



**Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF)
Request for Proposal (RFP)
Revised September 16, 2025**

Key Dates

Applications due: September 30, 2025

Announcement Date: estimated December 2025

Types of Grants:

- **Planning and Small Grants:** up to \$50,000
- **Rapid Response Grants:** up to \$50,000
- **Implementation/Collaboration Grants:** \$50,000 to \$200,000 total for up to 3 years

Overview

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF) Invites proposals for a grant opportunity aimed at fostering multidisciplinary multisector collaborations supporting renewable natural resources. This grant is designed to support projects that incorporate evidenced-based research into real-life applications, align with the mission of RNRF, and create meaningful impact in the field and in communities.

About

The Renewable Natural Resources Foundation (RNRF) is a nonprofit, public policy research organization founded in 1972. The Foundation is a consortium of scientific, professional, educational, design, and engineering organizations whose primary purpose is to advance science, the application of science, and public education in managing and conserving renewable natural resources.

RNRF is governed by a board of directors comprised of one representative from each of its member organizations.

RNRF Member Organizations

American Geophysical Union (AGU) – AGU’s mission is to support and inspire a global community of individuals and organizations interested in advancing discovery in Earth and space sciences and its benefit for humanity and the environment.

American Meteorological Society (AMS) - The American Meteorological Society advances the atmospheric and related sciences, technologies, applications, and services for the benefit of society.

American Society of Civil Engineers (ASCE) – ASCE’s mission is to lead the civil engineering profession to sustainably advance and protect the health, safety, and welfare of all.

American Society of Landscape Architects Fund (ASLA Fund) – The Fund's mission is to invest in global, social, and environmental change through the art and science of landscape architecture.

American Water Resources Association (AWRA) – AWRA is the primary multidisciplinary association for information exchange, professional development, and education about water resources and related issues. Our mission is to advance multidisciplinary water resources education, management, and research.

Society of Environmental Toxicology and Chemistry (SETAC) – SETAC’s mission is to advance environmental science and management.

Guiding Principles and Focus Areas – The grants will support projects that align with the following guiding principles and focus areas.

Guiding Principles	Focus Areas
• Overall Impact in Supporting Renewable Natural Resources • Stakeholder/Community Engagement • Community Stewardship/Benefits • Scientific Rigor/Evidence-based and Ethics • Interconnectedness/Systems Approach • Advances Understanding of Renewable Natural Resources • Broader Potential or Future Use	• Air Quality and Atmospheric Sciences • Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation • Ecosystem, Soil, and Land Remediation and Restoration • Circular materials, Recycling, and Waste Systems • Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health • Renewable Energy and Sustainable Infrastructure • Water Quantity and Quality

See Appendix for details and examples

Types of Grants

RNRF provides three types of grants to support collaborations from planning through implementation.

- 1. Rapid Response Grants** – Small grants available to organizations that have lost federal funding. These grants are intended to support projects directly impacted by the termination of recent federal funding (After January 1, 2025). Grant funding may be used to fill critical gaps, complete essential components, or responsibly close out projects that have recently lost federal funding.
 - a. **Amount:** Up to \$50,000
 - b. **Grant Period:** 12 months
- 2. Planning and Small Grants** – **Planning grants** are available to support potential collaborators to carry out the initial discussion and investigation to conceptualize a collaborative project and the methods needed to implement the

project. **Small grants** support targeted projects that are limited in scope and budget.

- a. **Amount:** Up to \$50,000
- b. **Grant Period:** 12 months

3. **Implementation/Collaboration Grants** – These grants are to support collaborative, multidisciplinary projects in applying current research to implementation. Examples of projects may include, but are not limited to, applying new research to everyday use within a community, pilot studies for real-world study, evaluation on current collaborative projects to improve project activities, or to replicate previous projects on a larger scale or new area of focus.
- a. **Amount:** \$50,000 to \$200,000 per grant
 - b. **Grant period:** 12-36 months

Eligibility:

- **Organizational Status:**¹ The lead applicant must be one of the following:
 - A 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization incorporated in the United States or its territories
 - A tax-exempt institution of higher education in the United States or its territories
 - A federally recognized tribal government or tribal college
- **Collaborative Structure:** Projects must demonstrate multidisciplinary collaboration, bringing together expertise from different fields to address challenges in renewable natural resources.
 - **Implementation/Collaboration Grants** – Must involve at least three multidisciplinary collaborators (including the applicant organization). At the time of the application, at least one of the collaborating entities must be identified.
 - **Rapid Response, Planning & Small Grants** – A minimum of two collaborators need to be on the project, but they do not need to be identified at the time of the application.
- **RNRF Member Affiliation:** At least one project lead or co-lead must be a current member of an RNRF Member Organization.

Requirements:

- **Completed Application:** A full application must be submitted by the stated deadline. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered.
- **Duration:** The proposed project should be completed within the grant period described for each type of grant.

¹ Updated September 16, 2025, to clarify organizational eligibility requirements.

- **Proof of RNRF Member Affiliation:** Proof of membership is required at the time of application. (e.g., A copy of your membership receipt, screen shot of membership profile, etc.)
- **Alignment with Guiding Principles and Focus Area:** The proposed project must align with one or more of the Guiding Principles and Focus Areas and indicated in the grant application.
- **Letter(s) of Intent**
 - **Implementation/Collaboration Grants** – At least one collaborating organization, confirming their role and commitment to the project
 - **Rapid Response, Planning & Small Grants** – Letters of intent are not due at time of application, but applicant must demonstrate their plans for collaboration.
- **Attachments**

	Rapid Response Grants	Planning & Small Grants	Implementation / Collaboration Grants
IRS Determination Letter (Proof of nonprofit Status)	Required	Required	Required
Most recent audit report or alternative financial review. If your organization does not have a recent audit, please upload a brief statement explaining why (e.g., not required based on size or type, etc.).	Not Required	Not Required	Required
Most recent IRS Form 990	Not Required	Not Required	Required
Proof of Membership At least one collaborator must be a member of one of the RNRF member organizations. The collaborator must be the lead or co-lead of the project.	Required	Required	Required
Letters of Intent (LOI): LOI are required for all collaborating entities, specifying their role and resource contributions. The letters must be on the organization's letterhead and signed by someone in a leadership position	Optional at time of application	Optional at time of application	Required At least one is required at time of application
Biosketches, CVs, or Resumes:	Required	Required	Required

Attach biosketches or CVs for key personnel from all collaborators, including the prime applicant and collaborating entities.			
Project Timeline (up to 2 pages)	Required	Required	Required
Budget and Budget Justification	Not applicable	Required	Required
Rapid Response Grants Only	1. A copy of funding termination notice 2. Original Notice of Award or federal contract with financial details	Not Applicable	Not applicable
Supplemental Materials (5 pages max): Work plans, diagrams, or tables supporting the proposal.	Optional	Optional	Optional
References/Citations	Optional	Optional	Required

Submission Instructions

- All applications and supporting materials must be submitted in the grant portal. The link can be found on the [RNRF website](#)

Excluded Activities:

- Lobbying and political activities
- Scholarships
- Operational support
- Fundraising

Contact Information – grants@rnrf.org

Appendices

Appendix A - Definition and Examples of Guiding Principles

1. **Supports or Advances Renewable Natural Resources:** Build collaborations across researchers and communities to extend the life of renewable resources, increase their use, enhance capacity for resource management, or implement monitoring and corrective actions as needed.

Examples:

- Extends the life or protects the integrity of a renewable resource
- Increases the use of renewable resources
- Enhances the capacity for resource management
- Implements monitoring or corrective actions

2. **Community Engagement:** Eligible applicants will describe their methodology for engaging communities. The approach will ensure that sustainable natural resource management aligns with community input and is adaptable based on feedback.

