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Golden LEAF Strategic Priorities FY 2022-2026

- To **increase job creation and economic investment** in rural, economically distressed, and tobacco-dependent communities
- To **improve workforce preparedness** in rural, economically distressed, and tobacco-dependent communities
- To increase the **value of North Carolina's agriculture** industry
- To improve the **competitiveness and capacity of targeted communities**
- To have, and be recognized for, excellence in **organizational collaboration, innovation, and impact**

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Golden LEAF Community-Based Grants Initiative

The 15 counties from the North Central Prosperity Zone are invited to participate in our Community-Based Grants Initiative (CBGI).

The counties in the North Central Prosperity Zone are Chatham, Durham, Edgecombe, Franklin, Granville, Harnett, Johnston, Lee, Nash, Orange, Person, Vance, Wake, Warren, and Wilson.

The process is competitive, but organizations from all counties within the North Central Prosperity Zone will have an opportunity to participate.

A row of six icons: a tractor, a certificate, a graduation cap, a hand holding a seedling, a house with a plus sign, and a gear.

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Golden LEAF Community-Based Grants Initiative

It is a **focused** process targeted toward investments in the building blocks of economic growth. It is **competitive** among all counties within a Prosperity Zone.

Projects are reviewed and awarded funds through a **two-stage process** that begins in spring 2025 and concludes in February 2026.

Awards are limited to no more than three projects in any county and may total no more than \$1.5 million in any county. Regional projects are not included in those county limits. The total budget for the Initiative is \$11 million, including any regional projects.



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Role of County Manager

The **County Manager** plays a critical role in the process by endorsing up to four projects to submit an application through this initiative.

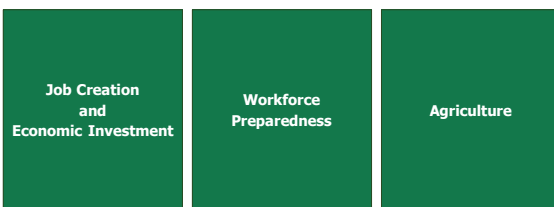
The purpose of this endorsement is to reflect the county's needs and priorities.

Each county will establish its own process for gathering projects. You are encouraged to reach out to your county manager to understand your county's process.

Awards are not required to be administered by the county unless the county is the grantee.

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Golden LEAF Priority Funding Areas



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Golden LEAF Priority Area Outcomes

Job Creation and Economic Investment

- Private capital investment
- New jobs created
- Average annual wage of new jobs

Workforce Preparedness

- Courses or programs completed
- Industry credentials earned
- Students employed in field of study

Agriculture

- Participants at agricultural trainings
- Publications directed towards farmers
- Use of facilities

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Characteristics of Competitive Projects







Strategic.	Demonstrate immediate need and the ability to put funds to work quickly.	Focused on action, not planning.
Leverage additional funds or investment.	 Moves the economic needle in the community.	Builds on previous community planning processes.
For prior grantees, performance and track record managing Golden LEAF projects.	Community buy-in and strong support from a variety of citizens and organizations.	Sustainable.

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Characteristics of Competitive Projects

Clearly meet identified issue or need in the county, address Golden LEAF priorities, and be **aligned** with investments in the building blocks of economic growth. Will help **improve** human and/or physical capital that makes the county more attractive as a place to create and **grow economic opportunity**.


Funds are limited to projects that support agriculture, workforce development, education, and capital investment for infrastructure to support economic development and healthcare job creation.



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Characteristics of Low Priority Projects


- Tourism, arts, or cultural resources
- Emergency services including fire departments
- General social services
- Reimbursement for prior expenditures
- Capital campaign or endowments
- General maintenance and operational support
- Infrastructure not related to economic development
- Repair or replacement of existing equipment and infrastructure



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Requirements

- Eligible Applicant
 - ✓ 501(c)(3) nonprofit
 - ✓ Governmental entity
- Eligible Uses of Funds
 - ✓ Must be charitable – no impermissible private benefit
 - ✓ May not be used for purchase of land or buildings
 - ✓ May not be used for grant administration
- Projects are subject to due diligence by Golden LEAF staff, Board, and legal counsel as necessary.
- Golden LEAF Board of Directors makes final funding decisions.
- Funded projects are subject to all reporting requirements of Golden LEAF Foundation, the State Auditor, and Office of Budget and Management as applicable. Grantees must comply with all conditions and requirements in the grantee agreement.
- All correspondence/communications to and from Golden LEAF are subject to the North Carolina Public Records Law and may be disclosed to third parties.



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CBGI Process and Timeline

Spring & Summer 2025	Fall 2025	February 2026
<p>Gathering held to share information and discuss potential projects</p> <p>County managers submit initial project ideas, receive feedback from Golden LEAF, and finalize list of four projects to apply</p>	<p>Applications from projects endorsed by the county will be due in November</p>	<p>Applications reviewed by Golden LEAF Board and awards made</p>

See detailed timeline posted on the Golden LEAF website

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Project Worksheet

The purpose of this worksheet is to gather a **high level overview** of potential Golden LEAF projects that will allow Golden LEAF staff to provide feedback on a project idea.

