



Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

Environmental Stewardship Pillar

Request for Proposals | Grants, Fellowships and Scholarships





FOUNDATION FOR
APPALACHIAN OHIO

Environmental Stewardship Pillar of Prosperity

Request for Proposals

The Foundation for Appalachian Ohio (FAO) recognizes the profound importance of funding conservation and environmental stewardship, not merely as an investment in our environment, but as an investment in the future of our communities and people.

Our area is home to a rich biodiversity of plants and animals, which is supported by clean air and water, fertile soil and diverse habitats. These are all foundational to our own health, economy and quality of life. In supporting these aspirational goals, FAO and its partners empower local communities to create and sustain a legacy of environmental prosperity in one of the most ecologically diverse and culturally significant regions of our state.

Thanks to a transformative investment from the Muskingum Watershed Conservancy District (MWCD) and the generosity of many donors – including Nicolozakes Trucking & Construction Inc., Ohio CAT, American Electric Power (AEP), the AEP Foundation and the AEP Ohio Foundation – FAO requests proposals for projects advancing conservation, environmental stewardship and greater well-being in Appalachian Ohio.



A total of \$125,000 will be available in 2024 as outlined on page 2. FAO will consider proposals for grants, scholarships and fellowships in five program areas.

Applications for funding are available online at:

www.AppalachianOhio.org/EnvironmentalStewardship starting Friday, June 21, 2024.

*Special thanks to all those who have given generously to support
FAO's Environmental Stewardship Pillar of Prosperity.*



MUSKINGUM
WATERSHED
CONSERVANCY DISTRICT





1 Research Grants

Research grants are designed to contribute to the conservation and improvement of aquatic biodiversity and healthy habitats that specifically address gaps in our understanding of our diverse ecosystems, the species living within them and the impairments that negatively impact the environment. This program recognizes the important role research plays in informing conservation practices and promoting sustainable water management strategies. More details about these grants and how to apply can be found on page 3. At least \$75,000 is available to support research grants.

2 Community Grants

Community grants are designed to empower local communities with the ability to preserve and enhance our natural environment. We know relatively modest projects can make an outsize difference when they promote environmental stewardship and engage whole communities in conservation. Community grants will be reviewed on a quarterly basis or until funds are exhausted. More details about these grants and how to apply can be found on page 5. At least \$20,000 is available to support community grants.

3 Innovation Grants

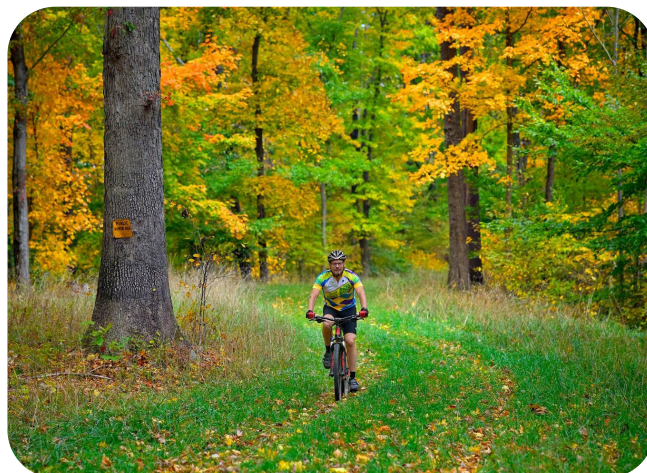
Innovation grants invest in new and creative solutions and approaches that result in environmental good while encouraging environmental stewardship. The possibilities are endless and can include areas such as upcycling materials or developing approaches to harmonize energy, economics, environment and health. FAO will also consider strategic initiatives and planning for communities leveraging larger funds. Innovation grants can support pilot projects that increase the region's capacity to improve air quality; water quality; green energy generation, storage and adoption; and diesel emission reduction. More details about these grants and how to apply can be found on page 7. At least \$16,000 is available to support innovation grants.

