

2025 Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) Frequently Asked Questions



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Applicant Eligibility

Eligibility: Eligible applicants include:

- 501(c)3 nonprofits
- Town and county governments
- Churches (including rural United Methodist churches), and other faith-based organizations.
- Community organizations without a 501(c)3 nonprofit -- you can still apply in partnership with a fiscal agent.
- Organizations with a physical office in an eligible rural county

Ineligible Entities:

- Organizations based in these urban counties: Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, and Wake
- State or County agencies that receive dedicated funding (e.g. Cooperative Extension, County Senior Services, etc.)
- Organizations with budgets over \$300,000
- For-profit organizations (e.g. LLC)
- Projects that benefit individuals or provide deficit financing

Priority: In addition, we **prioritize**:

- **Community-based** organizations in **rural** communities with limited access to resources. We will **not** prioritize organizations based in areas experiencing rapid growth, such as counties like Pitt or Alamance or growing cities like Hendersonville, Fayetteville, Hickory, etc.
- **Low-budget** organizations (we will not fund organizations with budgets over \$300,000)

Can organizations outside North Carolina apply?

Our funding is currently limited to North Carolina.

What if our organization doesn't have 501(c)3 nonprofit status?

If your organization is not a 501(c)3 nonprofit, you can still apply for grant funds in partnership with a fiscal agent (a government agency or nonprofit that accepts grant funds on your organization's behalf). We encourage all applicants that work with a fiscal agent to develop a memorandum of understanding and clarify terms of the partnership and distribution of funds *before* applying for a grant.

Application and Application Process

When is the application due?

Applications are due via email to smallgrants@conservationfund.org by 11:59 p.m. EST on **Friday, February 14th.**

Can you help us with our project or application?

Resourceful Communities staff are available to provide assistance.

Please connect with someone on our staff by **Friday, February 7th.** We are unable to discuss applications after **Friday, February 14th.**

What is the triple bottom line?

Resourceful Communities' "triple bottom line" incorporates **environmental** stewardship, community **economic** development, and **social justice** to address community challenges. Results of triple bottom line efforts might include, but are not limited to:

- Economic: Economic impacts could be preparing students for college/career readiness, creating jobs, generating additional income, business developing new job skills, providing education, creating new economic opportunities through agriculture, tourism, or a similar project.
- Social Justice: Meaningfully engage people of color or low wealth; educational improvement; overcome barriers to participation; address racism and other -isms.
- Environmental: Provide environmental education; protect land/water resources; reduce pesticide usage; improve water quality; plant trees to offset carbon; improve energy efficiency.

How do we become a network partner?

Resourceful Communities supports a network of engaged and informed community practitioners who connect with and learn from each other. We provide opportunities to connect through a variety of network events. (**Please note:** Network offerings are both in-person and online during the pandemic.) Network participants include "community partners" or "resource partners" (agencies or nonprofits that can provide technical assistance, funding, or other resources). We encourage applicants to participate in our network to help them better understand Resourceful Communities and to strengthen community efforts.

If you would like to sign up for our e-newsletter to be alerted to upcoming events and grant opportunities, please email Donna Pratt at dpratt@conservationfund.org. We also post network events on our Facebook page at www.facebook.com/resourcefulcommunities. Like us to stay in touch!

Eligible Uses of Grant Funds:

Can my organization use grant funds to cover operating expenses?

Small grants can be used for operating expenses if they are related to the proposed project.

Can my organization use grant funds for building renovations?

Building renovations are not often triple bottom-line projects and therefore, funds typically cannot be used to cover renovations. On rare occasions, a portion of the small grant can be used for building materials, if tied to broader triple bottom line programming. Please discuss any proposed construction projects with a Resourceful Communities team member. We may also be able to direct you to funding sources that support building renovations.

Can my organization use grant funds for equipment?

Grant funds cannot be used to purchase equipment for individual ownership. Equipment must be related to program delivery and fit the scale of the project. Reviewers will not prioritize requests that

use an entire grant to purchase one piece of equipment. Please contact Resourceful Communities for ideas on other potential resources to support such requests.

Can my organization use grant funds for feasibility studies?

Though we understand the need for thorough planning, CNEF funders prioritize project implementation rather than feasibility studies.

Are there other ineligible uses of grant funding?

Please note that CNEF grants cannot support deficit financing, for-profit businesses, individuals, equipment for individuals, or projects that do not include triple bottom line benefits.

Grant Information and Priorities

How big are grants?

Grants cannot exceed \$15,000. There is no minimum amount that must be requested for consideration, however, grants average \$8,000-\$12,000.

If we get a grant, when will my organization get the money?

Grants will be announced in **April 2025**. Once notified of an award, grantees must submit a signed grant agreement before funds can be released. Processing payment typically takes 2-3 weeks.

How long is the project period?

Project periods typically run 6-9 months, however, if you need more time to complete your project or report, please send a written request to Donna Pratt at dpratt@conservationfund.org.

Where can I find a list of previously funded grants?

Please visit <https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/our-approach> and scroll to Investing in Communities for general information about the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) or to download a list of supported projects.

Can you share more about grant priorities?

Proposals receiving the highest consideration will:

- Incorporate triple bottom-line results.
- Be planned and implemented by a community organization that has participated in Resourceful Communities network events.
- Build on local assets (a community's natural, historical, cultural and human resources) to address economic, social justice and environmental challenges in a community.
- Meaningfully engage those who benefit from the project, particularly people of color or low wealth.
- Focus on work in rural counties.
- **Please note:** Targeted funding is available for rural United Methodist churches across North Carolina that are supporting their local food economy.

Additional questions?

Please email smallgrants@conservationfund.org or call (919)-902-0889.

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