Declaration or easement.
 4. Copy of the Commitment for Title Insurance.
 5. A letter from the solicitor certifying adherence to all municipal and other governmental codes, laws, regulations, procedures, policies, and ordinances.
 6. The boundary survey plan and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.
 7. A photograph of the permanent sign, acknowledging County funding assistance, including the required language, visually displayed and installed at the project site and photos showing the site acquired.
 8. For easement projects, executed [1099-S Verification Form](#).
 9. For easement projects, the Baseline Documentation Report.
- The County reserves the right to request further documentation prior to approving the municipality's reimbursement request.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Acquisition

Step 12: County Reimbursement Payment to Municipality

- Processing the payment will take approximately thirty days from the date that the documentation is complete and the reimbursement request approved. Payment will be made by check to the applicant or by direct deposit into the applicant's bank account on record with the County.
- Grantee agrees to accept payment or facsimile of payment at a public meeting of the County Commissioners if requested to do so.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

B. Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting or Site Visit with Program Administrator

- Contact Judy Thomas, Preservation Programs Coordinator at 610-344-5499 or jthomas@chesco.org as early as possible in the project development process to schedule the mandatory project meeting or site visit (as conditions permit.)

Step 2: Submit Complete Application

- Submit the Grant Application package to the Department of Parks and Preservation by 4:00 p.m. on February 25, 2022. A complete Grant Application package consists of the following forms (items 1 - 7) and applicable supporting documentation (items 8-24).

Forms to Complete:

1. [Grant Application Checklist](#)
2. [Application Summary and Certification](#)
3. [Financial Summary](#)
4. Responses to [Grant Application Questions](#)
5. [Grant Application Resolution](#)
6. [Certificate of Title](#)
7. [Cost Estimate Worksheet](#)

Supporting Documentation to Include:

8. Signed and attested [grant contract](#) signature page
9. Site Plan, if available at time of application, or other plans illustrating the project
10. Bid Documents, if available at time of application
11. Copy of any deed restrictions, declarations, or easements restricting the use of the park or trail, if applicable, and a project approval letter from any entity named in that document
12. For a project in an existing park, copy of any Ordinances, Rules and Regulations, and Use/Permit Forms governing the parks use
13. Copy of Capital Improvements Program (CIP), if one has been adopted by the municipality, and/or appropriate documentation of budgeting for future recreational and open space needs (one of these two must be submitted)
14. Copy of the municipal Resolution adopting the CIP or Budget (one of these two must be submitted)
15. Copy of (or web link to) the adopted master site plan, if applicable
16. Map showing proposed project location, the specific site, and public access points
17. Map of the municipality showing all other municipal park and recreational areas within the municipality
18. Photographs of current site conditions
19. For cooperative projects - copy of the Intergovernmental Cooperation Agreement
20. For land-owing municipal recreation authorities - copy of the Endorsement Resolutions

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

21. Review/Support letter from municipal planning commission
22. Review/Support letter from municipal parks/recreation/open space commission or committee
23. Letters of funding commitment from all sources contributing to the project
24. Copy of commitments to donate goods or services and from all donors whose value is included in the required matching funds calculations

Step 3: County Review of Application

- Application review will begin upon receipt of a complete application, based on the Project Review Criteria shown in Section IV of this document.

Step 4: County Notification of Grant Award to Municipality

- Timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners.
- The County Commissioners will award the grants in a public meeting after the application deadline, and the County Department of Parks and Preservation will return one fully executed copy of the grant contract to the applicant. The contract will specify the maximum amount of funds to be provided by the County and the contract terms.
- The County Department of Parks and Preservation will notify applicants that are not awarded grants.

Ongoing: Status Reports

- The municipality must provide status reports throughout the project at the County's request.

