

VOREC Community Grant Program Grant Administration Guide

This Grant Administration Guide outlines key responsibilities of the Grantee in administering their VOREC Community Grant, from tracking grant expenses to grant closeout. This document is meant to serve as a quick reference version of the more detailed grant agreement, however it is ultimately the responsibility of the Grantee to adhere to the specific terms outlined in the grant agreement.

Please contact the Recreation Grants Team at the Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (FPR) at ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@vermont.gov for all communications about your grant. Even if you have personal emails for individual FPR staff, please don't send grant-related information to those addresses. This helps us keep all communication related to your grant together - which ultimately helps us better support you!

Grant Start-up & Management

- 1. Tracking Grant Expenses:** The Grantee is responsible for maintaining financial records throughout the grant agreement period. Please inform your Municipal Clerk/Treasurer (for Municipalities) or your Finance Director (for Nonprofits) of your VOREC Community Grant and complete the following:
 - Provide them with copies of your fully executed grant agreement.
 - Recommend that they determine the best way to document grant income and expenses in line with the project budget included in the grant agreement.
 - Explain that the VOREC Community Grant Program is a reimbursement program. The Grantee pays for eligible project expenses up-front and submits for reimbursement from FPR.
 - Explain that eligible project expenses must be for costs associated with the project components outlined in your executed grant agreement, Attachment A – Scope of Work.
- 2. Procurement Procedures:** The Grantee may follow their own established written procurement procedures and standard bid processes if such procedures and processes obtain optimal solutions at reasonable prices through procurement efforts that are efficient and cost-effective, promote fair and open competition, guard against favoritism, fraud, and corruption, and protect the interest of the State and its taxpayers. These written procurement procedures and standard bid processes must exist prior to the award start date, listed in Part 1 of your grant agreement. When the grantee does not have such written policies, the Grantee shall comply with

Key Dates

Award Start Date – Located in part 1 of the grant agreement. Notes when project officially began and grantee can start submitting for reimbursement. *Flood recovery grantees: see your grant agreement for pre-award reimbursement details! (Attachment B, Paragraph 6)*

Reimbursements and Progress Reports – You can submit reimbursement requests every 3 months. Check your individual agreement for reporting frequency (last section in Attachment A, Paragraph h) if you are not submitting frequent reimbursement requests!

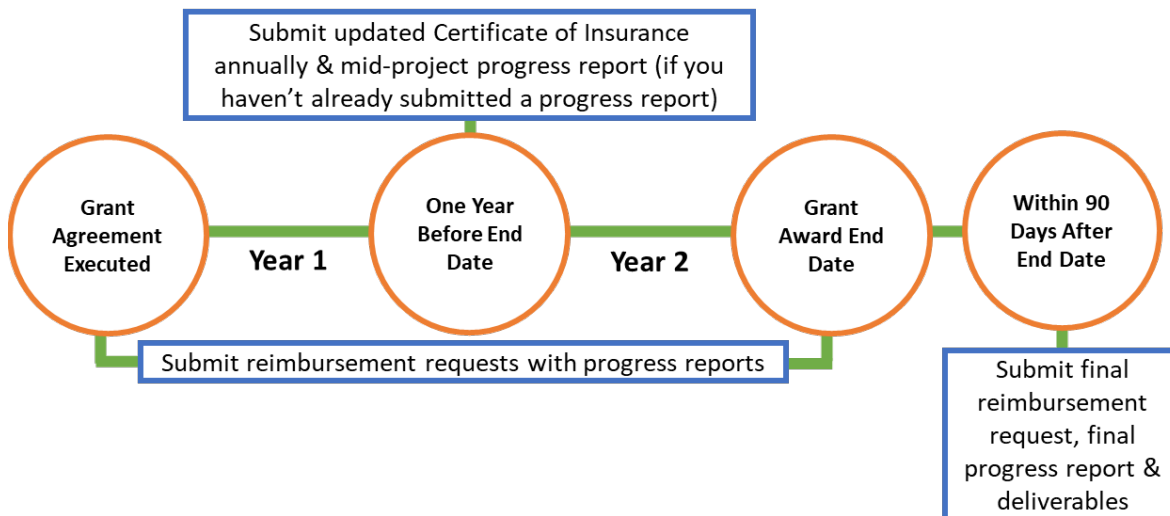
Award End Date – Located in part 1 of the grant agreement. Notes when all project components must be complete and eligible project expenses paid.

