



September 2026 Grant Resources Newsletter



Welcome to ECC's September 2026 Grant Resources Newsletter.



**Eastern Carolina
Council of Governments**

Investing in Our Region's Future

GRANT WRITING *Workshop*

Learn how to **FIND • WRITE • WIN • MANAGE**
more grant funding for your community!

A practical, hands-on 1½-day workshop designed to help local governments, organizations, and community partners strengthen their grant skills from start to finish.

Real strategies. Real tools. Real results.

WHAT YOU'LL LEARN



FIND THE RIGHT FUNDING

Identify opportunities, evaluate eligibility, and decide if an opportunity is a good fit before investing time and resources.



THINK LIKE A REVIEWER

Understand how grants are scored and what reviewers really look for.



WRITE COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS

Craft clear, compelling narratives that address scoring criteria and tell a strong, credible story.



MANAGE GRANT AWARDS

Learn key post-award responsibilities, reporting, compliance, and best practices for sustaining future funding.



SAVE THE DATE!

SEPTEMBER 29–30, 2026

233 Middle Street
(in the O. Marks building)
New Bern, NC 28563

WWW.ECCOG.ORG

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS



UP TO 30 PARTICIPANTS

Interactive, engaging,
and hands-on!



PRACTICAL TOOLS

Ready-to-use templates,
examples, and resources



REAL-WORLD APPLICATION

Exercises using your
own programs and
funding priorities



EXPERT INSTRUCTION

From a former federal
grant maker and
experienced consultant

REGISTRATION INCLUDES

- ✓ Workshop instruction and materials
- ✓ Refreshments and lunch
- ✓ Real-world examples and exercises
- ✓ Resources you'll keep and reuse



1½-DAY IN-PERSON WORKSHOP

Day 1: Tuesday, September 29, 2026
9:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Day 2: Wednesday, September 30, 2026
8:30 AM – 12:00 PM



UP TO 30 PARTICIPANTS

Interactive, engaging,
and hands-on!



HOSTED BY

**EASTERN CAROLINA
COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS**

Serving communities across
eastern North Carolina

**OPEN TO ECCOG
MEMBERS & NON-MEMBERS!**

Member pricing available.

LEARN FROM AN EXPERT



Tara Kunkel, MSW

Founder & Executive Director, Rulo Strategies

- Former Federal Grant Maker & Reviewer
- U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance
- Grant Consultant & Trainer
- Helps organizations WIN and MANAGE millions in grant funding

Grants



STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Seeks Applications for the Rural Decentralized Water System Grants Program

(Washington, D.C., August 5, 2026) – The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development today announced the agency is accepting applications for grant funding to improve water and wastewater infrastructure for communities across the nation.

USDA is accepting applications through the [Rural Decentralized Water Systems Grant Program](#) now through Sept. 30, 2026. This program, administered through the Rural Utilities Service, directly contributes to vibrant rural communities with modern, reliable infrastructure.

Rural Decentralized Water System Grants

USDA expects to make approximately \$11 million available through the Rural Decentralized Water System Grant program. Grants will be awarded to qualified non-profit organizations to create a revolving fund and to issue sub-grants to finance the costs of individually owned household water well systems and individually owned household decentralized wastewater systems. Approximately \$1 million will be available for applications directly supporting individually owned household decentralized wastewater system subgrants. All funds are subject to availability. Additional information about this funding is available on [Grants.gov](#).

USDA is accepting applications for the DWS Grant program through [Grants.gov](#). The deadline to apply is 11:59 p.m. ET on Sept. 30, 2026.

USDA Rural Development invests in rural America with programs to promote rural prosperity. These programs expand access to high-speed internet, electricity, and transportation infrastructure, and support economic growth, healthcare, education, housing, and other community essentials. Discover more investment details and historical data in the [Rural Data Gateway](#) and learn more about the agency at www.rd.usda.gov.

Bad Tree Bounty Project:

Targets invasive or hazardous tree identification and mitigation for municipalities and tribal governments.

Applications are open from July 1, 2026, through September 30, 2026.

Details and links are hosted on the [N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program](#). [1]



Industrial Development Fund Utility Account



NORTH CAROLINA
DEPARTMENT of
COMMERCE

The NC Department of Commerce (DOC) is accepting applications for its Utility Account. The funds may be used for publicly owned infrastructure and are used for projects that are reasonably anticipated to result in the creation of jobs.

Eligible applicants are units of local governments located within the 80 most distressed counties in the state. All counties within the ECC region are [Tier 1 or Tier 2](#), with the exception of Carteret Co (Tier 3). A cash match equivalent to at least 25% of the grant amount is required for projects not located in one of the state's [25 most distressed counties](#).

Eligible projects are infrastructure improvements that result in the creation of private sector jobs. See the guidelines below for job creation and other requirements.