4 Fellowships

Fellowships provide a two-year timeline of support for individuals who pioneer positive change through projects that address environmental challenges and promote biodiversity conservation. Fellows are supported as they engage communities in educational initiatives related to sustainability and environmental stewardship. We seek to invest in fellows who will pilot new methodologies, develop scalable solutions and ultimately shift existing patterns in environmental stewardship. More details about these fellowships and how to submit a letter of intent can be found on page 9. At least \$10,000 is available to support environmental stewardship fellowships over a two-year timeline.

5 Scholarships

Scholarships will support individuals seeking degrees or continuing education in ecology, forestry, wildlife ecology or related natural resource fields, as well as skilled trades, vocational and technical training in fields that integrate and support green energy technology, sustainable agriculture and land stewardship. Qualified individuals at any point in their education may apply. Preference will be given to applicants with an expressed intent to live and work in Appalachian Ohio. At least \$4,000 is available for scholarship awards. *Please note: Scholarships will be available as part of FAO's annual scholarship application cycle. More information and an application will be available in early 2025.*



Research Grants

Background

Research grants support studies that address critical gaps in our understanding of natural history and contribute to the conservation and enhancement of aquatic ecosystems and healthy habitats. Recognizing the vital role research plays in informing

conservation practices and promoting sustainable water management strategies, FAO seeks to fund projects that advance the scientific knowledge and practical solutions for environmental challenges in the region.

Funding area

FAO welcomes proposals for projects that result in scalable change, with a priority for projects that will impact multiple counties. FAO will consider funding requests of up to \$25,000 per project, and at least \$75,000 is available to award. We encourage applicants to propose research with the potential to significantly impact the understanding and conservation of aquatic biodiversity, water quality and healthy habitats. The following examples illustrate eligible projects, but proposals are not limited to the listed areas.

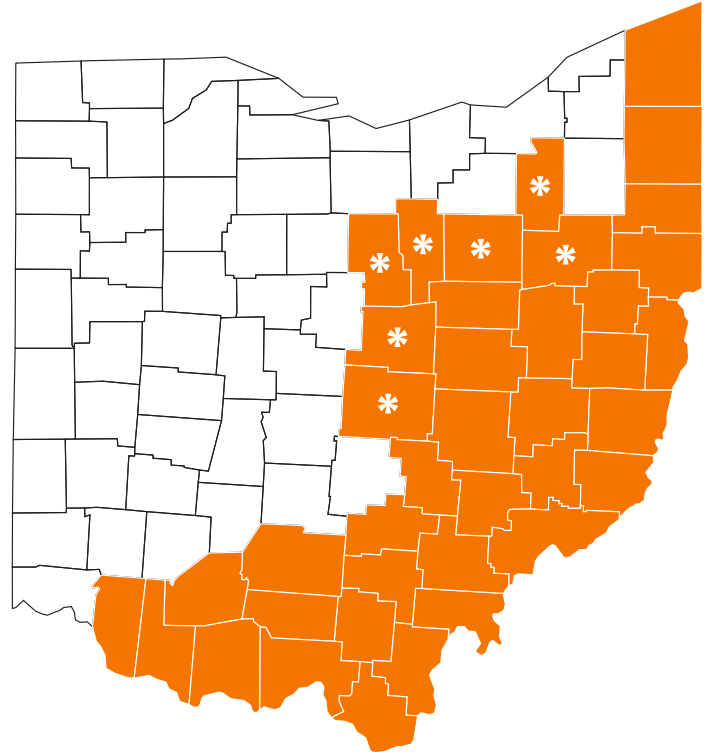
- **Aquatic biodiversity assessments**
- **Water quality monitoring and analysis**
- **Development and application of innovative technologies and methodologies**
- **Collaborative research partnerships across disciplines and sectors**
- **Habitat restoration and conservation efforts**

Eligibility

Public and nonprofit organizations and academic institutions, as well as groups operating in fiscal sponsorship with others who are conducting research within the Muskingum Watershed and Appalachian Ohio regions, are eligible to apply. Projects will be evaluated on their scientific merit and ability to foster collaboration among stakeholders and advance the understanding of Ohio species of concern and unique habitats within Appalachia Ohio. Proposals that contribute significantly to regional conservation efforts within the watershed district will rank higher.