We can use the following definitions to clarify what we mean by community for the purpose of this statement:

- **Community** – A group of people connected by geography, identity, profession, interest, or shared experience. Applicants must define the relevant community for their project.
- **Community Partner** – An organization or entity composed of members from the defined community that is formally involved in the planning, implementation, or oversight of the project.
- **Community Input** – Engagement strategies that involve gathering feedback or ideas from the defined community to shape how the project is conducted.

Examples:

- A community organization is the primary applicant.
- A community organization is named as a collaborator in the grant.
- The proposal describes a method for engaging community or community input.

3. **Community Stewardship/Benefits:** Projects must demonstrate how they will provide meaningful, lasting benefits to the impacted community, either directly or indirectly impacted. Unlike community engagement, which refers to participatory processes and relationship-building, community stewardship and benefits focus on outcomes.

A Community Beneficiary is defined as any group, population, or geographic community that experiences direct or indirect improvements as a result of the project, such as enhanced environmental conditions, access to knowledge, capacity-building, resource equity, improved health and safety, or improved quality of life indicators.

Examples:

- Tangible improvements in environmental quality or local infrastructure
- Increased access to useful, usable data or decision-making tools
- Empowerment through knowledge-sharing, capacity-building, or technical training
- Structural improvements that improve quality of life indicators and/or equity and environmental justice
- Risk reduction/resilience to environmental shocks or stressors

- 4. Scientific Rigor/Evidence-based and Ethics:** Eligible projects must be grounded in current scientific knowledge or established best practices, with a strong emphasis on translating research into meaningful action. Projects should demonstrate the ability to conduct thorough impact assessments, engage in community consultation, or implement effective mitigation strategies, all while integrating ethical standards throughout every phase of the project.

Examples:

- Enhances or improves current evidence-based practices.
- Supplements or complements existing applied research projects (i.e., ongoing federally funded projects).
- Translates or applies emerging research into implementation

- 5. Interconnectedness/Systems Approach:** Eligible applicants should be able to demonstrate or acknowledge how their project fits into the larger, complex, and interconnected system, recognizing the environmental, social, and economic relationships that exist within it.

Examples:

- Fits into a larger complex and interconnected system
- Relates to interconnected environmental, social, or economic systems
- Informs policies, regulations, or advocacy
- Aligns with national or international policies

- 6. Advances the Understanding of Renewable Natural Resources:** Projects funded through the RNRF Grant Program should contribute to deepening knowledge, awareness, or practical understanding of renewable natural resources.

Examples:

- New datasets or applied research outcomes that inform future natural resource management
- Practical models or tools that improve understanding of system dynamics (e.g., watershed models)
- Increased community or stakeholder understanding through participatory science.
- Contributes to better-informed policies or practices based on improved evidence or communication

7. Broader Potential or Future use - Projects will be recognized for their broader potential such as their ability to scale, adapt, be replicated or potential for future usability.

Examples:

- Toolkits or guides that can be shared or adapted
- Assessment models or protocols that use local data but can be applied in other regions
- Training modules or curriculum
- Pilot projects with pathways for growth, iteration, or replication
- Pilot projects that build on or improve on results from earlier pilot studies
- Planning templates

Appendix B - Definition and Examples of Focus Areas

The focus areas describe the environmental/scientific priority areas that represent areas of interest of the member organizations. The main focus areas include:

- Air Quality & Atmospheric Sciences
- Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation
- Ecosystem, Soil, and Land Remediation and Restoration
- Circular Materials, Recycling, and Waste Systems
- Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health
- Renewable Energy and Sustainable Infrastructure
- Water Quantity and Quality

Examples:

1. Air Quality and Atmospheric Sciences

Examples:

- Carbon sequestration
- Pollution control
- Research on sustainable alternatives to harmful chemicals
- Air pollution reduction
- Urban heat reduction

2. Ecosystem and Biodiversity Conservation

Examples:

- Reforestation and urban forestry
- Controlled burns as a forest management strategy
- Living shorelines and coastal resilience projects
- Wildlife corridors and habitat conservation
- Pollinator protection and nurturing

3. Ecosystem, Soil, and Land Remediation and Restoration

Examples:

- Sustainable remediation, phytoremediation, and bioremediation
- Biodegradable plastics.
- Erosion control using natural landscapes
- Research and reef rehabilitation techniques to enhance biodiversity and protect coastlines from erosion
- Enhance reef ecosystems as natural carbon sinks and coastal barriers to mitigate erosion and storm surge impacts.