Step 5: Contact the Chester County Conservation District (CCCD); Prepare Plans and Specifications

- If the project involves earth disturbance, the engineer must coordinate with the CCCD to determine the level of Erosion and Sedimentation Control planning, review, or permitting required.
- The municipality shall begin preparing plans and specifications.
- If bids are required by the municipality's code, the plans and specifications must be sealed by a licensed architect, landscape architect, or engineer registered to practice in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. These professionals are expected to have experience in recreation and park planning and design.
- The municipality shall submit draft plans and specifications; a current, itemized cost estimate; an updated project schedule; and any additional relevant information for the County to determine consistency with the approved grant application
- If applicable, obtain Letter of Adequacy from CCCD and any required permits.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

Step 6: County Reviews Plans Prior to Bidding

- Submit revised plans, an updated cost estimate, and draft bidding documents to the County for review and approval **at least one month prior** to the bid announcement date.
- The County may prepare a Contract Addendum for municipal execution if significant changes to the scope of work, total cost, or time frame from what was originally presented in the grant application are proposed. The municipality shall execute the Addendum prior to opening the bid.
- If applicable, submit a copy of CCCD Letter of Adequacy for the project and copies of any permits.
- County will review the documents and give the municipality authorization to bid.

Step 7: Municipal Bidding

- After obtaining the County's authorization to bid, the municipality shall advertise and bid the materials and equipment, or the contract(s) for construction.

Step 8: Municipal Contract Authorization from County

- After the bid due date but prior to awarding the contract(s), the municipality shall submit a bid tabulation sheet or form that summarizes base bids and alternates along with its award recommendations for County approval. The municipality shall not award contract(s) without County authorization.
- Before signing any contracts, the municipality should review the certification letter required from its solicitor after the project's completion (see Final Payment Request in [Step 10](#) below).
- County will give approval to the municipality to award the contract and to begin work.
- All proposed construction contract Change Orders shall be submitted to the County for approval prior to municipal execution. Work performed without County approval may not be reimbursed.

Step 9: Document Recording

- Prior to the first request for reimbursement, the municipality shall execute and record the County's most current [Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restriction](#) on the property.

Step 10: Municipal Reimbursement Request to County

- Chester County will reimburse the municipality 25% or 50% of eligible costs up to the maximum amount stipulated in the Grant Contract. No more than two reimbursement requests will be accepted - one partial reimbursement and a final reimbursement once the project is complete.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

- The municipality must submit the following documentation to support its reimbursement request:
 1. Completed Reimbursement Request Form and accompanying Cost Summary Worksheet.
 2. A copy of all invoices and municipality's corresponding canceled check or other proof of payment for each item being requested for reimbursement.
 3. Documentation of the value of any donated goods or services eligible for matching fund credit.
 4. A copy of the recorded Declaration including legal description and map of encumbered land.
 5. Photographs of current site conditions showing work completed to date.

- For the Final Payment request, the municipality must also submit the following:
 1. A letter from the municipal solicitor certifying that the project is complete, that all liens and bonds have been satisfied, and that there are no outstanding payments to contractors or suppliers. This letter shall attest that in the course of the project, the Municipality:
 - a. Followed all applicable laws, bidding requirements, regulations, codes, policies and procedures, etc.
 - b. Was reviewed and approved by applicable State agencies such as (but not limited to) the PA Historical and Museum Commission, the departments of Environmental Protection, Labor and Industry, Transportation and/or other state agencies as appropriate.
 - c. Is in compliance with the Flood Plain Management Act 166 of 1979, and wetlands regulations.
 - d. Complies with the Architectural Barriers Act of 1968; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990; and the 2010 ADA Standards for Accessible Design.
 - e. Operated in compliance with Pennsylvania prevailing wage rates as/if required. Compliance with federal wage rates may also be required if federal funds are used.
 - f. Conducted itself in accordance with the PA Human Relations Act regulations for nondiscrimination and equal opportunity.
 - g. Obtained all necessary County, State and Federal approvals and permits.
 2. A copy of the Notice of Termination for any permits, if applicable.
 3. A photograph of the permanent sign, acknowledging County funding assistance, including the required language, visually displayed and installed at the project site.
 4. Photos of the completed project.

- The County reserves the right to request further documentation prior to approving the municipality's reimbursement request.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Municipal Park and Trail Improvements

Step 11: County Reimbursement Payment to Municipality

- Processing the payment will take approximately thirty days from the date that the documentation is complete and the reimbursement request approved. Payment of the appropriate funds will be made by check to the municipality or by direct deposit into the municipality's bank account on record with the County.
- Grantee agrees to accept payment or facsimile of payment at a public meeting of the County Commissioners if requested to do so.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Acquisition

C. Conservancy Acquisition

Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting or Site Visit with Program Administrator

- Contact Judy Thomas, Preservation Programs Coordinator at 610-344-5499 or jthomas@chesco.org as early as possible in the project development process to schedule the mandatory project meeting or site visit (as conditions permit.)

