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**CATALYST FUND**

**Request for Proposals: 2023 Funding Round**

***Issued Wednesday, March 15, 2023***

The Network for Landscape Conservation (the Network) is pleased to release the 2023 Request for Proposals for the Catalyst Fund, which is made possible through the generous support of the Doris Duke Foundation and the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation.

The Catalyst Fund strives to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation and stewardship 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) to catalyze Partnership efforts to achieve long-term conservation goals. A portion of the Fund is reserved specifically to advance Indigenous landscape conservation and stewardship priorities.

Proposals are due on **Friday, April 21, 2023**, with grant awards to be announced by August.

1. **PURPOSE OF THE CATALYST FUND**

The purpose of the Catalyst Fund is to accelerate the pace and practice of collaborative landscape conservation and stewardship across the United States. The Fund makes strategic investments in strengthening the collaborative capacity of place-based, community-grounded Landscape Conservation Partnerships. These investments are intended to better position Partnerships to achieve long-term conservation and stewardship success, building in landscapes across the country the enduring collaborative capacity needed to address systems-level challenges like the interwoven biodiversity, climate, and environmental injustice crises.

Grant requests should focus on strengthening collaborative capacity. Collaborative capacity can be understood as those elements that allow groups of partners to be capable of functioning effectively across organizations/entities to achieve a shared purpose.

Funds can be used for supporting Partnership coordination staffing and/or for costs associated with other collaborative process activities such as convenings, communications, partner and community engagement, governance development, and strategic planning and conservation prioritization. Funding cannot be used for direct project implementation such as trail building, land management activities, or the acquisition of land or conservation easements. Funding also cannot be used for academic research; capital campaigns or capital improvements; or political lobbying.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](https://landscapeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Catalyst-Fund_2023Guidance-Document.docx) offers more background on collaborative capacity, as well as examples of components of collaborative capacity that can be funded.

1. **INDIGENOUS-LED LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION**

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

1. **FUND PARAMETERS**

**LANDSCAPE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIPS:** The Catalyst Fund seeks Landscape Conservation Partnerships[[1]](#footnote-1) that reflect the following characteristics:

* ***Place-based***:Focuses on a geographically explicit landscape.
* ***Long-term Conservation Purpose****:* Pursues a long-term and multi-issue conservation and stewardship vision and purpose, with clearly identified goals and outcomes that encompass people and nature.
* ***Collaboratively Governed***: Embraces collaborative leadership and participatory engagement and decision-making.
* ***Community-Grounded and Inclusive****:* Engages a breadth of collaborators and partners on the landscape, bridging interests, perspectives, 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.

Implicit in these characteristics is an emphasis on a transformative (rather than transactional) approach to collaboration. Landscape Conservation Partnerships that embody transformative collaboration—by sharing power with those that have been historically excluded and building understanding and connection across difference—can be essential conduits for sustaining the ecological integrity of our landscapes and fostering a more just and equitable future for our human communities.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](https://landscapeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Catalyst-Fund_2023Guidance-Document.docx) offers more background on these characteristics, and on transformative collaboration.

**PIVOTAL POINTS IN PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT**: The Fund seeks Partnerships at pivotal points in their development where modest investments in collaborative capacity can shift the trajectory of conservation and stewardship outcomes over time in the landscape.

Specifically, the Catalyst Fund prioritizes the transition from collective *vision* to collective *action*. The shift from vision to implementation and action often requires increased time and energy, and investments in coordination and collaborative capacity at this point can be critical to significantly accelerating forward progress on conservation and stewardship outcomes.

We recognize that Partnership development is unique to the context of a landscape and not always linear; proposals from established Partnerships that are structured around other pivotal points in partnership development may be considered, but interested applicants are encouraged to contact the Catalyst Fund Manager prior to applying to ensure appropriate fit. The Fund does not consider proposals for starting new Partnerships.

The [Applicant Guidance Document](https://landscapeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Catalyst-Fund_2023Guidance-Document.docx) offers more background on Partnership development.

1. **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.
* **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 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.

1. **THE PEER LEARNING PROGRAM**

A Catalyst Fund Peer Learning program brings grant recipients together in a learning/exchange community to further catalyze growth and development, better positioning each Partnership to successfully achieve its goals over the long term. Grant recipients will be invited to identify a leadership representative (e.g. Partnership coordinator, steering committee member) to join the 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.

1. **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 West[[2]](#footnote-2) are also eligible to apply directly as Tribal Nations or under IRS Code, Section 7871. For Landscape Conservation Partnerships without formal IRS status, another organization may apply *on behalf of* a Partnership.

**Timeline & Funds Available:** Proposals are due Friday, April 21, and grant awards will be announced by August. Approximately $335,000 is available for grantmaking in 2023, with 13-15 grant awards anticipated.

**Requests:** Applicants may request one- or two-year grants of up to $25,000 in total. Previous grant recipients are not currently eligible to reapply for additional grant support.

**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 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. The Network will also track progress of funded Partnerships for up to five years after the grant period through a short survey.

1. **HOW TO APPLY**

**Applicants may submit proposals** **via the Network’s** [**online application system**](https://www.grantinterface.com/Home/Logon?urlkey=NLCgrants) **through Friday, April 21, 2023**.

Indigenous-led Partnerships are encouraged to submit proposals via the online application system but may, if preferred, submit this [Word form](https://landscapeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Catalyst-Fund_2023-proposal_word-form_FINAL.docx) via email to Jonathan Peterson.

**Informational Webinars:** We will host an optional webinar for interested potential applicants on [Tuesday, March 28](https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_m9FzAAP9ThKojvJBJAOEww) at 2 pm Eastern Time. This will include a brief overview of the RFP, but will be dedicated primarily to responding to applicant questions. A recording will be posted to the Network’s website upon conclusion.

In addition to the [Applicant Guidance Document](https://landscapeconservation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/12/Catalyst-Fund_2023Guidance-Document.docx), potential applicants may also refer to these [Frequently Asked Questions](https://landscapeconservation.org/catalyst-fund/faqs/). Should questions remain after a review of all materials, emailed inquiries can be directed to Jonathan Peterson. Please indicate “Catalyst Fund RFP Question” in the subject line.

1. We use “Partnership” generally to represent a variety of differing structures and degrees of formality for individuals and entities coming together in collaboration to advance conservation and stewardship of their landscapes; we consider requests from partnerships, collaboratives, networks, etc. See [FAQs](https://landscapeconservation.org/catalyst-fund/faqs/) for more information on what we mean by “Partnership.” [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
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. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)