

**NORTH CAROLINA MAIN STREET AND RURAL PLANNING CENTER
POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES AND RESOURCES
FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND OUTDOOR RECREATION ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
(Revised May 2025)**

*** The NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center recommends contacting listed entities directly for more information about their programs. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. ***

Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
AllTrails Stewards Fund	AllTrails donates 1% of proceeds to environmental organizations that advance conservation and outdoor access. The AllTrails Stewards Fund will give money to projects that improve, maintain, rebuild, and restore our outdoor spaces through an open application process. The fund is for trail projects that expand outdoor access and preserve outdoor spaces. Looking to assist projects with strong community support and strategies for long-term sustainability.	Grants	Fund awards range from \$2,000 to \$10,000	https://publiclands.alltrails.com/stewards-fund
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources – The Great Trails State Program	The Great Trails State Program provides funding for new trail development and extension of existing trails anywhere in the state of North Carolina. This includes paved trails	Grants	Eligible applicants receiving a grant under this program shall provide matching funds	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/great-trails-state-program

	<p>or greenways, natural surface trails, biking trails, equestrian trails, and any other type of trail recognized by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. There will be one grant cycle distributing the full \$25 million dollars in non-recurring funding.</p> <p>Application deadline: Sept. 3, 2024</p>		<p>based on the tier ranking of the county where the project is located. See webpage for details.</p>	
NC Land & Water Fund	<p>These grants have been used in all 100 N.C. counties to help ensure clean drinking water, protect natural habitat and preserve our unique natural and cultural resources for future generations.</p>	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://nclwf.nc.gov/apply
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - The Land and Water Conservation Fund	<p>The LWCF provides matching grants to local governments to assist with public park and recreation projects. LWCF grants can be used to acquire land for a public park; to develop outdoor recreation and support facilities; or a combination of both. A project must be located on a single site.</p>	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	<p>An applicant must match the grant with a minimum of 50 percent.</p>	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/land-and-water-conservation-fund

North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)	Awards matching grants to local governments for parks, public beach access, and improvements in state parks. The statewide program helps local governments reach their park and public access goals to improve the quality of life in their communities.	Grants - The North Carolina General Assembly funds PARTF each year at different levels.	1:1 Match for Local Government Projects; Funds also available for NC State Parks projects and the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program	https://www.ncparks.gov/more-about-us/parks-recreation-trust-fund/parks-and-recreation-trust-fund
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NCDNCR, Division of Parks and Recreation - Recreational Trails Program Grant	The intent of the RTP is to help fund trails and trail-related recreational needs at the State level for projects that are construction ready for grant funding.	Grants – past grant amounts awarded between \$10k-\$100k	Past years have required a 25% Match of RTP Funds Received	https://trails.nc.gov/trail-grants/apply-grant
NC Department of Environmental Quality, Division of Marine Fisheries - Boating Infrastructure Grant (BIG) Program	The BIG program is a federal grant program, administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, that provides funding to states for the construction, renovation, and maintenance of boating infrastructure facilities for transient recreational vessels at least 26 feet long that are operated, leased, rented, or chartered primarily for	Grants - Two tiers: State (up to \$200,000) and National (up to \$1.5 million).	Yes – 25% cost share / match. In-kind services, materials, and other contributions are allowed for the cost share / match.	https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/marine-fisheries/grant-programs/nc-boating-infrastructure-grant-program

	<p>pleasure. Boating infrastructure means the structures, equipment, accessories, and services that are necessary or desirable for a facility to accommodate eligible vessels. Transient vessels are those passing through or by a place, staying up to 15 days. Projects completed using BIG funds must provide public access but may be publicly or privately owned. The NC Division of Marine Fisheries is the lead agency for BIG in North Carolina. Both publicly owned and privately-owned marina facilities that are open to the public are eligible to apply for funding, including private marinas, local municipalities, state agencies, or other non-governmental entities.</p> <p>Note: No announcement yet for 2024 grants.</p>			
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation	Intended to streamline grant funding opportunities for new	Grants - Approximately \$85 million	Non-federal match helps demonstrate	https://www.nfwf.org/programs/america-beautiful-challenge

