Community Match Fund - Project Eligibility

This program supports projects that have a publicly accessible benefit and make Connecticut communities more vibrant and sustainable, aligning with Sustainable CT's comprehensive action roadmap.

To be eligible for Sustainable CT's Community Match Fund, your project must:

1. **Be located in a Sustainable CT registered town (or towns).** Check here to see registered towns. Registering is easy, so if your town isn't already registered, reach out to our Sustainable CT Community Outreach Manager at hildingsalorioa@easternct.edu, and he can help you get your town registered.
2. **Align with Sustainable CT's mission of creating equitable, sustainable communities.** See the eligible project examples below to get an idea of possible projects.
3. **Align with Sustainable CT actions.** By aligning with Sustainable CT your town will be able to earn points towards Sustainable CT Town Certification when the project is complete. Our Community Outreach Manager will help you determine which action your project aligns with.
4. **Have a public benefit and be inclusive to members of your community(ies).** Projects cannot be aimed at securing private profit for a specific individual, family, or business.
5. **Be specific and concrete.** Projects must be well-defined and specific, and your capacity to implement the work once funding is secured should be clear.
6. **Have a detailed budget.** We anticipate that project budgets might range from several hundred dollars to thousands. There is no minimum project budget size and this program is designed to support projects of widely varying scale. The size of your final budget goal should be based on the costs for a specific, defined project, and take into consideration what is feasible for you to crowdfund from your networks.
Please note:
   - Organizational overhead/ regular operating expenses and budget allocations for existing staff's time spent on a project are not eligible for match funding.
   - Your project budget may not include funds for paying yourself.
   - Equipment and supplies purchased with funds secured through this program that will not be used up in the implementation of your project must have an ongoing use associated with your project that continues to provide or further a free public benefit.
   - Funds already raised cannot be leveraged toward the match.
   - Major funding sources (i.e. grants, corporate sponsorships, available municipal funding) cannot make up more than 35% of your crowdfunding budget goal.

- o Any donation that exceeds 35% of your crowdfunding goal will only be matched by Sustainable CT up to the 35% threshold.
- o While the individual, group, organization, or municipality leading a project may donate to its own campaign, that donation cannot exceed 20% of the crowdfunding goal.

7. **Be determined eligible by Sustainable CT staff.** When you share your project idea, you will be contacted by Sustainable CT's Community Outreach Manager to discuss your project and be sure that it fits within the criteria above.
8. **Be your or your group's only Sustainable CT Community Match Fund project that is actively fundraising.** While there is no limit to the number of projects that you can undertake through the Community Match Fund or to the total number of projects that can be happening in your city or town at any one time, you or your group cannot begin a new project until you have completed the prior one's fundraising campaign and have begun implementation.
9. **Be implemented in a short time frame after fundraising.** The Community Match Fund is intended to support projects with immediate funding needs, so you should be planning to start work on your project in the near-term after your crowdfunding campaign is complete.

In addition, before accessing Sustainable CT Community Match Fund dollars, project leaders must:

1. **Be available for a conversation with your city or town's Sustainable CT Sustainability Team or municipal representative.** Once your project has been approved, our Community Outreach Manager will connect you to the primary contact for your town's Sustainability Team so that you can discuss opportunities to collaborate.
2. **Run a public crowdfunding campaign with Patronicity and receive a minimum of twenty donations.** Match funding is intended to support you in asking the broader community to invest in your project, not for doubling one or a few large donations. Projects must engage the community broadly enough to achieve a minimum of twenty donors. This minimum may be waived for small-scale campaigns that make a good-faith effort to crowdfund and reach their goal with fewer donors.
3. Commit to beginning work on the project within a specific time-frame and to completing the project and expending the funds within 12 months of receiving funding.

Eligible Project Examples

NOTE: For all projects, we encourage project leaders to minimize adverse environmental impacts by following environmental best practices and using environmentally responsible products and services.

Arts and Culture and Local Economies - Projects that promote local arts and creative culture, enhance community spaces, and/or support local business and tourism.

- Youth arts program
- Community arts festival promoting foot traffic to downtown small businesses
- Mural celebrating the town's history or diversity
- Parklets that provide gathering spaces in main street areas
- Outdoor community concert series
- Art installations, sculpture gardens, artists walks, etc

- Buy local campaign
- Main Street beautification projects

Renewable and Efficient Energy Use - Projects that utilize or increase the use of renewable energy and reduce energy use in community facilities and public spaces.

- Solar panels to power public spaces
- Energy efficiency improvements to public buildings/spaces
- Community energy campaigns
- Programs that support residents in making their homes more energy efficient
- Electric vehicle charging stations

Public Transportation - Projects that improve or create sustainable mobility options, including walking, biking, and public transit.

- Expansion or development of sidewalks, bike lanes, bike paths
- Bike safety classes
- Bus shelters and seating
- Bike-share programs
- Walk-audits
- Complete streets planning, design, or construction

Land and Natural Resource Protection - Projects that promote the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of lands, waterbodies, and other natural resources.

- Developing and maintain public trails or trail systems
- Tree planting in public and open spaces
- Rain gardens, bioswales, green infrastructure
- River/watershed cleanups, protection, or restoration
- Pollinator gardens
- Invasive species management
- Sustainable landscaping/groundskeeping
- Preserving open space

Healthy & Sustainable Food Networks - Projects that provide food & health education, increase food security, and promote local food production.

- Food wellness and healthy cooking classes
- Community gardens
- Giving gardens
- Farmers markets

Waste Reduction - Projects that promote reuse and reduce waste.

- Repair cafe or tool library
- Composting initiatives
- Food scraps recycling programs
- Reusable bag campaigns

Equity and Inclusion - Projects that create more equitable, inclusive, and connected communities.

- Cultural awareness events
- Outreach campaign to include underserved residents
- Events that bring the community together to discuss equity opportunities and challenges

Ineligible Project Examples

- Planning exercises and other municipal projects that are not public-facing and will have no aspect of community engagement.
- Projects that are already funded through an organization or municipality's budget.
- Events limited to the membership of a specific organization that are not reasonably accessible to community residents.
- Fundraising for a pool of funds to be re-granted to others or used for an unspecified purpose in the future.
- Fundraising for a business startup costs, or for projects through which a local business is charging a fee for a product.
- Political advocacy focused on an individual politician or party or a specific piece of legislation.

If you have questions or would like to discuss a potential project, contact Sustainable CT's Community Outreach Manager, Abe Hilding-Salorio at (860) 465-0256 or hildingsalorioa@easternct.edu, or schedule a time to talk with him here.