Our goal is to build and support environmental stewardship in Appalachian Ohio and across the Muskingum Watershed. As a result, priority will be given to projects led by organizations headquartered in Appalachian Ohio. Organizations headquartered outside of the Muskingum Watershed and FAO service areas may apply but will need a local sponsor based within one of the counties listed in the map.

Eligible counties include: Adams, Ashland,* Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox,* Lawrence, Licking,* Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Richland,* Ross, Scioto, Summit,* Stark,* Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, Washington and Wayne*



**Denotes counties in the Muskingum Watershed also eligible for this opportunity.*

Research Grants

Proposal guidelines

Applicants must submit a proposal online at www.tinyurl.com/FAO-ResearchGrant24, including the following information:

Applicant information: Include organization and applicant information.

Project title: The title of the proposed research project.

Project summary: Provide a concise overview of the project objectives, methodology and expected outcomes.

Objectives: Define the specific goals and objectives of the research project.

Methodology: Describe the research methods, data collection techniques and analytical approaches to be employed.

Expected outcomes: Outline the project's anticipated results, impacts and contributions to the field of study and conservation efforts.

Budget and justification: Present a detailed budget plan, including itemized expenses and a justification for each cost. College and university overhead is

capped at 10%. Funding will not cover tuition but can support travel, materials and supplies, testing services, equipment, software and limited conference support.

Timeline: Provide a comprehensive timeline indicating key milestones, deliverables and project duration.

Partnerships and collaborations: Describe any existing or potential partnerships, collaborations or stakeholder engagement strategies.

Sustainability plan: Explain how the project will be sustained beyond the grant period, including plans for ongoing monitoring, maintenance and funding.

Evaluation plan: Outline a robust evaluation plan with clear metrics and indicators to measure the project's success and impact.

Evaluation criteria

Proposals will be evaluated by a review committee of subject matter experts, based on the following criteria:

- Alignment with the Environmental Stewardship Pillar research grant goals and objectives
- Scientific merit, feasibility and rigor of methodology
- Potential for significant impact, scalability and relevance to the Muskingum Watershed and Appalachian Ohio
- Integration of community engagement, education and stakeholder involvement
- Demonstration of collaboration, partnerships and interdisciplinary approaches
- Budget justification, cost effectiveness and financial sustainability, including secured matching funds and other project funders
- Evaluation plan with measurable outcomes, indicators and success measures
- Need for funding and the degree to which the organization has access to other funding resources to bring the project to fruition
- Extent to which the project develops capacity within Appalachian Ohio for future research, conservation and environmental stewardship success

Submission instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically via FAO's online grant application by **August 2, 2024**. Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. For inquiries or clarifications regarding the RFP, applicants may contact Kelly Morman at kmorman@ffao.org.

Community Grants

Background

Relatively modest projects make an outsize difference when they promote environmental stewardship and engage community members in conservation. By involving wide swaths of the community in environmental stewardship, it

multiplies the effect, awareness and engagement of environmental stewardship activities for generations to come. Community grants will be reviewed on a quarterly basis or until funds are exhausted for the funding cycle.

Funding area

FAO welcomes proposals for community projects that create positive local change. These projects should be limited in scope and use funding to support "people-powered" projects. Examples of such initiatives include volunteer-led efforts,

youth-led projects, grassroots initiatives and those led by civic associations. We encourage proposals that involve a collaborative effort from various community members. Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

- **Stream cleanups**
- **Trail maintenance and restoration**
- **Community pollinator gardens**
- **Environmental education workshops and events (e.g., nature hikes)**
- **Wildlife habitat restoration**
- **Community efforts to build storybook trails, pocket parks and to create greenspaces and community gardens**
- **Citizen scientist activities, for example the Great Backyard Bird Count**
- **Public awareness campaigns**
- **Other projects that increase engagement and awareness of the local environment among the broader community**