By End Date Or Within 90 Days After End Date – Final reimbursement request, final progress report, and deliverables due to FPR.

the State’s bidding requirements in the [State of Vermont Agency of Administration Bulletin No. 3.5, Procurement and Contracting Procedures](#).

- Partners:** Many Grantees have pre-identified partners who will be completing some of the project components identified in the Scope of Work in Attachment A of their grant agreements. In these instances, Grantees will need to follow their own written procurement procedures or Bulletin 3.5 to establish a written agreement (i.e. a memorandum of understanding) or contract with the partner(s). The agreement should specify the project components the partner(s) will complete and include all the same terms outlined in the Grantee’s grant agreement. FPR does not need to review these partner agreements, however if the Grantee’s written procurement procedures do not allow them to establish a written agreement with a pre-identified partner(s) through sole source purchasing or some other means, please contact us.
- Permits:** Before starting on-the-ground project work that requires permit(s), it is the Grantee’s responsibility to secure all necessary permit(s) for the work. (Attachment A, Paragraph 5.a)

Requesting Reimbursement & Communicating Progress



The Grantee is responsible for communicating progress on their grant agreement in two different ways: by submitting reimbursement requests and progress reports. In addition, grantees will need to update their insurance information throughout the grant period.

- Reimbursement Requests:** To request reimbursement, grantees will complete the materials underlined below and submit them as attachments by email to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov. Unless there are extenuating circumstances, please plan to only submit reimbursement requests once every three months. For example: if you submit one on June 1, 2024, you may submit the next one on or after September 1, 2024. In general, reimbursements take 4-6 weeks to process once they are submitted to FPR.
- Progress Report**
Submit a progress report form ([separate Excel sheet](#)) with every reimbursement request. The progress report asks Grantees to report on project components outlined in the grant agreement, Attachment A – Scope of Work. Please see [FPR’s video](#) for an overview of how to complete the progress report form.
Note: When Recreation Grant Program Staff receive your Reimbursement Request they will check to make sure you’ve submitted this report. During their review of both the Reimbursement Request materials and Progress Report, they will need to see progress being made on grant agreement activities in order to approve the reimbursement request.

- Reimbursement Request Invoice

FPR is providing each grantee with an invoice template to fill out and submit with each reimbursement request. The document provided is a fillable PDF. When the grantee is ready to submit a reimbursement they should do the following:

- **Date** – Enter the date for your request.
- **Invoice #** – Select the invoice # from the drop-down menu.
- **Total Amount Due** – Fill in the total reimbursement request for the amount due. *Important to note: all costs need to include two decimal places so they are accurate to the \$0.01 – this number MUST match your reimbursement request spreadsheet.*

- Reimbursement Request Spreadsheet

FPR is providing each grantee with an excel spreadsheet containing two tabs. The grantee is required to fill out both the “Reimbursement Request” tab and the “Budget Tracker” tab.

For the “Reimbursement Request,” the following columns must be completed:

- **Itemized activity** – Example: Interpretive panel installation
- **Associated Budget Category** – This is the VOREC Project Activity in the grantee’s budget that the cost for this activity is being drawn from. The grantee’s budget is listed under Attachment E in their grant agreement.
- **Total Cost** – This is the total cost of the itemized activity. *Important to note: all costs need to include two decimal places so they are accurate to the \$0.01.*
- **Brief Description of Project Component(s) Completed** – The grantee should use this space to describe the itemized activity completed. Example: Placed signage at trailhead, at intersection of Trail X and Y.
- **Vendor, Consultant or Staff Person Listed in Associated Invoice** – This will help Recreation Grant Staff find the associated invoice or receipt for this itemized activity.

The “Budget Tracker” tab is filled in with the Grantee’s Budget information. The tracker will help the grantee and Recreation Grant Staff track their funding as they submit reimbursement requests. When the grantee submits for reimbursement, they must fill out the “Budget Tracker” tab with the following information:

- **Total Current Request for Reimbursement** – Total the itemized activities from the “Reimbursement Request” tab for each associated VOREC Project Activity. *Important to note: all totals need to include two decimal places so they are accurate to the \$0.01 as well.*
- **Total Previously Reimbursed** – Fill out with the total reimbursed from any previous reimbursement requests submitted. You must manually update these numbers each time!
- **Total Funds Remaining** – This column has been set up by FPR to automatically tally the total funds remaining in the associated VOREC Project Activity.

