

Resilient Coastal Communities Program (RCCP)

Phase 3 and 4 FAQ

2026–2027 Funding Round

This FAQ explains common questions about RCCP Phase 3 and Phase 4 applications. Read it alongside the current RFA and application for the phase you are requesting. Contact rccp@deq.nc.gov with project-specific questions before submitting your application.

Eligibility and Funding

Who can apply?

County and municipal governments and federally or state-recognized tribes within the 20 CAMA counties may apply. Consultants and nonprofit organizations can support an eligible applicant. Adjacent communities may submit joint applications for regional projects.

Can we apply if we have not participated in RCCP?

Yes, if you can document equivalent resilience planning and community engagement work. Complete the Resilience Strategy Matrix and identify the documents and pages that address each requirement. For Phase 4, you must also document the required engineering and design work.

Does our project have to be the top priority in our portfolio?

The application asks you to explain why you selected the project, particularly if it was not ranked first. Show its connection to your resilience planning and explain why you are pursuing it now.

Can we apply for more than one project?

Yes. Submit a separate application for each project and clearly rank your requests in priority order. If one project includes several locations, describe how they are connected and provide costs by location. Contact staff if you are unsure whether to combine them.

How much funding is available?

Approximately \$2.5 million is available for Phase 3 and Phase 4 combined. Expected awards range from \$25,000 to \$750,000 for Phase 3 and \$50,000 to \$750,000 for Phase 4. There is no formal maximum request, but larger requests will be difficult to accommodate.

Is a local match required?

No. A match is not required and will not improve your application score. You may include optional cash contributions or other funding needed to complete the work. In-kind matches are not accepted.

When and where do we submit?

Submit your completed application and attachments to rccp@deq.nc.gov by 5 p.m. on November 10, 2026.

Phase 3 questions

What kinds of work can Phase 3 fund?

Phase 3 can support engineering and design, feasibility or suitability studies, alternative analyses, and development or updates to local resilience ordinances. Describe the specific work, expected deliverables, and how it advances community resilience.

Can we request funding for a feasibility study without completing engineering and design plans?

Yes, but the study must help move a specific nature-based resilience project closer to shovel-ready status. Explain what questions the study will resolve, how the findings will inform project design, and what work will remain before construction. The final report should include findings, recommendations, and clear next steps for design, permitting, and implementation.

We do not know all the site conditions yet. What should we include?

Describe what you know now and identify the information you still need. The application asks for site conditions if known and includes a question about data gaps. Explain how the proposed work will investigate those gaps and determine whether the approach is suitable.

Do we need to own the site before applying?

The application asks whether you have site control through ownership, lease, or easement. If you do not, explain your plan and timeline. Work affecting another owner's or agency's land must include their participation or written support.

Does an ordinance have to be adopted by the end of the grant?

No. The required deliverable is a final draft ordinance for DCM review. Explain your intended next steps, including the local review and adoption process.

In Section 5 of the Phase 3 application, does "Funding Status" refer to the proposed Phase 3 work or future construction?

This question refers to the funding needed to complete the Phase 3 work proposed in your application. If your RCCP request covers the full cost of that work, say so. If additional funds are needed, identify the amount, source, and when those funds will be available. Describe potential funding for future construction under "Next Steps" in Section 3.

How long will we have to complete Phase 3?

The anticipated contract period is April 2027 through October 2028, or 18 months. Build procurement, studies, design, engagement, agency coordination, and final deliverables into the timeline.

Phase 4 Questions

How complete do our plans need to be when we apply?

The application requires design plans to be at least 90% complete for consideration. Attach the plans. If your Phase 3 work is still underway, contact RCCP staff to discuss your current level of completion before applying.

Do all permits have to be issued before we apply?

You may identify pending permits in your application and explain the timeline for obtaining them. Include existing approvals, remaining permits, and any agency feedback. DCM will evaluate regulatory feasibility and readiness. A grant award does not replace required permits or authorize construction before those approvals are obtained.

What is the site control form?

It is an attorney certification showing that the local government has the control or permission needed to carry out and maintain the project. Submit one form per parcel and attach the supporting documentation. Local government ownership does not remove the attorney certification requirement.

What if site control is not finalized?

If site control is pending, explain the proposed arrangement, owner participation, steps still needed, and expected completion date. The RFA allows an explanation of how control will be attained. Contact DCM before submission to determine what supporting documentation is appropriate when attorney certification is not yet available. Do not represent pending control as finalized.

Can RCCP fund land acquisition?

No. The applications state that RCCP funds cannot be used for land acquisition. Explain how any necessary acquisition or site control will be secured through other means.

Can RCCP pay for part of a larger project?

Explain exactly what RCCP would fund, how it fits into the larger project, and what other funding is needed. Identify the amount, source, availability, and timeline for securing those funds. Define a clear scope that can be evaluated and contracted.

What monitoring and maintenance are required?

Describe who will maintain the project, how that work will be funded, and how success will be measured. The current RFA requires one year of post-construction monitoring, with at least three monitoring events approximately four months apart. A detailed monitoring plan is required as a deliverable.

How long will we have to complete Phase 4?

The anticipated contract period is April 2027 through April 2029, or 24 months. Plan to complete procurement, permitting, construction, and grant closeout within that period. The required year of monitoring begins after construction is completed and may continue after grant closeout.

Completing the Application and Budget

What is a contingency? Do we have to include one?

