



Request for Applications (RFA)

NC Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP)

Phase 3 - Engineering and Design Fiscal Years 2026–2027

RFA Opens: September 1, 2026

Applications Due: November 10, 2026

Applicant Webinar: 2:00 - 3:30pm, October 13, 2026, [Register here for webinar](#)

Program Overview

The Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP) was developed through the 2020 North Carolina Climate Risk Assessment and Resilience Plan. The North Carolina Division of Coastal Management (DCM) administers the RCCP with funding from the NC State Legislature and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). Key program partners include the NC State Resilience Office (NC SRO), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), and NC Sea Grant (NCSG).

The RCCP is a phased program designed to meet the following objectives:

- **Address** local barriers to coastal resilience, including limited capacity, economic constraints, and social inequities.
- **Assist** communities in conducting localized risk and vulnerability assessments
- **Help** communities to develop a prioritized portfolio of resilience projects.
- **Advance** resilience projects through engineering and design to reach shovel-ready status.
- **Link** communities with funding sources for project implementation.

The four phases of the RCCP are:

- Phase 1: Community Engagement and Risk & Vulnerability Assessment
- Phase 2: Planning, Project Identification, and Prioritization
- **Phase 3: Engineering and Design**
- Phase 4: Project Implementation

PLEASE NOTE: To be eligible for Phase 3 funding, applicants must have completed RCCP Phases 1 and 2 or demonstrate equivalent resilience planning and community engagement efforts.

Objective and Funding Availability

RCCP Phase 3 Objective: The primary objective Phase 3 is to provide funding to assist coastal communities with the engineering and design of a prioritized nature-based solution (NBS) project identified through Phases 1 and 2 of the RCCP (outlined in the [RCCP Planning Handbook](#)). Alternatively, a NBS project may be identified from a different planning effort that meets the resiliency criteria and deliverables outlined in Phases 1 and 2 of the RCCP Planning Handbook. Any alternatively identified project applications will be considered at DCM discretion.

Anticipated Contract Period: April 2027 – October 2028 (18 months)

Award Amounts:

- \$2.5 million total is available for Phase 3 and Phase 4 projects, combined
- Anticipated award range is approximately \$25,000 – \$750,000 per project
- No formal maximum on funding requests, however, requests larger than the anticipated range will be difficult to accommodate
- Applicants may apply for multiple projects by submitting a separate application for each and clearly ranking each application in priority funding order

No Match Requirements: There is no cash or in-kind match requirement, and a match will not affect your application score. If desired, an optional cash match may be submitted, but DCM will not accept in-kind match contributions. This decision has been made to reduce the reporting burden on communities.

Eligibility Requirements

Applicant Eligibility: Who can apply?

- All county and municipal governments or federally and state-recognized tribes within the 20 Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) counties
- Adjacent communities may submit joint applications for regional projects

Project Eligibility Criteria: To be eligible for Phase 3, projects must meet the following criteria.

- Must be a product of the community's efforts in RCCP Phases 1 and 2, aligning with the Resilience Strategy and having been identified in the Project Portfolio. Alternatively, if



the project was developed through equivalent resilience work, documentation using the Resilience Strategy Matrix is required.

- Project produces **engineering and design plans** for a shovel-ready priority resilience project or **produces analysis or study results** that advance a NBS project design towards shovel-readiness, or a final draft of the **development or refinement of local ordinances** that enhance resilience.
- The project advances a nature-based solution addressing the community's vulnerability to a coastal hazard
- All projects that impact federal, state, local, or private lands must include participation or written support from the relevant management or ownership entity.
- Public awareness and ongoing communication regarding the project and its potential impacts shall be maintained throughout project development.

Funding Criteria: DCM will consider the following criteria when reviewing Phase 3 applications.

- Alignment with previous resilience planning and the priority rating of the project
- Project's ability to address the identified coastal hazards or vulnerabilities of the community
- Potential for *both* community and environmental benefits and impacts
- How the project benefits communities with demonstrated resilience needs *and* limited planning, technical, or financial capacity
- Potential for the project to be replicable in other municipalities
- Potential for the project to deliver benefits on a broader scope or scale
- If applicable, the identification of project partners and availability of any additional funds required to complete the project

Permitting Considerations and Scoping Meetings: To be considered for Phase 3 funding, proposed projects must demonstrate regulatory feasibility under the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA) and other applicable requirements.

