



Northern Forest Center Community Recreation Grant Request for Proposals Winter/Spring 2026 Grant Round

Announcement: The Northern Forest Center seeks to increase youth participation in low-cost, non-motorized outdoor recreation in rural communities across the Northern Forest of Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York. We are pleased to announce that we are seeking grant proposals from qualifying entities to advance this work.

The Center is an innovation and investment partner working across Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont and New York. Rooted in community, forest stewardship, and economic development, we are the only nonprofit delivering integrated, cross-state solutions in our region to help rural people and places thrive.

Grant background:

While the region is well known for outdoor recreation and attracts thousands of tourists each year, many year-round residents have been excluded from activities such as mountain biking, skiing, hiking, and paddling. The Center's Community Recreation Grant program provides modest funding to projects that help alleviate this problem.

The Center seeks proposals for projects that:

- Reduce physical, financial, and social barriers for local youth to participate in outdoor recreation;
- Use outdoor recreation to address public health concerns; and/or
- Directly engage young people in natural resource stewardship related to outdoor recreation.

Criteria: Preference will be given to projects that best meet the following criteria:

- Tangibly reduce barriers to youth participation in outdoor recreation
- Promote healthy activity
- Incorporate natural resource stewardship in programming
- Have a clear implementation plan

Preference will be given to smaller applicants (by budget, number of staff, or community population, as applicable), in which a small grant will demonstrably increase programmatic reach or effectiveness.

Funding Available: Requests should range between \$1,500 and \$3,000. We anticipate making up to 15 awards. Funding for this program has been made possible through a grant from L.L. Bean. Additional funding has been provided by the RK Mellon Foundation specifically to support projects in the Moosehead Lake and Katahdin regions of Maine. Qualifying organizations in these regions are highly encouraged to apply.

Sample Projects: This list is illustrative only; proposals for additional project types are welcome.

- Gear for youth stewardship programs
- Equipment or startup costs for "gear libraries"

- Professional certification for adults wanting to start relevant clubs or courses for children (e.g., a mountain biking camp or wilderness program)

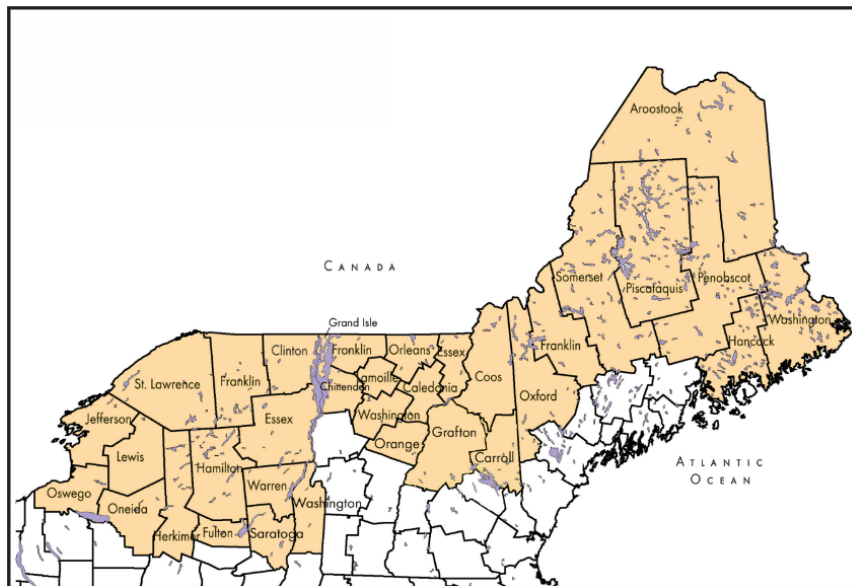
Eligibility: Municipalities, schools, 501(c)3 organizations, tribal organizations, and town-based committees in the following counties are eligible to apply for funding:

New York: Clinton, Essex, Franklin, Hamilton, Herkimer, Jefferson, Lewis, Oneida, Oswego, Saratoga, St. Lawrence, Warren, Washington, Fulton

Vermont: Caledonia, Chittenden, Essex, Franklin, Grand Isle, Lamoille, Orange, Orleans, Washington

New Hampshire: Carroll, Coos, Grafton

Maine: Aroostook, Franklin, Hancock, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Washington



Contact: Joe Fox, Outdoor Recreation Manager – jfox@northernforest.org

Deadline: March 13, 2026

Review Process: Northern Forest Center staff will review proposals and may reach out for additional information. Decisions will be announced by April 10.

Proposal Guidelines

- Respond briefly to the prompts below *in a separate document*.
- The total application should be no longer than 2 pages.
- Submit your proposal to Joe Fox jfox@northernforest.org by March 13 via PDF.

Required Information

1. Project Name

2. Lead Organization

3. Contact Person (Name, Phone #, and email address)

4. Project Partners (if any)

List partners whom we could contact to learn more about the project.

5. Project Description

Include discussion of how this meets Community Recreation Grants goals.

6. Expected Timeline and Brief Implementation Plan

7. Project Budget

Itemize major line items. How will this grant affect the overall budget and affordability of the project for local youth?

8. Requested Amount

9. Match Sources (if any) and Status