

## 2026 Climate Resilience Grant Program Request for Applications

The Nature Conservancy in New York is pleased to announce the sixth round of the Climate Resilience Grant Program (CRGP). The goal of the program is to support New York's conservation community in protecting the lands and waters that contribute to climate resilience for the benefit of people and nature. Funding is available to land trusts, other conservation organizations, academic institutions, Tribal Nations, municipalities, and local agencies. Previously funded projects from earlier rounds can be found [here](#).

Since 2021, the CRGP has contributed \$2.5 million toward the protection of over 12,000 acres of lands and waters and for initiatives that strengthen organizations through planning and capacity building.

### Program Structure and Funding Availability

The 2026 CRGP funding cycle offers grants to support fee and easement acquisitions as well as planning and capacity initiatives in two distinct categories:

- **Conserving Resilient Lands**
- **Conserving Resilient Waters**

*Conserving Resilient Lands acquisition* projects will protect lands identified as being part of the Resilient and Connected Network and within mapped focal areas.

*Conserving Resilient Lands planning and capacity* projects will focus on initiatives that increase an organization's effectiveness in protecting resilient and connected lands within focal areas.

*Conserving Resilient Waters acquisition* projects will protect shorelines and lands that contain or intersect with mapped hydrological features throughout New York.

*Conserving Resilient Waters planning and capacity* projects will focus on initiatives that increase an organization's effectiveness in protecting lands at the land/water interface in New York, such as floodplains, wetlands, and shorelines.

[Click here to access the map viewer](#)

The total amount of funding available is \$750,000. Applicants may apply for up to \$50,000 for acquisition projects or \$25,000 for planning and capacity projects.

Please note that *Conserving Resilient Lands* acquisition projects that are **over 500 acres** are eligible for The Nature Conservancy's, [Resilient and Connected Appalachians Grant Program](#), which is more competitive but also offers larger grants.

Awards may be less than the amount requested. Projects must be completed within twelve months of the start of the grant term, which is expected to be June, 2026.

Acquisition awards are provided at the start of the grant term, except for any portion of the grant allocated for Stewardship and Legal Defense, which is released once the project closes.

Planning and capacity grantees will receive an initial payment at the start of the grant term followed by two staged payments tied to interim and final reporting requirements.

**Proposals are due February 13, 2026.**

For questions about requirements, guidelines, application process, or other relevant concerns please email us at: [CCCFund@tnc.org](mailto:CCCFund@tnc.org)

**Funding Priorities:**

***Land Acquisition Grants***

**Conserving Resilient Lands** – As the climate continues to change, plants and animals require access to landscapes up stream, uphill, and up north to adapt to warming temperatures. The Nature Conservancy’s Resilient and Connected Network is a data-rich map that identifies the representative, climate-resilient sites needed to sustain biodiversity and ecological functions into the future. This road map of “core forests and connectors” shows where plant and animal species have the best chance to move away from growing climate threats and find new places to call home. Protecting and sustaining these lands collaboratively is critical for a climate resilient future. The Conserving Resilient Lands category will fund the fee and easement acquisition of parcels wholly or partially in the Resilient Lands focal areas shown in [the map viewer](#).

**Conserving Resilient Waters** – New York is experiencing more intense rainfall, erosion, and sea level rise as the climate continues to warm, putting people and nature at risk. Floodplains, streams, wetlands, tidal marshes, beaches, dunes, and bluffs provide natural infrastructure that help mitigate flooding and erosion. They also provide additional benefits like water filtration, groundwater recharge, recreational opportunities, habitat, and human wellbeing. The Conserving Resilient Waters category will fund the fee and easement acquisition of parcels along rivers, streams, wetlands, and coasts to help mitigate flooding and erosion, preserve aquatic migration pathways and habitats, maintain water quality, facilitate sediment transport, and protect aquifers. Projects in this category are not limited to the Climate Resilient Lands focal areas and may include any parcel or tract that contains or intersects with shorelines or any of the hydrological features shown in [the map viewer](#).

## ***Planning and Capacity Grants***

The CRGP will provide up to \$25,000 for projects and initiatives that strengthen an organization's effectiveness in protecting the lands and waters most important for nature and people. Applicants can apply for planning and capacity grants under the Conserving Resilient Lands category *or* the Conserving Resilient Waters category.

**Conserving Resilient Lands** – Planning and capacity projects under the Conserving Resilient Lands category should include activities that will strengthen the applicant's effectiveness in protecting land for the benefit of climate resilience in New York, focusing on the Resilient Connected Network. Examples include:

- Creating or updating strategic conservation plans at the local or regional scale
- Professional development such as GIS or other trainings related to land protection
- Developing and implementing landowner outreach strategies
- Pursuing accreditation by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission (LTAC)
- Building relationships and boosting collaboration with peer organizations
- Funding for new conservation or land protection staff
- Hiring consultants or short-term employees to focus on parcel prioritization
- Initiatives to expand an organization's reach or service area

**Conserving Resilient Waters** – Planning and capacity projects under the Conserving Resilient Waters category should include activities that will strengthen the applicant's effectiveness in protecting lands and waters that contribute to flood mitigation, water quality, habitat protection, and adaption to sea-level rise. In addition to the examples provided above, Conserving Resilient Waters planning and capacity projects could include:

- Community engagement around protection or use of shorelines or lands that contain or intersect with mapped hydrological features
- Developing or updating conservation plans for the protection of wetlands, shorelines, and floodplains
- Training of staff to learn a skill that will assist the organization in more effectively and equitably protecting lands important for water quality, flood mitigation and sediment transport

## **Community Benefits and Engagement**

The Nature Conservancy believes that durable conservation results when people and communities are engaged in projects and benefit from their outcomes. The CRGP prioritizes projects that conserve natural resources, benefit biodiversity, and help meet the needs of local communities.