Golden LEAF understands that potential applicants may not have answers to all of the questions at this time. Responses to these questions should be **brief and focused**. If you have any questions about this form, please contact **CBGI@GoldenLEAF.org**.

Process

This worksheet is due to your county manager at their specified deadline.

It should **not** be sent directly to Golden LEAF unless your organization has been designated as a regional project.

Golden LEAF will provide guidance to county managers on how to share project worksheets with Golden LEAF for feedback on potential projects.

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Project Overview

What is the issue that your project addresses? What is the need or demand in your community for the services you will provide? If available, include data or documentation of demand that helps define the issue.

Golden Community College needs to grow our existing healthcare programs to provide training to individuals to meet the needs from local employers for a variety of healthcare-related fields. The hospital and clinics in our county report staffing shortages and as a result are increasing wages for many positions. For example, we know there is a need for at least 35 new nurses every year at the hospital, with additional needs at other locations. The increased wages are driving an interest from individuals in the community looking to make a career change or grow into advanced roles. With the growing and aging population in our county, there will be an increased demand for healthcare in the coming years.

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Project Overview

How does your project align with the Golden LEAF priorities of job creation and economic investment, workforce preparedness, or agriculture?

This project aligns with the Golden LEAF priority of workforce preparedness. This project will meet the outcomes specified for that priority area including students receiving degrees and credentials.

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Project Outcomes

Complete the table with the Golden LEAF priority outcomes you expect to achieve, if you know them. (Projects are not expected to address all priority outcomes.)

Workforce Preparedness		
Increase in students earning at least one academic credential (certificate, diploma, or associate degree) in the area funded.	35/year	Student records, enrollment data
Increase in students earning at least one industry/industry certification, license, or other credential (nonacademic) in the area funded.	45/year	Student records, enrollment data
Increase in high school students completing CTE pathways in the area funded.		
Increase in secondary or post-secondary students		

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Project Outcomes

Project Outcomes
 Complete the table with the Golden LEAF priority outcomes you expect to achieve, if you know them. (Projects are not expected to address all priority outcomes.)

Outcome	Year 1	Year 2
Choose any that your project will address		
Workforce Preparedness		
Increase in students earning at least one academic credential (certificate, diploma, or associate degree) in the area funded.		
Increase in students earning at least one industry/industry certification, license, or other credential (nonacademic) in the area funded.		
Increase in high school students completing CTE pathways in the area funded.		
Increase in secondary or post-secondary students participating in work-based learning.		
Increase in students earning meaningful wages and apprenticeships to explore their career interests.		
Community		
Number of participants at agricultural fairs.		
Number of participants at agricultural fairs.		
Number of agricultural fairs held on campus.		

Complete the table with the Golden LEAF priority outcomes you expect to achieve, if you know them.

Projects are not expected to address all priority outcomes.

Information about outcomes is available here: <https://www.goldenleaf.org/priority-area-outcomes/>

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Project Overview

Describe your project. What are the key elements and what steps will you take to implement them? Provide an overview of the major project activities and a timeline.

In order to grow our existing healthcare programs, the college needs to renovate an existing building to increase available classroom space, purchase additional equipment, and hire new instructors. We will also need to seek approval to increase the size of our programs and to add one new program. We are using available capital funds for the majority of the renovation expenses and in the planning and design phase now. We expect to complete planning/design by spring 2026, begin renovations in fall 2026, and complete the renovations by summer 2027.

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Project Overview

Who will you serve with this effort? Describe the support you have from the people or organizations that you plan to serve with the project. For example, if you are planning a workforce development project, do you have engagement of employers? from the potential trainees? If you are considering an agriculture project, have farmers expressed interest in your work?

This project will serve unemployed, underemployed, and recent high school graduates seeking employment in our county. This project will also benefit the major healthcare employers in our county who have expressed an interest in growing our existing training program to meet their need for talent. The community college recognizes that attracting students to the program will be key and has partnered with LEAF Nonprofit, a 501(c)(3) organization that works with individuals with barriers to employment to identify career opportunities.

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Project Overview

Why is your organization particularly suited to implement this project? What background, resources, connections, and experience does your organization offer?

The community college is the primary workforce training provider for the region. We have seen great success in our healthcare programs as demonstrated by student outcomes on licensing exams, employment rate, and requests from employers for referral and participation at career fairs. The community college is committing existing staff resources as well as available capital funds to start the renovation.

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Project Overview

Who else is working on this issue or similar issues in your community? Who are potential partners? List organizations that are collaborating with you.