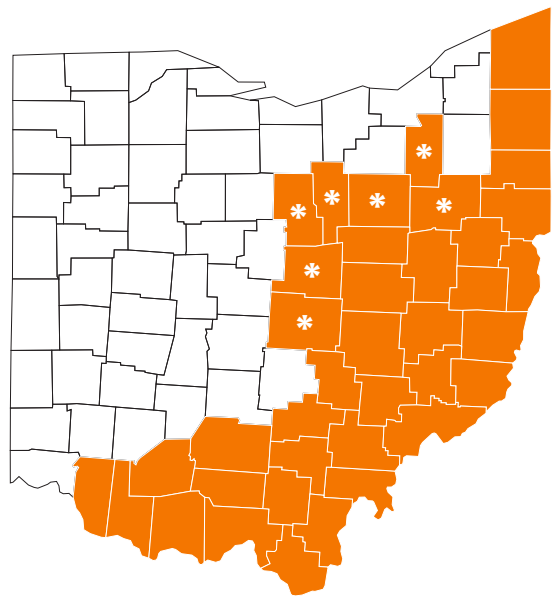
Community grant requests should be between \$500 and \$5,000, and at least \$20,000 is available to award.

Eligibility

Public and nonprofit organizations and individuals or groups working with a fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply.

Our goal is to build and support environmental stewardship in Appalachian Ohio and across the Muskingum Watershed. As a result, priority will be given to projects led by organizations headquartered in Appalachian Ohio. Organizations headquartered outside of the Muskingum Watershed and FAO service areas may apply but will need a local sponsor based within one of the counties listed below.

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Community Grants

Proposal guidelines

Applicants must submit a proposal online at www.tinyurl.com/FAO-CommunityGrant24, including the following information:

Applicant information: Include organization and applicant information

Project title: Articulate the title of the proposed project

Project summary: Provide a concise overview of the project objectives, methodology and expected outcomes

Budget: Present a detailed budget plan, including itemized expenses

Partnerships and collaborations: Describe any existing or potential partnerships, collaborations or stakeholder engagement strategies

Sustainability plan: Explain how the project will be sustained beyond the grant period (if necessary)

Evaluation criteria

Projects will be evaluated by a volunteer review committee using the following criteria:

- **Project need.** Why is the project needed? How will the grant funding uplift the project?
- **Project impact.** What is the significance of the project to the community? Who will benefit? How many people will be engaged in the project?
- **Community support.** How does the project align with local community needs and priorities? Who within the community supports the project?
- **Additional partners.** What other local funds, resources or partnerships are committed to support the project? Has the project encouraged others to participate?
- **Community engagement.** How many people will participate in the project? How will you measure the impact on individuals who participate in the project? How has the project impacted participants' attitudes toward environmental stewardship?

Submission instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically via FAO's online grant application by **September 1, 2024**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. For inquiries or clarifications regarding the RFP, applicants may contact Rochelle Hawk at rhawk@ffao.org. Applications will be reviewed on a quarterly basis in response to emergent community needs and opportunities.

Innovation Grants

Background

Innovation grants invest in new and creative solutions and approaches that result in environmental good while encouraging environmental stewardship. The possibilities are endless and can include areas such as upcycling materials and developing approaches to harmonize energy, economics, environment and health.

FAO will also consider funding strategic initiatives and planning for communities leveraging larger funds. Innovation grants can support pilot projects that increase the region's capacity to access public funds for improving air quality; water quality; green energy generation, storage and adoption; and diesel emission reduction.

Funding area

Appalachian Ohio's historic and present role in the energy economy provides a robust canvas to unleash the innovative potential of its people and

organizations to be leaders in developing effective and innovative solutions to environmental challenges. Projects supported through this grant opportunity will:

- **Enhance community engagement across energy, economics, environment and health.** Foster greater involvement of the community (schools, nonprofits, businesses, etc.) in sustainable initiatives and projects with a high impact across multiple sectors.
- **Invest in new ideas and approaches to promote the circular economy, where we seek to keep materials and products in circulation for as long as possible.** Support innovative projects that focus on developing new or improving upon methods for reduction and redesign of materials, driving forward-thinking solutions that benefit communities and the environment.
- **Expand capacity to access larger funding pools.** Strengthen the ability of local organizations to secure substantial funding from state, federal and national programs. By increasing access to these resources, we aim to amplify the impact of projects focused on large-scale and innovative approaches to cleaner air, cleaner water, green energy adoption and diesel emission reduction.

