

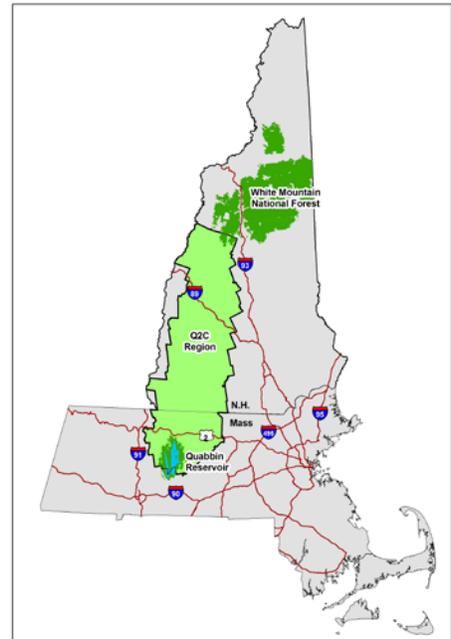


Request for Proposals

Q2C Trail Grants Program 2018 Grant Round

The Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) will award its seventh round of grants to support trail projects in the “Quabbin-to-Cardigan” region of western New Hampshire and north-central Massachusetts. The region spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir northward to the southern boundary of the White Mountain National Forest, and is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the Q2C region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in central New England and is a key headwater of the Merrimack and Connecticut rivers.

Launched in 2003, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership is a collaborative effort of more than twenty private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the Q2C landscape. The partners share a vision of conserving (on a strictly willing-seller/donor basis) the region’s most ecologically significant forests and key connections between them for wildlife passage and human recreation. In 2007, the Q2C Partnership completed a strategic conservation plan for the region that combines state-of-the-art natural resource data with the expertise and experience of the partner organizations.



In 2009, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership launched its Land Conservation Grants program, which underwrites transaction costs—appraisals, surveys, title research, staff time, etc.—on key land conservation transactions in the region. To date, the grants program has funded 89 separate projects that have or will have conserved over 30,000 acres of land.

In 2013, the Q2C Partnership began offering small grants to support the development, improvement, and maintenance of hiking trails in the Q2C region. Over 43 trail projects have been funded and some \$247,000 has been awarded to partners to improve nearly 70 miles of trails within the region, conduct trail planning, develop parking areas, signs, trail maps, and trail guides, and even purchase important trail lands. As with our land conservation grants program, the trail grants are awarded through a competitive process and are available for projects in both the New Hampshire and Massachusetts portions of the Q2C.

The Maximum grant is \$10,000. The Grantee is required to match funds with a minimum of 25% cash match of the grant award. The written permission of relevant landowner(s) is required at the time of application.

Q2C Trail Grants Program

2018 Grant Round Application Guidelines

Eligible Projects

Q2C Trail Grant funds may be used for:

- Development of new trails;
- Maintenance and/or restoration of existing trails;
- Purchase or rental of tools or other equipment need for trail work (see below);
- Development and/or rehabilitation of trailside and trailhead facilities, signs, kiosk, etc.;
- Educational projects for trail safety and/or environmental education;
- Other activities - Feasibility studies, trail guides, project planning, mapping, trail work trainings.

Funded projects must be located in the Quabbin-to-Cardigan region. (See list of towns.) Applications from entities outside the region will be considered so long as the actual proposed project is inside the region.

Eligible Expenses:

- Unskilled labor: Work performed outside of the workers'/volunteers' professional capacity.
- Skilled labor: Work performed within the workers'/volunteers' professional capacity.
- Service contracts: Contracted services for any combination of labor, equipment rental and operation, and/or materials.
- Materials: Lumber, steel, concrete, stone, aggregates, fasteners, culverts, mulch, seed, etc.
- Equipment rental: heavy and light equipment used specifically on trail project.
- Trail tools purchase: chainsaws, shovels, picks, mattocks, rakes, etc. (Equipment purchased with Q2C funds may only be used for trail construction/maintenance tasks.)
- Design & engineering: May be included, only through use of a professionally licensed and registered engineer or trail design planner. Should be only a relatively small portion of the grant request.
- Permits/reviews: Actual costs incurred for any required state or local permit or review requirements.
- Trail signs: Materials for or pre-fabricated signs for trail information, guidance, or restrictions.
- Brochures/maps: Printed materials for trail information and guidance.

Grantees are required to provide documentation of the purchase and/or rental of materials, equipment, and contract services associated with any awarded grant. Proper documentation will be required in order to receive grant funds.

Expenses incurred before January 1, 2018 are not eligible for funding through this grant round.

