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## NCF-Envirothon

# 2025 Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant Request for Proposals (RFP)

*Funded in partnership with the USDA Forest Service*

The National Conservation Foundation (NCF), in collaboration with the USDA Forest Service (USDA FS) and the NCF-Envirothon, is excited to announce the 2025 cycle of the Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant (Diversity Grant) program.

Recognizing that historically underserved communities and students frequently encounter substantial barriers to participation, the NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant program provides mini-grants to states, provinces, tribal nations, and territories that are either interested in starting an Envirothon program in historically underserved communities or have projects that improve diversity, equity, inclusion, justice, and/or access (DEIJA) to hands-on, outdoor natural resource education opportunities. The program's goals are to improve access to hands-on outdoor natural resource education opportunities, encourage education exploration, and educate young adults on the importance of conservation education.

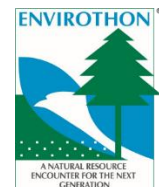
Mini-grants will be awarded for projects that aim to expand the reach of environmental education and Envirothon programming to students who would not normally have access due to a variety of barriers, including but not limited to socioeconomic status, geographic location, lack of school resources, limited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

2025 Diversity Grant Timeline:

- November 18, 2024 – Application period opens.
- January 10, 2025 – The application period closes.
  - *The deadline to submit complete applications and attachments is at 11:59 pm ET.*
- February 3, 2025 – Anticipated 2025 Diversity Grant Awards announcement.

This document serves as a guide to the application process. Further questions can be directed to Jennifer Brooks, NCF-Envirothon Program Manager, at 1-800-825-5547 ext. 2 or [administration@envirothon.org](mailto:administration@envirothon.org).

Sponsors:



In accordance with applicable civil rights laws, the National Conservation Foundation Envirothon (NCFE), its offices and employees, and institutions participating in or administering NCFE programs are prohibited from and shall not discriminate based on race, color, national origin, religion, sex, gender identity (including gender expression), sexual orientation, disability, age, marital status, family/parental status, income derived from a public assistance program, political beliefs, or reprisal or retaliation for prior civil rights activity, in any program or activity conducted or funded by the NCFE.



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## 2025 FUNDING AVAILABLE

### U.S. State or Territorial Projects:

Thanks to the support of the US FS, the NCF-Envirothon will be able to facilitate three levels of Diversity Grant projects for U.S. states or territories, based on the project's scope and impact.

2025 U.S. Grant Tiers	Award per Project*
1. U.S. statewide projects, projects focused on a large metropolitan city ( <i>that will reach a wider audience</i> ), or initiatives to establish <u>new</u> Envirothon programs in U.S. states or territories without current Envirothon programs	Up to \$8,500
2. County, conservation district, or regional-based projects	Up to \$5,200
3. Small-scale outreach projects (targeting 1 school or a small school district) or projects to transportation funds for students to attend Envirothon training opportunities or competition	Up to \$2,500

*\*The amounts granted will partially depend on the total number of applications submitted*

### Canadian Projects:

To support Canadian Envirothon program DEIJA projects, one Canadian provincial Envirothon program can receive up to \$2,000 USD sponsored by the National Conservation Foundation.

2025 Canada Grant Tiers	Award per Project
Provincial or territory-wide initiatives	Up to \$2,000 USD

## TYPES OF PROJECTS

Applications for a wide variety of projects are encouraged. The following are some **examples** of Diversity Grant project categories that we have seen in the past. However, your project does not have to be limited to one of these categories:

- Participation Projects that provide travel and registration cost assistance to teams who have been prohibited from participating in Envirothon events in the past due to 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 education or opportunities to learn about the Envirothon, conservation, natural resources, and more. These may also improve environmental literacy and provide students with access to hands-on learning experiences.
  - *“Passive” campaigns (e.g., a grant request to print posters, brochures, DVDs, etc., without a plan for onsite, virtual, or in-person interaction with target audiences) to reach proposed target*



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*audiences will receive lower consideration than “active” outreach proposals (e.g., in-person training, etc.).*

- Cultural Inclusion Projects that incorporate underrepresented cultures 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.