If job creation goals are not met, a pro-rata share of funds for each job not created must be repaid to the Department of Commerce by the local government. For projects involving a named company, the local government will secure the funds through a Legally Binding Commitment agreement executed between the local government and the company owner.

LINKS:

- [Click HERE for guidelines document](#)
- [Click HERE for NC DOC page on the Utility Account](#)

205(j) Water Quality Management Planning Grant



NORTH CAROLINA
Environmental Quality

Is your community interested in a water quality planning project?
The NC Department of Environmental Quality offers the 205(j) grant on an annual basis.

Eligible projects include:

- 9-element watershed restoration plan development or update for 12-digit HUC (hydraulic unit code) or smaller watersheds.
- Stormwater infrastructure mapping.
- Assessment/identification of pollution sources.
- Water quality planning efforts between councils of governments and local governments.
- Projects that have regional or statewide impacts.

Only councils of governments are eligible to apply. If you have a water quality planning project idea and are interested in potentially partnering with Eastern Carolina Council on a 205(j) grant, please reach out to ECC staff.

This grant is competitive. A local match is not required, but it is preferred. Award amounts vary.

Link:

- Click [HERE](#) for details about 205(j).

Fiscal Year 2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program



The US Economic Development Administration has posted the NOFO for the FY 2025 Disaster Supplemental Grant Program. The purpose of this program is to support long-term economic recovery in areas that received a major disaster declaration in the calendar year 2023 or 2024. For the ECC region, this only includes **Carteret and Onslow counties**.

Eligible applicants include local governments in the areas specified above. Total funding for this program is \$1,447,000,000, and federal cost share is generally 80%. Award amount range depends on the selected project pathway.

Eligible projects fall under three pathways:

- The **Readiness Path** is for non-construction projects focused on planning and building capacity for future projects related to economic development and disaster recovery. The award range for this pathway is \$250,000 to \$500,000. Some project examples include strategic planning, additional staff, or preparation for future construction projects.
- The **Implementation Path** is for construction and non-construction projects that improve local economies and disaster resilience. The award range for non-construction projects is \$100,000 to \$5 million, and the award range for construction projects is \$2 million to \$20 million. Project examples include infrastructure improvements, workforce training programs, and revolving loan funds.
- The **Industry Transformation Path** is closed.

Applications under the **Readiness Path** and **Implementation Path** are accepted on a continuous basis until funds are gone or the NOFO is canceled.

Links

- Click [HERE](#) to access the NOFO.
- Click [HERE](#) to access the project's page on EDA.gov.

Fiscal Year 2025 Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs



The US Economic Development Administration (EDA) is continuing to accept applications for its Public Works and Economic Adjustment Assistance Programs. Local governments are eligible to apply. One application is submitted for both programs.

Awards must fund projects that reflect at least one of the following EDA Investment Priorities:

- Critical Infrastructure
- Workforce
- Innovation and Entrepreneurship
- Economic Recovery Resilience
- Manufacturing

Detailed descriptions of these Investment Priorities are located [HERE](#).

Furthermore, awarded projects must be consistent with the region's Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS). Please contact ECC staff if you have any questions about ECC's CEDS.

The Public Works program provides assistance with infrastructure design and construction with the goal of making communities more economically competitive. The range of eligible infrastructure

projects is wide, including, but not limited to, water and sewer improvements, industrial parks, brownfield redevelopment, telecommunications infrastructure, aviation facilities, and port facilities.

The Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) program assists with construction and non-construction activities meant to counter adverse economic changes. As with Public Works, the scope of EAA activities is wide, including, but not limited to, workforce training programs, long-term disaster recovery and resiliency plans, revolving loan funds, market or industry research, and creation or expansion of foreign direct investment and trade. Special consideration is given to communities that have been affected by the closure of nuclear, biomass, or coal power facilities.

Please see the NOFO for details.

Link

- Click [HERE](#) for grant details. A link to download the NOFO can be found in the Related Documents tab.



The Grant Portal (TGP) - Aging Grants / Grants for Seniors

View a catalog of aging grants at
<https://north-carolina.thegrantportal.com/aging-seniors>.

TGP is online database of grant opportunities.
Information about grant details requires a paid subscription.

ARPA

Office Hours

The UNC School of Government (SOG) hosts office hours via Zoom for discussions on local government finance including ARPA. Click [HERE](#) for the office hours page on UNC SOG's NC Finance Connect website. Consider bookmarking this page to stay up to date on future offerings.



Updates

ECC Services

**Would you like to pursue a grant opportunity but are short-staffed?
Consider grant writing and administration services offered by ECC.**



Eastern Carolina Council's Mission *is to improve the region's quality of life by providing human, planning, and economic development services to local governments and area residents*

by leveraging resources and collaborating regionally.

Visit Our Website and Facebook Page



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