Step 2: Submit Complete Application

- Submit the Grant Application package to the Department of Parks and Preservation by 4:00 p.m. on February 25, 2022. A complete Grant Application package consists of the following forms (items 1 - 5) and applicable supporting documentation (items 6 through 15):

Forms to Complete:

1. [Grant Application Checklist](#)
2. [Application Summary and Certification](#)
3. [Financial Summary](#)
4. Responses to [Grant Application Questions](#)
5. [Landowner Letter of Understanding](#)

Supporting Documentation to Include:

6. Signed and attested [grant contract](#) signature page
7. Executed resolution from the Board of the nonprofit agreeing to apply for the grant and to accept the terms of the grant contract and the Preservation Partnership Grant Program
8. Appraisal Report
9. Copy of any deed or other restrictions currently on the land, if applicable, and a project approval letter from any entity named in that document
10. Agreement of Sale, if available at time of application
11. For conservation easement projects, draft easement language or summary of easement restrictions
12. Current photographs of the site
13. Map(s) showing proposed project location, size of parcel(s), public access, the land use and protection status of adjacent parcels, and any other pertinent information
14. Letters of funding commitment from all sources contributing to the project
15. Copy of a letter to the municipality in which the project is located, notifying them about the project and giving them an opportunity to comment on it

Step 3: County Review of Application

- Application review will begin upon receipt of a complete application, based on the Project Evaluation Criteria shown in Section IV of this document.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Acquisition

Step 4: County Notification of Grant Award to Nonprofit Organization

- Timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioner.
- The County Commissioners will award the grants in a public meeting after the application deadline, and the County Department of Parks and Preservation will return one fully executed copy of the grant contract to the nonprofit. The contract will specify the maximum amount of funds the County will provide as well as the contract term.
- The Department of Parks and Preservation will notify applicants that are not awarded grants.

Step 5: Proceed with the Acquisition

- Proceed with the acquisition, contacting the Department of Parks and Preservation with any questions or technical assistance needs that arise.
- Provide status reports or information as requested by the County at any time during the contract term.

Ongoing: Survey

- The County requires a boundary survey to be completed for each project, performed by a professional land surveyor registered in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.
- The surveyor must visibly mark all property corners with monuments. The applicant must provide the County with the survey plan (with the signature and seal of the surveyor) and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.
- For successfully completed projects, the County may reimburse 100% of surveys that cost \$7,000 or less. For surveys that cost more than \$7,000, three price quotes are required. The County may reimburse 100% of the lowest price quote or 100% of the actual cost of the survey; whichever is less.
- Submit the survey plan and legal description, three price quotes if applicable, a copy of the invoice, and a copy of the cancelled check during the reimbursement process.

Ongoing: Prepare Conservation Easement or Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions

- Keep the County informed on the progress of these documents. Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved County language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (such as redline/strikeout or color differences, for example.)

Ongoing: Prepare the Baseline Documentation Report

- Baseline Documentation Reports are required for easement acquisitions. The report should include the items listed on the [Baseline Documentation Report Checklist](#).

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Acquisition

Ongoing: Title Insurance

- Obtain a Commitment for Title Insurance. The County requires title insurance, at a minimum, in the amount of the full value of the land or easement as stated in the appraisal submitted with the grant application.
- 100% of the cost of title insurance is eligible for County funding. For reimbursement, the nonprofit is required to submit a settlement sheet that shows the actual cost of the title insurance and the value on which it was calculated or an invoice from the title company stating the same information.

Step 6: Technical Review of Appraisal or Second Appraisal

- If required by the County, the nonprofit shall submit a technical review of the original appraisal or a second appraisal to confirm the original valuation conclusion. Please refer to the [Appraisal Policy](#).

Step 7: Submit Draft Agreement of Sale

- Submit the Agreement of Sale to the County for approval prior to execution, if not already submitted with application. The County will review the document to determine its consistency with the Declaration or easement, and the grant application.

Step 8: Submit Final Conservation Easement Language or Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions Language

- Submit the final Conservation Easement or Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions language for County review and approval. Any proposed additions or modifications to the pre-approved County language must be submitted in a format that clearly identifies the proposed changes (e.g. underlining redline/strikeout, or highlighting, etc.) The time frame for easement review will vary and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Completing an easement review may take as long as one month.

