



## Go Outside (GO) Grants – Guidelines (Updated March 2024)

The GO Grant FAQ is available here: <https://gooutside.nc.gov/go-grants/apply/>

### 1. **Eligibility**

Applicants must qualify as either a North Carolina K-12 school, or nonprofit organization as follows:

A. **North Carolina K-12 School:**

A public, private, or charter school based in North Carolina. A registered homeschool association or children's home (both must have 501(c)(3) nonprofit status) based in North Carolina.

B. **Nonprofit Organization**

A nonprofit organization with tax-exempt status under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Organizations must have the ability to adopt the Commission's branding as part of their grant.

### **Applicant Requirements**

Any member of a school's faculty or administrative staff may apply for a GO Grant. Parent Teacher Associations, nonprofit organizations, and outdoor activity center staff may apply on behalf of a school or in partnership with a school, but the school's administrative staff must sign off on the application.

### **Reapplying for a GO Grant**

Applicants seeking funding for field trips or visiting programs are eligible to receive one GO Grant per class/grade each school year. For example: multiple applications (inside a school year) for a single group of students will be rejected but multiple applications (inside a school year) for different classes/grades will be considered.

Applicants who have previously received funding for structures and are seeking further funding for structures may reapply, however, during the review process consideration is given to funding geographically diverse projects, so repeat applications may be rejected or held for future review.

### 2. **Funding Guidelines**

Grant awards are dependent upon the type of GO Grant that is being applied for:

A. **Standard On-Campus Structures:**

Up to \$15,000 is available for the construction of standard outdoor learning facilities, to include outdoor classrooms, greenhouses, pollinator gardens, and vegetable gardens.

B. **Advanced On-Campus Structures:**

Up to \$20,000 is available for the construction of outdoor on-site agricultural, aquatic, archery, or nature-trail facilities, to include animal barns, mini-farms,

hydro/aquaponic greenhouses, fishing docks, canoe/kayak docks, archery ranges, and educational hiking trails.

C. **Field Trips:**

Up to \$3,000 for single-day field trips or up to \$5,000 for overnight field trips. An extra \$1,000 is available per additional day up to the \$5,000 cap. Field trips must include an outdoor learning component/activity and may include visits to National/State Parks, city/county parks, outdoor recreation areas, outdoor activity/education centers, and historical sites.

D. **Visiting Programs:**

Up to \$2,500 for outdoor on-campus programs. Visiting programs must include an outdoor learning component/activity and may include visits from aquarium/zoos, museums, gardening organizations, and other STEM organizations.

The N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission will **not** consider requests for:

A. **Indoor Field Trips/Visiting Programs**

B. **Amusement/Theme Parks:**

Exceptions may be made if proposed field trips contain a significant proportion of outdoor activities or STEM opportunities.

C. **T-Shirts**

D. **Gifts/Souvenirs**

E. **School Beautification Projects**

Includes structures and floral gardens that have no hands-on application to outdoor learning.

F. **Playgrounds**

G. **Lunch Areas**

H. **Gym/Sports Equipment:**

Excluding sports that could be described as adventurous activities, e.g., archery, camping, climbing, fishing, hiking, hunting, kayaking, mountain biking, skiing, snowboarding, and other shooting sports.

I. **Electronics:**

Excluding electronics that are integral to the use of a structure or activity, e.g., electronic installation for animal barns, aquaponic/hydroponic greenhouse systems, or trail cameras.

J. **Previous Projects/Field Trips/Programs**

Structures that have already been built (this does not include proposed renovations) or field trips/programs that have already taken place.

**Structures on Personal Private Property**

K. Includes applications for structures intended to be built on personal private property.

### **3. Applications**

Applications are considered for structures/field trips/visiting programs that further outdoor education and recreation opportunities for North Carolina's youth. Applicants should take into consideration the following when completing an application:

A. **Application Submission Period:**

There is no application deadline, GO Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis and are awarded throughout the year, as funds allow.

B. **Application Completion:**

Grant applications must be fully completed, with no blank sections, and must be initialed, signed, and dated by the applicant, the administrator/principal, and accountant/bookkeeper that agree to adhere to our guidelines. GO Grant applications for Standard On-Campus Structures, Advanced On-Campus Structures,

Field Trips and Visiting programs can be found [HERE](#). Applications are to be submitted to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov) or mailed in (the mailing address can be found on the application).

C. **Application Changes:**

Should changes need to be made to the original grant application, either before or after a grant has been awarded, the applicant must complete a GO Grant Amendment Request form, found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov) for approval. An amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be used. Changes include but are not limited to:

- Point of contact
- Timeline/trip date
- Trip location
- Number of students attending a field trip
- Purchase requests
- Changes to cost breakdown (this includes allocation of funds)

We cannot accept amendment requests for additional funds once a grant has been awarded and the recipient has been notified. Improper or unapproved expenditure may result in the Commission requiring a refund of the grant award.

D. **Applicant Changes:**

If an applicant has left the school/nonprofit organization but the school/nonprofit organization wishes to continue with their grant application, a new point of contact must be detailed on a GO Grant Amendment Request form. Complete the GO Grant Amendment Request form, found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov) for approval. An amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be used. Improper or unapproved expenditure may result in the Commission requiring a refund of the grant award.

E. **Additional Information for Nonprofit Organizations:**

Nonprofit organizations must additionally complete the Nonprofit Supplement form found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov) with their grant application. If the applicant is both a charter/private school and has nonprofit status, the Nonprofit Supplement does not need to be completed.

#### **4. Grant Selection Process**

All grant applications undergo a thorough review process by the Commission and will consider alignment with our mission and vision, geographic diversity, and community/financial need. Priority shall be extended to applications that focus on underserved youth aged 4-18, who are not traditionally outdoors and/or do not have opportunities to participate in outdoor activities. All decisions to award or not award grants are made at the sole discretion of the N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission and are final and not appealable.

#### **5. Grant Awards and Reporting**

##### **Timeline**

Grant awards will be sent directly to the recipient school system or nonprofit organization within 45 days of the proposed construction timeline or field trip/visiting program.

## Expenditure

- A. **Timeline:**  
Grant awards must be expended within 60 days of receipt and must follow the grant outlined in the approved GO Grant application. Should an applicant need to adjust their timeline or grant, see 3-D.
- B. **Improper Expenditure:**  
Should a grant recipient expend grant funds improperly or without approval, the Commission may require a full refund of the grant award.
- C. **Shipping:**  
Shipping costs must not exceed 5% of the total grant award.
- D. **Charter Buses:**  
Charter bus costs must not exceed \$1,000 for single-day field trip applications. This cap is raised for overnight multi-day field trips but is determined by the Commission during the application process.

## Grant Reporting

30 days from the completion of your structure or field trip/visiting program you are required to submit proof of payment and photographs. You can view and download an expense reporting quick guide [HERE](#). The following documentation is required:

- A. **Proof of Payment**  
For each purchase we require two forms of proof of payment, to include a copy of a check stub and/or account transaction summary AND a receipt, invoice, or purchase order.
- B. **Reporting Responsibility**  
Applicants, administrators/principals, and/or accountants/bookkeepers are responsible for collecting, collating, and providing proof of payment.
- C. **Photographs**  
Recipients must submit photographs of their structure or field trip/visiting program that we may use on our website, social media, and in our print and other marketing materials.

## Unspent Funds

Unspent grant funds must be returned to the Commission within 30 days of grant completion. Checks must be mailed to:

N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission  
1715 Mail Service Center  
Raleigh, NC 27699-1715