(NFWF) - America the Beautiful Challenge	conservation and restoration projects around the U.S., the America the Beautiful Challenge consolidates funding from multiple federal agencies and the private sector to enable applicants to conceive and develop large-scale projects that address shared funder priorities and span public and private lands.		broad support for the project and may be required by the federal funding requirements. Dependent of federal agency funding.	
U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Transportation Alternatives	Provides funding for a variety of generally smaller-scale transportation projects such as pedestrian and bicycle facilities; recreational trails; and more.	Grants	Variable	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/transportation_alternatives/
U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) – Recreational Trails Program	Provides funds to the States to develop and maintain recreational trails and trail-related facilities for both nonmotorized and motorized recreational trail uses.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/recreational_trails/
National Forest Foundation – Matching Awards Program	The MAP program supports action-oriented projects that enhance outdoor experiences,	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	1:1 nonfederal cash match	https://www.nationalforests.org/grant-programs/map

	forest and ecosystem health, and engage local communities in caring for their public lands.			
US Fish & Wildlife Service - Wildlife and Sport Fish Restoration (WSFR) Program	Programs that distribute funding annually to state agencies and Tribes to manage fish, wildlife, and habitats, evaluate and enhance species of greatest conservation need, and provide recreational opportunities for fishing, hunting, shooting, and boating. Local governments and orgs. may have to partner with state agencies to access these funds.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.fws.gov/program/wildlife-and-sport-fish-restoration
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National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Acres for America	Walmart’s Acres for America program stands today as the leading public-private land conservation partnership in the United States. The partnership began in 2005, when Walmart and NFWF joined forces to establish Acres for America as a groundbreaking effort to support and catalyze the conservation of lands and wildlife habitat of national	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	All grant awards require a minimum 1:1 match of cash or contributed goods and services.	https://www.nfwf.org/programs/acres-america

	significance, and to benefit local communities and local economies.			
Outdoor Heritage NC - North Carolina Schools Go Outside (GO) Grant	Created to address the main barrier to getting kids outside during the school day – funding. Qualifying for grants require instructors demonstrate how the experience will address topics currently being taught in class and that the experience meets the goals of the Outdoor Heritage Trust Fund plan.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.outdoorheritage.nc.gov/grants/ For questions, contact ohac.grants@nc.gov
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - Accessible Parks Grant	The Accessible Parks Grant Program provides \$12.5 million in matching grants for parks and recreation to benefit people living with disabilities in North Carolina.	Grants – Maximum of \$500,000	Applicant must match the grant with at least \$1 of local funds for every \$5 in grant funds.	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/accessible-parks-grant
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources - Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program	The purpose of the program is to provide grants to acquire and/or develop public lands for outdoor recreation purposes consistent with the purposes of LWCF, but with the further specific goals of funding projects that:	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	ORLP grant projects must be cost-shared with non-federal funds at a minimum ratio of 1:1.	https://www.ncparks.gov/about-us/grants/outdoor-recreation-legacy-partnership-program

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are located within or serve an Urbanized Area (population of 50,000 or more) as designated by the Census Bureau from the 2010 Census; and <p>Are in, or are directly accessible to, neighborhoods or communities that are underserved in terms of parks and recreation resources and where there are significant populations of people who are economically disadvantaged.</p>			
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
NCDOT - IMD Feasibility Studies Program	Feasibility studies for eligible project types including paved trails, greenways, shared-use paths, sidepaths, and sidewalks.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	A local match is not required; however, it may be a factor to consider for a competitive grant cycle.	https://connect.ncdot.gov/municipalities/PlanningGrants/Pages/IMD-Feasibility-Studies-Program.aspx
The Conservation Fund – Resourceful Communities'	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resourceful Communities' small-grant program, the 	Grants - Grants cannot exceed \$15,000. There is no minimum	Not Specified	https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/grants-and-other-resources

'Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF)'	Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF), provides direct investment in community-based efforts. Seed money supports a range of projects: eco- and heritage tourism, youth conservation programs, farmers markets, alternative energy production and more.	amount that must be requested for consideration, however, grants average \$8,000-\$12,000.		
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
Athletic Brewing Co. – Two for the Trails	ABC donates 2% of sales to protect and restore trails, and other projects that enhance access to the outdoors. Any registered LLC eligible, with preference given to 501(c)(3) non-profits.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not specified	https://athleticbrewing.com/pages/two-for-the-trails
Fox Factory Trail Trust	Provide grants to organizations helping to preserve the places we love to play. The goal is to bring together diverse communities to build, maintain, and expand access to trails for both	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.trailtrust.com/

