



Network for Landscape
CONSERVATION

Advancing the Practice of Conservation at the Landscape Scale

LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION CATALYST FUND
Request for Proposals: 2021 Funding Round
March 15, 2021

The Network for Landscape Conservation (Network) is pleased to release this Request for Proposals for the 2021 Landscape Conservation Catalyst Fund, which is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The Catalyst Fund strives to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation across the United States by investing in Landscape Conservation Partnerships. The Fund couples financial support through a competitive grant program with capacity-building support through in-depth Peer Learning for funded Partnerships. A portion of the Fund is reserved specifically to advance Indigenous landscape conservation priorities.

Proposals are due on Friday, April 23 with grant awards to be announced in July 2021.

I. PURPOSE OF THE CATALYST FUND

The purpose of the Catalyst Fund is to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation across the United States. The Fund makes strategic investments in strengthening the collaborative capacity and process of place-based, community-grounded Landscape Conservation Partnerships—building in landscapes across the country the enduring collaborative infrastructure and social capital that is necessary to achieve bigger and better conservation over the long term.

Grant funds can be used for Partnership coordination roles and/or for costs associated with other collaborative process activities such as convening meetings (space, lodging, travel), web and print communications, stakeholder outreach activities, and strategic planning and conservation prioritization. Funding cannot be used for direct conservation project implementation such as acquisition of land or conservation easements, trail building, or land management activities; funding also cannot be used for academic research or writing; capital campaigns or capital improvements; office equipment; or political lobbying.

II. INDIGENOUS-LED LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION

A portion of the Catalyst Fund is dedicated to supporting Indigenous leadership in landscape conservation. Partnerships that are led by Indigenous peoples, organizations, and communities and working to advance Indigenous landscape conservation priorities are invited to apply. Indigenous-led Partnerships may be focused wholly on sovereign tribal lands and/or focused on conserving Indigenous interests, territories, and rights across a broader landscape.

III. FUND PARAMETERS

LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS—The Fund focuses its investments on Landscape Conservation Partnerships¹ that reflect the following characteristics:

- **Place-based:** Focuses on the conservation of a geographically explicit landscape.
- **Long-term Conservation Purpose:** Pursues a long-term and multi-issue conservation vision and purpose for the defined landscape, with clearly identified conservation goals and outcomes that encompass people and nature.
- **Collaboratively Governed:** Embraces collaborative leadership that ensures participation in decisions from a breadth of partners.
- **Community-grounded and Inclusive:** Engages a breadth of stakeholders on the landscape, and bridges sectors, interests, and cultures to find common ground.
- **Informed:** Uses ecological, cultural, traditional, and/or social information to guide its work and build a shared foundation of knowledge.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](#) offers more background on these characteristics.

PIVOTAL POINTS IN PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT—The Fund targets Partnerships at pivotal points in their development where modest investments in collaborative capacity and process can shift the trajectory of conservation outcomes in the landscape.

Specifically, the Catalyst Fund prioritizes the transition from collective *vision* to collective *action*. The relationship- and trust-building of partners uniting around a co-created conservation vision most successfully emerges from the combined efforts of the broader group of participants. Yet there often comes a point where backbone organizational support and capacity to bring people together is necessary to move from vision to action. Investments in coordination staffing and/or the collaborative process at this point can overcome this common barrier to success and can significantly accelerate forward progress on conservation outcomes.

We recognize that Partnership development is unique to the context of a landscape and not always linear; more established Partnerships may structure proposals around other pivotal development points, but are encouraged to contact the [Catalyst Fund Manager](#) prior to doing so to ensure appropriate fit. The Fund does not invest in the launch of new Partnerships.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](#) offers more background on Partnership development.

IV. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Partnership Commitment:** Demonstrated commitment to building a community-grounded Landscape Conservation Partnership as an effective and enduring vehicle for accelerating conservation impact within a landscape.

¹ We use “Partnership” as an umbrella term to represent a variety of differing structures and degrees of formality for individuals and entities coming together in collaboration; we consider requests from partnerships, collaboratives, coalitions, networks, working groups, etc.

