



Guidelines (Updated January 2025)

Trailblazers FAQs are available here: <https://gooutside.nc.gov/trailblazers-info/apply/>

1. **Eligibility**

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

North Carolina Middle School, High School, or Early College:

Applicants must qualify as either a North Carolina middle school, high school, or early college, including public, charter, and private schools.

Applicant Requirements:

Any member of a school's faculty or administrative staff may apply for a Trailblazers Club, but it is strongly encouraged that the applicant and the proposed club advisor be the same individual.

2. **Funding Guidelines**

Club awards are intended for use throughout the inaugural year of the club. \$10,000 is available for first year field trips and outdoor equipment purchases. 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.

Field Trips:

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. Eligible activities include, but are not limited to, hiking, camping, caving, climbing, canoeing, kayaking, skiing, white water rafting, horseback riding, biking, archery, shooting sports, fishing, and hunting.

Equipment Purchases:

Eligible purchases include equipment for the activities listed above e.g., backpacks, tents, and fishing rods.

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

- Indoor Field Trips/Visiting Programs
- Amusement/Theme Parks
- Gifts/Souvenirs
- Gym/Sports Equipment:
- We will fund 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.

- Electronics:
We may fund electronics that are integral to the use of an outdoor adventurous activity, e.g., trail cameras.

3. Applications

Applications are considered for clubs that aim to further outdoor education and recreation opportunities for North Carolina's youth. Applicants should take into consideration the following when completing an application:

Application Submission Period:

The application is open from January-April 12th.

Application Completion:

Applications must be fully completed, with no blank sections, and must be signed and dated by the applicant, administrator/principal, and accountant/bookkeeper that agree to adhere to our guidelines. Applications are to be submitted to GoOutside@nc.gov, faxed, or mailed in (the fax number and mailing address can be found on the application).

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 an *Amendment Request* form found [HERE](#), and email it to 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)
Improper or unapproved expenditure may result in the Commission requiring a refund of the grant award.

Applicant Changes:

If an applicant has left the school but the school wishes to continue with their grant application, a new point of contact must be detailed on an *Amendment Request* form. Complete the *Amendment Request* form found [HERE](#), and email it to 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.

4. Club Selection Process

All 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, 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, are final and not appealable.

5. Grant Awards and Reporting

Timeline:

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

Expenditure:

- Improper Expenditure:
Should a grant recipient expend grant funds improperly or without approval, the Commission may require a full refund of the grant award.
- Shipping:
Shipping costs must not exceed 5% of the total grant award.

Grant 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:

- 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.
- Reporting Responsibility
Applicants, administrators/principals, and/or accountants/bookkeepers are responsible for collecting, collating, and providing proof of payment.
- Photographs
Recipients must submit photographs of their club activities that we may use on our website, social media, and in our print and other marketing materials.

Unspent Funds:

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 an *Amendment Request* form, found [HERE](#), and submit it to the Commission for approval. 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