

# Veterans and Nature Grant Program (2024-2025): Enhancing Well-being through Outdoor Experiences

Request for Application (RFA) | January 8, 2024





## 2024 – 2025 Veterans and Nature Grant Program

Supported by the USDA Forest Service

Issued by the USDA Forest Service and the National Environmental Education Foundation

Application Due Date: March 1, 2024

Awardees Announced: April 2024

### Grant Program Priorities

NEEF and the United States Forest Service aim to increase engagement of veterans' communities in understanding the physical and mental health benefits of time in nature and provide opportunities for physical and mental health-focused outdoor activities at US Forest Service sites and other public lands\* (including state and local sites).

Project types may include:

- Outdoor activities
  - Hiking, biking, climbing, fishing, picnicking
  - Wellness activities
  - Educational components – community science, environmental service projects
- Adaptive programming
- Conservation efforts
- Volunteer opportunities

### Eligibility

This grant competition is open to all 501(c)(3) entities that have a partnership with a public lands entity.\*

### Funding

There will be \$100,000 available to issue grants for projects implemented during the 16-month grant period.

- Applicants may apply for a total request of \$10,000.

Eligible use of funds:

- Services (recreational and educational)
- Materials (equipment and supplies)
- Administrative costs
- Billed labor



Ineligible use of funds:

- Transportation costs

## Timeline

### Application Process

- January 8, 2024 – Online applications open
- March 1, 2024 – Grant applications are due
- March 2024 – Review and grantee selection completed
- April 2024 – Award announcement and distribution of funding

### Grantee

- May 2024 – August 2025 – Grant performance period
- January 31, 2025 – Interim report due
- September 30, 2025 – Grantee final reports due

## Application Requirements

The following sections outline what will be expected of applicants. All applications must be submitted using NEEF's [online grants portal](#). If you have applied for a NEEF grant previously, please use your existing account. If in doubt, existing accounts can be **searched for** using a tax ID number (EIN). First time applicants will need to create an account.

Grant applications are due on **March 1, 2024**, by 11:59 PM PST

## Required Project Proposal Criteria

Strong applications will include the following:

- Project description (*Character Limit: 3000*)
  - Goals and objectives, include anticipated impact
  - Description of key activities, include description of the educational and/or engagement activities that veterans and other participants will take part in for this project.
- Description of the project participants, include outreach plan with an emphasis on Black, Indigenous, People of Color, gender diverse and veterans with disabilities. (*Character Limit: 1500*)
- Description of the plans for collaboration between the nonprofit organization, public land site, and organization that serves veterans, if applicable, around the proposed project. (*Character Limit: 3000*)
  - Description demonstrates a commitment to collaboration and listening to the needs of local veterans.
  - Proposed projects must include the following partners:





- Nonprofit organization working at the community level: this is the entity that will receive and manage funds.
- Forest Service/Public Lands Representative: The Forest Service/public lands staff must be involved in the application for the award and the coordination of project activities.

A preference will be given to projects that:

- Engage an organization that serves veterans as evidenced by a letter of support in the application.
- Indicate how they will address accessibility issues related to their proposed work.
- Engage/serve Black, Indigenous, People of Color, gender diverse and veterans with disabilities.
- Involve USFS staff. Map of possible locations, [click here](#).

## Targeted Project Outputs and Outcomes

NEEF will be evaluating projects based on the following data:

- Number of veterans served
- Number of total participants
- Types of educational and engagement activities, including educational resources
- Number of events – educational and engagement
- Number of program hours
- Number of accessibility issues addressed
- Increased sense of physical and mental well-being of veterans as a result of the activity.
- Increased intent to return to the public lands site as a result of the activity
- Increased knowledge of veterans in understanding the physical and mental health benefits of time in nature
- Increased confidence of veterans in accessing public lands
- Increased sense of connection of veterans with other members of the community

## Grant Awards Process

Funding for this grant will be distributed to the nonprofit entity as a single payment.

## Optional Virtual Visit

NEEF may conduct a virtual check in during the grant period.

## Application Assistance



All applications must be submitted through our [online system](#). For questions or problems related to the application system, please contact us [grantsadmin@neefusa.org](mailto:grantsadmin@neefusa.org). Please type "Forest Service Veterans & Nature Grant" in the subject line of your email.

**Contact:** Christy Haas-Howard, Program Director for Health, NEEF, [health@neefusa.org](mailto:health@neefusa.org)  
Subject: FS Veteran & Nature Funding Question

**Forest Service Support:** Melissa Taggart, Environmental Education Specialist, USDA Forest Service, [melissa.taggart@usda.gov](mailto:melissa.taggart@usda.gov), Subject: FS Veterans & Nature Funding Question

For a map of national and state forests and veterans' populations, [click here](#).

For a glossary of terms and FAQs, [click here](#). If you are interested in viewing previous grantee public lands projects, [click here](#).

\*Definition of public lands – Any federal, state, local, county, or regional land or waterway held in the public trust and/or spaces that are accessible to the public. Examples of public lands can include (but are not limited to) national forests, national parks and monuments, national wildlife refuges, and state/local lands that are accessible to the public, such as state parks and forests, community gardens, and urban green spaces.