



## Support for Places: Environmental Conservation 2017-2018 Transaction Grant Guidelines

Funding direct costs for land transactions is one of the greatest challenges facing conservation organizations today, in spite of the very high leverage effect it has on a land or easement donation from private donors. Landowners who are willing to donate conservation land worth hundreds of thousands of dollars are often unable to fund the cash transaction costs as well. Triangle Community Foundation will leverage donated land transactions by providing funding for the transaction costs and stewardship endowments associated with land donations.

### **ELIGIBILITY**

Applications are available to 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and governmental agencies based in Chatham, Durham, Orange, and Wake counties. Religious congregations and organizations operating under fiscal sponsorship of a tax-exempt nonprofit are eligible to apply when collaborating with a 501(c)(3) that meets all other criteria. Organizations must meet the Foundation's non-discrimination policy, and must have been incorporated at least three years prior to the application deadline. Only one application per organization per fiscal year (July – June) will be considered.

### **GRANT PROGRAM INFORMATION**

The Transaction Grant Program will assist organizations in leveraging conservation projects by providing support to fund qualifying transaction costs associated with land and easement donations. Each property funded with these grants must be permanently protected through a Conservation Easement or Notice of Acceptance of Property for Conservation Purposes.

The Foundation will consider funding requests for the following:

- Survey, environmental assessment, and legal description expenses
- Legal expenses including attorney fees, title insurance, closing costs, and recording costs
- Legal defense fund for the project
- Baseline documentation report (including grantee labor and expenses to create the report)
- Stewardship endowment for the project
- Conservation staff expense, including labor costs and travel expenses, directly related to the proposed project

The Foundation will not fund deficit or debt financing, grants solely for the purpose of re-granting, grants to projects in which land is not permanently protected, projects outside Chatham, Durham, Orange, or Wake counties, ad valorem or rollback taxes (may count as match), landowner's appraisal for tax reporting (may count as match), land acquisition (value may count as match), or general administrative or operating costs not related to the project.

### **Grant Awards and Matching Requirement:**

Grant values will vary by project and will not exceed \$25,000. Organizations must provide matching funds with a minimum ratio of 4:1. Land value may count toward matching requirement. (See below for additional details.)

### **Collaboration:**

Collaboration is not required for the Transaction Grant Program, but preference will be given to collaborative proposals.

### **Timeline:**

All application materials must be submitted online and will be accepted on a rolling basis. All applicants will be notified of the selection committee's decision within 45 days of submission. Site visits or interviews are not typically required for this grant. However, Triangle Community Foundation reserves the right to request a site visit or interview with board and staff leaders.

### **APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS**

Triangle Community Foundation utilizes online grant management software. All application materials can be accessed by clicking the link below, creating a profile (or logging in to your organization's existing profile), and selecting the "Environmental Conservation: Transaction Grants 2017-2018" process on the application dashboard.

Online Grant Portal: <http://trianglecf.org/nonprofits/resources-for-nonprofits/online-grant-application-portal/>

## **APPLICATION MATERIALS**

In addition to the online application form, proposals must include the following attachments:

- [Conservation Impact Worksheet](#)
- Map Assessment (one PDF) that includes the following:
  - 1 - 8.5"x11" Regional Map representing the property and where it is located within the Triangle region.
  - 1 - 8.5"x11" Location Map (color) representing the context of the property and its surrounding areas, its natural environment, other conservation initiatives, and any additional details that will help describe the property's values and importance within the community.
  - 1 - 8.5"x11" Property Map (color) detailing the conservation attributes and benefits of the property. Include orthophotographs and provide other attributes and labeling to best represent the property.
- Photographs – Up to 3 pages (8.5"x11") of photographs that depict the property and its attributes in support of the project (as one PDF).
- [Transaction Grant Budget template](#)
- Land Value documentation (if included as match funding)
- [Stewardship Calculation Worksheet](#)

## **MATCHING FUNDS**

Each grant applicant must provide minimum matching funds/contributions of at least 4:1 (\$4 of match for each dollar of grant funding requested from Triangle Community Foundation). The Foundation may waive or amend match requirements on a case-by-case basis. The availability of match must be documented. Projected match is the responsibility of the grantee to substantiate in final grant reporting. Applicant accepts responsibility for match projections.

Triangle Community Foundation defines matching funds/contributions in the following ways:

- [Land/Real Property Value](#) may be considered a match, valued by County tax or appraised value. For conservation easements, applicant may use the value of up to 60% of the unrestricted property value, unless a qualified appraisal is available to substantiate the value. Prorate the value based on the acreage under consideration. Land/Property value may be counted toward match so long that it is permanently conserved with an approved legal instrument.
- [Transaction Expenses](#) may be used as match, including the following: legal fees, recording costs, closing expenses, title insurance, survey costs, baseline documentation report expenses, land protection staff time, environmental assessment (including transaction screen and phase 1), rollback taxes, and appraisal fee. Baseline Documentation Reporting (BDR) reporting may be conducted by the grantee and invoiced accordingly. BDR is an exception to project related staff expenses and utilizes a separate budget line item.
- [Stewardship Endowments](#) must be substantiated with a stewardship calculation worksheet. Applicant must permanently endow grant funds or match contributions budgeted as stewardship endowment expenses.
- [Project-Related Expenses](#) are eligible expenses related to project creation/development, must be as outlined in the budget, and fit in the following categories: (1) the cost of contractor services; (2) supplies and materials for implementation; (3) Staff expenses, including staff labor and travel expenses. Expenses not included as part of the grant request are to be budgeted as match.
- [In-Kind Donations](#) of goods or services may be used as match. These values must consider the real value, based on product condition at donation. Used items are to be valued at used market value, not new replacement cost (if value not available, utilize no more than 50% of new value). Services may be valued at the cost of hiring the professional contractor to complete those services, so long as the contractor performs the work. Volunteers that complete the same services may be acknowledged under volunteer services. Professional services must be valued at the current market rate for services. Please substantiate in-kind values.
- [Volunteer Labor](#) may be used as a match. Volunteer labor may be valued at \$10 per hour.
- [Restrictions on match](#)
  - General overhead and administration cannot be counted as a match.
  - All approved match must be integral in the completion or development of the program/project application and project implementation.
  - All match contributions must be substantiated by the completion of final report.

## **STEWARDSHIP CALCULATION**

Each conservation project application should demonstrate sufficient stewardship endowment funding. Each request that includes stewardship endowment funds must place grant funds in a permanent endowment. The Foundation will require substantiated proof that these funds have been permanently protected as part of the final grant report.

Utilize the [Stewardship Calculation Worksheet](#) (based on the Clean Water Management Trust Fund – CWMTF monitoring worksheet) to develop a stewardship endowment budget for your conservation property. If stewardship funds are requested in the budget, a stewardship calculation worksheet must be included as a part of the application. An example stewardship endowment budget is also provided for your review.

If stewardship endowment funds are not requested in the budget, there must be a corresponding stewardship endowment match in the budget (a minimum calculation rate utilizing the attached stewardship calculation budget). Match stewardship endowment funds are not required to have the same permanent endowment documentation.

The Foundation will consider stewardship endowment amounts as calculated in the Stewardship Calculation Worksheet. A grantee may determine that they desire additional stewardship funds beyond the Worksheet. Grantee may self-fund or find other match resources to add additional stewardship endowment funds. These additional funds are eligible match expenses.

Stewardship Endowment Calculation – The provided worksheet was originally developed to support annual monitoring of property. It may not fit every stewardship endowment need, particularly for fee properties. Grantees are permitted to include additional calculation in box 2D – Site Management for fee owned properties. This is a onetime request that is included in the stewardship endowment calculation. Grantee must include notes to describe the Site Management endowment expense.

Permanent Stewardship Endowment - All stewardship endowment funds provided by the Foundation must be placed in a permanent stewardship endowment. If funded, documentation will be required as part of the final grant report to demonstrate the permanent endowment funding.

**Can my organization submit more than one application per fiscal year?**

No. Only one application per organization will be considered for each fiscal year (July – June).

**Can this grant be used to purchase property?**

No. Funds awarded through this program cannot be used toward land acquisition.

**Can the donated property value count as match toward the Transaction Grant budget?**

Yes. A substantiated land value can be included as part of the match. It requires a description of the substantiation, including tax value or appraised value. A conservation easement valuation, if not appraised, may be valued at 60% of the underlying land value, as substantiated by tax documentation or land appraisal.

**Can the donation of in-kind goods and services count as matching funds?**

Yes. In-kind goods and services are considered a valid match toward Transaction Grants.

**What are the time limitations of the grant?**

The Transaction Grants are intended to be completed within 12 months. The grant period may be extended upon request.

**How will projects be selected to receive grant funding?**

Applications will be reviewed by a committee of community volunteers, and grantees will be selected based on the following:

- *The property is part of a larger conservation initiative or adjacent to existing protected land:* Adjacency or larger conservation initiatives lead to long term conservation successes for species protection and reduced buffer landscape fragmentation.
- *The project will contribute to important conservation goals:* The project has excellent conservation potential with valuable conservation impact. Its benefits include water quality, habitat value, public access and recreation, local food or forest production.
- *The project will provide important community benefits:* The application articulates the community goals that the project's conservation will fulfill. The project was identified in a conservation or community plan or through stated community goals and objectives. The project's conservation will provide measurable public benefits.
- *The project conserves unique and important conservation values:* Significant natural heritage areas, natural heritage element occurrences, state significant soils, high quality waters, impaired waterways, public access
- *Resources and feasibility:* The organization has appropriately allocated resources toward the project, and the project's goals and objectives seem feasible.

**What are the final grant reporting requirements?**

Reporting requirements will be outlined in the grant agreement and may include:

- A finalized budget
- A finalized Conservation Impact Worksheet with the actual property impact statistics
- Proof that the conservation property is permanently protected
- A declaration or other documentation demonstrating that the stewardship funding is in a permanent stewardship endowment

Reports will be submitted to the Foundation no later than 30 days after the completion of the grant period.

**What do I do if the project runs into a complication?**

As soon as you are aware of complications with your project, or other significant issues, please contact your Foundation Program Officer to discuss the issues. The Foundation recognizes that conditions change during grants from time to time. We will make every effort to work with our grantees to determine the best future course of action due to both timing and budgetary issues.