## WHO CAN APPLY

In U.S. states and Canadian provinces **WITH** established Envirothon programs:

- State and Provincial Envirothon programs that are current on all membership dues may apply.
- Schools, organizations, conservation districts, or other nonprofit entities
  - The support/approval of the local state/provincial Envirothon program is required.
  - The state/provincial Envirothon program must agree to act as the fiscal agent administering the grant funds for the project (*e.g., the grant funds will be sent to ‘XYZ State Envirothon’ program to be administered to ‘ABC Conservation District’ for the Diversity Grant project*).

In U.S. states or territories currently **WITHOUT** an existing Envirothon program:

- Be located in one of the following states or territories: Alaska, Hawaii, Nevada, Wyoming, American Samoa, Guam, Northern Mariana Islands, Puerto Rico, or the U.S. Virgin Islands
- Meet one of the below criteria:
  - 501(c)3, Nonprofit Organizations (NPO), or Non-Governmental-Organization (NGO), State or Territory Conservation Districts and/or Associations, Educational Institutions, or Government Agencies, including Tribal Governments and Instrumentalities

## ONLINE APPLICATION

Apply at -> [2025 Diversity Enhancement and Underserved Audience Grant Application](#)

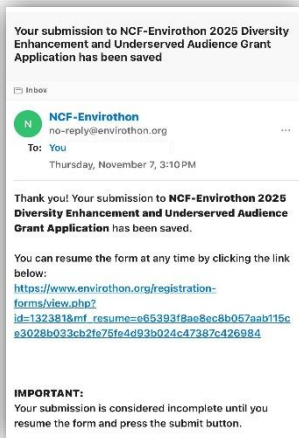
You will have the ability to **SAVE your application**, allowing you to open and edit your draft application.

- If you select to SAVE your application and resume later, after clicking the ‘Save form and resume later’ button you will:

1. See a screen (*example top left*), that will have a copy of your application's ‘in progress’ application. (Right-click on the hyperlink to save it for later)

2. Receive an email (*example below left*) from [no-reply@envirothon.org](mailto:no-reply@envirothon.org) with a link to your ‘in progress’ application.

- ➔ This email may end up in your spam folder. Please check these folders if it doesn’t appear in your Inbox.
- ➔ Please do not delete this email! NCF-Envirothon staff may not be able to retrieve your incomplete applications if saved improperly.



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

**Once your application is complete, you must click the SUBMIT button to officially submit it!**

- Once submitted, you will get an on-screen confirmation that your entry was received and an email notification from [administration@envirothon.org](mailto:administration@envirothon.org) with a copy of your application submission. Please do not delete this email.
  - This email may end up in your SPAM or quarantine folder. Please check these folders if it doesn’t appear in your Inbox.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

The following information will be needed to complete the online application. (*Additional questions may be asked, below is an overview*)

### Page 1: APPLICANT INFORMATION

- **Project’s U.S. State/Territory or Canadian Province**
- **Eligibility Status:** Select which of the following eligible grant recipient groups your organization qualifies as. If your organization qualifies under more than one type, please choose the type that



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best fits the grant request (e.g., if the Applicant is the state Envirothon program and a 501(c)3, select 'State or provincial Envirothon program')

- State or provincial Envirothon program
- 501(c)3 Organization, Nonprofit Organization (NPO), or Non-Governmental-Organization (NGO)
- State or Territory Conservation District and/or Association
- Educational Institution (e.g., University, school system, or other educational entity)
- Government Agency (including Tribal Government and Instrumentality)
- **Sponsoring Agency or Organization**
  - Name, Address, Website
- **Project Point of Contact**
  - Name, Email, Work Phone, Cell Phone
- **Project Jurisdiction:** To determine the Funding Tier (*see page 2 for information*)

## Page 2: DIVERSITY GRANT PROJECT PROPOSAL INFORMATION

- **Project Title**
- **Project Blurb:** Brief (200 words or less) project description.

