



October 2026 Grant Resources Newsletter



Welcome to ECC's October 2026 Grant Resources Newsletter.

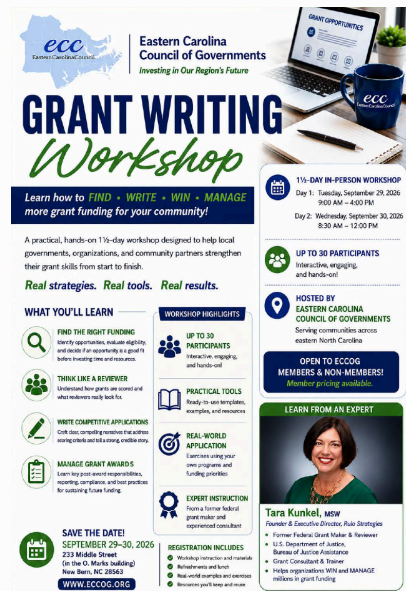
This is a resource for local government employees, elected and appointed officials, and other community-focused individuals in the ECC region for receiving information about upcoming opportunities and useful tools related to grants.

GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

On September 29th-30th,
ECC hosted a Grant Writing Workshop
featuring
Tara Kunkel Founder & Executive Director,
Rulo Strategies

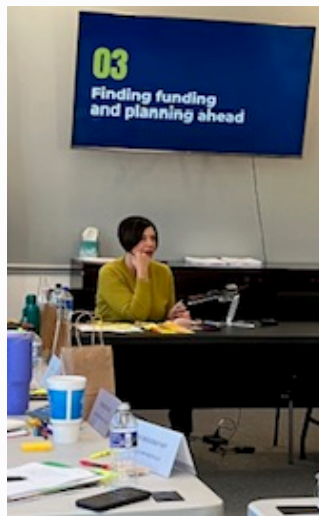
Tara Kunkel instructed the class of fifteen (12 participants & 3 ECC staff members) on how to find the right funding, think like a reviewer, write competitive applications, and manage grant awards.

Her expert instruction enhances participants' ability to assist their communities by addressing key concerns and submitting competitive grant applications.



The flyer for the ECC Grant Writing Workshop features the ECC logo and the text "Eastern Carolina Council of Governments Investing in Our Region's Future". The main title "GRANT WRITING Workshop" is prominently displayed. Below it, a tagline reads "Learn how to FIND • WRITE • WIN • MANAGE more grant funding for your community!". A brief description states: "A practical, hands-on 1½-day workshop designed to help local governments, organizations, and community partners strengthen their grant skills from start to finish." The flyer lists "Real strategies. Real tools. Real results." and outlines "WHAT YOU'LL LEARN" in four sections: "FIND THE RIGHT FUNDING", "THINK LIKE A REVIEWER", "WRITE COMPETITIVE APPLICATIONS", and "MANAGE GRANT AWARDS". It also includes "WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS" such as "UP TO 30 PARTICIPANTS", "PRACTICAL TOOLS", "REAL-WORLD APPLICATION", and "EXPERT INSTRUCTION". The date and location are given as "SEPTEMBER 29-30, 2026" at "233 Middle Street (On the O. Wells building) New Bern, NC 28563". A "REGISTRATION INCLUDES" section lists workshop instruction, materials, refreshments, and a real-world example. A photo of Tara Kunkel is included with her bio: "Tara Kunkel, now Founder & Executive Director, Rulo Strategies" and her previous roles at the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons, and as a Grant Consultant & Trainer.

EVENT PHOTOS





Grants



Cori Lindsay
Coordinator, Resourceful
Communities Initiative
910.898.2964

For additional information
click on the link below:

[Creating New Economies
Fund](#)

Creating New Economies Fund

The [LegacyWorks Group](#) operates small grant opportunities in North Carolina through its program [Resourceful Communities](#), primarily via the [Creating New Economies Fund](#).

Grant Overview: Creating New Economies Fund

Grant Amount: Average of **\$8,000 to \$12,000**, with a maximum award of **\$15,000**

Target Recipients: Rural grassroots organizations and churches in North Carolina with operating budgets under \$300,000 (or under \$500,000 for churches)

Focus Areas: Triple-bottom-line projects covering environmental stewardship, social justice, and sustainable economic development (such as local food systems, health equity, eco-tourism, and land preservation).

Ineligible Locations: Buncombe, Durham, Forsyth, Guilford, Mecklenburg, New Hanover, Orange, and Wake counties, as well as national organization chapters. Standalone general operating expenses are also excluded.

2026 Tree City USA,



Tree Campus Higher Education and Tree Line USA awards application period opens September 8 & closes December 31

Greetings, partners!

The Arbor Day Foundation (ADF) 2026 application period for Tree City USA, Tree Campus Higher Education and Tree Line USA awards begins with the opening of the ADF application portal on Sept. 8, 2026. Now is the time to begin gathering your accomplishment documentation to start your application. The application period closes Dec. 31, 2026.

Please don't delay completing your application! We have many applications to review and will need sufficient time to address any issues that may require attention before the application period closes.

Visit our [Tree City USA](#), [Tree Campus Higher Education](#), [Tree Line USA webpage](#) for additional information and guidance. Below is this year's schedule.

Application Review and Award Schedule

- Sept. 8 – The ADF [application portal](#) opens.
- Nov. 1 – We begin the state-level application review.
- Dec. 31 – The application period closes. No extensions will be offered.
- Mid-January – Our review of applications is complete and approved applications are submitted for the ADF's review and approval.
- End of January
 - The ADF completes their application reviews and notifications.
 - Submit your request for NCFS staff to present your award at your Arbor Day celebration.
- Mid-February – The ADF begins shipping award recognition materials to awardees. Be aware that recognition materials may take several weeks to arrive.

Thank you for all you do for your community. We are looking forward to reading about all your accomplishments! Please don't hesitate to contact me if you need assistance.

In partnership,

Sarah Hollis

Community Forestry Coordinator

(919) 857-4841, sarah.hollis@ncagr.gov

[Learn more about the N.C. Forest Service Urban and Community Forestry program.](#)

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.*

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