A contingency is money you can set aside in your project budget for unexpected costs, such as materials costing more than estimated or additional work needed because of site conditions. It is optional, and 5% is the maximum. It is not automatically paid out; reimbursement is based on actual, allowable expenses. Show the contingency as a separate budget line and explain your calculation. Contact DCM if you need help applying the percentage, particularly when the project includes other funding. Contact DCM before moving forward with changes to your approved scope or budget.

Do we need exact measurements of the benefits?

Use the best available information and explain its source. Phase 4 asks for metrics if known. Identify practical measures of success, such as acres restored, shoreline protected, assets benefiting, or changes in flooding. Explain what remains uncertain and how you will measure performance.

What should we emphasize in the benefits sections?

Explain the hazard, how the project will address it, and who or what will benefit. Section 6 focuses on resilience and environmental outcomes. Section 7 focuses on public benefits. Both sections carry significant weight, so use specific information and supporting evidence where available.

What does replicability mean?

Explain what another coastal community could learn from your project or use in a similar setting. For example, the approach, design process, ordinance language, or monitoring method may be useful elsewhere.

Do we have to show benefits beyond the project site?

The broader impact questions are marked if applicable. Describe broader benefits when you can support them. If benefits are primarily local, explain those clearly rather than overstating the project's reach.

Can we leave questions blank if they do not apply?

Answer every question. Where something does not apply, say so and explain briefly. Both applications warn that incomplete submissions may result in ineligibility.

What attachments should we prepare?

Use the checklist in your application. Both phases request governing board documentation, maps, photos, a completed cover sheet and narrative, budget, and timeline. Phase 4 also requests engineered plans and the site control form. Include the matrix when documenting equivalent work.

Managing the Grant

Will DCM select and manage our consultant or contractor?

For Phases 3 and 4, the community manages procurement and selects its contractor. Submit proposed procurement language to DCM before public release so staff can check alignment with the approved scope. Follow the requirements applicable to the services or construction being procured.

When can grant-funded work begin?

Wait until you receive the fully executed DEQ contract. An award notice alone does not authorize work. Costs and work outside the contract dates are the grantee's responsibility.

How do payments and progress reports work?

This is a reimbursement grant. Submit the combined reimbursement request and progress reporting form every two months, with supporting documentation when requesting payment. A progress update is still required when there is no reimbursement request. DCM retains 10% until final deliverables are accepted.

What if the scope, budget, or schedule changes?

Contact your DCM contract administrator before making changes. Scope and budget changes require approval and a contract amendment. Requests for changes or extensions must be submitted at least 60 days before expiration. Extensions are discretionary and are not guaranteed.

What is a DEACS scoping meeting?

It brings the applicant and reviewing agencies together to discuss the concept, identify permitting issues, and receive early feedback. DCM may require one during application review. Projects requiring permits also have a post-award scoping meeting requirement. A scoping meeting does not replace permits.

Additional Application Questions

Does a 25-year lease satisfy the permanent protection requirement?

Site control and permanent protection are separate requirements. The site control form allows a lease of at least 25 years to document authority to construct and maintain the project. The Phase 4 RFA separately requires the project site to be protected in perpetuity through a recorded conservation easement or deed of conservation agreement. A 25-year lease alone does not demonstrate permanent protection. If you propose leased, private, agency-owned, or right-of-way property, contact DCM before applying to discuss whether the required protection can be established and what documentation is needed.

What portion of the property needs permanent protection?

The RFA refers to the project site or funded project area; it does not specify that an entire parcel must be protected in every case. Show the proposed project footprint and affected parcels on your map. DCM will need to confirm the area and documentation required for your site. Do not assume a parcel-wide restriction or a narrower boundary without discussing it with staff. Include the required recording cost in your Phase 4 budget.

Can a project combine nature based and structural elements?

The current RFAs require projects to advance or implement a nature-based solution addressing a coastal hazard. If your proposal also includes structural elements, explain how the components work together, why they are needed, and how the nature-based work contributes to hazard reduction. Landscaping alone does not demonstrate that a project meets this requirement. Contact DCM about the proposed scope and eligibility before applying.

How should ordinance applicants answer site specific questions?

Describe the area covered by the ordinance, the hazards it addresses, the proposed policy changes, and expected resilience benefits. For questions about an individual parcel, site conditions, or engineering design that do not apply, write “Not applicable” and explain why. Under deliverables, identify the final draft ordinance. Under next steps, describe local review and the intended adoption process.

What governing board documentation should we include?

Include a resolution or a copy of meeting minutes showing that your governing board reviewed and approved the RCCP application at a duly advertised public meeting. If your board cannot take action before the application deadline, contact DCM in advance to discuss your situation.

Are all expenses listed in the budget template automatically eligible?

No. The categories help you organize the budget, and not every category applies to every project. Itemize necessary expenses, explain their connection to the proposed work, and identify the funding source. Ask DCM about staff time, legal services, monitoring costs, or other expenses whose eligibility is unclear. Long-term responsibilities should identify a funding plan rather than assume that all future costs will be covered by the grant.

What if our project has changed since the portfolio was completed?

Identify the original project and describe the changes. Explain how the revised scope remains connected to the identified hazard, planning goals, and priority. If the proposal is substantially different or was not identified in the portfolio, contact DCM before applying so staff can review the planning connection and documentation needed.

What happens if bids exceed our budget or the full request cannot be funded?

Explain the full cost and any funding gap. Where practical, identify separable components and their priority so DCM can understand what a reduced scope would accomplish. A smaller award or revised scope is not guaranteed. After contracting, proposed scope or budget changes require DCM approval and an amendment; contact your contract administrator before committing to changing work.