Regarding Administrative Costs

Administrative costs include time for administering the grant (e.g., submitting reports, sending payments, documenting progress) as well as a portion of general operating costs (e.g., utilities, bookkeeping, postage) that are necessary but cannot easily be itemized for this project. Administrative costs *must* be broken out in your budget to be approved, but do not need any additional documentation or explanation outside of the approved amount of administrative costs. If you do not have an Administrative budget category you would need an amendment to be reimbursed for these types of activities. Administrative costs cannot exceed 10% of your total grant amount.

Administrative costs must be distributed across reimbursement requests proportional to your progress. For example, if you are submitting a reimbursement request for 40% of your grant expenses, you should only request up to 40% of the administration line in that request. Please contact ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@vermont.gov if there are any extenuating circumstances that might justify a different one-time reimbursement rate for administrative expenses. Examples of extenuating circumstances may include incurring significant one-time operating expenses (e.g., audit, contracted tax documentation preparation, purchasing computers for grant project staff, etc.).

- ***Invoices, Receipts, and Other Expense Documentation (Check Your Grant Agreement)***

For each itemized activity, the grantee will need to retain copies of a receipt, invoice, or other documentation in your files. **If specified in your grant agreement (Attachment B, Paragraph 8)**, compile financial documentation as specified into one PDF file in the same order they appear on the Reimbursement Request Spreadsheet. If your grant agreement does not specify you need to submit documentation with your reimbursement request, you only need to provide these materials if requested by FPR at a later date.

- **Receipts** – Receipts should include an itemized list of purchases.

- **Invoices** – Invoices should include an itemization of services completed by the contractor or consultant.

Here are some answers to common questions about invoices:

- If a contractor or consultant completes work that crosses different budget categories, they need to itemize their work completed by budget category or send separate invoices for each budget category.

- If a partner organization is managing part of the project or completing activities outlined in the Scope of Work (Attachment A), the partner needs to send an itemized invoice to the grantee for the work completed. After the grantee pays the partner, the itemized invoice (from the partner) would be submitted as part of the reimbursement request materials.

- **Other Expense Documents** – Every expense should have corresponding documentation that clearly explains what the item is, what the value is, who provided it, and when it happened.

- **Donated Labor or Materials** - Statements or invoices with donated services shall clearly indicate that the donation was made for the specific project component specified in this agreement. Donation documentation must include the donor's signature.

- For unskilled volunteer labor, you can submit a volunteer hours log/report.

- For skilled volunteer labor, you must submit both a volunteer log/hours report and backup documentation showing the rate of pay (usually paystub from current employer) or the hours will be counted at the current unskilled volunteer labor rate.

- **Timesheets** – Staff employed by the grantee organization need to track hours spent on activities outlined in the Grant Scope of Work (Attachment A) in a timesheet or other acceptable timekeeping record. Timesheets need to show the number of hours worked by pay period (at a minimum), with time tracked separately for each budget category if applicable, as well as a general description of the allowable activities completed (per the Scope of Work).

Below is an example of a format that provides information about the level of detail required. If time tracking software is not available this format can be used by the grantee for submitting their timesheet information.

Employee Name & Title	Pay Period	Number of Hours	Hourly Rate*	Budget Category from Grant Agreement	Description of Activities Completed
Employee A, Title	07/23/23 – 08/04/23	3.5 hours		Marketing	– Met with partners to discuss brochure contents – Developed brochure outline
Employee B, Title	07/23/23 – 08/04/23	.75 hours		Outdoor Recreation Equipment	– Placed orders for 20 mountain bikes and 1 bike transport trailer
Employee B, Title	08/07/23 – 08/18/23	1 hour		Outdoor Recreation Programs	– Meeting with mountain bike instructors to plan lessons.
Employee A, Title	08/07/23 – 08/18/23	5 hours		Marketing	– Finalized text for brochure

*It's important to note that the 2023 VOREC Community Grant program will reimburse the full cost of an employee's time on the project, including salary and fringe. Staff-related taxes cannot be reimbursed.

