

Trail Accelerator Grant Program

Applicant Toolkit



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

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IMBA's mission is to create, enhance and protect great places to ride mountain bikes.

We understand that in order to grow the quantity and quality of mountain bike trail communities, we need to accelerate the pace of trail building. Trail Accelerator grants provide a jump-start to communities that have the interest and political support to develop trail systems, but need assistance to get projects up and running.

A Trail Accelerator grant offers awardees professional trail planning and consultation services to launch their trail development efforts, which can often leverage additional investment from local, regional, and national partners.

#MoreTrailsClosetoHome



INTERNATIONAL MOUNTAIN BICYCLING ASSOCIATION

Program Overview

This grant results in a planning process and documentation for your project. **It is not a cash grant.** Grants typically range from \$10,000-\$30,000 and they require a one-to-one match to reach the total project cost. For example, if you are awarded a \$10,000 grant, you must commit an additional \$10,000 to IMBA for a \$20,000 scope of work. Finalists will receive a call from IMBA Trail Solutions staff to clarify any questions and to discuss and define the scope of work, tasks, and final deliverables of the proposed Trail Accelerator grant project. **A phone call does not mean that a grant has been awarded.** For grant awardees, the agreed-upon trail planning process will be different for each site based on the desired outcomes and will be clearly documented in a contract between the applicant and IMBA. The deliverables will include trail plans in the form of written reports and maps, based on the scope of the project. You can see project and report examples on the [Trail Accelerator Grant homepage](#).

What Types of Projects Will Be Considered?

- Projects that serve mountain bikers as the primary users, though multi-purpose human-powered trail uses are of course viable as well.
- Projects that will result in a visible and substantial increase in access, improved mountain bike experiences, and greater community benefit.
- Projects where the Trail Accelerator grant stands to leverage additional resources to ensure the success of the project.
- Projects that promote community development, volunteer recruitment, new rider development, youth riding, and engaging community members not currently represented in the outdoor space.
- A declined request does not imply that the project is not needed or valued. Those who do not receive a grant award may apply again in subsequent rounds (and we hope you do!).

Impact to Date

[See the full report here](#)



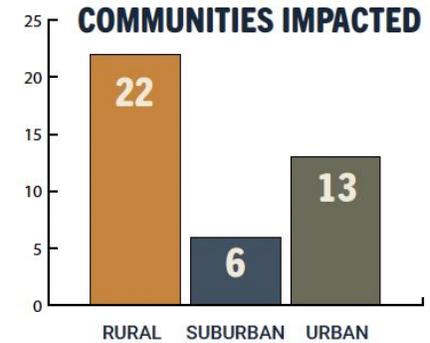
IMPACT REPORT

BY THE NUMBERS (2018-2022)



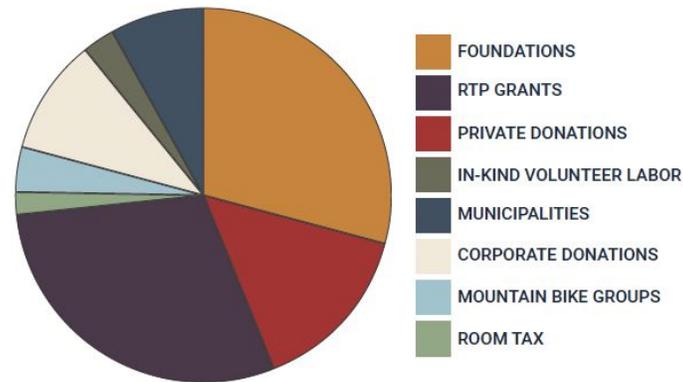
118
APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

42
APPLICATIONS FUNDED



THESE DELIVERABLES UNLOCKED \$12.8M IN ADDITIONAL FUNDING

SOURCES OF ADDITIONAL FUNDING



AMOUNT REQUESTED



18 PROJECTS SUPPORT YOUTH PROGRAMMING & NICA VENUES



AMOUNT FUNDED

Who Can Apply?



Local, municipal, state, or federal government agencies, and 501(c)3 nonprofits that actively manage parks and trails may apply. Mountain bike/trail clubs and IMBA Local partners with the capacity to match and manage a grant of this scale are also eligible to apply.

