



BUILDING OUTDOOR COMMUNITIES PLANNING & CAPACITY BUILDING GRANTS

OVERVIEW

The MADE X MTNS Partnership (Made By Mountains), through the [Building Outdoor Communities Program](#), is seeking applications to advance outdoor community and economic development projects that catalyze rural development across the 25 counties and Qualla Boundary of Western North Carolina. The MADE X MTNS Partnership plans to invest \$250,000 equitably across the region over the next year in two consecutive funding rounds. The application period for Round 1 completed in June 2023. The application period for **Round 2 opens on October 12th and closes on December 8th**. Grant awards will range from \$5,000-50,000 depending on if they are single or multi-county projects.

DETAILS

Grant Allocations:

- **Up to \$50,000** for projects that cross one or more county line
 - Community Working Groups from within the multi-county project boundary would submit only one project application
- **Up to \$25,000** for projects within a single county
- Rounds 1 and 2 are open to any Community Working Group participating in the 7-Month Cohort Work Period of the Building Outdoor Communities program and can only be awarded one time.

Timeline for Round 2:

Thursday, October 12	Application Window Opens
Thursday, October 19	Q&A Webinar - Register Here
Friday, December 8	Application Window Closes
Early January	Awards Announced



Scoring & Eligibility:

Projects will be scored and selected by the Building Outdoor Communities Selection Committee and funds will be allocated on a competitive basis to Community Working Groups participating in the 7-month Cohort Work Period of the Building Outdoor Communities Program. The Community Working Group must designate a local jurisdiction or nonprofit organization to act as the fiscal agent for the grant process.

Projects should demonstrate their high impact potential – the ability to drive private investment, job creation, social equity, accessibility, community, cultural, and climate resilience, and scalability. Projects should demonstrate their connectivity potential – the ability to advance livability and healthy community principles by connecting local businesses and cultural heritage sites to vital community services, local parks, and outdoor recreation assets, or by filling a gap in the outdoor economic ecosystem model. Projects should demonstrate their regional potential – the ability to create a positive ripple effect on surrounding municipalities, counties, and across WNC. Projects should demonstrate their sustainability benefit– the ability to have successful long-term operations and maintenance strategies that have a positive impact on the land and community.

Eligible Activities *(include and are not limited to):*

- Outdoor community and economy master planning
- Outdoor recreation infrastructure– feasibility, planning, community engagement, design, economic impact, usage and public perception data collection & analysis
- Outdoor community branding, marketing, wayfinding, activation, communications strategy
- Geospatial asset mapping, project site analysis
- Sustainable tourism strategy, destination management planning
- Outdoor business support, entrepreneurial ecosystem development, real estate feasibility
- Community and land capacity assessment, long-term sustainability strategy
- Project scoping, feasibility, conceptual design, planning, and implementation support

Project Scoring Criteria:

Criteria	Description	Project	Points
Conceptual Design	<i>Is the project concept...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creative, innovative, beneficial, scalable ● Aligned with local, regional, and state plans and priorities 		10
High Impact	<i>Does the project have the potential to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Drive private investment, job creation, social equity, accessibility, community, cultural, and climate resilience, ● Positively impact the community's triple bottom line ● Enhance quality of life by embracing placemaking principles 		10
Connectivity	<i>Does the project have the potential to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Advance livability and healthy community principles ● Connect local businesses and cultural heritage sites to vital community services, local parks, and outdoor recreation assets ● Fill a gap in the outdoor economic ecosystem model 		5
Regional	<i>Does the project have the potential to...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Create a positive ripple effect on surrounding municipalities, counties, and WNC 		10
Planning Process	<i>Does the project have...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Diverse stakeholder representation ● Community Working Group that is inclusive of partners within the county/ies ● Community buy-in ● Elected official and public official support 		5
Fund Allocation	<i>Does the project have...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Justified funding request and cost estimate ● Strategic plan for how the funds will be managed and spent 		5

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Sustainability	<i>Does the project concept consider...</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Long-term impacts on the land and community ● Needs for operations and maintenance ● Destination stewardship principles 		5
Total Points			50

Grant Requirements:

- Project Lead is responsible for acquiring the required local match based on the amount awarded. Local match requirements are determined by [NC Dept. of Commerce County Distress Rankings](#).
 - Tier 1: 10% of amount awarded
 - Tier 2: 25% of amount awarded
 - Tier 3: 50% of amount awarded
- Funds must be completely expended by July 2024
- Fiscal Agents will be responsible for completing progress reports detailing how the funds were spent (*details will be provided in the grant agreement*)
- Applications can include construction needs, but funds allocated cannot be used for construction.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. *Who is eligible to apply for the Building Outdoor Communities Planning & Capacity Building Grants?*

Community Working Groups from the Acceleration, Planning, or Initiation Cohorts that have participated or are participating in the 7-month Cohort Work Period are eligible to apply for both funding rounds. Community Working Groups can only be awarded one time.

If a project is not selected during Round 1, it can be considered for Round 2 pending that the feedback from the Building Outdoor Communities Scoring Committee is integrated into the Round 2 application.