As part of the application review process, DCM may require applicants to participate in a preliminary scoping meeting coordinated through the N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (NC DEACS). Depending on the proposed project, a CAMA minor, general, or major permit may ultimately be required for implementation. For projects with anticipated permitting requirements, a preliminary scoping meeting will be used to help assess permitting feasibility and support the effective use of public funds through the RCCP. These meetings may occur before funding selections are made.

Scoping meetings through NC DEACS provide an opportunity for applicants to:

- Be paired with an Environmental Assistance Coordinator;
- Present project concepts to reviewing agencies;
- Receive early technical feedback and recommendations;
- Identify potential permitting challenges; and



- Refine project design before advancing further in the permitting process.

In addition, projects that require permits for future implementation will require at least one scoping meeting with NC DEACS following award and before submitting Phase 3 final deliverables to DCM.

RCCP Phase 3 applications will be evaluated with permitting requirements in mind. Projects determined to be infeasible or impermissible under applicable regulations may be ineligible for funding. [More information on scoping meetings with NC DEACS can be found here.](#)

Natural and Nature-Based Solution Project Guidelines

RCCP Phase 3 provides funding to projects that offer natural or nature-based solutions to coastal hazards. Nature-based solution (NBS) projects are those that leverage natural systems to enhance resilience to coastal hazards, while delivering co-benefits for people and natural ecosystems. Co-benefits refer to the added environmental, economic, and social advantages generated beyond the project's primary goal (i.e. a restored floodplain reducing flooding while also providing recreation area or greenway connection, a living shoreline providing erosion protection as well as creating habitat). [Additional NBS project information can be found here.](#)

Priority will be given to proposals that demonstrate long-term resilience benefits. Examples include projects that facilitate the upland migration of coastal wetlands, provide stormwater or floodwater infiltration areas, or offer natural protection for public or private infrastructure.

To explore previously funded RCCP communities and projects, please visit the [RCCP Dashboard](#). Additionally, RCCP case studies from projects that have successfully completed all phases of the program, are [available here](#). These case studies are provided as examples of project types that may be eligible for funding.

The following provides guidance on several forms of NBS projects and the information that should be included in their project application. Other NBS project types may also be eligible; inclusion on this list does not influence project selection.

[Living Shoreline Projects:](#) A living shoreline is a nature-based approach to shoreline stabilization that uses native vegetation, natural materials and low-profile structures to reduce erosion caused by flooding, waves, and storm impacts while maintaining natural coastal processes, enhancing habitat, improving water quality and increasing coastal resilience. Applications should document erosion trends at the proposed project site and the infrastructure or habitats at risk. Applications should also describe the beneficial impacts of the proposed project and prioritize the use of biodegradable, natural, and inert materials alongside vegetation over gray infrastructure (e.g., bulkheads, revetments, breakwaters). [Additional information on living shoreline permitting considerations can be found here.](#)

Constructed Wetland Projects: A constructed wetland is an engineered ecosystem that mimics natural processes, using soil, vegetation, and microbes to treat wastewater, manage stormwater, ease erosion and flooding while also creating habitat and enhancing biodiversity. Applications should document the current use and condition of the project location as well as the risk or hazard the proposed wetland is intended to mitigate (i.e. flooding, water quality, etc.). Applications should also describe the beneficial impacts of the proposed project to the community and ecosystem (i.e. connecting habitats, or creating green space, etc.). [Additional information on constructed wetland permitting considerations can be found here.](#)

Floodplain Improvement and Stormwater Control Projects: Floodplain projects prioritize nature-based strategies that restore or replicate the natural capacity of the landscape to store and treat floodwaters. Stormwater projects aim to reduce the volume and rate of runoff caused by land use changes by promoting natural infiltration and other best management practices that restore, enhance, or replicate natural hydrology. These two project types often work hand in hand, combining benefits for managing flood waters. Applications may include floodplain or riparian buffer restoration, redirecting runoff to green spaces or natural infiltration areas as well as rain gardens, retention basins, bioswales and permeable pavers. For more information on stormwater management measures please refer to the [DEQ Stormwater Manual](#).

