

NCF-Envirothon

2023 Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant

Request for Proposals

Funded in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service

The National Conservation Foundation (NCF), working in conjunction with the U.S. Forest Service and the NCF-Envirothon, is pleased to announce the 2023 Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant (Diversity Grant) program. The program was created to encourage students to expand their knowledge and explore the environment and natural resource conservation through participation in Envirothon and its five areas of study: Aquatic Ecology, Forestry, Soils and Land Use, Wildlife, and Current Environmental Issues.

Recognizing that historically underserved communities and students often face significant barriers to participation, NCF and the USFS collaborate to offer Diversity Grants to U.S. state and Canadian provincial Envirothon programs to provide additional support and financial resources to recipients with the goals of:

- Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion within local state and provincial Envirothon programs
- Improving access to hands-on, outdoor natural resource education opportunities
- Encouraging education exploration
- Educating young adults on the importance of conservation

Mini-grants will be awarded to qualified Envirothon programs for projects that aim to expand the reach of environmental education and Envirothon programming to students who would not normally have access due to a variety of barriers, including but not limited to socioeconomic status, geographic location, limited educational opportunities, physical or mental disabilities, and learning differences.

U.S. state Envirothon program grant applicants can receive up to \$4,000 for a project, regardless of previous grant recipient status. One Canadian provincial Envirothon program can receive up to \$2,000 for a project. *(Final amount awarded per applicant will depend, in part, on the number of applications received.)*

Examples of Diversity Grant projects* include, but are not limited to:

- Participation Projects that provide travel and registration cost assistance to teams who have been unable to participate in the past due to a lack of funding.
- Outreach and Engagement Projects that initiate a training and/or outreach program for historically underserved communities and students currently lacking access to outdoor



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education or opportunities to learn about the Envirothon, conservation, natural resource, and more. These may also improve environmental literacy and provide students access to hands-on learning experiences.

- *“Passive” campaigns (e.g., a grant request to print posters, brochures, DVDs, etc., without a plan for onsite, in-person, and/or online interaction with target audiences) to reach proposed target audiences will receive lower consideration than “active” outreach proposals (e.g., in-person trainings, etc.).*
- Cultural Inclusion Projects that incorporate underrepresented culture into state/provincial Envirothon competitions and/or programs (in the form of ceremonies, histories, oral traditions, indigenous systems of science, traditional ecological knowledge, etc.) or translation of education materials into languages other than English.
- Accessibility Projects that seek to adapt training and testing materials for hearing, visually, or mobility impaired students.

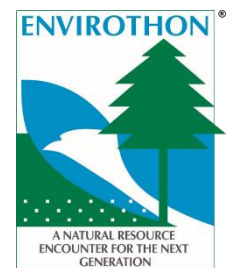
** For any in-person events, please be sure to follow local health guidelines and regulations regarding COVID-19 safety.*

2023 Diversity Grant Major Dates:

- December 2, 2022 – Application period opens.
- February 3, 2023 – Application period closes.
 - *Deadline to submit the complete application and attachments is 11:59 pm EST.*
- March 3, 2023 – Anticipated 2023 Diversity Grant Awards announcement.

This document serves as a guide to the application process. Further questions should be directed to Jennifer Brooks at 1-800-825-5547 or administration@envirothon.org.

Sponsors:





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Application Overview

Eligibility

State and Provincial NCF-Envirothon programs that are up to date on all membership dues may apply.

An individual school, organization, conservation district, or other entity may be the sole focus, or project participant, of a Diversity Grant Project, but the local state/provincial Envirothon program must support the project and agree to act as the fiscal agent, administering the grant funds, for the life of the project (e.g., the grant funds will be sent to 'XYZ State Envirothon' program to be administered to the grantee).

Funding Availability

- U.S. Applicants (regardless of application history) = up to \$4,000
- Canadian Applicants = up to \$2,000

Budget Requirements

- Applications must reflect, at minimum, a 25% match of the Total Project Budget
- *No additional points will be awarded for matches over 25%*
- The match can be either Monetary (cash) or In-Kind (such as staff or volunteer time/labor).
- Applications without the minimum match amount will NOT be considered.
- Documentation of match will be required at the time of application (letters from Boards or partner organizations verifying match will suffice for in-kind matches).
- Match Calculation: Reminder, the match should be at least 25% of the **TOTAL** Project Budget.

For Example: If the total project budget is \$5,000, of which \$1,250 was provided by matching funds (cash) or in-kind sources (volunteers), then:

$$\frac{\$1250}{\$5000} \times 100 = 25\%$$



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Allowable vs Unallowable Budget Expenses

Diversity Grant funds are restricted funds that are to be used for the specific purpose of expanding the diversity of student participation in Envirothon. As such, certain activities or components are designated as Unallowable expenses for Diversity Grant funds (*i.e., you can't use Diversity Grant funds to pay for it*), while others are allowed **but** have strict guidelines or limitations that should be considered during the budget development process (see footnotes to below sample budget items). Examples of allowable and unallowable grant expenses:

ALLOWABLE	UNALLOWABLE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stipends for teachers to attend Envirothon trainings ¹ • Substitute teachers pay (allowing advisor to travel to event) ¹ • Team registration fees and/or travel funds to local, state/province Envirothon competitions • Materials specifically purchased for Envirothon trainings ³ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operating and/or maintenance expenses of organizations, including salaries, fees, rents, and honorariums • Most travel/lodging for grantee (e.g., project manager) ² • Equipment (including computer software/hardware, digital cameras, tablets and other electronics) and/or supplies not specifically related to the intent of the grant ³ • Virtual or online testing programs for state/provincial Envirothon competition • Project activities that are in-process/completed or components that were purchased prior to the official Project Start Date. ⁴ • Competition team awards and/or scholarships
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Expenditures for educator stipends/substitutes cannot exceed 40% of total request. 2. No more than 15% of the total grant funds may be applied toward lodging, meals, or mileage for grantee travel in fulfilling the proposed project. (e.g., project manager milage to travel to oversee project components) 3. The grant application must show: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. A <u>clear need</u> that demonstrates how the materials/supplies will directly and primarily benefit the increased diversity of student participation in Envirothon. ii. A <u>clear implementation plan</u> explaining the use of the materials/supplies during the grant project that will increase the diversity of student participation in Envirothon. 4. Larger projects or on-going projects may be broken into <u>phases</u>, with the phase coinciding with the proposed 2023 Diversity Grant project scheduled to start in mid-spring 2023 or later. 	



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Application Process

Application and Required Budget Form

1. Download the [Diversity Grant Budget Template](#) [MS Excel] and complete.
2. Go to the [2023 NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant Application](#) online form.
3. Fill out online form, upload Budget to form, and submit your application!

Online Application Form

You will have the ability to **save your application**, allowing you to open and edit your draft application. If you select to save your application and resume later, you will receive an email with a link to your draft application. This email may end up in your spam folder. Please check your email spam or quarantine folders to view email. Please do not delete this email!

Once your application is complete you must click the 'Submit' button to officially submit it!

Once submitted, you will get an on-screen confirmation and an email notification that your entry was received.

Incomplete Applications

All information requested in the application is required. Incomplete applications will be considered ineligible for funding.



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2023 Diversity Grant Selection Criteria

The NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant Subcommittee will consider the following factors when selecting projects to fund:

	Maximum Points
Audience. Has the target audience been described? Does the project reach a diverse and underserved audience?	20
Needs Addressed. Is the project clearly outlined? Does the project fulfill an environmental/natural resource/conservation education need? Is the project consistent with the goals of the NCF-Envirothon?	20
Timeline. Has a realistic timeline been developed? Are tasks sufficiently outlined? Is there sufficient time to do the project?	10
Benefits. Are the goals clearly stated? Is there a full description of the plan of work?	20
Budget. Is the project cost effective? Is the budget detailed and itemized? What are the extent and sources of other matching funds being raised for the proposed project?	20
Additional Partners. Are partnerships developed within the targeted audience? If so, who are key partners and how are they involved with proposed project?	15
Sustainability of the project. How will the project be sustained upon competition of the NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant period?	10
Evaluation. How will success of the proposed Diversity Grant Project be measured?	5

Awards Announcement and Contracting Process

- I. The 2023 Diversity Grant Awards announcement will be made by email in early March (tentative date March 3, 2023).
- II. Following award announcement, Award Recipients (**Grantees**) will receive a Diversity Grant General Condition of Acceptance Agreement. Upon receipt they are required to sign and return within 30 days.
- III. Grantees will not receive any funds until a signed agreement is on file. Failure to return a signed contract within 30 days of award notification may result in the project application being canceled and funds being reallocated.



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Grant Fund Disbursement:

- Upon the return of the signed Diversity Grant General Condition of Acceptance Agreement, Grantees will receive up to 75% of awarded funds.
- The remaining 25% of funds will be paid to the Grantee upon successful submission of the final project report.

Project Timeline:

- Project Start Date – Work to accomplish project goals and objectives must begin within 60 days of grant award announcement.
- Project End Date - All project components should be completed, and grant funds spent in full within 14 months of the Project Start Date.

Project Reports:

- An Interim Report will be due at the 7-month mark of the project.
- A Final Report is due 30 days after the competition of the project.

Project Revision or Extensions Requests:

All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. **Please note that not all requests will result in approval.**

- Project Revisions - If an unexpected issue or complication arises during the Project that requires a revision to a project component, timeline deliverable, expected outcome, etc. (e.g., a teacher workshop has to be canceled due to COVID-19) the Grantee should **contact NCF-Envirothon staff immediately** to discuss the situation and any requests BEFORE proceeding. All grant project revisions must receive prior approval in order to be in compliance!
- Extensions – For Reports or Project End Date
 - Any extension requests for either the interim report or the final report must be made in writing at least 30 days prior to set deadline.
 - Any request to extend the project beyond the original 14-month period must be made in writing 60 days prior to the Project End Date.



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Questions

If you have questions or would like to discuss potential Diversity Grant project ideas to see if they would qualify for funding, please contact Jennifer Brooks, NCF-Envirothon Program Manager, at administration@envirothon.org or 1-800-825-5547 x 2.