Step 9: Prepare for Settlement

- Scheduling settlement is the sole responsibility of the nonprofit and may not occur prior to completing all steps outlined above (unless you have obtained a Waiver for Retroactivity to purchase the property or easement prior to the grant award).
- **Timing County Funds:** If County funds are needed prior to or at settlement, please allow at least 30 days for the County to process the payment request and generate a check (payable to the nonprofit.) Please take this time frame into account when scheduling settlement. Document submission requirements for payment are listed in Step 11 below, and on the [Reimbursement Request](#) form.
- **County Easement Signatures/Number of Easement Copies:** Submit original copies of the easement for County signature and notarization. The number of copies to be executed is up to the nonprofit, taking into account that one fully executed copy will be retained by the County and one will be recorded.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Acquisition

- **County Easement Signatures after Settlement:** If the nonprofit proceeds with settlement before obtaining the County signatures on the easement, the nonprofit shall submit copies of the signed easement (each with original signatures) to the County for signing within five working days of settlement.

Step 10: Document Recording

- The Deed; Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions; and the Conservation Easement must all be recorded at the Chester County Recorder of Deeds office.
- For fee simple land acquisition, record the deed transfer documents first, followed by the Declaration.
- For Conservation Easements, record the easement no more than 30 days after the County has executed it.

Step 11: Nonprofit Reimbursement Request to County

- Requests for the release of County grant funds cannot be processed until all required documentation has been received, reviewed, and accepted. In certain cases, funds may be dispersed before the project is complete if the applicant requires the funding to be in hand in order to complete the real estate transaction. Document submission requirements are shown below and on the [Reimbursement Request](#) form.

For reimbursement prior to settlement, the following items must be submitted and approved at least 30 days prior to settlement:

- [Reimbursement Request](#) Form and Attachments Checklist.
- Copy of the signed agreement of sale.
- A complete final draft of the Conservation Easement or Declaration language approved by the County.
- Copy of the property survey plan and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.
- Copy of the estimated preliminary Settlement Sheet.
- Copy of the Commitment for Title Insurance.
- Copies of invoices and cancelled checks (or other proof of payment) for indirect acquisition costs for which reimbursement will be sought, and where applicable, 3 survey quotes.

Following settlement, the nonprofit must submit the following items:

- a copy of the recorded deed and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions for fee-simple projects or a copy of the recorded Conservation Easement for easement purchases.
- For easement projects, Baseline Documentation Report.
- Copy of the final settlement sheet.
- For easement projects, one copy of the signed 1099-S Verification Form.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Acquisition

For grant reimbursement to be paid after settlement, the following items must be submitted 30 days prior to anticipated reimbursement date:

- [Reimbursement Form](#) and Attachments Checklist.
 - For easement projects, Baseline Documentation Report.
 - Copy of the signed agreement of sale.
 - For fee simple purchases, a copy of the recorded deed and Declaration of Covenants, Conditions and Restrictions. For easement purchases, a copy of the recorded Conservation Easement.
 - Copy of the property survey plan and legal description in both hard copy and .pdf format.
 - Copy of the final Settlement Sheet.
 - Copy of the Commitment for Title Insurance.
 - Copies of invoices and cancelled checks (or other proof of payment) for indirect acquisition costs for which reimbursement will be sought, and where applicable, 3 survey quotes.
 - For easement projects, one copy of the signed 1099-S Verification Form.
- The County reserves the right to request further documentation for any reason prior to processing the funding request.

Step 12: County's Payment to Nonprofit

- Processing the payment will take approximately thirty days from the date that the documentation is complete and the reimbursement request approved. Payment will be made by check to the applicant or by direct deposit into the applicant's bank account on record with the County.
- Grantee agrees to accept payment or facsimile of payment at a public meeting of the County Commissioners if requested to do so.

Step 13: Submit Final Documentation to County

- If funds were provided prior to settlement, submit final settlement sheet; recorded deed and Declaration or easement; baseline documentation report for easement projects; and the 1099-S Verification Form for Conservation Easements Projects.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

D. Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

Step 1: Pre-Application Meeting or Site Visit with Program Administrator

- Contact Judy Thomas, Preservation Programs Coordinator at 610-344-5499 or jthomas@chesco.org as early as possible in the project development process to schedule the mandatory project meeting or site visit (as conditions permit.)