The organization applying must be able to provide the matching funds. Please see information later in this document to learn more about how agencies disburse grant funds.

- Projects which are primarily based on private land are not eligible to apply.
- Private organizations including ski resorts, HOAs, or property developers are not eligible to apply.
- Religious organizations for religious purposes, private foundations, and political causes/candidates/legislative lobbying groups are not eligible to apply.

Filling Out the Application

You can help us by supplying the most thorough answers possible, which will help move your project to the top of the list. There are two critical things we want to understand:

- How your project involves and benefits your community (the vision behind the project).
 - I.e., will your project provide access for areas with few outdoor opportunities? Tie in with youth programs?
 - Before you apply, think through the ways your project will align with broad community needs.
- The true scope of your project (the nitty gritty of what you want to build).
 - We'll ask a lot of detailed questions about what you're trying to accomplish.
 - Be sure to think through how your project timeline will unfold, how you plan to get to the next steps, etc.

***Please know that even if you don't have a lot of knowledge about the trail development process, we still want you to apply! If you're confused or get stuck anywhere in the application process, don't hesitate to reach out. Let's work together to make your trail dreams a reality.*



Community Assessment

To begin your application, you'll be asked to complete our [Community Assessment](#). This gives us a well-rounded picture of where your community stands in key categories related to trail development.

Please answer the questions honestly, and don't fear — your score is NOT used to rate your TAG application! Your answers simply help us understand the areas in which you might need additional support. This grant exists to help those who are newer to trail development, so your straightforward answers are much more important to us than your final score.

It helps to have some information ready before completing the assessment, so feel free to [preview the questions](#) beforehand.

What You Will Need

1. A .kmz file of your project area

[Click here for a tutorial](#) on creating a .kmz file from an area of interest:

In your file, please include things such as:

- project area delineation
- property boundaries
- hydrology
- areas of cultural significance
- existing amenities like trails, parking, etc



