



Open Grants Program Guidelines

Increasing Economic
Opportunity in North Carolina
since 1999.

www.goldenleaf.org

The Open Grants Program allows applicants to apply for Golden LEAF funding throughout the year. Eligible applicants are governmental entities and 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

This program is for economic development projects aligned with the Golden LEAF priority areas. More details regarding Golden LEAF’s priority areas and priority outcomes are available at the links below.

- Job Creation and Economic Investment
- Workforce Preparedness
- Agriculture
- Community Competitiveness, Capacity, and Vitality

The Golden LEAF Foundation is committed to using the funds entrusted to it for projects that show the most potential for strengthening North Carolina’s economy, especially in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed, and/or rural communities.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

05 **Application Process**

07 Stage 1 Application

07 *Step 1*

10 *Step 2*

12 *Step 3*

13 *Step 4*

14 Stage 2 Application

14 *Step 5*

19 *Step 6*

Amount Available

The Golden LEAF Board has indicated that most awards in the Open Grants Program will be for \$200,000 or less. For projects that have certain characteristics, Golden LEAF will make awards of up to \$500,000 from this program.

Characteristics of Open Grants Projects Eligible for Funding of More Than \$200,000

Golden LEAF expects that most grants in the Open Grants Program will be for \$200,000 or less, and grants of more than \$200,000 will be infrequent. To determine which projects will be eligible for consideration for an award of more than \$200,000, Golden LEAF requires that the project include one or more of these characteristics:

- a. The applicant can clearly demonstrate and explain how the applicant would be able to achieve additional outcomes as a direct result of receiving more than \$200,000 in funding, and the additional outcomes are commensurate with the additional funding.
- b. The project results from a planning process involving multiple organizations and members of the community that the project will serve, e.g., employers, and those organizations and individuals continue to be engaged in and will provide support to the project.
- c. The additional funding will build on a history of success and allow the applicant to scale a project to significantly increase the outcomes the project can achieve.
- d. The project is collaborative and includes some features that make the collaboration particularly compelling, such as the following characteristics:
 - i. The collaboration is uncommon and includes innovative approaches.
 - ii. Golden LEAF funding will enable or encourage the collaboration.
 - iii. The project is regional, i.e., involves organizations in more than one county.



- e. A Golden LEAF award would leverage significant funding from other organizations, i.e., Golden LEAF is a small but important part of a larger project.
- f. The applicant has limited resources and has made efforts to secure funding from other sources.
- g. Implementing the project in phases would compromise its outcomes.

Required Consultation

If an applicant wishes to apply for more than \$200,000, the applicant must first have a consultation with Golden LEAF staff to discuss the project and how the project addresses Golden LEAF characteristics of projects eligible for funding of more than \$200,000 in the Open Grants Program. Applicants should be prepared to discuss which of the characteristics they believe their project satisfies and how. **A general conversation with Golden LEAF staff about an application is not a substitute for this required consultation.** Golden LEAF staff will be available for these required consultations up to one week in advance of the application deadline. **To schedule a consultation, please [click here](#).**

Application Process

Presenting a project for review involves a two stage process, a relatively short Stage 1 Application and, if invited by the Golden LEAF Board, a longer Stage 2 Application. This two-stage review will help each applicant avoid investing time and resources in completing a detailed application for a project that is not likely to receive funding. Although an invitation to submit a Stage 2 Application indicates interest in learning more about a project, it does not indicate that funds will necessarily be awarded or the potential level of funding. In limited and very unusual circumstances, applicants that have urgent need for funding due to circumstances beyond their control may be able to bypass the Stage 1 Application. **Please contact Golden LEAF staff to discuss this possibility.**

We encourage all potential applicants to **contact Golden LEAF staff** prior to submitting an application to learn more about Golden LEAF and the application process.

Timeline

Golden LEAF staff will use its best efforts to bring applications before the Board as soon as possible and has **established a timeline** to provide applicants guidance on when applicants can expect to receive a decision regarding their submission. Applicants that intend to request funding in excess of \$200,000 must complete a **required consultation** one week before the published application submission date for each Board meeting. Please contact Golden LEAF staff well in advance of the consultation deadline to ensure there is time to complete the required consultation.