Beneficial Use of Dredged Materials: Often this type of project is referred to as thin-layer placement. Thin-layer placement (TLP) is a coastal wetland restoration or enhancement strategy where dredged sediment is placed on a wetland to increase its elevation while maintaining hydrology and inundation durations necessary for native wetland vegetation to persist. The primary purpose of TLP should not be for the ‘convenient disposal’ of dredged material. Rather, the primary goal should be the restoration of impaired or at-risk wetlands with measurable benefits expected from the addition of sediment. Applications should document early coordination with federal and state regulatory agencies and describe any seasonal restrictions to protect sensitive ecosystems. The compatibility and suitability of dredged materials for the proposed use must be evaluated. Disposal of dredged materials on coastal wetlands will require a more intensive regulatory review and may necessitate a variance from the NC Coastal Resources Commission. [More information on thin layer placement projects can be found here.](#)

How to Apply

Submit completed applications to rccp@deq.nc.gov by **November 10, 2026, by 5 p.m.**
Contact RCCP staff for questions or assistance with applications.

- **Mackenzie Todd, DCM Coastal Resiliency Coordinator**
mackenzie.todd@deq.nc.gov / (252) 515-5434



- **Jennifer Fickler, DCM Coastal Resiliency Specialist**
Jennifer.Fickler@deq.nc.gov / (252) 515-5431
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Award Administration, if Selected to Receive a Grant

Contracting: For Phase 3, DCM will contract directly with community grantees. Grantees are responsible for conducting their own request for proposal (RFP) procurement process and have full discretion in choosing their Phase 3 contractors. Grantees will submit their RFP language to DCM prior to public release to ensure alignment with scope of work.

The scope of work and project costs submitted with the application will form the basis of the contract. The contract outlines the project details, timeframe, and the terms for receiving the grant, forming a legally binding agreement between the grantee and the State of North Carolina.

If selected for funding, the applicant will receive an award notice from DCM. **Do not begin any work until a fully executed contract has been received from DEQ.** A DEQ grant contract is considered "fully executed" once it has been signed by an authorized representative of both the grantee and DEQ Financial Services. The grantee will receive a copy of the fully executed contract after DEQ has signed it. The grantee is responsible for any work started outside of the contract dates and for any additional costs beyond the awarded grant funds needed to complete the project.

Changes to Scope or Budget: If changes to the project scope or budget are needed after receiving a fully executed contract, a DEQ contract amendment will be necessary. **Unapproved changes to the project scope or budget will not be eligible for reimbursement.** Changes to scope or budget must be submitted *at least 60 days before* the contract expiration date via email to RCCP@deq.nc.gov or directly to the DCM Contract Administrator.

To request approval for changes, grantees must submit a written request on official letterhead that includes:

- Justification for the proposed changes
- Revised scope of work narrative
- Revised budget, if applicable
- DCM may request additional information as needed

Contract Duration and Extensions: Phase 3 grant contracts will have a **18-month term** and will be executed between DEQ and the grantee. If additional time is needed, grantees may request a no-cost extension; however, amendments and extensions are granted at DCM's discretion and thus, not guaranteed.



Extension requests must be submitted *at least 60 days before* the contract expiration date via email to RCCP@deq.nc.gov or directly to the DCM Contract Administrator. Approved extension requests will require an amendment to the grant contract.

To request an extension, grantees must submit a written request on official letterhead that includes:

- Justification for the extension request.
- Summary of the current project status.
- Updated project schedule with anticipated timelines.
- DCM may request additional information as needed

Progress Reporting and Invoicing Requirements

Grantees are required to submit an RCCP Reimbursement Request Form every two months, consistent with the Project Timeline outlined in the application. This form serves as both the progress report and the request for invoice reimbursement.

