



NEEF Health and the Natural Environment Grant Announcement

*Connecting Diverse Communities to US Forest Service Resources for
Health Promotion, Education, and Conservation*

The National Environmental Education Foundation (NEEF), with funding support from US Forest Service (USFS), is offering \$32,200 through mini-grants to health promotion activities that will also help restore and protect America's forests. Awarded grantees will be expected to facilitate the development of conservation activities on: 1) local Forest Service lands, 2) other federal partner public lands, 3) local and municipal public lands, or 4) on public lands within urban communities that seek to connect to urban forests and nature-based spaces. Grant-funded activities will mobilize a diverse community of volunteers and educate participants about how protecting the long-term sustainability of their local public lands greatly benefits people's health.

Background

Human activities, natural disasters, extreme weather events, and a host of other factors take a toll on our public lands, threatening the health and wellbeing of the people and wildlife who depend on them. Public land managers, volunteers, and others steward these special places, working tirelessly to restore and protect them, and ensure that people and wildlife continue to enjoy them for years to come.

NEEF is interested in supporting volunteer conservation activities that occur during National Environmental Education (EE) Week and make the critical connection between the health of people and the health of nature. Scientific research has proven there are physical, and mental health benefits to spending time in nature. These restorative qualities of nature are compromised when people do not understand the importance of protecting and enhancing the natural areas people enjoy and depend upon. For that reason, NEEF finds it a good practice to incorporate health education and activities into volunteer projects.

Grant Goals

The goal of the grant is to: 1) educate the public on the mental and physical health benefits of outdoor activities in nature, and 2) engage the public in restoration of public lands.

NEEF is interested in partnering with recipient organizations who engage the public in meaningful conservation and stewardship, healthy living, and education on the relationship between human health and the natural environment. We are seeking collaborative efforts to meet people where they are that will impart positive experiences and ensure educators, youth, families, and communities have the critical opportunity to learn about safeguarding the health of the land and its people.

Grant Guidelines and Timeline

1. Applicants can request up to \$4000 in grant funds.
2. Application Opens: February 6, 2019
3. Application Closes: March 1, 2019
4. Grant Period: mid - April to June 2019
5. Final Report Due: July 31, 2019

Eligibility

1. Open nationally (including US territories) to 501(c)3 organizations with a connection to a Forest Service (FS) agency. These include federal, state, and local Forest Service agencies.
2. A current letter of support from a FS partner agency must be provided to show collaboration on the proposed project. The letter must also demonstrate a history with the FS partner. *(Please note that NEEF will not assist applicants in developing these partnerships.)*
3. Applicants will host an event in April or May. Preference will be placed on those who host events during EE Week (April 22 through April 26).
4. Applicants must incorporate health education into the proposed conservation projects.
5. Applicants will partner with a health professional (e.g. physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant, nurse, community health worker) to provide health education and assist with guiding participants through health-related activities during the event. Activities can be educational, physical, or both. Applicants may contract with group fitness instructors in lieu of a health professional only if the instructor's exercise includes education on the health benefits of completing the activity on the public land site.
 - A letter of support will be submitted by the health professional or instructor with affiliation detailed.
6. While activities do not have to occur on USFS property, they should be tied to USFS interests. This might apply to areas where USFS has invested money, perhaps through a [NUCFAC](#) grant. Acceptable public lands include: local Forest Service lands, other federal partner public lands, local and municipal public lands, or lands within urban communities.

Strong Applications Will Include the Following

7. Describe the purpose and benefits of proposed project to the public land, including: why the conservation work is needed, what the post-grant benefits would be, and how the proposed project will restore and help sustain America's forests.
8. Describe how volunteers will be educated on the conservation activities, the importance of their actions, and their relationship to long term sustainability of the lands;
9. Describe any educational resources that will be provided the day of volunteer activities;
10. Describe how health education and health promotion will be integrated into the proposed event. Applicant will be expected to lead a health-related activity during the event. Through these exercises, describe how the applicant will educate and engage the population on the healthful benefits of nature;
11. Describe how diverse audiences will be brought to the public land, primarily youth and families from Latino/Hispanic communities;
12. Describe the project team, including partnerships with community-based organizations, schools, health care organizations, or others involved in the proposed project. Detail the roles and involvement of each organization cited in the application; and

13. Describe how the above-mentioned events will lead to improved public lands and improved experience for people visiting public lands.

If you have any questions or problems, please contact us at grantsadmin@neefusa.org.