4. Circular Materials, Recycling, and Waste Systems

Examples:

- Community-based Recycling Programs
- Develop a neighborhood-level circular economy pilot program that includes composting, plastics sorting, and local reuse hubs.
- Establish a materials recovery facility.

- Redesign of local recycling systems for greater accessibility, equity, and environmental impact

5. Regenerative Agriculture and Soil Health

Examples:

- Precision irrigation systems that maximize water efficiency and reduce runoff.
- Agroforestry and urban agriculture for sustainability
- Green agriculture and biopesticides

6. Renewable Energy and Sustainable Infrastructure

Examples:

- Wind, solar, and geothermal energy infrastructure
- Green roadways, transit, and building design
- Eco-friendly urban and landscape planning
- Smart cities (use of data, digital technologies, and interconnected systems)
- Integrating renewable materials
- Hydropower and tidal energy development
- Renewable energy integration into infrastructure

7. Water Quantity and Quality

Examples:

- Sustainable watershed and groundwater management
- Integrated water resources management
- Water supply sustainability
- Wetland and riparian buffer restoration
- Stormwater management using green infrastructure
- Pollutant removal from water, especially emerging contaminants
- Wastewater treatment and disposal practices
- Desalination innovation

Appendix C – Glossary

Applied Research – Research conducted to solve real-world problems or inform decision-making in specific contexts.

Capacity Building – Activities that enhance the skills, infrastructure, or resources of individuals, communities, or organizations to address challenges effectively.

Community – A group of people connected by geography, identity, profession, interest, or shared experience. Applicants must define the relevant community for their project.

Community Beneficiary - any group, population, or geographic community that experiences direct or indirect improvements as a result of the project, such as enhanced environmental conditions, access to knowledge, capacity-building, resource equity, health and safety, or improved quality of life.

Community Partner – An organization or entity composed of members from the defined community that is formally involved in the planning, implementation, or oversight of the project.

Community Input – Engagement strategies that involve gathering feedback or ideas from the defined community to shape how the project is conducted.

Evidence-Based Practices – Strategies or approaches that are supported by systematically collected data or validated research findings.

Multisector Collaboration – A project that involves partners from more than one sector—such as academic, government, nonprofit, private industry, or community-based organizations.

Multidisciplinary Collaboration – A project that involves participants from two or more scientific or professional disciplines working together toward a shared goal.

Interconnected Systems – The environmental, social, and economic systems that interact with and influence each other; projects that acknowledge and work within these complexities.

Renewable Natural Resources – RNR defines renewable natural resources as resources that occur naturally, which are regenerated when used or consumed in a sustainable manner. They include abiotic materials such as soil/sediment, water, and air as well as biota including forests, plants, fisheries, and wildlife and could encompass a whole ecosystem.

Readiness Factors – (Planning Grants) Readiness factors are the conditions that must be met before a project can move from idea to implementation. The planning grant is a chance to get ready — to gather input, reduce uncertainty, align partners, and figure out how to deliver a project that is realistic and impactful.

Replicability – The ability of a project, program, or approach to be repeated or duplicated in a different context with similar results.

Resilience (Environmental/Climate Systems Definition) – In the context of climate change, environmental management, and community planning, resilience refers to the capacity of a community, ecosystem, or infrastructure system to anticipate, absorb, adapt to, and recover from environmental shocks or stresses—such as extreme weather, wildfire, drought, sea level rise, or pollution—while maintaining or improving core functions and equity.

Scalability – The ability of a project, program, or intervention to grow or expand in size, scope, or reach while maintaining its effectiveness.

Stakeholder – Any individual, group, or organization that may be affected by or have an interest in the project, including but not limited to the identified community.

Translation (of Research) – The process of converting research findings into practical applications, programs, or policies.