November/December 2026 Grant Resources Newsletter



Welcome to ECC's November/December 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.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Sound Rivers awarded Land and Water Fund grant for Town of Pikeville project

Sound Rivers, a nonprofit organization that protects the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico river basins, was recently awarded two grants from the North Carolina Land and Water Fund. One grant, totaling $75,000, is for a watershed restoration plan in the Town of Pikeville. **Eastern Carolina Council is a partner on this project and will provide mapping services.**

See the Sound Rivers post here: https://soundrivers.org/nc-land-and-water-fund-comes-through-with-two-new-grants/

Regional Brownfields Summit: Harvesting Redevelopment Potential

This in-person summit will allow attendees to interact with other municipal attendees, learn Brownfields basics, discuss grant writing resources, and more.

NCDEQ will also be presenting to discuss our program and available resources.

Date: November 10, 2026

Registration: https://asoft200455.accrisoft.com/centralina/index.php?src=events&srctype=detail&category=Centralina Learns&refno=1586&submenu=events

---

Grants

Low Income Energy Assistance

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) is a federally-funded program that provides for a one-time vendor payment to help eligible households pay their heating bills.

Households including a person aged 60 or older or disabled persons receiving services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from Dec. 1 – 31. All other households may apply from Jan. 1 – March 31 or until funds are exhausted.

Households that meet the following criteria may be eligible:

- Have at least one U.S. citizen or non-citizen who meets the eligibility criteria.

- Meet an income test.
- Be responsible for its heating costs

How to Apply:

Households including a person aged 60 or older or an individual receiving disability benefits and services through the NC Division of Aging and Adult Services are eligible to sign up for assistance from Dec. 1 – 31.

All other households may apply from Jan. 1 – March 31, or until funds are exhausted.

Contact your local Department of Social Services for the application dates and for additional information on LIEAP. To apply for Energy Assistance online please visit NCDHHS - ePASS.

Contact:

For more information, please contact your local Department of Social Services or the NC Division of Social Services.

Safe Routes to School Planning and programming grants

The Safe Routes to School (SRTS) Planning and Programming Grant application period is now open and will close November 6 at 11:59 p.m.

These grants support local and regional efforts to conduct SRTS-related planning and implement programs and activities that create safe opportunities for students to walk, bike, and roll to school and within their communities.

The purpose of this program is to:

- Enable and encourage children and teens in grades K-12, including those with disabilities, to walk, bicycle, and roll to school and in their communities.
- Build the skills, confidence, and knowledge students need to safely walk, bicycle, and roll to school and in daily life.
- Make walking, bicycling, and rolling safer and more appealing transportation options for students.
- Support the planning, development, and implementation of projects and activities that improve safety and access around schools and help reduce traffic, fuel consumption, and air pollution.

Funded projects will range from $25,000 to $300,000 and require a 20% local match.
The grant period will run from January 1, 2027 through June 30, 2028.

An informational webinar was held on and the recording will be published alongside additional information on the website below:

Safe Routes to School Grant Application & Guidance

Paved trail feasibility studies

The Call for Projects opened on October 1 and will close on November 6th.

These feasibility studies aim to build upon higher-level planning efforts and take a comprehensive approach to identify possible route alternatives of multimodal corridors. The purpose of this type of study is to evaluate technical feasibility of a project from a design, permitting, and constructability perspective. Project types eligible for these studies include paved trails, greenways, shared-use paths, sidepaths, and sidewalks.

Any municipality, county, MPO, or RPO within North Carolina is eligible to apply.

To learn more information, IMD hosted a webinar on October 1 and the recording will be posted on the website below alongside additional information:

Paved Trail Feasibility Studies Website

Apply for Urban and Community Forestry project funding!

The N.C. Forest Service is pleased to announce
the 2027-1 Urban and Community Forestry Financial Assistance Program
request for applications (RFA) will open Dec. 1, 2026.
There are **five offerings** and more than $2.5 million in cost-share assistance available.

Climb to Tree City USA

This assistance package is designed to help municipalities that have not met all the Tree City USA standards to complete select urban forestry practices and community forestry activities that are foundational in the management of public trees and to achieve Tree City USA designation.

Climb to Managing Community

This assistance package is designed to help municipalities that have achieved Tree City USA standards to complete practices and activities to meet the standards to achieve the NCFS U&CF Managing Community designation.

Tree Maintenance and Planting

There are two assistance packages designed to help municipalities that have achieved Tree City USA standards to address tree maintenance, i.e., pruning and removal, and planting needs.

New! ACC CRPG Tree Planting Project

This assistance package is designed to help municipalities that have achieved Tree City USA standards meet tree planting needs in a localized area to mitigate adverse environmental conditions. This package includes cost share assistance to develop tree planting and post care plans, plant of 50-100 trees and an outreach program to engage and educate the public about the project.