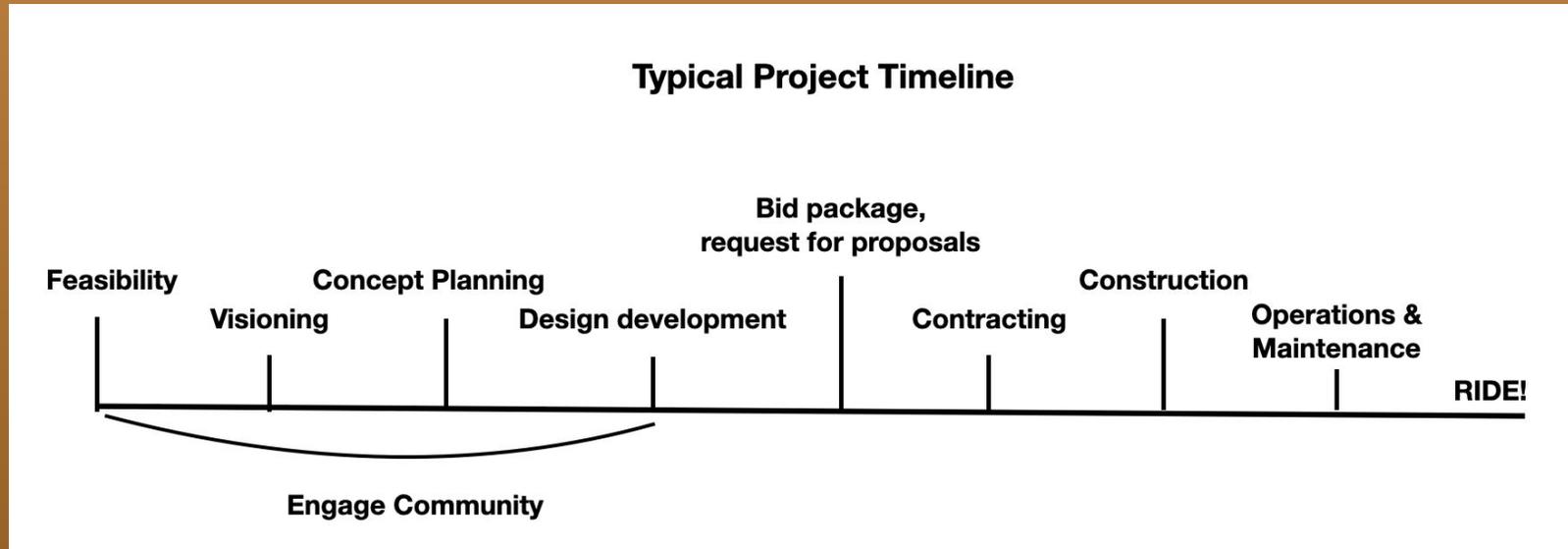
DATA WE NEED IN KML OR KMZ FILE FORMAT



What You Will Need

2. Timeline of your project

Most trail projects follow a general timeline from start to finish. We'll be asking you to give us an idea of when you think your project might hit these milestones.



What You Will Need

3. Assurance from your agency or organization that this grant is compatible with your financing processes.

- If you represent a municipality or other agency that goes through procurement, contact that department and ensure that they can disburse the funds for your half of the match. We will be asking you to confirm that the funds will be available at the time of contract signing.
- If you're with a mountain bike or trail organization, you can simply confirm that your secretary or accountant will make the funds available at the time of contract signing.

Other Things to Think About

Partners:

Robust trail projects come to life through partnerships. We'll be asking you about the organizations or agencies you're partnering with to bring this project to fruition.

Community Engagement:

Every project needs to be filtered through the community for feedback and improvements. This is often how you find financial partners, too. We'll be asking you how you plan to approach this part of the process.

Implementation:

Just like you, we want to see this project become reality. Think about how you and your partners will get to the next steps, whether it's fundraising, design, or construction. We'll be asking you how you'll get there.

Funding:

We'll be helping you talk through how much your project will cost. **But don't be worried if you don't have large sums of funding for implementation already.** Once planning documents are made, they are the perfect marketing tool for fundraising, because they provide a clear picture for funders. The visual nature of a planning document gets people excited about the possibilities.

Social Media Requirements

A requirement of receiving funding is to post about the grant and how it's helping your project/community. Take a few minutes to decide which social media channels will work best, since we'll be asking for those links in the application.

- Hashtags to Use:

- #trailacceleratorgrant
- #moretrails closetohome

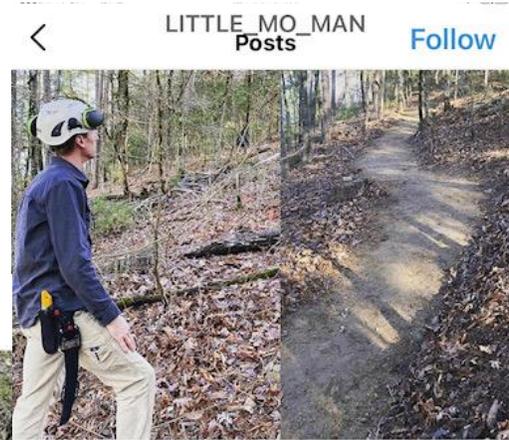
- Our Handles

- Instagram @IMBA_US
- Facebook @IMBAonFB



Liked by patrick.kell and 177 others

visitelynevada @unclejoeyklein from @imbatrailsolutions enjoying one of our gnarliest trails while out this week scouting the Garnet Hill/ Squaw Peak area for another sweet new trail system coming soon to Ely.
#trailacceleratorgrant @imba_us



Liked by adam.reitz and 43 others

little_mo_man Before and After
Day 1 of field work went very well. Thanks to @imbatrailsolutions and to the @waltonfamilyfdn for making this project possible through the TAG. This is a shining example of what is possible when a community steps up and works together.
#trails #southwestarkansas #mtbtrails #mountainbiking #bikearkansas #roguehoe #pulaskitool #moretrails closetohome #imba #cycling #seviercycling #dequeenarkansas #trailacceleratorgrant #accessibletrails

And Finally... the Questions

We have a new requirement as of the 2025 round: Each applicant must complete our [community assessment](#) as part of their application. We'll look for your result there before diving into your application.