2. *Will project development technical assistance be available for the BOC grant application process?*

Yes. The BOC program team will be available to guide Community Working Groups in the right direction and the COG liaisons will be available for project development technical assistance.

3. *Are the BOC grants allowed to be used for local match requirements for other state or federal grants?*

Yes, however the allowable funds for local match requirements are limited. If the Community Working Group is seeking local match funds, please explain and justify this in your project application.

4. *Can funds from federal grants be used for the local match requirement for the BOC grants?*

Yes. Funds from federal grants can be used as the local match requirements. Please explain and justify this in your project application.



5. *Can in-kind contributions be used as the local match requirement for the BOC grants?*

Yes. For the purposes of this grant opportunity, we are using the [current estimated national value of each volunteer hour of \\$31.80](#) –produced by Independent Sector.

6. *What are the procurement requirements for securing professional services?*

Awardees must follow the Federal Office of Management and Budget's procurement guidelines, as [outlined here](#), or defer to the fiscal agent's local procurement policies.

7. *How does the local match requirement work for single and multi-county project applications that may differ in economic tiers?*

Remember to refer to [NC Dept. of Commerce County Distress Rankings](#) for the appropriate tier. Then, multiply the project amount awarded by the correct tier percentage.

- Tier 1: 10% of amount awarded
- Tier 2: 25% of amount awarded
- Tier 3: 50% of amount awarded

Single-county example (*tier 1*)

- Amount awarded= \$18,000
- Take \$18,000 X 10%= \$1,800
- The Community Working Group would be responsible for \$1,800 as the local match.

Multi-county example (*County A-tier 1; County B-tier 2; County C-tier 3*)

- Amount awarded=\$36,000
- Take \$36,000/3 counties= \$12,000
- Each county would be responsible for \$12,000 times their correct tier percentage
- County A-Take \$12,000 X 10%= \$1,200
- County B-Take \$12,000 X 25%= \$3,000
- County C-Take \$12,000 X 50%= \$6,000



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Updated after Information Webinar on 5/3/23

8. *What advice do you have for communities in the cohorts that haven't completed the 7-month capacity building portion of the program as they consider this grant opportunity?*

If communities in the Planning or Initiation Cohorts have project concepts already developed, we encourage them to apply for Round 1. However, there is an equal funding opportunity for Round 2, which launches this Fall, so if communities need more time to strategize that is completely understandable. The Initiation Cohort begins their Cohort Work Period in August, so they will receive support and align key stakeholders to be ready for the Round 2 launch.

9. *If project applicants provide more than the required local match, can they get awarded additional grant funds?*

No. In order to ensure an equitable distribution of funds, there is no incentive for project applicants to provide more than the required local match.

10. *Considering that these grant funds CANNOT be used for construction or (moving dirt), can the local match be used for moving dirt?*

Yes. The local match can be used for implementation, which includes construction or moving dirt. These grant funds must be used for planning and capacity building activities as described in the *eligible activities* section of this document.

11. *Can counties outside the BOC program boundary benefit from this funding opportunity?*

Yes. However, ALL funds must be spent in BOC participating counties. Project concepts can include benefits to counties outside the program boundary, but in order for an applicant to receive up to the \$50K threshold, the project funds must support counties within the program boundary.

PROJECT APPLICATION TEMPLATE

APPLICATION WINDOW ROUND 2

The Building Outdoor Communities Planning & Capacity Building Grant Application for **Round 2 opens on October 12th and closes on December 8th**. Community Working Groups from across WNC are eligible to apply for these funds. Please review the information above before submitting an application. It is recommended that you complete your answers in a separate document first and then copy-paste them into the online application form.

PROJECT LEAD & FISCAL AGENT INFORMATION

PROJECT TITLE

PROJECT CORE CONCEPT

One paragraph summarizing the core concept of this project.

What is the purpose of this project? How does this project enhance your community's outdoor economic ecosystem, and ultimately contribute to sustainable community and economic development?





PLANNING PROCESS

One paragraph explaining the planning process and community engagement to date.

What organizations and individuals have been involved in the conceptual design, and what will future engagement look like if your Community Working Group is awarded funds? Are there any other organizations that should be involved for the success of this project? Are there underrepresented communities or populations who should be engaged for the success of this project?

OPERATIONS & MAINTENANCE

One paragraph explaining the initial plan for long-term operations & maintenance.

If this project is fully implemented in the next several years, what are some key ideas for operations and maintenance that should be considered early on in the project conception stage?

SUSTAINABILITY

One paragraph explaining the long-term benefits and implications of the project.

Thinking about the long-term social, environmental, and economic impacts of the project, what are the potential benefits to the community's triple bottom line? How can potential negative impacts be mitigated early on in the project conception stage and planning process?

PROJECT BUDGET

One paragraph detailing the estimated project costs.

What is the estimated project budget and how did your Community Working Group justify these costs? What is the staffing plan to manage the funds? What is the plan for acquiring the required local match?



TIMELINE & PROCUREMENT

One paragraph detailing the anticipated timeline for spending the funds before the required deadline of July 2024.

What is the anticipated timeline for spending the funds taking into consideration local procurement policies? Will the project team use the fiscal agent's procurement policy? If sole-sourcing is allowed, please justify why the project team wants to use a specific vendor.