This project has been funded wholly or in part by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency under assistance agreement 3D25824 to the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The contents of this document do not necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency, nor does the Environmental Protection Agency endorse trade names or recommend the use of commercial products mentioned in this document, including any images, video, text, or other content created by generative artificial intelligence tools, nor does any such content necessarily reflect the views and policies of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Professional Staff Development Assistance

This assistance package is designed to help municipalities add urban forestry expertise to their organization by providing financial assistance for a staff member to obtain professional urban and community forestry credentials.

Please visit the N.C. Forest Service website for RFA links and more information about our financial assistance program.

Visit the Website

Don’t miss the 27-1 U&CF Financial Assistance Program Webinar

Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, 10-11 a.m.

The webinar will review the requirements of the grant program, the RFAs, developing a grant project and completing an application.
This webinar is only open to eligible North Carolina applicants.
Click below to register for the webinar no later than Nov. 8, 2026.
Those who register will receive the webinar link on the day before the scheduled event.

Register for the Financial Assistance Program Webinar



STAKEHOLDER ANNOUNCEMENT

USDA Taking Applications to Improve Water and Waste Infrastructure in Rural Communities Across the Nation

U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development announced today that USDA is now accepting applications for programs to improve water and waste disposal infrastructure for communities across the nation.

The Solid Waste Management Grants program and the Water and Waste Disposal Technical Assistance and Training Grants program are open for applications now through December 31, 2026. These programs, administered through the Rural Utilities Service, directly contribute to vibrant rural communities with modern, reliable infrastructure.

The Solid Waste Management Grants Program supports technical assistance and training to help rural communities manage solid waste sites, such as landfills, and reduce or eliminate water pollution. Historically, USDA has invested in projects to train waste management operators and support responsible planning to protect communities against improper waste storage or other potential problems. Eligible applicants include public bodies, nonprofits, federally acknowledged or state-recognized Native American Tribes or groups, and academic institutions.

USDA expects to make approximately $4 million available through this program. Additional information, including how to apply, is available online.

Water and Waste Disposal Technical Assistance and Training Grants ultimately help small communities improve water and waste treatment facilities. Qualified nonprofit organizations can use

this program to deliver technical assistance and training that solves water and waste disposal problems and helps communities prepare applications for related loans and grants.

USDA expects to make approximately $35 million available through this program. Find more information about this program online.

Applicants that support eligible rural areas and towns with 10,000 or fewer people are encouraged to apply for these programs through Grants.gov.

The deadline to apply is 11:59 p.m. ET on December 31, 2026.

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.

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program

USDA Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program and Grant Program This US Department of Agriculture Rural Development program assists with funding essential community facilities in rural areas. Local governments are eligible to apply.

Rural area is classified as a jurisdiction of no more than 20,000 residents based on Census data.

Essential community facilities broadly include educational, health care, administrative, community support, and public safety facilities as well as streets and local food systems such as community gardens and food banks.

Funding includes low interest direct loans, grants, or a combination of both. This is a competitive program. Smaller communities (5,500 residents and less) and low-income communities (median household income under 80% of the state nonmetropolitan median household income) are prioritized.

This program is open year round. Please CLICK HERE for additional information.

North Carolina Land & Water Fund (NCLWF)

The North Carolina Land and Water Fund improves water quality, sustains ecological diversity, and protects historic sites and military installations by funding projects to acquire lands, restore the habitat for fish, wildlife, and other species, and enhance the filtering of stormwater runoff to reduce pollutants from entering water supplies.

Grant Cycle Timelines:

Regular Grant Cycle Applications

- **January 15 - Grant Cycle Opens. The application web-forms and updated funding manuals will be available on our website. Please plan to update your copy of the Funding Manual after the cycle opens.**
- **March 1 - Application Deadline.**
- **July 7 - Landowner Status and Match Security Update Deadline.**
- **October 1 - Anticipated funding meeting date.**

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

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

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 Golden LEAF Foundation

Golden LEAF's mission is to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural, tobacco-dependent, and economically distressed communities through leadership in

grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

The Golden LEAF Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1999 to receive a portion of North Carolina's funding from the 1998 Master Settlement Agreement with cigarette manufacturers. Golden LEAF has worked to increase economic opportunity in North Carolina's rural and tobacco-dependent communities through leadership in grantmaking, collaboration, innovation, and stewardship as an independent and perpetual foundation.

For more than 25 years, the Foundation has provided lasting impact to tobacco-dependent, economically distressed, and rural areas of the state. In fiscal year 2025, Golden LEAF helped create 1,665 jobs, more than $116 million in new payrolls, and more than 4,722 workers trained or retrained for higher wages.

Governed by a board of directors appointed by leaders of NC's legislative and executive branches, Golden LEAF has focused on critical issues facing North Carolina communities including bringing jobs and building industry by providing resources to communities, awarding scholarships to local students and administering the state's relief efforts following natural disasters.

For additional information on Golden Leaf Foundation click here

TGP

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.

Updates

ECC Services

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

ecc
EasternCarolinaCouncil

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

Eastern Carolina Council | PO Box 1717 | New Bern, NC 28560 US

Unsubscribe | Update Profile | Constant Contact Data Notice

Constant Contact

Try email & social marketing for free!