## PROJECT DEMOGRAPHICS

- **Geographic Scope/Reach of the Project and Details**
- **Demographic Information about Project Location/Target Audience:** Please include any relevant diversity information on your target audience, including but not limited to race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, language, culture, religion, socioeconomic status, geographical location (urban/suburban/rural), physical or mental disabilities, learning differences, et cetera.
- **Source of Demographic Data**
- **Estimated Project Reach:** How many students and others will your project reach?
  - # of High School Students Reached, # of Educators (teachers) Reached, # of Other Individuals Reached (the general public, etc. )

## PROJECT NARRATIVE

- **Project Narrative:** Longer, more detailed description of the project (up to 1000 words)
- **Goals and Objectives:** 3-5 SMART Goals and associated Objectives (usually 2-3+ Objectives per Goal)



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- SMART Goals keep the project moving forward, help with accountability and timing, and let you know that you are accomplishing what you set out to accomplish. For more information on how to write SMART Goals, [click here](#).
  - Specific – Goals need to be specific. *“Provide outreach at five underserved high schools”* - concrete and descriptive.
  - Measurable – Goals should include some metric that can be used to evaluate success. *“Five new teams from underserved communities will participate in the state Envirothon competition”* - can be measured.
  - Achievable – Goals should be achievable and realistic to set your project up for success.
  - Relevant – Goals must relate to the overall mission of your project. Goals that do not relate to environmental education and the Envirothon should not be included in Diversity Grant applications.
  - Timely – All applications should include a detailed timeline, and individual goals should have a time in which they will be achieved. *“An Envirothon Training Day at XYZ High School will be held in October of 2025.”*
- Objectives are specific and measurable actions to achieve the Goal; steps needed to get to the Goal.

#### PROJECT TIMELINE *(The Project must begin and end within 14 months)*

- **Project Start Date:** must begin within 60 days of the grant award announcement (expected on 2/3/2025)
  - If selected a Contract Agreement must be signed before the project can begin.
  - The recommended Project Start Date is **4/3/2025**.
- **Project End Date:** all project components should be completed, and grant funds spent in full, within 14 months of the Project Start Date
  - The recommended Project End Date is **6/1/2026**.
- **Project Timeline Narrative:** Please provide an outline of major project activities, milestones, deliverables, etc.

#### PROJECT PERFORMANCE MEASURES

- **Project Evaluation:** How will the success of the project be measured?
- **Project Sustainability:** How will the project continue after the grant concludes?
- **Project Partners:** Who will you be partnering with to implement the project?
- **Sponsor Recognition:** How will you recognize the sponsors?



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## PROJECT BUDGET *(Please see Page 8 for complete details on Budget Expenses)*

- **Project Budget Spreadsheet Upload:**
  - Download the [NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant Budget Excel Spreadsheet](#) and Upload the completed form.
- **Requested Diversity DG Amount:** See page 2 for the maximum amount available per project
- **Total Match:** must be at least 25% of the Total Project Budget
- **Total Project Budget:** = DG Funds + Match
- **Budget Narrative:** Description of items listed in your DG Budget spreadsheet, including details about any matching funds.

## PAGE 3

### USDA FOREST SERVICE ENGAGEMENT *(N/A for Canadian Applicants, skip to next section)*

- **Closest USDA Forest Service-managed National Forest or Grasslands to the project location**
  - Find your local National Forestlands or Grasslands using the interactive map at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/ivm/>
- **USDA Forest Service Engagement**
  - Please detail any support or services your local Envirothon program or this diversity grant project may receive from the USDA FS or nearby National Forest or Grasslands

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS

- **Letter of Support Upload:** REQUIRED
  - From the local state or provincial Envirothon program for this project *(if your U.S. state/territory has an established Envirothon program)*
- **Supporting Documentation:** OPTIONAL
  - Any additional documents deemed imperative to the grant application, including documentation of match (e.g. letters from Boards verifying match, etc.), or that will help the grant selection committee understand the project.

## PAGE 4: CERTIFICATION AND SIGNATURE



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## PROJECT BUDGET

### DG Budget Template

- Please download and use the [DG Budget Template](#) [MS Excel (.xls)] spreadsheet file] to itemize your project's budget.
- Once completed:
  - Save the file using the following format:
    - [YEAR][StateCode]-DGBudget.xlsx (e.g. 2022WY-DGBudget.xlsx).
    - You may also save it as a PDF file, but please use the same format when naming.
  - Upload the file to the Diversity Grant Online Application before submitting the grant application.
- **Reminder: Your DG Budget should be ITEMIZED.**

### Match

Applications must reflect, at minimum, a 25% match of the Total Project Budget.