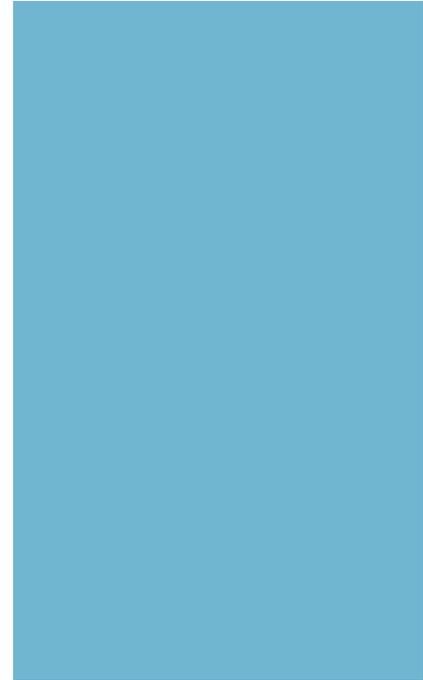


Stage 1 Application

Eligible applicants are invited to submit an application using the forms and process described below. Submission is the first step in pursuing Golden LEAF funding under the Open Grants Program. Applicants may submit supplemental information and letters of support; however, the application must be complete and stand on its own.

Step 1: Complete the application in Golden LEAF's online Portal

-  [Click here](#) to begin your online application. Enter your e-mail address and click “New Account” to set up a new account. Your account information will be sent to the e-mail address you entered.
-  Click “Save & Finish Later” if you need to complete the form at a later time. When you're ready to finish the form or upload required attachments, click [Return to Online Stage 1 Application](#) here. [See Step 3 below for instructions on submitting the form.]

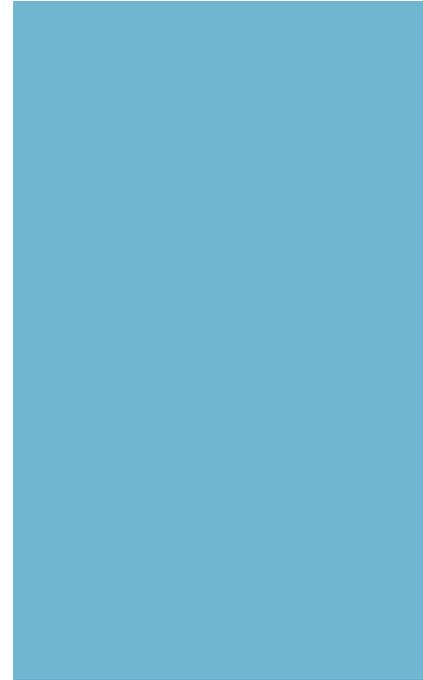


The Stage 1 Application requests the following information about the project proposal and how it relates to Golden LEAF's priority areas.

 Identify the Golden LEAF priority area(s) this project addresses—select one or more as applicable:

- **Agriculture:** Efforts particularly in the areas of value added processing, market expansion, and project targeting alternative crops, livestock and aquaculture.
- **Job creation and economic investment:** Efforts to create opportunities for employment with new and existing businesses in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed, and/or rural communities, particularly in the health care sector.
- **Workforce preparedness:** Efforts to train workers in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed, and/or rural communities for identified job opportunities, especially in innovative sectors such as advanced manufacturing, healthcare and alternative energy.
- **Community capacity, competitiveness, and vitality:** Other efforts to support and develop economic strength in tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities.





- ☉ Briefly describe how the project will meet the priority area(s) checked above, and how it will benefit tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities and the people who live there. Describe how you will implement the project. (200 word limit)
- ☉ Describe the project's outcomes. How will progress and success be measured? (150 word limit)
- ☉ Describe plans to sustain funding for your project beyond the grant. (150 word limit)
 - For projects that will continue after the conclusion of the requested funding.
- ☉ Organizational History – Briefly describe the organization's history, current programs, and accomplishments. Include a short summary of the organization's mission, goals and objectives. (150 word limit)

STEP 2





Step 2: Complete and upload the required attachments:



The Project Budget Form and Budget Narrative.

- The main budget table should contain only cash, not in-kind, contributions to the project. List in-kind contributions in the appropriate section below the budget table.
- Save the completed budget and budget narrative to your computer to upload to the application portal. (See Step 3, below, for details.)



Addendum for Projects Requesting More Than \$200,000, **only**.

- Golden LEAF staff will provide the addendum form to applicants seeking more than \$200,000 following the required consultation.
- The addendum requires applicants to identify and explain which of the characteristics of Open Grants projects eligible for more than \$200,000 your project addresses and how. (500 word limit)
- Save the completed addendum to your computer to upload to the application portal. (See Step 3, below, for details.)



 The certification and signature form.

