

## Frequently Asked Questions

### Sustainable Communities: Environmental Resilience Spring 2023



#### **Are you really offering unrestricted support? What if I need support for a project?**

Yes, we're really offering unrestricted support! Unrestricted funding is something program staff had been considering and when COVID-19 hit, we decided to release restrictions on as many of our discretionary grants as feasible. And we're continuing to do that whenever possible.

Our goal is to support organizations that are doing work that reflects our program goals and trust that they (you) know best how to deploy this funding to achieve shared impact. So, while the funding is unrestricted, we expect that this funding will support work aligned with our goals.

#### **What do you mean by "nature-based strategies"?**

Great question! Nature-based strategies or solutions rely on natural systems, or mimic them, to address climate threats. It's really just a fancy name for work that many environmental organizations are already doing, like planting trees, creating rain gardens, or conserving or restoring wetlands. Here are some resources that provide more information.

- Types of Nature-based solutions – A rubric of nature-based solutions and their environmental, social, and economic benefits to communities, prepared for Triangle Community Foundation by a group of Duke University Sanford School of Public Policy students: <https://bit.ly/3pypqEQ>
- Naturally Resilient Communities – Provides an overview of nature-based solutions and a database of more than 50 solutions and case studies that are helping communities across the US become more resilient: <http://nrcsolutions.org/>
- Nature as Resilient Infrastructure: Fact Sheet – Provides examples of nature-based solutions by type of climate-related threat: <https://www.eesi.org/papers/view/fact-sheet-nature-as-resilient-infrastructure-an-overview-of-nature-based-solutions>

#### **What do you mean by "climate change threats"?**

The Triangle is experiencing an increasing number of climate-related threats, which are expected to get worse in the future. Findings from the Triangle Regional Resilience Partnership's [Resilience Assessment: Technical Report](#) published in 2018 indicate that the region is experiencing certain climate-related trends:

- More extreme precipitation leading to increased flooding
- Increasing temperatures and temperature variability
- More droughts
- Population growth which puts pressure on resources and services

Therefore, through this grant program, we are interested in supporting organizations that are doing work which address flooding, extreme heat, water shortage, or other issues that represent a climate-related threat, through nature-based strategies.

**How can we demonstrate that our work benefits communities who are disproportionately impacted by effects of climate change?**

We know that certain communities that have endured chronic stressors such as poverty and racial segregation [are more vulnerable to impacts of climate change](#). So, preference will be given to organizations whose work is explicitly benefitting communities of color, low-income groups, people with limited English proficiency (LEP), and/or immigrant groups.

Advisory committee members would like to understand the make up of the broad community in which you work (e.g. Durham County, or the Triangle region) as well as specific communities / people who benefit from your programming. Please include geographic, socio-economic, status, race, ethnicity, gender, age, and physical or mental abilities. Be specific, using numbers whenever possible. We encourage you to cite data in your application using resources such as:

- County Health Rankings and Roadmap - <https://www.countyhealthrankings.org/app/north-carolina/2019/overview>
- CDC’s Social Vulnerability Index - <https://svi.cdc.gov/map.html>

**How will proposals be scored?**

Below is an outline of the evaluation rubric the volunteer advisory committee will use to score applications. Please know that funding decisions are not made solely based on score. We seek to have a grantee portfolio that reflects diversity across geography, types of projects, and other criteria.

Evaluation Criteria	Relevant application question(s)	Scoring rubric
<b>Organizational Alignment with Program Goals</b>		
<p>Historical programming</p> <p>How strong is the organization's historical track record of delivering programming and achieving outcomes that align with the program goals?</p>	<p><i>Environmental resilience programming history - In the last five years, has your organization provided programming related to the following?</i></p> <p><i>Recent key outcomes / impacts / accomplishments - We want to know what your organization has achieved recently (in the last five years, roughly) related to the program goals and programming history you checked above.</i></p>	<p>1 = Not strong at all 3 = Moderately strong 5 = Very strong</p>
<p>Current programming</p> <p>How well do the organization's current programs and future plans address the goal(s) of the grant program?</p>	<p><i>Tell us about your current programming - What are you doing and what impact is it having? How do you know your work is making a difference?</i></p>	<p>1 = The organization's work does not align with the goals of the grant program. 3 = The organization's work appears to meet the goals of the program, but there are some questions. 5 = The organization's work is strongly aligned with the goals of this program.</p>
<b>Commitment to equity and benefits to to populations of concern</b>		
<p>Board and staff representation</p> <p>To what degree is the organization committed to staff and board reflecting communities they serve?</p>	<p><i>Board &amp; Staff Composition - This could be evidenced by the board and staff closely reflecting the communities in which they work. It could also reflect an organization's efforts to become more representative and inclusive</i></p>	<p>1 = Not at all 3 = Moderately 5 = Very much</p>
<p>Benefits to communities most impacted by climate change</p>	<p><i>To what degree are the organization's programs benefiting communities most impacted by climate change including communities of color, low-income groups, people with limited English proficiency (LEP), and/or immigrant groups?</i></p>	<p>1 = Not at all 3 = Moderately 5 = Very much</p>

<b>Evaluation Criteria</b>	<b>Relevant application question(s)</b>	<b>Scoring rubric</b>
<b>Impact of Funding</b>		
What level of impact would this funding likely have on the organization?	<i>What impact will this funding have on your work? - Briefly share the impact that this funding will have on your organization's ability to do work aligned with the program goals.</i>	1 = Low impact 3 = Moderate impact 5 = High impact
<b>Financial Health</b>		
Financial health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Current and previous FY revenue/expenses/surplus(deficit)</i></li> <li>• <i>No unexplained surpluses or deficits greater than 10%</i></li> </ul>	GREEN - No unexplained surplus/deficits >10%, no other "red flags" YELLOW - A surplus/deficit >10% concern, possible "red flag" RED - Organization demonstrates multiple "red flags"
<b>Recommendation</b>		
Committee member recommendation	<i>Do you recommend that this organization be among the 15 funded grantees?</i>	Yes No Maybe