Section 1 asks for basic contact information such as name, address, email, etc. Then we'll ask you about your project, organization, capacity and support in subsequent sections..



Sections 2 & 3: Project Goals and Previous Planning

Section 2: Project Goals

1. Project title
2. What are the top three goals for the project?
3. What type of document outcome are you seeking from this project? Feasibility Study, Assessment and planning to improve an existing trail system/bike park, or planning and design of a new trail system/bike park or significant expansion of existing infrastructure

Section 3: Previous Planning

1. What previous natural surface recreational trail planning processes have been completed in this area? Please describe the type of planning effort, who led it, what agencies were involved and how it was funded. What was the outcome? Please attach any relevant planning documents. These could include park or parcel master plans, previous trail plans or feasibility studies, maps, presentations, etc.

Section 4: Project Details

1. Project location/name of parcel. Please attach a GoogleEarth .kmz file that delineates your project area(s). We gain a much better understanding of your site if you include all the information you can. We'd like to see property boundaries, existing trails, parking, buildings, water bodies and streams, areas of cultural significance, ecological concerns, etc. (A sample image can be viewed earlier in this document, along with a video tutorial.)
2. What is the approximate size of your land parcel?: multiple choice - 1-15, 15-50, 50-250, 250-500, +500
3. What is the total project area acreage?: multiple choice - 1-15, 15-50, 50-250, 250-500, +500. *Projects under 15 acres in size are not well-suited for trail projects. They are much better used for bike parks, pump tracks or skills areas.
4. Who owns this land?
5. Describe the area where you wish to see trails and/or bike park facilities planned. Include details about topography, vegetation types, resource concerns; proximity to local and regional population centers; proximity to local schools; proximity to campgrounds, parking lots, day-use areas, and other recreation infrastructure.

Sections 5 & 6: Scope of Work and Community Benefits

Section 5: Scope of Work

See the [Trail Accelerator Grant FAQ](#) for more information on project scopes and costs

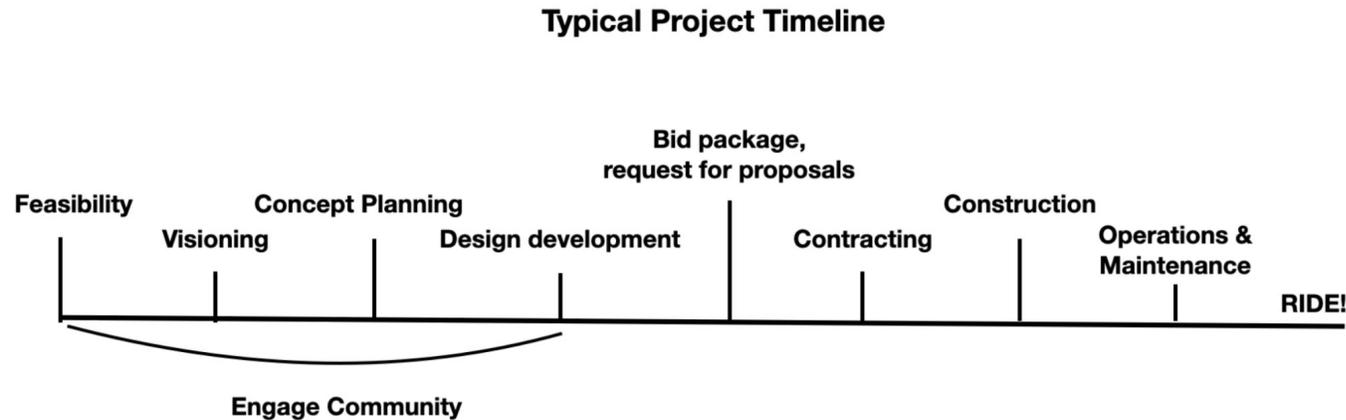
1. What are you trying to build? Bike park, trails, both
2. What bike park amenities do you want to include? Select all that apply
3. What style(s) of trails do you wish to build? Select all that apply
4. Who will use the trails in addition to mountain bikers? Select all that apply.
5. Will any of the trails be single-use? Select all that apply.
6. How many new trail miles are you hoping to gain as part of this design process?
7. What other amenities already exist in your project area? Select all that apply