- The match amount can be Monetary (cash) or In-Kind (such as staff or volunteer time/labor) sources, or a combination of the two.
- Applications without the minimum match amount will NOT be considered and no additional points will be given for matches above 25%.
- Documentation of the match may be required at the time of application (letters from Boards or partner organizations verifying the match will suffice for in-kind matches).
- Match Calculation:
  - The match should be at least 25% of the Total Project Budget (not the award amount).
  - 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 the Match is:  $(\$1250/\$5000) \times 100\% = 25\%$

### 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 are designated as Unallowable expenses for Diversity Grant funds (*e.g., you can't use Diversity Grant funds to pay for it*), while others are allowed **but** have strict guidelines or restrictions that should be considered during the budget development process.

Please see the next page for Allowable Expenses, with restrictions, and Unallowable Expenses.





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ALLOWABLE EXPENSES	RESTRICTIONS
Stipends for teachers (advisors) or substitute teachers, to allow teachers (advisors) to attend Envirothon trainings.	Expenditures for educator stipends/substitutes <b>cannot exceed 40%</b> of the total requested amount.
Team registration fees or team travel funds to attend local/area/regional, and state/provincial Envirothon competitions	No restriction on the amount
<u>Some</u> Travel/lodging for grantee (e.g., project manager)	No more than 15% of the 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).
Materials specifically purchased for Envirothon trainings	The grant application <b>must</b> show: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A <u>clear need</u> that demonstrates how the materials/supplies will directly + primarily benefit DEIJA of Envirothon participation.</li> <li>• A <u>clear implementation plan</u> explaining the use of the materials/supplies during the grant project that will increase DEIJA.</li> </ul>

UNALLOWABLE EXPENSES
<i>X</i> Operating and/or maintenance expenses of organizations, including salaries, fees, rents, and honorariums
<i>X</i> Virtual or online testing programs for state/provincial Envirothon competition
<i>X</i> Envirothon competition awards or scholarships
<i>X</i> Project activities or components that occurred or were purchased <b>before</b> the official Project Start Date*

\* Larger projects or ongoing projects may be broken into phases, with the phase coinciding with the proposed 2025 Diversity Grant project scheduled to start in mid-spring 2025 or later.



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## SELECTION CRITERIA

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

- Audience: Has the target audience been described? Does the project reach a diverse and underserved audience?
- 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?
- Timeline: Has a realistic timeline been developed? Are tasks sufficiently outlined? Is there sufficient time to do the project?
- Benefits: Are the goals clearly stated? Is there a full description of the plan of work?
- 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?
- Additional Partners: Are partnerships developed within the targeted audience? If so, who are key partners and how are they involved with the proposed project?
- Sustainability of the project: How will the project be sustained upon completion of the NCF-Envirothon Diversity Grant period?
- Evaluation: How will the success of the proposed Diversity Grant Project be measured?

## AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT AND CONTRACTING PROCEDURES

- The 2025 Diversity Grant Awards announcement will be made by email in early February 2025 (*tentative date February 3, 2025*).
- Following the 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.
- 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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## FUND DISBURSEMENT

Upon the return of the signed Diversity Grant General Condition of Acceptance Agreement, Grantees will receive 75% of the awarded funds.

- The remaining 25% of funds will be paid to the Grantee upon successful submission of the final project report.

## PROJECT REPORTING

NCF-Envirothon staff will supply grantees with online report forms for both the Interim Reports and Final Reports. Both are **REQUIRED**.

- 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 REVISIONS OR EXTENSION REQUESTS

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 circumstances outside of your control and cannot be rescheduled), 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
- Extension Requests
  - Any extension requests for either the interim report or the final report must be made in writing at least 30 days before the set deadline.
  - Any request to extend the project beyond the original 14-month period must be made in writing 60 days before the Project End Date.
- **All requests will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Please note that not all requests will result in approval.**

## QUESTIONS

Please contact Jennifer Brooks, NCF-Envirothon Program Manager, at [administration@envirothon.org](mailto:administration@envirothon.org) or 1-800-825-5547 ext. 2.