Ineligible Projects

- Acquisition of easements or land for trails or trailheads
- Funds for administration time, meeting time, travel time, passenger vehicle rental, or food items
- Equipment including groomers, drags, tractors, ATVs, etc.
- Purchase of equipment not directly needed for trail project
- Construction of paths or sidewalks along or adjacent to public roads, paving of trails

Eligible Applicants

The following entities may apply to and receive funding from Q2C Trail Grant program:

- Nonprofit tax exempt 501(c)(3) organizations;
- State or federal agencies that have trails and/or land conservation and stewardship as their primary function;
- Local governments.

No other entities, including individuals, may apply to or receive funding from this grant program. Private for-profit trail systems are ineligible. Applicants must designate one project administrator who will be responsible for coordinating the submission and receipt of all grant documents and who will be the primary contact for any questions or issues related to the grant.

While there can be only one applicant per project, the Q2C grants program welcomes partnerships, especially those that encourage volunteerism and community involvement. In particular, volunteer trail groups are encouraged to submit projects via partnerships with a non-profit or public agency, or local government.

Grant Amounts/Match Requirements:

Maximum grant amount per project is \$10,000. Applicants may only submit one application for this grant round.

The Q2C grants program has a “cash” match requirement. All applicants must provide matching funds of a minimum of **25%** of the grant award. Cash match does not include any “in-kind” gifts.

The Q2C grants program also strongly encourages applicants to provide “non-cash” match in the form of volunteer labor and other in-kind contributions. Non-cash match may consist of any funds or the fair market value of materials and services provided in-kind at the applicant’s expense or donated by a third party. The value of volunteer labor should also be counted as non-cash match. For the fall 2018 grant year, unskilled volunteer labor is rated at \$18.58/hour and skilled volunteer labor is at fair market value. Grantees must be able to document and justify skilled labor value. Labor provided by employees of the applicant organization and/or partners (i.e. town or government employees, public agency employees, non-profit org. employees, etc.) may be credited at their wage plus benefits.

How to Apply:

Applicants should provide complete and concise information regarding proposed project work using the Q2C application and budget form provided on the website (www.q2cpartnership.org). All necessary labor, materials, equipment, methods and costs must be clearly described. Items and expenses that are omitted from the project description (and budget) will not be considered for reimbursement without prior approval.

In addition to the completed application and budget form, the following must be included for an application to be considered complete:

- **Applicant authorization:** Applications must include written permission from an executive director, agency head, municipal governing body, or other staff with legal and fiduciary authority to enter into grant agreements. For applications from municipalities, the application must include formal permission from the applicant organization for the project administrator to enter into a grant contract.
- **Landowner Permission:** Applications must include written permission from the property owner(s) indicating that they approve of the proposed project and support the grant application.

- **Documentation of any and all permits** required (wetlands, etc.) for the project from local, state, or federal regulatory agencies. If permits have been secured, please provide copies with application. If permitting is in process, please provide current status and timeframe for receipt. No Q2C funds will be released for any awarded project until all required permits have been documented.

Selection Committee

- All grants will be reviewed by a volunteer Q2C Selection Committee and the committee will make recommendations for individual grant awards.
- Not all applicants may receive funding.

Grant Agreement

Applicants who receive a grant will be required to sign a grant agreement that addresses the following:

- Term of the Grant
- Grant amount and required cash match
- Approval and documentation procedures for any project amendments
- Project reporting requirements
- Reimbursement

Grant payments:

Q2C grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must incur costs for work actually completed. At project completion, the grantee will submit a request for reimbursement along with a final budget and attach any cancelled checks and/or paid-in-full receipts. Grantees must also submit documentation of completed match. Expenses and items may not be reimbursed if they are not included within the original project proposal and budget. No partial reimbursements will be made.

The project should be completed and all grant funds spent within 1.5 years from the date of the grant award. (*Expenses incurred before January 1, 2018 are not eligible for funding through this grant round.*)

Application Deadline:

Completed applications must be received no later than 5:00 p.m. on October 15, 2018. Completed applications may be submitted electronically to ccolton@forestsociety.org. Completed applications may also be sent by mail, and must be *postmarked* no later than **October 15, 2018**. Mail applications to: Connie Colton, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301.

Successful grant applicants will be notified in late November 2018.

For questions regarding the grant program and the application process, please contact: Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945 x316 or bhotz@forestsociety.org.

For more information on the Quabbin-to-Cardigan region and conservation plan, grant application materials, maps, a list of towns in the region, etc., visit the “grants” section of www.q2cpartnership.org. If you need help determining whether your project is eligible for funding, please call Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945.

The Q2C Trail Grants program is privately funded and administered by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests on behalf of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership.

The Q2C Partnership reserves the right to modify this and other application materials in future grant rounds, based on experience gained from administering the program, changes in funding and/or legal requirements.

July 2018