Step 2: Submit Complete Application

- Submit the Grant Application package to the Department of Parks and Preservation by 4:00 p.m. on February 25, 2022. A complete Grant Application package consists of the following forms (items 1 – 5) and applicable supporting documentation (items 6 through 16):

Forms to Complete:

1. [Grant Application Checklist](#)
2. [Application Summary and Certification](#)
3. [Financial Summary](#)
4. Responses to [Grant Application Questions](#)
5. [Cost Estimate Worksheet](#)

Supporting Documentation to Include

6. Signed and attested [Grant Contract](#) signature page
7. Executed resolution from the Board of the nonprofit agreeing to apply for the grant and to accept the terms of the grant contract and the Preservation Partnership Grant Program
8. Copy of any deed restrictions, declarations, or easements restricting the use of the land on which the project will be built
9. Copy of any relevant ordinances, rules, or regulations governing the use of the land on which the project will be built
10. Site Plan, if available at time of application, or other plans illustrating the project
11. Map showing other parks, recreational areas, and preserved open spaces in the general project area
12. Photographs of current site conditions
13. Copy of a letter to the municipality in which the project is located, notifying them about the project and giving them an opportunity to comment on it
14. Letters of funding commitment from all sources contributing to the project
15. Copy of commitments to donate goods or services from all donors whose value is included in the required matching funds calculations
16. Project approval letter from the landowner if project area is not owned by the applicant

Step 3: County Review of Application

- Application review will begin upon receipt of a complete application, based on the Project Evaluation Criteria shown in Section IV of this document.

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

Step 4: County Notification of Grant Award to Nonprofit

- Timing and amount of any grant award is at the sole discretion of the County Commissioners.
- The County Commissioners will award the grants in a public meeting after the application deadline, and the County Department of Parks and Preservation will return one fully executed copy of the grant contract to the nonprofit. The contract will specify the maximum amount of funds the County will provide as well as the contract terms.
- The Department of Parks and Preservation will notify applicants that are not awarded grants.

Ongoing: Status Reports

- The nonprofit must provide status reports throughout the project at the County's request.

Step 5: Contact the Chester County Conservation District (CCCD); Prepare Plans and Specifications

- If the project involves earth disturbance, the nonprofit must coordinate with the CCCD to determine the level of Erosion and Sedimentation Control planning, review, or permitting required.
- The nonprofit shall begin preparing plans and specifications.
- If applicable, obtain Letter of Adequacy from CCCD and any required permits.

Step 6: Submit Draft Plans and Specifications to County for Review

- The nonprofit shall submit draft plans and specifications; a current, itemized cost estimate; an updated project schedule; and any additional relevant information for the County to determine consistency with the approved grant application.
- If applicable, submit the CCCD Letter of Adequacy to the County, and obtain any required permits.

Step 7: Authorization to Proceed

- The nonprofit shall submit a final cost estimate, construction plans and details, and draft contract language (if contracted labor is to be used) for review and approval by the County before entering into a construction agreement or beginning construction.
- The County may prepare an Addendum to the Grant Contract if significant changes to the scope of work, total cost, or time frame from what was originally presented in the Grant Application are proposed.
- County will give approval to the nonprofit to award the contract and to begin work.

Step 8: Reimbursement Request

- The County will reimburse the nonprofit up to the maximum amount stipulated in the Grant Contract, consistent with the matching aspects of the program. No more

Section III – Grant Process Step by Step Conservancy Public Benefit Improvements

than two reimbursement requests will be accepted - one partial reimbursement and a final reimbursement once the project is complete.

- The nonprofit must submit the following documentation to support its reimbursement request:
 1. Completed Reimbursement Request Form and accompanying Cost Summary Worksheet.
 2. A copy of all invoices and nonprofit's corresponding canceled checks or other proof of payment for each item being requested for reimbursement.
 3. Documentation of the value of any donated goods and services eligible for matching fund credit.
 4. A copy of the recorded conservation easement or declaration language (if applicable.)
 5. Photographs of the completed project (for partial payments, photographs of current site conditions showing County grant funded work completed to date.)
 6. For the final payment, a photograph of the permanent sign, acknowledging County funding assistance, including the required language, visually displayed and installed at the project site, if applicable.

