Golden LEAF Foundation

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Does Golden LEAF have a contingency plan to extend their timeline, if COVID-19 limits ability to gather and plan together?

As of April 7, 2020, Golden LEAF has not developed a contingency plan to extend the timeline for the CBGI program in the Northwest Prosperity Zone; however, we will continue to monitor the situation and may adjust the timeline. To the extent possible, we encourage the continued development of projects through conference calls and other means.

2. To what degree will Golden LEAF fund planning efforts, for example, a county-wide strategic planning effort (different than a comprehensive plan) that includes nonprofit and other public participation?

Planning is a lower priority for Golden LEAF; we prefer to use funds for implementation of projects and plans that have already been developed and that will result in tangible outcomes.

3. Are childcare jobs of interest to the foundation, or any other “workforce behind the workforce” professions?

Golden LEAF prioritizes job-creation projects that will create or train people for jobs that are full-time, permanent, and that pay wages at or above county average wages.

4. What are some examples of successful proposals, and the amount received by the applicant? (We have a summary of funded projects from the northeast, but if there are others to share, that would be great)

All of Golden LEAF’s grant awards are available here: https://www.goldenleaf.org/grant-search/ The awards can be filtered by grant program, including the Community-Based Grants Initiative. We encourage people that are interested in the kinds of projects that Golden LEAF currently funds to focus on grants awarded in the past 2-3 years because priorities have changed over time. In addition, anyone may contact Golden LEAF to discuss one of the projects funded to learn whether there were some characteristics of the project that made it more competitive.

5. There is some confusion about broadband projects. What broadband infrastructure is GLF willing to fund, and under what circumstances?

Currently, broadband projects are not priority projects for Golden LEAF. Golden LEAF has funded some special broadband programs, e.g. a grant to MCNC for the Golden LEAF Rural Broadband Initiative. We have also funded extension of broadband services offered by a 501(c)(3) nonprofit broadband provider where the broadband was part of the infrastructure
needed to encourage a company to expand and create jobs in a rural North Carolina community. Also, because Golden LEAF only awards grants to governmental entities and 501(c)(3) non-profit organizations, it is often difficult to find opportunities for direct support from Golden LEAF for broadband projects because most broadband providers are for-profit entities.

6. If a county is interested in developing an industrial park, what, if any, infrastructure will Golden LEAF support? Does job creation have to be pegged to a private sector commitment to locate to the park, or can the results of an economic development assessment be used as evidence of job creation potential?

Golden LEAF can support public infrastructure, typically water and wastewater. On occasion, Golden LEAF has constructed roads and related infrastructure in industrial parks that are publicly owned. Golden LEAF can also assist with extension of other government infrastructure, e.g. municipal electrical systems, though that is less frequent. Golden LEAF does not do site work for building pads, e.g. clearing and grading. If the industrial park owned by a governmental or 501(c)(3) organization, there are special considerations that affect what infrastructure Golden LEAF can provide and we encourage potential applicants to contact Golden LEAF staff to discuss the project. For example, Golden LEAF will not construct a private road within the boundaries of an industrial park that is owned by a for-profit business or an individual. For the CBGI program, the applicant does not have to identify a specific company that will locate in the park upon completion of the project; however, Golden LEAF does ask for evidence that businesses are interested or have expressed interest in the site. This might be a history of projects that have considered locating at the site. Because funds are used to make a site ready for development, evidence of company interest should show a connection with the site or the area served by the infrastructure.

7. What is Golden LEAF’s viewpoint on workforce housing and its role in improving economic conditions in rural, economically distressed counties? One of the gaps/needs that has come up repeatedly is the lack of affordable/workforce housing, limited housing supply (Burke County - 2 months; McDowell County - 0 months), workers exceeding the 30% threshold in salary to pay for housing (both ownership & rental), the difficulty of workers (manufacturing, 1st responders, etc.) living in the county in which they work, and how all of this is impacting/inhibiting local companies from filling job openings or expanding or the difficulty economic developers are having luring companies because of issues over a lack of workforce housing.

Golden LEAF has not awarded grants for housing projects. Unless the Golden LEAF Board establishes housing as a priority, we would not encourage applications for housing projects. We would be glad to learn more about these needs to make sure we understand the issues in these communities.