Each submission must include the following information:

Project Progress Information

- Submission date
- Reporting period dates
- Contract number (e.g. CW123456)
- Grantee name and contact information
- A detailed description of work completed during the reporting period. DCM will request additional information if the report is vague, incomplete, or shows little change from previously reported work.
- A summary of remaining work needed to complete the project

Invoice Reimbursement Information

If reimbursement is requested, the submission must also include:

- Unique invoice number (e.g., INV-2027-001)
- Invoice period
- Total reimbursement amount requested
- Payment instructions, if applicable (bank details for electronic payments or a remit-to mailing address)
- Itemized list of work and/or materials being reimbursed
- Supporting documentation, such as receipts, paid invoices, or proof of payment (e.g., itemized receipts, subcontractor invoices, cleared checks, or bank statements)



If no invoice reimbursement is requested for a reporting period, grantees must still submit the reimbursement request form with the progress reporting information completed.

DCM will provide templates for the reimbursement request form and the final close-out report. Any adjustments to the reporting schedule must be approved by the DCM Contract Administrator.

Reimbursements are provided for actual, allowable expenses and are subject to review and approval by the DCM Contract Administrator. Grantees may request reimbursement no more frequently than once every two months.

DCM will retain 10 percent (10%) of the total grant award until all final project deliverables have been submitted and accepted. The final invoice must be clearly marked “Final Invoice” and submitted to DCM *within 30 days* after the end of the grant contract period. Once final deliverables are approved, the remaining 10 percent of the grant award will be released.

Final Deliverables and GIS Data Requirements

Project Deliverables: All Phase 3 projects must be completed in accordance with the deliverables outlined in the contract.

- For engineering and design projects, deliverables must include engineered site plans that achieve 90-100% design completion, making them ready for submission to relevant permitting agencies (e.g., DEQ-Stormwater, CAMA).
 - Provide estimated or anticipated metrics, (e.g., acres restored, flooding reduction, number of assets protected, etc.).
 - A scoping meeting through NC DEACS will be required before final deliverables are submitted to DCM.
- For ordinance projects, a final draft document of the ordinance must be submitted for review by DCM.
- For analysis or study projects, a detailed report outlining the results of the analysis or study and how those results advance a NBS project towards shovel-readiness must be submitted.
- For ***all projects***, grantees must include:
 - A final project summary describing the work completed, purpose, benefits, and preliminary cost estimate of project implementation.
 - Description of community engagement plan, detailing how the community was informed of the project and its projected outcomes. (i.e. workshops, press releases, social media outreach, educational brochures or signage, ribbon cutting ceremonies, etc.)

- Explanation of how future conditions were incorporated or analyzed for this project. (i.e. sea level rise predictions, increased storm intensity, land use changes, etc.)
- Letter of Completion on official letterhead, signed by the local project administrator, confirming that all final deliverables have been received and reviewed by the grantee and that they satisfy the project's approved scope of work.

GIS Data Requirements

GIS data may be submitted in one of the following formats:

- **Package (.ppkx):** A single file that includes the ArcGIS Pro project files (.aprx), **Project** maps, data, and styles.
- **Map Package (.mpk or .mpkx):** A single file that includes an individual map file and all referenced data.

Guidance for Creating Packages

- For instructions on creating and sharing a Project Package, refer to Esri's documentation on [Sharing a Project Package](#) and [A Guide to ArcGIS Pro Project Packages](#).
- For instructions on creating and sharing a Map Package, refer to Esri's documentation on [Creating a Map Package](#).
 - If using ArcMap, refer to the appropriate [Esri documentation for Map Packages](#) (.mpk).
 - If using ArcGIS Pro, refer to the appropriate [Esri documentation for Map Packages](#) (.mpkx).

Spatial Reference and Metadata Requirements

All GIS data must:

- Be projected in **North Carolina State Plane, NAD 83 (US Survey Feet)**; and
- Include **Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC)-compliant metadata**.

Additional Information and Resources

- [RCCP Website](#)
- [RCCP Dashboard](#)
- [RCCP Case Studies](#)
- [RCCP Planning Handbook](#)
- [DEACS link for scoping meetings](#)
- [Nature Based Solutions 2-pager](#)
- [Permitting Constructed Wetland 2-pager](#)
- [Permitting Living Shoreline 2-pager](#)