



**REQUEST FOR CONCEPT PAPERS FOR GOCO'S**

**PATHS TO PARKS GRANT CYCLE**

August 4, 2014

The Great Outdoors Colorado (GOCO) Board is requesting concept papers for trail projects with a focus on providing increased trail access for youth and families to existing parks, open spaces, natural areas and environmental education opportunities. The Board has allocated up to \$4 million for this grant cycle.

Continued stakeholder input indicates that Coloradans place a high priority on trails. Meanwhile, the health and wellness of our state's youth is a topic of concern as obesity rates continue to rise. GOCO is responding with its second Paths to Parks Grant Cycle. The intent of this grant opportunity is to provide youth and families with increased opportunities for safe trail access to their local parks and open spaces. Providing free, safe, non-motorized access will encourage trail activity while increasing the exploration and use of existing outdoor opportunities.

The Board will evaluate these concept papers based on the criteria included in this request. At its December 9, 2014 meeting, the Board will invite selected concepts to submit full applications. Awards will be made in June 2015.

Concept papers are due at the GOCO office no later than 3:00 p.m., October 1, 2014.

GOCO prefers to receive concept papers electronically at [trails@goco.org](mailto:trails@goco.org); please put "Paths to Parks" in the subject line. If unable to deliver them electronically, please deliver four copies of your concept paper by hand or mail to: Great Outdoors Colorado, Paths to Parks Grant Cycle, 303 E 17<sup>th</sup> Ave, Suite 1060, Denver, CO 80203.

For more information please contact Jake Houston, Local Government Program Coordinator 303-226-4517 or [jhouston@goco.org](mailto:jhouston@goco.org)

Thank you for your interest in Great Outdoors Colorado's Paths to Parks Grant Cycle.

## GENERAL REQUIREMENTS OF ALL PROJECTS

Concept papers submitted in response to this request must demonstrate the following:

- *Safe Trail Connections for Youth and Families to outdoor destinations.* All projects must provide for safe trail connections for youth and families to existing outdoor recreational amenities including: parks, open spaces, natural areas, and/or environmental education opportunities. Projects that link these areas to schools will be more competitive.
- *Public Planning.* Whether through a formal master planning process or an independent planning process, the community to be impacted must have had sufficient opportunity to prioritize and provide feedback on the project.
- *Strong Partnerships.* Strong partnerships have been the trademark of GOCO's grants. If invited to submit a full application, applicants will be expected to submit project support letters from user/neighborhood groups, schools, local governments, or other entities that may benefit from the proposed project.
- *Cooperative Investments.* Applicants must demonstrate local commitment to the project by providing matching funds (cash and in-kind) and discuss efforts to maximize the local investment.
- *Completion within 3 Years.* While the grant period will be three years, the Board wishes to see its funds used – and the public benefiting from the projects – as quickly as possible and encourages projects that can be completed sooner.

Project examples include:

- Trail construction that connects a local park, open space, natural area, or environmental education site to a neighborhood and/or school.
- Construction of a missing trail link that provides for better connectivity between neighborhoods and/or schools and local parks, open spaces, natural areas, or environmental education sites.
- Construction of an overpass or underpass that provides for better connectivity between neighborhoods and/or schools and local parks, open spaces, natural areas, or environmental education sites.
- A critical land or easement acquisition required to improve connectivity between neighborhoods and/or schools and local parks, open spaces, natural areas, or environmental education sites.

Please visit our website for details on the six Paths to Parks grants that were awarded in 2014:

<http://www.goco.org/goco-grants-close-gaps-between-trail-systems-create-safer-access-outdoor-destinations>

## **GOCO Paths to Parks Grant Cycle Fact Sheet**

**Eligible Entities:** Entities that currently receive distributions from the Conservation Trust Fund are eligible for GOCO Local Government purpose funds. These entities are counties, municipalities, and title 32 special park and recreation districts.

**Eligible Project Types:** These grants are intended to assist grantees in the construction of trails, including over/underpasses that provide trail connectivity. Grants can also be used for critical land and easement acquisitions required to improve connectivity between neighborhoods and/or schools and local parks, open spaces natural areas, or environmental education sites.

**Grant Amount:** Between \$500,000 and \$1,000,000.

**Match Requirements:** GOCO will not fund more than 75% of the proposed project's eligible costs. A minimum of 25% must come from sources other than GOCO. Although total matching resources may be either cash or in-kind (see below for more information regarding in-kind match), a minimum of 10% of the total project costs must be a cash match from the applicant and/or partners.

**Timeline:** Construction of the proposed project may not begin until after the grant has been awarded in December 2014. Grantees are allowed up to three years from the award date for completion.

**Property Ownership:** All property on which GOCO-funded projects are located must be owned by or under control of the applicant for at least 25 years.

### **Trail Grant Cycle Timeline**

<b>August 4, 2014</b>	Request for Concept Papers Released
<b>October 1, 2014</b>	Concept Papers Due at GOCO
<b>December 9, 2014</b>	Board Approval of Concepts
<b>December 12, 2014</b>	Applications Distributed to Invitees
<b>March 4, 2014</b>	Applications Due at GOCO
<b>June 2015</b>	Board Decision on Grant Awards (exact date to be determined)

## Concept Paper Content Requirements

**Organization:**  
**Contact Name:**  
**Email Address:**  
**Phone:**

The narrative section of the concept papers should be no more than five (5) pages plus maps and should address each of the following questions.

1. Briefly describe the proposed project. For trail construction, include the length of trail and identify any major components necessary to complete the trail such as under/overpasses, bridges, etc. For easement or land acquisitions, include the number of acres. Describe the larger trail network this project is a part of. How does it contribute to local, regional and/or statewide trail opportunities?
2. Briefly describe how the proposed trail/acquisition will increase access to existing recreational, open space, and/or environmental education opportunities for youth and families. What connections will it provide for between neighborhoods, schools, outdoor recreational areas, open spaces, natural areas, environmental education opportunities, etc. Why are these connections needed in your community?
3. Estimate the number of users located within a one mile radius of the proposed trail(s). How many users do you expect to benefit from the proposed connections? How will the project provide opportunities for underserved populations?
4. Briefly describe the project's urgency. Why now? What opportunities are lost if the grant isn't awarded?
5. Is this project part of a public planning process? If yes, when was that process completed? If not, when do you anticipate conducting that process? Has there been any public opposition to the proposed project? If so, describe the opposition and what has been done to address it.
6. Who has committed to partnering (financially or otherwise) in this project? Who else do you anticipate will be a partner? (Note: Please do not submit letters of support. They will be requested as part of full applications, but are not necessary at this stage.)
7. List the easements, permits, licenses, and approvals required to complete this project. For each one, discuss where you are in the process of securing it and when you anticipate securing it. For easements or land acquisitions, provide details on where you are in negotiations with the landowner.
8. Budget:
  - a. What is the estimated total project cost?
  - b. What is the estimated GOCO grant request?

- c. How much cash match from applicant, partner, or other funding sources is currently secured? How much is left to secure? What is the timeframe for securing outstanding matching funds?
  - d. In-kind/Land Donations: Estimate the value of in-kind contributions.
9. Please attach one or two maps of the project or project area identifying important connections to be made.