



## Preservation Trust Fund

### Overview

Established by the Virginia General Assembly in 1997 and administered by the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (VOF), the Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust Fund (PTF) provides grants for acquisitions, easements, rights of way, and other methods of protecting open space for farming, forestry, recreation, wildlife, water quality, and more. A right, privilege, or interest in real estate must be conveyed to either VOF or a locality, pursuant to Virginia's Open-Space Lands Act, to be eligible for PTF funding.

### Opportunity

VOF hosts two grant rounds annually, with requests for proposals announced in January and July each year, and grant awards made in June and October or November. Grant agreements have a two-year lifespan. VOF seeks proposals for projects that provide new or expanded public access to open space, such as parks, preserves, trails, greenways, outdoor classrooms, beaches, and boat launches, as well as projects that protect exceptional natural and cultural resources for the benefit of the Commonwealth. Proposals may be submitted for both public and private lands.

### Applicant Eligibility

PTF grants may be awarded to any person, organization, or locality with a real estate interest to convey on either public or private land. The real estate interest must be conveyed to VOF or a locality. The land protection partner must be specified with documented support of the project submitted with the application. Land already under locality ownership may be eligible for PTF funding as long as the parcel is not already protected through existing deed restrictions.

### Funds Available

The amount of funding available for each grant round is determined by Virginia's annual state budget. Historically, grant awards on average have not exceeded \$150,000 per project. However, there is no absolute cap, and projects with substantiated needs have been funded at higher amounts. Partial funding is possible. Funds may be disbursed only when a real estate interest has been conveyed to VOF or a locality. Once a land protection instrument is recorded, the grant award may be issued in full with spend-down reporting to follow.

### Project Prioritization

While VOF is offering grant awards for both public access and exceptional natural and cultural resource protection projects, VOF is prioritizing those projects in which the interest in real estate includes a provision to provide access to the property by the public. Successful proposals will protect and preserve open green space. Funding for resource protection easements will be prioritized for those projects that show exceptional characteristics in the following categories: historic and cultural, water quality, scenic and open space, habitat, agriculture and forestry, and policy alignment. Deed restrictions will protect the highest conservation values of a property.

### Eligible Costs

PTF grants may pay for any costs that are associated with the conveyance of an interest, right, or privilege in open space to VOF or a locality, including fee-simple acquisition, development rights, public access rights of way, leases, legal costs, and survey costs. Components critical for public use of the land may also be included in the grant request such as infrastructure and the associated necessary engineering, design, and planning. While infrastructure is an eligible cost, impervious surface will be capped, and project sites that are currently predominantly hardscape or are intended to be predominately hardscape are not good candidates for PTF funding.

### Application Process

Applications will be accepted through an online process, which can be accessed at <https://www.vof.org/protect/grants/ptf/>. Interested applicants should check the website for updates. Please contact grant program staff at [grants@vof.org](mailto:grants@vof.org) with any questions about the application process or project eligibility.