- Open the certification and signature form and save it to your computer.
- Fill in all the fields except the “Signature” lines.
- Print the form and obtain the required signatures as described on the form. (For 501(c)(3) organizations, one signature must be that of a member of the applicant’s board of directors.)
- Scan the completed certification and signature page to upload to the application portal. (See Step 3, below, for details.)



STEP 3





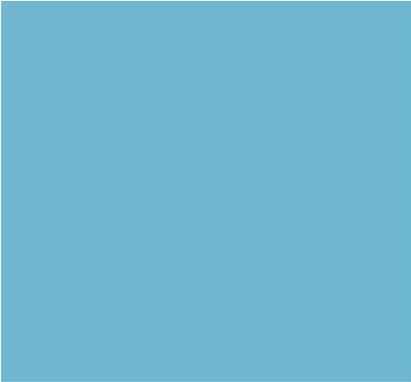
Step 3: Send the Stage 1 Application and required attachments to Golden LEAF.

 [Click here to return to an application started in the online portal.](#)

- Click “Attachments” near the top of the page and follow the instructions to upload the completed certification and signature form, project budget form with narrative, and, if applicable, the addendum for projects requesting more than \$200,000. You may include additional attachments with your application; however, they will not serve as replacements for the required attachments or for the information required in the application form.
- When you have completed the application form and have uploaded the attachments, click “Submit.”
- If you have not received a confirmation email within two (2) business days of your submission, please contact programs@goldenleaf.org.

STEP 4





Step 4: The Stage 1 Application is reviewed and applicants notified.

-  The Golden LEAF staff and the Golden LEAF Board of Directors, at a regularly scheduled board meeting, will review complete Stage 1 Applications. [Click here to see the review schedule.](#)

The Golden LEAF board will determine its interest in the project and will vote to:

- Invite a Stage 2 Application. Organizations that are to submit a Stage 2 Application will receive further instructions and access to the Stage 2 Application portal. Notification will be made to the contact person listed on the Stage 1 Application. An invitation to submit a Stage 2 Application does not imply a proposal will be funded, but indicates an interest by the Golden LEAF Board to learn more about the project.
- NOT invite a Stage 2 Application. Funds will not be awarded to organizations that are not invited to submit a Stage 2 Application. Notification of the decision will be made to the contact person listed on the Stage 1 Application. Applicants that are not invited to submit a Stage 2 Application may not submit an application for the same project for six (6) months following the decision by the Golden LEAF Board not to invite a Stage 2 Application. (Applicants are eligible to submit applications for substantially different projects at any time.)

Do not proceed with the steps below unless invited by Golden LEAF to submit a Stage 2 Application.

STEP 5





Stage 2 Application

Step 1: Complete Stage 2 Application and required attachments—only by invitation of Golden LEAF.

(The attachments listed in the checklist below are not required for the Stage 1 Application.)

-  If your organization is invited by Golden LEAF to submit a Stage 2 Application, you will have approximately three (3) weeks from the invitation date to make that submission for review at the following Board meeting. If additional time is needed, your organization may request to be deferred to a later meeting. However, Golden LEAF may rescind an invitation to submit a Stage 2 Application if it determines the application is inactive. If the invitation is rescinded, your organization must wait six (6) months to submit an application for the same or similar project, and will have to restart the process with a new Stage 1 Application.
-  An application is not considered complete or eligible for review unless ALL blanks have been appropriately filled in, questions answered and attachments provided, and all documents have been received by Golden LEAF. Attachments must comply with the guidelines provided and be uploaded with the application in order for an application to be considered complete and eligible for review.
-  The budget submitted with the Stage 1 Application will also be used for the Stage 2 Application. It is not necessary to submit a budget with the Stage 2 Application. Applicants may not request more funding in the Stage 2 Application than requested in the Stage 1 Application.



Required Short Answer Questions

The Stage 2 Application includes the following short answer questions:

- Geographic area in North Carolina this project will serve
- Grant timeframe (period of time over which Golden LEAF funds will be used)
- Project timeframe (period of time for initial outcomes to be reached)

Required Attachments

Document formatting guidelines

- Use a font no smaller than 10 points
- Use only black as the font color—no colored text
- Documents should be single-spaced with 1” margins
- Format to standard, letter-sized paper (8.5” x 11”)

Organization Information (Maximum length: 1 page)

Create your own document that provides a more detailed summary of your organization’s history, current programs, activities and accomplishments, as well as its mission statement, goals and objectives.