- **Mid-Project Progress Reports:** If specified in your grant agreement (see the last section in Attachment A, Paragraph h), the grantee must submit a Progress Report even if you are not submitting a reimbursement request.
 - a. If your grant agreement specifies “quarterly” reporting, this means every three months beginning from the start date of your grant agreement. For example, if your grant agreement start date is June 1, you will submit reports by September 1, December 1, March 1 and so on until the end of your grant period or your final project report is submitted, whichever occurs first.
 - b. If your grant agreement specifies “biannual” reporting, this means every six months beginning from the start date of your grant agreement. For example, if your grant agreement start date is June 1, you will submit reports by December 1, June 1 and so on until the end of your grant period or your final project report is submitted, whichever occurs first.
 - c. If your grant agreement does not specify a reporting period, you only need to submit progress reports along with any reimbursement requests and at the end of your project.

After completing the report form, email it to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov.

If you have already submitted a Progress Report with a reimbursement request, your reporting period (3 or 6 months) resets from the date of that reimbursement. For example, if you submit a reimbursement report November 1 but normally would have had a quarterly report due December 1 – instead, your next progress report would be due February 1, since that is 3 months from the date of your previous progress report.

- **Certificate of Insurance:** FPR needs a current Certificate of Insurance (COI) on file for each year of the grant. Grantees will need to submit an updated COI ahead of the current COI's policy expiration date (approximately annually). Grantees should set a reminder to ask their insurance carrier for an updated COI with current policy dates. The COI needs to include the insurance requirements outlined in [this guidance document](#). Please email the updated COI to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov.

Making Agreement Adjustments

In all cases, requests to make adjustments to your grant agreement must be submitted in writing. The Recreation Grants team will review the request, ask clarifying questions, and decide on your request. If an amendment is needed, changes cannot be implemented until the amendment is fully signed.

- 1. Budget Adjustments:** Changes to budget categories that are less than 25% of the budget for that category do not require approval and only need to be documented through the reimbursement request process (Attachment B, Paragraph 5). However, if a change is **25% or more for any single budget category** the grant agreement will need to be amended. To start this process, please email the following information to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov:
 - Summary detailing the original grant budget, what happened, and why the original budget allocations no longer work.
 - Proposed new budget
- 2. Extensions:** Grantees should aim to complete all project components by the award end date noted in part 1 of the grant agreement. If there are unforeseeable circumstances that make it impossible to meet the deadline of the grant, as soon as possible and at least two months before the grant end date please email the following information to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov to request an extension:
 - Summary detailing original grant timeline, what happened, and why specifically the grantee can no longer meet the original timeline.
 - What the Grantee has done to feel confident they can complete the work within the new proposed timeline.
- 3. Scope Changes:** Approval is required to change any project components identified in the Scope of Work in Attachment A of your grant agreement. In these instances, please review your grant agreement in full detail and then email ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov to request an amendment. Major changes are unlikely to be approved. To request a scope change, email the following information:
 - Summary detailing what happened, and why the original scope needs to change
 - Itemized list of proposed new scope – including both project component additions and removals, if applicable.
 - If the new scope will also include a budget change, please provide the same detail as requested above for budget adjustments.

Project Completion & Grant Closeout

1. **Before end date:** No later than one month before award end date, wrap up work and complete all payments.
2. **By end date:** Make sure all project components are complete and any outstanding grant expenses have been incurred and paid for. FPR will not be able to reimburse for payments submitted after the grant end date unless an amendment is processed beforehand to extend the grant.
3. **By end date or within 90 days after end date:**
 - Compile and submit the following final documentation to ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov:
 - All of the deliverables listed in the grant agreement under Attachment A
 - Final reimbursement request with all applicable supporting documentation
 - Final progress report, completing both “Progress Report” and “Final Report Addendum” tabs*If your project finishes before your end date, you are welcome to send final reports and closeout documentation early!*
4. **Confirmation:** Once all reimbursements have been completed and the final report submitted, FPR will email the Grantee to confirm the official closeout of the grant.

Questions & Contact Information

If you have questions or the Grantee’s main contact changes, please email the Recreation Grants team:

ANR.FPRRecreationGrants@Vermont.Gov It is the Grantee’s responsibility to ensure that FPR has up-to-date contact information for the grantee throughout the grant agreement period.