- **Partnership Development Point:** The extent to which the Partnership is at a pivotal point where modest investments can accelerate strategic growth and action.
- **Conservation Value:** The ecological and cultural value of the landscape, and the potential impact of the Partnership’s conservation work on that landscape, including but not limited to climate resilience and landscape connectivity.
- **Grant Period Impact:** The potential for the proposed activities to strengthen the Partnership over the grant period.
- **Long-term Impact:** The potential for the proposed grant period activities to catalyze the Partnership’s ability to realize its longer-term conservation goals and purpose.

The values of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion are guiding principles of the Catalyst Fund, and we believe that these values are central to the transformative potential of landscape conservation. All proposals will be considered through this lens as well.

V. THE PEER LEARNING PROGRAM

The Peer Learning program brings Catalyst Fund recipients together in an exchange/learning community to further catalyze growth and development, better positioning each Partnership to successfully achieve its goals over the long term. Catalyst Fund recipients will be invited to identify a leadership representative (e.g. Partnership coordinator, steering committee member) to join a Peer Learning cohort. Over two years, the cohort will convene monthly (virtually) for learning, exchange, inspiration, and growth. Conditions permitting, the cohort will also convene annually for an in-person retreat, with travel funds provided by the Network.

VI. ELIGIBILITY & APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

Applicant Eligibility: Applicants must be U.S.-based non-profit organizations with IRS 501(c)(3) status. Indigenous-led Partnership applicants in the American West² are also eligible to apply under IRS Code, Section 7871, or directly as Tribal Nations. For Landscape Conservation Partnerships without formal IRS status, another organization may apply *on behalf of* a Partnership. In such cases, the applicant should be a formal fiscal sponsor or a core partner organization within the Partnership.

Timeline & Funds Available: Proposals are due Friday, April 23 and grant awards will be announced in July. Approximately \$335,000 is available for grantmaking in 2021, with 13-16 grant awards anticipated.

Requests: Applicants may request one- or two-year grants of \$10,000 to \$25,000 in total. Applicants may apply each year, but no Partnership may receive more than \$25,000 over the first three years of the Fund (2019 through 2021).

Funding Match Requirement: A funding match of at least 1:1 is required. (*Match requirement is waived for the Indigenous-led portion of the Fund*). In-kind support can contribute to this requirement, but at least 50% of the minimum requirement must be direct support. Previously

² For the purposes of this RFP, the American West is defined to include the following states: Montana, Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Nevada, California, Oregon, Washington, and Alaska. Note: applicants from Hawaii are not included in the American West definition, but are still eligible to apply under 501(c)(3) status.

expended funds cannot be used as direct match. Direct match can be pending at time of application, but a grant award will be dependent on securing appropriate match.

Grantee Reporting: Funded Partnerships will be asked to submit short, written interim and final reports to document impact of Catalyst Fund support. The Network will also track progress of funded Partnerships for five years after the grant period through a short annual survey.

VII. HOW TO APPLY

Applicants must submit proposals via the Network's [online application system](#) by 9 pm Eastern time on Friday, April 23, 2021. Note: while previous funding rounds required a pre-proposal and full proposal, the 2021 funding round simply requires a single proposal.

Indigenous-led Partnerships are encouraged to submit proposals via the online application system but may, if preferred, submit this [Word form](#) via email to [Jonathan Peterson](#).

Informational Webinars: Potential applicants are invited to attend one of two optional webinars: [Monday, March 22nd](#) and [Tuesday, March 30th](#) at 2 pm Eastern Time. These will include a brief overview of the RFP, but will primarily be dedicated to responding to applicant questions. Recordings will be posted to the Network's website upon conclusion.

If questions remain after a careful review of this RFP, the [Applicant Guidance Document](#), and the webinars, emailed inquiries should be directed to [Jonathan Peterson](#). Please indicate "Catalyst Fund RFP Question" in the subject line of your email.