Projects supported by the CRGP will demonstrate specific actions for engaging communities and articulate tangible benefits for people. The grant application provides a list of community benefits and engagement categories to choose from and leaves space for additional activities not listed. Applicants are asked to explain their choices with specific reference to how community benefits and engagement will be embedded within their project. How well projects engage local people and groups in project design, collaborative management, two-way learning (between organizations and communities), or other related approaches are a part of the project evaluation and scoring criteria.

Some examples of community benefits include facilitating greater access to nature, protecting drinking water sources, enhancing recreational and resource-based economic opportunities, flood mitigation, or protecting lands that will meet community-defined conservation or other needs. Community engagement includes actions taken to seek input and invite participation in the project's development and outcomes from external partners and local community members.

Additional context and examples of community benefits and engagement from successful applications in previous rounds can be viewed [HERE](#).

## **Who Can Apply**

The program is open to all land trusts and other non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations with a conservation-related mission, non-profit academic institutions, State or Federally Recognized Tribal Nations (as well as affiliated non-profits applying on their behalf), municipalities and village, town and county agencies that operate in New York State. Land trusts that are not accredited by the Land Trust Accreditation Commission will need to provide additional information about their governance structure and financial health in the application. Municipalities and agencies may be asked about their history and capacity for acquiring and managing conservation lands. Please reach out to the CRGP team with any questions regarding eligibility.

## **Scoring Criteria**

**All projects** will be evaluated for:

- Eligibility
- Alignment with the goals of the CRGP
- Degree of collaboration with or engagement with other conservation organizations, community groups, local governments, and/or Tribal Nations
- Extent and specificity of community benefits and engagement
- Project feasibility and reasonable costs

**Conserving Resilient Lands Acquisition** projects will also be evaluated for:

- **Location:** the project is within a mapped focal area. Projects with outstanding conservation values and compelling community engagement attributes that are outside of but close to a focal area may be considered as funding allows. Please discuss this with us before applying.
- **Resilience:** the percentage of the total project area that is part of the Resilient and Connected Network.
- **Connectivity:** the project's adjacency to other protected lands or other demonstrated evidence that it will promote landscape connectivity over time (e.g., the project is a necessary acquisition for advancing a local or regional plan that aims to protect a critical conservation corridor).

**Conserving Resilient Waters Acquisition** projects will also be evaluated for:

- **Scale:** Acres of resilient floodplains or wetlands; amount of shoreline protected.
- **Urgency:** Threat of development to floodplains or erosion-prone lands within the project area or region.
- **Adjacency:** Project adds to contiguous acres of already protected lands, and/or;
- **Upstream/Downstream Connections:** Project reduces impacts (e.g. water quality, flood mitigation) to downstream infrastructure or development.

## **Eligible Project Expenses**

### Acquisition Projects (Land and Water)

- Project capital (purchase price)
- Project development (surveys, title search, environmental assessments, other due diligence)
- Stewardship and legal defense funds (does not include direct stewardship, land management or restoration)
- Community engagement (meeting venue, supplies, travel, facilitation, etc.)
- Match funding
- Legal support
- Technical support (e.g., hiring GIS or natural inventory consultants)
- Operational costs (e.g., staff salaries and travel expenses associated with project)
- Indirect costs (not to exceed 20% of the total grant amount)

### Planning and Capacity Projects (Land and Water)

- Consultant fees related to plan development and protection strategies
- Partner participation, coordination, and outreach efforts for regional or landscape-level conservation activities
- Training on conservation strategies, community engagement
- Developing tools that advance or improve collaborative conservation
- GIS training course fees, software licenses, and hardware
- Operational costs (e.g., staff salaries and travel expenses associated with a qualifying project)
- Community engagement costs related to project (meeting venue, supplies, travel, facilitation, etc.)
- Match funding
- Indirect costs (not to exceed 20% of the total grant amount)

This is not a comprehensive list and if you have any questions about what an appropriate planning and capacity project could be, please reach out to us at [CCCFund@tnc.org](mailto:CCCFund@tnc.org)

### **Ineligible Expenses**

- Costs related to lobbying
- Direct stewardship, land management or restoration

### **Dates to Know**

Application window opens	November 3, 2025
Informational webinar	January 14, 2026
Application window closes	February 13, 2026
Award notification	April-May, 2026

### **Proposal Requirements**

Applications must include:

- All required and relevant fields in the application

- Project budget narrative and worksheet in the application
- Organizational due diligence documentation as noted in the application

Optional uploads include:

- Maps, photos and other project-specific materials
- Letters of Support from partner organizations (not required but welcome and will be considered)

Applications are due by 11:59 PM on February 13.

An informational webinar will be held January 14. Attendance requires registration.

[Register for the webinar](#)

[Frequently Asked Questions](#)

[Click here to submit a Technical Assistance inquiry form](#)