Proposal Description (Maximum length: 3 pages)

Create your own document that provides a detailed, written description of the proposed project that:

- Explains how your project will meet one or more of the Golden LEAF funding priorities, and will benefit tobacco-dependent, economically distressed and/or rural communities;
- Identifies the geographic area and population your project will serve;
- Explains how the population served will benefit from your project;
- Describes how you will implement the project to achieve its desired outcomes; and,
- Defines the specific role of any collaborating organizations involved in the project, including any in-kind contributions they will make to the project.



Expected Outcomes and Activities (Excel workbook, provided by email with invitation to submit a Stage 2 Application)

Identify on the Excel workbook provided which Golden LEAF priority outcomes your project will address and provide quantitative information regarding goals and how success achieving those outcomes will be measured. List key activities by date.

Expected Outcomes Narrative (Maximum length: 1 page)

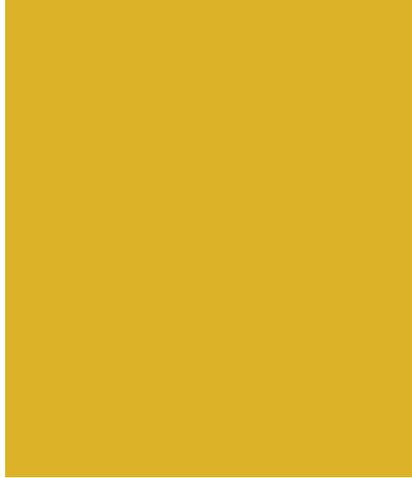
Create your own document to provide additional context and information regarding the project outcomes. List the Golden LEAF priority outcomes you expect the project to accomplish, both short-term and long-term. You may also include other outcomes of importance to the community. Describe how you will evaluate progress toward achieving those outcomes, the milestones that indicate the project is on track, and how people and/or places will be better off economically as a result of this project.

Agreement and Certification

Download the document from the portal. This document should be signed and dated by two authorized officials of the applicant organization. This signed form must be uploaded as a required attachment submitted using the online application system. For 501(c)(3) organizations, one signatory must be a member of the applicant's board of directors.

Board of Directors

List should include the organization's board members along with their addresses and occupations. For governmental entities, this is the members of the governing body, e.g., town council or county commissioners.



Staff

List of staff who will be involved in the project, their length of service, brief job descriptions, and their roles in the implementation of the project.

Community/County Partners (as applicable)

A list providing contact information for your partners in the communities and/or counties served by your project. Provide the roles and responsibilities for each.

Business plan/Strategic plan/Feasibility studies (as applicable and if available)

Any other supporting documents or information may be uploaded as an attachment in the portal.

Evidence of Tax-Exempt Status

For 501(c)(3) organizations – A copy of the current IRS exemption determination letter.

For governmental entities – A description of governmental status.

Organization Budgets

The organization's budget for the current year and the organization's budget for the period covered by the grant request, if available. If the budget is not available, provide a brief statement explaining why, e.g., it has not yet been adopted.



Financial Statements – Audited (if available)

To include PDF of the Balance Sheet, Statement of Financial Position, and Statement of Cash Flows, or a link to these documents if available online.

For 501(c)(3) organizations – Three most recent fiscal year-end financial statements, including management letter and/or reports on internal controls.

For governmental entities – Most recent fiscal year-end financial statements, including management letter and/or reports on internal controls.

Other Attachments

You may include additional attachments with your application; however, they will not serve as replacements for the required attachments.



STEP 2





Step 2: Send the Stage 2 Application and required attachments to Golden LEAF.

-  [Click here to return to an application started in the online portal.](#)
-  Click “Attachments” near the top of the page and follow the instructions to upload the completed attachments. You may include additional attachments with your application; however, they will not serve as replacements for the required attachments or for the information required in the application form.
-  When you have completed the application form and have uploaded the attachments, click “Submit.”
-  If you have not received a confirmation email within two (2) business days of your submission, please contact programs@goldenleaf.org.

STEP 3





Step 3: Grant Application Review and Notification

- ☉ The Golden LEAF staff and the Golden LEAF Board of Directors will review completed Stage 2 Applications on [this timeline](#). The Golden LEAF Board will decide whether or not to fund the proposal, request more information about the proposal, or take some other action. Notification of the Board's decision will be sent to the contact person on the application form.



The Public Records Act

Information submitted to Golden LEAF is subject to the North Carolina Public Records Act and subject to inspection by the public. For information on limited exceptions to the Public Records Act, please contact Golden LEAF staff.