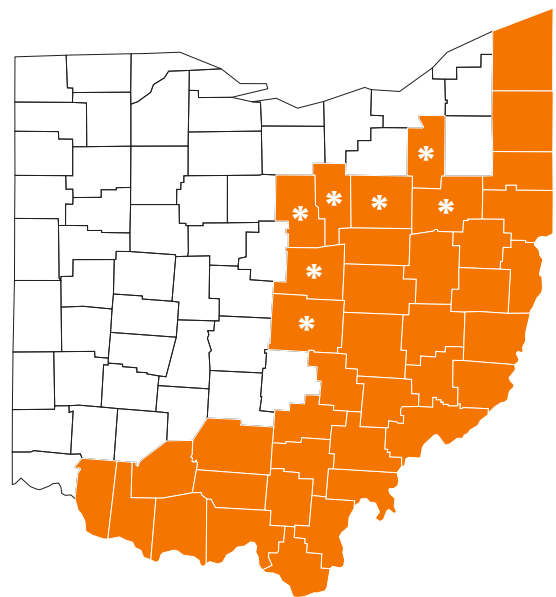
At least \$16,000 is available to award.

Eligibility

Public and nonprofit organizations and individuals or groups working with a fiscal sponsor are eligible to apply.

Our goal is to build and support environmental stewardship in Appalachian Ohio and across the Muskingum Watershed. As a result, priority will be given to projects led by organizations headquartered in Appalachian Ohio. Organizations headquartered outside of the Muskingum Watershed and FAO service areas may apply but will need a local sponsor based within one of the counties listed below.

Eligible counties include: Adams, Ashland,* Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox,* Lawrence, Licking,* Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Richland,* Ross, Scioto, Summit,* Stark,* Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, Washington and Wayne*



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Innovation Grants

Proposal guidelines

Applicants must submit a proposal online at www.tinyurl.com/FAO-InnovationGrant24, including the following information:

Applicant information: Include organization and applicant information

Project title: The title of the proposed project

Project summary: Provide a concise overview of the project objectives, methodology and expected outcomes

Expected outcomes: Outline the project's anticipated results, impacts and contributions to innovative approaches to environmental stewardship

Evaluation plan: Outline a robust evaluation plan with clear metrics and indicators to measure the project's success and impact

Budget and justification: Present a detailed budget plan, including itemized expenses and a justification for each cost

Partnerships and collaborations: Describe any existing or potential partnerships, collaborations or stakeholder engagement strategies

Sustainability plan: Explain how the project will be sustained beyond the grant period, including plans for ongoing monitoring, maintenance and funding

Evaluation criteria

Projects will be evaluated by a volunteer committee comprised of people with experience implementing innovative solutions to our most significant environmental stewardship challenges. However, we remain open to exceptional projects that may not fit neatly into these guidelines but demonstrate extraordinary potential.

- **Degree of innovation.** Does the project introduce new methods, materials, ideas or technologies? Are the innovative aspects of the project practical and implementable within the given context and resources? Does the project implement or move an innovative bright spot forward? Does the project change the pattern or dominant approach in a way that will advance greater benefits?
- **Project impact.** Does the project provide a solution to a problem? How well does it promote a long-term sustainable solution? Does it improve efficiency, conservation and the wise use of resources? Will it unlock other funding opportunities?
- **Regional leadership.** Does the project move Appalachian Ohio forward as a leader in environmental stewardship innovation? Does it address a barrier to deeper environmental participation? Does it contribute positively to the social well-being of the community?
- **Closing gaps.** Does the project introduce to Appalachian Ohio new circular economy practices or significantly improve existing ones? Will it lead to additional funding leveraged for Appalachian Ohio? Does the project help build the capacity of communities and organizations to undertake more significant environmental initiatives?
- **Measurability and evaluation.** Are the project's goals and objectives clearly defined and measurable? Does the project include a robust plan for monitoring progress and reporting outcomes?
- **Scalability.** Can the project be scaled up to have a broader impact? Can the project provide a model for other parts of the region, state and nation?