Organization	County	Contact Person Name	Contact Person Email
LEAF Nonprofit	Golden County	Ms. Tobacco	tobacco@leafnonprofit.org

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Project Budget

Complete the project budget form included in this document. Complete the project budget form below by inserting a dollar amount in the appropriate cells. The budget does not have to be final, but should give a general idea of the amount to be requested of Golden LEAF and the amount needed from other sources. The form includes a few high level budget categories for your use. More detailed information is not required. You may add other categories in the remaining cells on the Budget Category column if needed.

Budget Category	Golden LEAF Request (\$ in thousands)	Other Funding Sources (Committed) (\$ in thousands)	Other Funding Sources (Requested) (\$ in thousands)	Total (\$ in thousands)
Equipment/Supplies	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
Construction	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
Design/Engineering	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
Services	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
Personnel	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000
TOTAL	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000	\$00000

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Project Worksheet

Save the document with your organization name and county in the file name and provide to your county manager through their specified process.

It should **not** be sent directly to Golden LEAF unless your organization has been designated as a regional project.

If you have any questions about this form, please contact CBGI@GoldenLEAF.org.

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Leveraging Funds



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Regional Projects

Eligible entities may submit regional projects for consideration.

Regional projects are not required to receive a county manager endorsement but must reach out to discuss with Golden LEAF staff to ensure the project meets the eligibility requirements for regional projects.

We would not expect regional projects to exceed awards of \$2m.

Awards for regional projects come from the \$11 million budget for the program.

Regional projects must meet all of the following criteria:

- Collaboration of entities in at least three counties
- Collaboration outside of entities' traditional service area

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Contact Golden LEAF

Interested applicants are encouraged to contact Golden LEAF to discuss project ideas early in the process to ensure alignment with Golden LEAF priority areas.

Please use the form on our website -- <https://goldenleaf.org/funding-opportunities/contact-programs/>

Golden LEAF will review the information provided and match you with a member of our team to follow up.

Interested applicants can request to meet to:

- Get clarification about CBGI and the application and selection process
- Discuss a project idea
- Review for designation as a regional project.

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Recent Project Overview

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Iredell County EDC Foundation

Awarded \$750,000 in February 2025 through CBGI in the Southwest Prosperity Zone.

Funding road construction cost, including design and engineering and due diligence studies, to extend 1,100-1,300 LF of Herring Industrial Drive into the Mooresville Business Park East.

- ✓ Total project cost is approximately \$2.2 million
- ✓ Expected to generate \$100 million in private capital investment
- ✓ Expected to create 300 new jobs with an average annual salary of \$65,000

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Union County

Awarded \$1,000,000 in February 2025 through CBGI in the Southwest Prosperity Zone.

Funding for kitchen equipment and coolers/freezers for the Food Hub which will relocate to a Food Innovation Center that will provide additional market access. The Food Hub will shift toward servicing larger wholesale accounts, food service providers, and production companies while also serving small farmers and producers.

- ✓ Increase in use of agricultural facilities that benefit farmers
- ✓ Increase in number of agricultural producers served from 35 to 105
- ✓ Component of larger \$14.4 million project

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Cleveland County

Awarded a total of \$1,273,662.08 in February 2025 through CBGI in the Southwest Prosperity Zone.

Funds awarded across three entities to implement a three-tiered educational strategy.

Cleveland County Schools awarded \$360,590.58 for personnel, renovations, equipment, furniture and transportation to expand the district's healthcare education pathway participation by at-risk students.

Cleveland Community College awarded \$622,662.98 for personnel, equipment, and supplies to establish a Health Science Academy, which will include health science training programs in nursing, medical assisting, medical sonography, radiography, and surgical technology

Gardner-Webb University awarded \$290,408.52 for personnel, equipment, supplies, furniture, and participant support to implement a Summer Bridge Program for high school students and to enhance the hands-on experiences of its nursing students.

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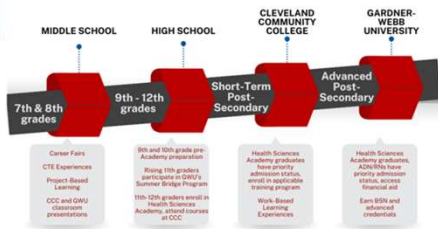
Cleveland County

Awarded a total of \$1,273,662.08 in February 2025 through CBGI in the Southwest Prosperity Zone.

- ✓ Increase in students earning academic credentials and receiving meaningful exposure to local career opportunities. (Cleveland County Schools)
- ✓ Increase in the number of students attaining completion and receiving third-party credentials in health-science related programs. (Cleveland Community College)
- ✓ Increase in the number of students enrolled in the schools' nursing programs and obtaining third-party credentials. (Gardner-Webb University)
- ✓ Increase in the number of undergraduate and graduate nursing students having the opportunity to increase their hands-on experience while enrolled in the nursing programs. (Gardner-Webb University)

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HEALTHCARE EDUCATIONAL PATHWAY



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