



# NORTH CAROLINA **TRAILBLAZERS** OUTDOOR CLUB

## Trailblazers Club Grants – Frequently Asked Questions

Trailblazers Club Grant guidelines are available here: <http://gooutside.nc.gov/trailblazers/apply>

### **What is the N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission’s Trailblazers Club Grant?**

The N.C. Youth Outdoor Engagement Commission provides outdoor learning opportunities for youth across the state of North Carolina. This state-wide grant program directly supports the creation of outdoor clubs for middle/high school-level students.

### **What organizations are eligible to apply for a Trailblazers Club Grant?**

Eligible organizations must qualify as either a North Carolina middle school, high school, or early college.

### **How are the clubs structured?**

The structure of the club is determined by the recipient school. A club advisor is required, and student leadership positions are strongly encouraged:

A. **Club Advisor(s)**

The club advisor is the faculty member responsible for leading the club, planning field trips and activities, purchasing equipment, and grant reporting. You may decide to have multiple advisors and share these responsibilities.

B. **Student Leadership**

Electing club members to leadership roles can provide an excellent opportunity for students to develop leadership and communication skills. You may choose to have positions such as President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

### **How should club activities be structured throughout the school year?**

The structure of your club’s activities throughout the school year will be determined by your club advisor and faculty, however, we make recommendations for allocation of field trips, club meeting activities, and equipment purchases. A sample curriculum with suggestions on field trips and club meeting activities can be found [HERE](#).

A. **Field Trips**

Field trips must include an outdoor learning component/activity (e.g., camping, hiking, kayaking) and may include visits to National/State parks, city/county parks, outdoor recreation areas, outdoor activity/education centers, and historical sites.

B. **Club Meeting Activities**

Club meetings provide an opportunity for students to be involved in planning and preparation for field trips, and to learn outdoor skills. Examples of skills students could learn about in a club meeting include how to: safely build a campfire, put up a tent, pack a backpack, cook with a campfire.

C. **Equipment Purchases**

Equipment purchases will be dependent on your club’s proposed activities but may include items such as fishing rods, tents, backpacks, kayaks, or first-aid kits.

### **Who can fill out the application?**

Any member of a school's faculty or administrative staff may apply for a Trailblazers Club Grant; however, it is strongly encouraged that the intended club advisor complete and submit the application.

### **What are the funding guidelines for the Trailblazers Club Grant?**

\$10,000 is available to initiate a club and fund field trips, club meeting activities, and equipment for the inaugural school year:

- A. **Field Trips**  
Field trips must include an outdoor learning component/activity (e.g., camping, hiking, kayaking) and may include visits to National/State parks, city/county parks, outdoor recreation areas, outdoor activity/education centers, and historical sites.
- B. **Club Meeting Activities**  
Club meetings provide an opportunity for students to be involved in planning and preparation for field trips, and to learn outdoor skills. Examples of skills students could learn about in a club meeting include how to: safely build a campfire, put up a tent, pack a backpack, cook with a campfire.
- C. **Equipment Purchases**  
Equipment purchases will be dependent on your club's proposed activities but may include items such as fishing rods, tents, backpacks, kayaks, or first-aid kits.
- D. **Professional Development**  
Club advisors may request to utilize a portion of the funding for professional development that contributes to the safety and longevity of the club. This may include courses such as Wilderness First Aid.

### **When is the grant application submission period?**

The application reopens each year in early January and closes March 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Where do I go to apply?**

Trailblazers Outdoor Club applications 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).

### **My school has a Trailblazers Club, do I need to reapply?**

Once your school has successfully joined the program, you do not need to reapply. It is the Commission's intention to support clubs into their second year. Funding for these clubs is contingent on an appropriation from the General Assembly and a specific amount will be determined annually by the Commission.

### **What is the 2-minute applicant video?**

This step is optional but gives applicants the opportunity to introduce the club advisor and their teaching role and give an overview of the plans for the clubs field trips/equipment purchases/club meetings, student interest, administrative support, and future fundraising and club support goals.

### **How should I record my applicant video?**

You may use any method you prefer to record your video (phone, webcam, etc.) and may submit the video file in .mp4, .mov, and .heic formats. .mov and .heic formats are typical default file formats for most Apple devices.

### **How do I submit my applicant video?**

Follow the instructions found [HERE](#) and click the “Submit Applicant Video” button to upload and submit your video. For any issues, contact [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov)

### **When will I find out the status of my application?**

After the close date, the grant review process may take up to 6 weeks. Typically grant recipients will be notified of the status of their application within 6 weeks of the close date. Exceptions may occur for grant applications that require the submission of additional documentation or further review.

### **When are grant funds made available?**

Grant awards will be sent directly to the recipient school system prior to the beginning of the Fall semester.

### **What kind of documentation am I required to submit for expense reporting?**

At the end of the school year, you are required to submit proof of payment and photographs. You can view grant reporting information [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. Photographs**

Recipients must submit photographs of their field trips and club activities that we may use on our website, social media, and in our print and other materials.

### **How do we fund the club past the inaugural year?**

It is the Commission’s intention to support clubs into their second year. Funding for these clubs is contingent on an appropriation from the General Assembly and a specific amount will be determined annually by the Commission. It is strongly encouraged that club advisors and faculty formulate a strategy for fundraising and club sponsorship. The Commission has rolled out sponsorship levels, that give donors the option to make one-time or recurring gifts to the agency or specific school systems. Learn more about our sponsorship levels [HERE](#).

### **What if I’m awarded a Trailblazers Club Grant but my field trip/activity plans or proposed equipment purchases changes?**

Grant funds must fund the purchases and costs listed in an approved application. If you need to make a change to your application, you must first complete and submit a Trailblazers Club Amendment Request form, found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov). Please note that an amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be spent.

### **What if the cost of my items changed but my purchase list has not?**

Grant awards must fund the purchases and costs as described in an approved application. If you need to make a change to your purchases, or need to reallocate funds from one purchase to another, you must first complete and submit a Trailblazers Club Amendment Request form, found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov). Please note that an amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be spent.

**What if we were awarded a Trailblazers Club Grant but the original club advisor has left the school?**

If this is the case, you must first complete and submit a Trailblazers Club Amendment Request form designating a new club advisor. The Amendment Form can be downloaded [HERE](#), then emailed to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov). Please note that an amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be spent.

**What if there are funds leftover at the end of the school year?**

Trailblazers Club grant funds are intended to be utilized throughout the school year. If funds are leftover, the club advisor can request the use of unused funds for the club's activities in the next school year. To do so, a club advisor must complete a Trailblazers Club Amendment Request form, found [HERE](#), and email it to [GoOutside@nc.gov](mailto:GoOutside@nc.gov) for approval. Please note that an amendment request must be approved by the Commission before grant awards can be spent. Otherwise, unspent grant funds must be returned to the Commission. Checks must be mailed to:

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