	mountain biking and power sports. 501(c)(3) Non-Profits eligible.			
NCDEQ – Water Resources Development Grant Program	This program provides cost-share grants and technical assistance to local governments in NC. Applications for grants are accepted for 7 eligible project types: general navigation, recreational navigation, water management, stream restoration, water-based recreation, Natural Resources Conservation Service Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) stream restoration projects and feasibility/engineering studies.	Grant – Funding Amounts Vary depending on project type - \$200,000 maximum recommended for “State & Local Projects”	50 percent matching limit	https://deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/water-resources/water-resources-grants/water-resources-development-grant-program
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
T-Mobile Hometown Grants program	T-Mobile is committing up to \$25 million over the next 5 years to support small towns across America by funding community projects. Program will help fund projects to build, rebuild, or refresh community spaces that help foster local connections in your	Grants – maximum \$50k per town	Not specified	https://www.t-mobile.com/brand/hometown-grants

	town. For example, this might include the town square pavilion, a historic building, an outdoor park, a ball field, etc.			
NCDEQ – Div. of Coastal Management - Coastal Management Beach & Waterfront Access Program	Provides matching grants to local governments for projects to improve pedestrian access to the state's beaches and waterways. Eligible applicants include local governments in the 20 coastal counties and their municipalities that have public trust waters (ocean, estuarine or riverine waters) within their jurisdictions.	Grants	Local Match Required	https://www.deq.nc.gov/about/divisions/coastal-management/coastal-management-beach-waterfront-access-program/beach-waterfront-access-grants
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program	The PeopleForBikes Community Grant Program supports bicycle infrastructure projects and targeted initiatives that make it easier and safer for people of all ages and abilities to ride. PeopleForBikes accepts grant applications from non-profit organizations with a focus on bicycling, active transportation or community development;	Grants - up to \$10,000	Do not require a specific % match, but do look at leverage and funding partnerships very carefully. We will not consider grant requests in which PFB funding would amount to 50%	https://www.peopleforbikes.org/grant-guidelines

	from city or county agencies or departments and from state or federal agencies working locally.		or more of the project budget.	
North Carolina Community Foundation	The North Carolina Community Foundation (NCCF) is the only statewide community foundation serving North Carolina and has administered over \$243 million in grants since 1988. With more than \$440 million in assets, NCCF sustains over 1,200 endowments and partners with a network of affiliates to award grants and scholarships in communities across the state.	Grants	Each grant resource administered by the NCCF will have different specifications.	https://www.nccommunityfoundation.org/
USDA-RD - Community Facilities Direct Loan & Grant Program	This program provides affordable funding to develop essential community facilities in rural areas. An essential community facility is defined as a facility that provides an essential service to the local community for the orderly development of the community in a primarily rural area. Funds can be	Grants and Loans	Varying match rates dependent upon various factors	https://www.rd.usda.gov/programs-services/community-facilities/community-facilities-direct-loan-grant-program/nc

	used to purchase, construct, and / or improve essential community facilities, purchase equipment and pay related project expenses.			
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
East Coast Greenway Alliance - Complete the Trails Program	The Alliance is seeking proposals for trail projects that can successfully apply CTP funding towards expanding the East Coast Greenway State Trail. This grant is for the purpose of planning, construction, promotion, and maintenance of component trails of the North Carolina Trails System.	Grant	Not Specified	https://www.greenway.org/complete-the-trails-nc
Project Fit for America	Project Fit for America is a national 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization that works at the grassroots level with schools and frontline educators to create new opportunities for kids to be active, fit, and healthy as part of the everyday school experience. The organization works with	For the fee listed, Project Fit for America will provide outdoor and indoor play equipment, lesson plan support materials, curriculum, and more.	N/A	https://projectfitamerica.org/pfa-program-summary/

	communities to bring in funding, equipment, teacher training, curriculum, and the resources schools need to get kids fit and foster a love of movement. The total funding required to sponsor a two-year pilot and model school program is \$18,206.			
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
Hydro Flask® Parks for All	Parks for All supports the development, maintenance, and accessibility of public green spaces so people everywhere can live healthier, happier, and more fulfilled lives. Through Parks for All, Hydro Flask®, in partnership with the Outdoor Foundation, offers grants and product donations (insulated stainless steel drink bottles with the Parks for All logo) to nonprofits dedicated to building, restoring, maintaining, or providing access to parks and	Grants and product donations	Not specified.	https://www.hydroflask.com/parks-for-all