Section 6: Community Benefits

1. Does this project increase outdoor access for potential trail users? For example, will the trails fill a void in a populated area that currently has few or no trails, create a venue for after-school programs, or offer access to riders with adaptive needs? If you answer yes, please list the names of any partner groups and explain your partnership with them. (moved up from bottom of list)
2. Does this project create opportunities for youth mountain bike programs, or have the potential to integrate with existing programs? Please describe.
3. Do you anticipate that, once completed, your project will bring economic benefit to your community? Please explain.
4. Please add any additional community benefits that you anticipate will result from your project. These could include physical and mental health, protection of open space, positive environmental impact, etc.
5. Does your organization typically include public engagement efforts (open meetings, public comment sessions, surveys) in projects like this?
6. Describe what kind of public engagement you usually employ.
7. Do you wish to have IMBA facilitate any of these efforts? yes/no

Section 7: Implementation

1. Project timeline: What is your preferred timeline to start and complete this project? Give us a general sense of when you see your project hitting the milestones in the timeline shown.



2. We want to learn how you intend to take this planning work to the next level. If awarded this grant, how does your organization plan to implement the project?
3. Have you identified potential funding sources for the next steps? If yes, provide general range of fundraising to date, estimated cost required to implement, and costs for maintenance/management.
4. What kind of construction team will you use? Select all that apply

Section 8: Capacity and Community Support



1. Describe your organization/department including numbers of staff or volunteers, board members, and mission statement.
2. Do you have written support from three local officials for this project? This includes both land managers and elected officials. Please list their names, positions, and phone numbers.
3. Describe another community project your organization or coalition has undertaken and has seen success with. Tell us about the larger community impacts.
4. What other community organizations are you partnering with on this project?
5. Has a representative from your committee or community attended an IMBA Trail Lab or will they be attending an upcoming Trail Lab?
6. Part of your requirement as an awardee requires you to post about the grant on social media. Please provide the social media feed(s) you will use to promote your project and the TAG grant.
7. Part of your requirement as an attendee is to provide follow-up information to IMBA about the grant and its impact. Please provide the name and email address of the best person to contact.

Section 9: Funding Needs and Understanding



1. This is an in-kind grant, and if successful, your project will be awarded staff time from IMBA Trail Solutions department, who will complete an agreed-upon trail planning process in your community. **This is not a cash grant.** Do you agree?
2. This is a one-to-one matching grant. For example, if you request and are awarded a \$5,000 grant, you must commit an additional \$5,000 payable as a check or electronic payment to IMBA. If you are awarded a \$30,000 grant, you must commit an additional \$30,000 payable as a check or electronic payment to IMBA. You will receive progress invoices at project milestones. Do you agree?
3. To be awarded this grant, you must understand how your agency will disburse your share of the funds. Within municipalities, for example, the funds must be obtained through a process called “procurement.” Before submitting this application, contact your procurement or accounting department and learn what steps are required to access the money. Do you agree?

Finalists will receive a call from IMBA Trail Solutions to clarify any questions and to discuss and further define the scope of work, tasks, and final deliverables of the Trail Accelerator Grant project. A phone call does not mean that a grant has been awarded. For grant awardees, the agreed-upon trail planning process will be different for each site based upon the desired outcomes and will be clearly documented in a contract between the applicant and IMBA.

We are here to help!

If you have questions about the application, or are feeling overwhelmed by the process, reach out to us! We want to see your trails and bike parks come to life, and we can guide you anywhere you're stuck on this application. No trail-nerd skills needed.

A great resource regarding the trail development process is our free e-book, [Mountain Bike Trail Development Guidelines](#). Check it out on us!

Marty Caivano
Community Engagement Coordinator
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An aerial photograph of a mountain trail with a hand-drawn sketch overlay. The sketch is drawn in black ink on a reddish-brown background, showing a winding trail, various plants, and a cyclist in a blue shirt riding a mountain bike. The text is centered over the image.

Thank you for applying, and
supporting IMBA as we accelerate the
pace of trail building.
#TrailsClosetoHome



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