Submission instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically via FAO's online grant application by **August 2, 2024**. Late or incomplete proposals will not be considered. For inquiries or clarifications regarding the RFP, applicants may contact Kelly Morman at kmorman@ffao.org.

Fellowships

Background

Advancing transformative change across Appalachian Ohio requires multiple forms of investment; it also requires innovation and multiple years of support financially. FAO has long advanced opportunities by investing in “bright spots” – initiatives that are transformative, scalable and financially sustainable. The vision behind FAO’s new fellowship opportunity is to support individuals who are developing and advancing bright spots.

We seek to invest in individuals who will pilot new methodologies, develop scalable solutions and ultimately shift existing patterns in environmental stewardship. These fellows will be at the forefront of creating positive change through projects that address pressing environmental challenges, promote biodiversity, conservation, and engage communities in educational initiatives related to sustainability and environmental stewardship. Our goal is to elevate the standard of ongoing work by focusing on high-impact initiatives that can serve as models for broader application.

Fellows will receive financial support, mentorship and access to a network of experts and resources to help them refine and implement their projects. As

such, this fellowship is not only an investment in the individuals but also in the communities they serve, aiming to foster long-term connections and sustainable change. Through this program, FAO is committed to identifying and nurturing leaders who can bring innovative solutions to environmental challenges facing Appalachian Ohio, ensuring a healthier, more resilient future for the region.

FAO is especially interested in fellows who will serve as ambassadors as they develop new and regional approaches with the potential to change the pattern and advance breakthrough results in conservation and environmental education within Appalachian Ohio.

As part of our commitment to advancing environmental conservation and education, FAO invites individuals with a specific vision for creating positive change across Appalachian Ohio to submit Letters of Intent (LOIs) for consideration. We are particularly interested in supporting projects that address pressing environmental challenges, promote biodiversity, conservation, and engage communities in educational initiatives related to environmental stewardship.

Fellow’s innovation will be supported by FAO through:

- **Financial stipends, supporting project materials, supplies and travel (supplemental salaries are acceptable and encouraged);**
- **A structure and process to take their vision from dream to reality;**
- **Leadership development through FAO’s Growing Home programming;**
- **The technical expertise to support conservation and stewardship endeavors;**
- **Introductions to additional partners who can help with project sustainability; and**
- **A network of support.**

Funding area

We encourage prospective fellows to propose innovative and impactful projects that align with the following thematic areas (although projects are not limited to these topics):

- **Biodiversity conservation:** Initiatives focused on protecting and restoring native flora and fauna, preserving habitats and enhancing ecological resilience in the Appalachian region
- **Environmental education:** Programs that promote awareness, knowledge and stewardship of the environment among community members, youth and other stakeholders
- **Sustainable practices:** Projects that demonstrate sustainable resource management, promote renewable energy adoption or advance eco-friendly agricultural practices
- **Community engagement:** Efforts to empower local communities in science-based environmental decision-making processes, foster partnerships and build capacity for long-term conservation efforts

At least \$10,000 is available to be awarded. FAO anticipates that most proposed fellowship projects will be completed within 24 months.