	recreational public lands and/or beaches and coastal areas. Note: Application deadline for product donations is April 30, 2023. Cash grant application round will open August 2023			
Program	Purpose/Description	Grants/Resources	Match	Website/Contact
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy (RTC)	RTC's Trail Grants program helps organizations and government agencies accelerate their trail network plans. The program is open to non-profit organizations as well as state, regional, local or tribal agencies working to support, develop and activate local and regional trail networks.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://www.railstotrails.org/our-work/grants/
Community Development Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization Program (CDBG – NR)	Infrastructure and public improvements that support existing housing in the designated area (e.g., streets, sidewalks/pedestrian ways, curbs and gutters, parks, playgrounds, greenways, water and sewer lines, flood and drainage improvements, and trees).	Grants – Maximum \$950k	The CDBG-NR Program does not have a matching fund requirement.	https://www.commerce.nc.gov/about-us/divisions-programs/rural-economic-development-division/community-development-block-grants-cdbg

Together Outdoors	Outdoor recreation-related programming, events, and leadership development initiatives that benefit communities of color, LGBTQIA+, underserved regions, people with disabilities, and/or other intersecting minority groups.	Grants - \$5,000 - \$10,000	Not Specified	https://www.togetheroutdoors.com/grantprograms
FHWA - Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP)	The Active Transportation Infrastructure Investment Program (ATIIP) is a competitive grant program to construct projects to provide safe and connected active transportation facilities in active transportation networks or active transportation spines.	Grant – Award Ceiling: \$15,000,000 Award Floor: \$100,000	The Federal share of the cost of an eligible project carried out using an ATIIP grant shall not exceed 80% of the total project cost.	https://www.fhwa.dot.gov/environment/bicycle_pedestrian/atiip/
The Conservation Alliance	The Conservation Alliance is a group of outdoor businesses that support efforts to protect specific wild places for their habitat and recreation values. There are two grant programs: Member Directed Grant The Confluence Grant.	Grants – Funding Amounts Vary	Not Specified	https://conservationalliance.com/grants/
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation -	National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) will make investments in	Grants - For planning and design projects,	Match is not required but is still strongly	https://www.nfwf.org/programs/national-coastal-resilience-fund

National Coastal Resilience Fund	planning, design, and restoration of natural and nature-based solutions to help protect coastal communities from the impacts of storms, floods, and other natural hazards and enable them to recover more quickly and enhance habitats for fish and wildlife.	estimated average awards are typically in the range of \$100,000 to \$1 million. For Restoration Implementation projects, average awards are typically in the range of \$1 million to \$10 million.	encouraged to show broad support for the project.	
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance - National Forest System Trail Stewardship Partners Funding Program	Program is intended to encourage and support volunteer and stewardship group trail maintenance accomplishments and trail deferred maintenance backlog on the National Forest trail system. This program directly supports the implementation of the National Trails Strategy, which has a goal of doubling volunteer trail work in the next decade. The ideal project proposal will engage volunteers in the accomplishment of trail maintenance over the course of a field season over a broad area of a District or Forest.	Grants - Maximum \$30,000.	20% Match Requirement	https://www.wildernessalliance.org/trail_funding

North Carolina Horse Council – Trails Grant	<p>Equine land access is a serious issue for North Carolina and our trail riding community. In addition, our trails continue to be threatened by closure or decreased in mileage. No one knows better where the priorities are than the local trail associations who, with this grant program, would partner with the NCHC to implement our strategic plans and promote NC as a trail destination state. NC Trail Associations are encouraged to apply for trail grants across the state.</p>	Grants – Amount Not Specified	Not Specified	https://nchorsecouncil.com/grants/
Keep North Carolina Beautiful - Window of Opportunity	<p>Keep North Carolina Beautiful operates a financial grant process that is open to any 501(c)3 organization in the state of North Carolina that educates our state's youth with regard to our environment and sustainability. The grants are for outdoor projects that enhance the beautification of campuses throughout NC, along with</p>	Grants	Not Specified	https://www.keeptncbeautiful.org/window-of-opportunity-grant

	replenishment and recycling projects that educate the youth of North Carolina on the impacts of preserving and enhancing our state's environmental sustainability. Window of Opportunity (WOO) Grants begin at \$1000 each.			
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In addition to the above list, the Outdoor Recreation Roundtable (ORR) in partnership with Oregon State University has compiled a list of national outdoor recreation funding and technical assistance resources. Some resources may be duplicated between the MS&RP and ORR resource guides. The inclusion of a program on the list is not an endorsement by the NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center. This list of resources is available via the below link:

<https://drive.google.com/file/d/1Ucp7AQQQTHa8x0eWYL-ID53AvJU628dE/view>