- The County reserves the right to request further documentation prior to approving the nonprofit's reimbursement request.

Step 9: County Payment to Nonprofit

- Processing the payment will take approximately thirty days from the date that the documentation is complete and the reimbursement request approved. Payment of the appropriate funds will be made by check to the nonprofit or by direct deposit into the nonprofit's bank account on record with the County.
- Nonprofit agrees to accept payment or facsimile of payment at a public meeting of the County Commissioners if requested to do so.

Section IV

Project Evaluation Criteria

Project applications will be evaluated using the criteria listed below. The County strives to make sound financial investments - stretching its dollar by preserving the most acreage with the least amount of County funds, and focusing on projects that provide the most benefit to its citizens.

1. Level of County Funds Requested

- Percentage of the project being funded by the County
- County cost per acre of preserved land (if applicable)
- Other funding sources and amounts

2. Extent of Public Benefit

- **For acquisition projects:**
 - level, type, and timing of public access
 - connectivity and linkages to other publicly accessible and permanently preserved parcels
 - number of development rights retained
 - environmental, economic, health, and other public benefits
- **For park and trail improvement and public benefit improvement projects:**
 - level and type of public access
 - proposed uses
 - proposed area of impact
 - connectivity and linkages to other publicly accessible and permanently preserved parcels
 - environmental, economic, health, and other benefits

3. Project Readiness

- **For acquisition projects:**
 - status of negotiations and agreement of sale
 - status of project matching funds and outstanding funding needs
- **For park and trail improvement and public benefit improvement projects:**
 - status of plans, engineering and permitting
 - status of project matching funds and outstanding funding needs

4. Administrative/Organizational Capacity

- Ability of applicant to complete the project within the grant timeframe

5. Commitment to Stewardship and Maintenance of the Property

6. Extent to which the Project Implements County and Local Adopted Plans and Policies

Appendix Links to Forms and Other Documents

Municipal Acquisition Grant

Application Forms

- [Grant Application Checklist](#)
- [Application Summary and Certification](#)
- [Financial Summary](#)
- [Grant Application Questions](#)
- [Municipal Resolution](#)
- [Landowner Letter of Understanding](#)
- [Grant Contract](#)

Reimbursement Forms

- [Reimbursement Request for Acquisition Projects](#)
- [1099-S Verification Form](#)
- [Baseline Documentation Report Checklist for Conservation Easements](#)

Other Documents

- [Appraisal Policy](#)
- [Conservation Easement](#)
- [Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#)

Municipal Park and Trails Improvement Grant

Application Forms

- [Grant Application Checklist](#)
- [Application Summary and Certification](#)
- [Financial Summary](#)
- [Grant Application Questions](#)
- [Municipal Resolution](#)
- [Certificate of Title](#)
- [Cost Estimate Worksheet](#)
- [Grant Contract](#)

Reimbursement Forms

- [Partial Reimbursement Request for Park and Trail Improvement Projects](#)
- [Final Reimbursement Request for Park and Trail Improvement Projects](#)
- [Value of Donated Labor Received](#)

Other Documents

- [Declaration of Public Trust, Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#)

Appendix Links to Forms and Other Documents

Conservancy Acquisition Grant

Application Forms

- [Grant Application Checklist](#)
- [Application Summary and Certification](#)
- [Financial Summary](#)
- [Grant Application Questions](#)
- [Landowner Letter of Understanding](#)
- [Grant Contract](#)

Reimbursement Forms

- [Reimbursement Request for Acquisition Projects](#)
- [Baseline Documentation Report Checklist for Conservation Easements](#)
- [1099-S Verification Form](#)

Other Forms and Documents

- [Appraisal Policy](#)
- [Conservation Easement](#)
- [Declaration of Covenants, Conditions, and Restrictions](#)

Conservancy Public Benefit Improvement Grant

Application Forms

- [Grant Application Checklist](#)
- [Application Summary and Certification](#)
- [Financial Summary](#)
- [Application Questions for Public Benefit Improvement Projects](#)
- [Cost Estimate Worksheet](#)
- [Grant Contract](#)

Reimbursement Forms

- [Partial Reimbursement Request for Public Benefit Improvement Projects](#)
- [Final Reimbursement Request for Public Benefit Improvement Projects](#)
- [Value of Donated Labor Received](#)