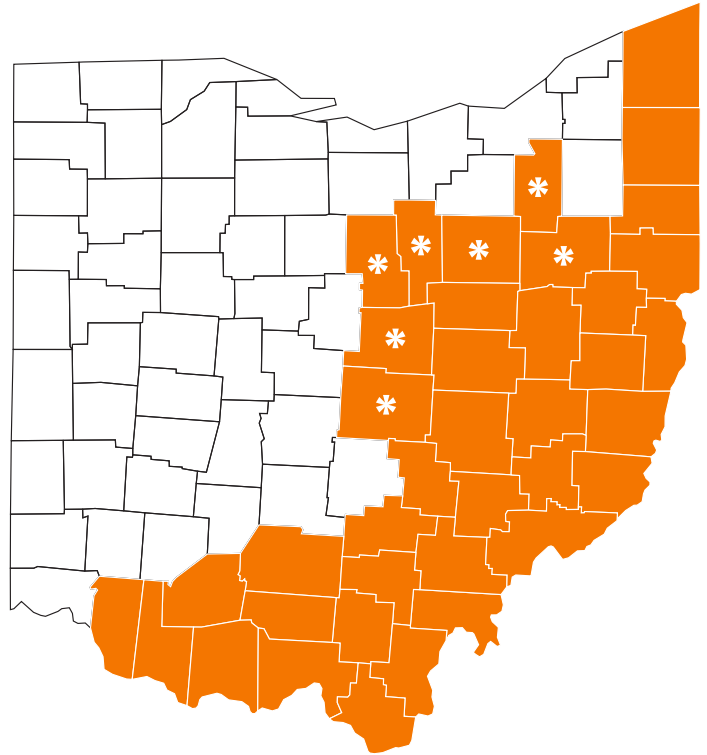
Fellowships

Eligibility

Individuals seeking funding to advance new initiatives, significantly expand ongoing efforts or explore a vision related to environmental stewardship are invited to submit letters of intent. It is essential that fellowship proposals center on projects distinct from the applicant's current paid employment responsibilities and not merely an extension of existing duties unless the applicant serves in a voluntary capacity.

Applicants do not have to be based in the counties served by the Muskingum Watershed or in Appalachian Ohio; however, project work and impact must occur in these counties. Priority will be given to projects led by applicants in Appalachian Ohio. Outside individuals may apply if they have a local sponsor based within the region. Our goal is to build and support environmental stewardship in Appalachian Ohio.

Eligible counties include: Adams, Ashland,* Ashtabula, Athens, Belmont, Brown, Carroll, Clermont, Columbiana, Coshocton, Gallia, Guernsey, Harrison, Highland, Hocking, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Knox,* Lawrence, Licking,* Mahoning, Meigs, Monroe, Morgan, Muskingum, Noble, Perry, Pike, Richland,* Ross, Scioto, Summit,* Stark,* Trumbull, Tuscarawas, Vinton, Washington and Wayne*



**Denotes counties in the Muskingum Watershed also eligible for this opportunity.*

Submission guidelines

Interested fellowship applicants should submit a brief letter of intent outlining their proposed project, including the following details:

- **Project title**
- **Brief project description** (objectives, methods and expected outcomes)
- **Relevance to the fellowship focus and thematic areas**
- **Target audience and geographic focus**
- **Plans for disseminating information and research findings, if applicable** (e.g., publications, presentations, community outreach, etc.)
- **Anticipated or planned partners**
- **Budget estimate**
- **Anticipated timeline**
- **Applicant's contact information**

Letters of intent should not exceed three single-spaced pages and must be submitted electronically to Megan Cremeans at mcremeans@ffao.org by **August 2, 2024**.

Selection process

After the initial review of LOIs by FAO staff, as well as a panel of regional and subject matter experts, selected applicants will be invited to submit full project proposals for further consideration. The final selection will be based on the project's potential impact, feasibility and alignment with fellowship goals and the applicant's capacity to execute the proposed activities effectively.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please contact us at info@ffao.org.



Environmental Stewardship RFP Calendar

Research Grants

June 21, 2024 RFP opens
August 2, 2024 RFP closes
By September 30, 2024 Decisions announced

Community Grants

Q3 (Submitted June 21 - September 1, 2024) Decisions announced September 30, 2024
Q4 (Submitted October 1 - December 1, 2024) Decisions announced December 30, 2024

Innovation Grants

June 21, 2024 RFP opens
August 2, 2024 RFP closes
By September 30, 2024 Decisions announced

Fellowships

June 21, 2024 Letter of intent opens
August 2, 2024 Letter of intent closes
September 30, 2024 Invitations to submit full proposal sent
By October 30, 2024 Decisions announced

Scholarships

Scholarships will be available as part of FAO's annual scholarship application cycle in early 2025. Sign up for FAO's e-newsletter at www.AppalachianOhio.org to receive updates on this and other scholarship opportunities.

Applications for funding are available online at:
www.AppalachianOhio.org/EnvironmentalStewardship