Who is eligible to apply for Safety First and Thriving Communities grants?

Eligibility is dependent on the grant type.

- For the Safety First grant, organizations must align with Norfolk Southern's safety focus area and qualify as a tax- exempt nonprofit organization as either a public 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as listed in the IRS Master File or a state, county or municipal government entity and seeks funding to serve the needs of the community at large.

- For the Thriving Communities grant, organizations must align with one of Norfolk Southern's focus areas and qualify as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization based as either a public 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as listed in the IRS Master File, a public or charter school, or state, county or municipal government entity that seeks funding to serve the needs of the community at large.

How much funding should an organization apply for through the Thriving Communities and Safety First grant programs?

Grant request amounts should align with the specific project needs of the organization. Generally, the Thriving Communities grant ranges from $1,000 to $50,0000 and the Safety First grant ranges from $1,000 to $15,000. In 2025, the average grant amount was $17,000 for the Thriving Communities grant and $11,000 for the Safety First grant.

What is the deadline for applying to the Thriving Communities and Safety First Grants?

Applications open February 2, 2026 and will be accepted through August 3, 2026 for the 2026 program year. Applications must be submitted by 11:59pm on August 3, 2026, to be accepted. Applications should be started early. Any delay in submitting the application should be addressed prior to the deadline date. Please note, there is an average turnaround time of 10-14 business days to create a Bonterra Nonprofit Hub login. Late applications will not be accepted, with no grant deadline extensions.

Can the same organization apply for multiple grants under this program simultaneously?

Organizations are eligible to receive one grant per fiscal year and should only apply for one grant. If an organization is rejected for one grant and has a project that meets the criteria for a different grant, they are welcome to apply for the other grant if the rejection of the original grant application occurred prior to the application deadline.

If a government entity is applying, can different departments within that city both apply for a grant?

Yes, each department is eligible to apply even if from the same city. For example, the city's fire department and police department would each be eligible to apply for a Safety First grant separately and will be considered as two separate grant applications.

How can an organization check the status of their application?

Organizations can log into their account at any time to check the status of their application. Please note, most applications will not be reviewed until after the grant program has closed on August 3, 2026.

I am having trouble logging into my grant application account, who should I contact?

Issues logging in or creating an account are handled by the CyberGrant's support team by selecting "Need Support?" at the bottom of the login page.

How soon after applying for a grant will organizations be notified of a decision?

Organizations will be notified of an outcome as soon as a decision has been made. **We ask that you refrain from contacting us during the processing period unless you have additional information you feel is pertinent to your request or haven't heard back by October 1, 2026.** Generally, organizations will receive notification of their final application status within six to eight weeks after the application deadline of August 3, 2026. Please note that most applications will not be reviewed until after the grant program has closed on August 3, 2026; however, some organizations may receive notification prior to the deadline.

If approved for funding, how soon will payment be disbursed?

Payments for approved funding can be expected to be sent out within four to six weeks from approval. Although ACH may have been indicated as your preferred payment method, payments will be issued by check at this time. If you have special circumstances, please contact NSCommunityImpact@nscorp.com and include a brief explanation of your situation so we can explore possible alternatives.

Is location taken into consideration during grant review?

Yes, organizations must be located within Norfolk Southern's 22-state network as shown [here](). Generally, an organization should be within 30 miles for consideration. Organizations located closest to our lines may receive priority.

Which login should my organization use to apply?

For every application type, there will be two options for logging in: Bonterra Nonprofit Hub or Company Portal login through email. The login type is dependent on the organization's tax status.
- Nonprofit organizations and schools can use either Bonterra Nonprofit Hub or login with email for either grant
- Government entities must use Bonterra Nonprofit Hub login when applying to the Thriving Communities Grant and email login when applying to the Safety First Grant

How long does it take to create a Bonterra Nonprofit Hub account?

There is an average turnaround time of 10-14 business days for creating a Bonterra Nonprofit Hub account. Issues logging in or creating an account are handled by the CyberGrant's support team by selecting "Need Support?" at the bottom of the login page. Bonterra provides organizations with a consolidated way to access payments and donations. A single account can be used across any other organization they are receiving grants from who may also use this platform.

Can funds be used for general operating support?

Grants should not be submitted with requests for general operating support (i.e., salaries and overhead). In general, our funding supports projects and programs rather than general operations. However, if paying salary is a key part of how your program works and helps to achieve program goals, then we would consider it as a direct program cost and an eligible request. For example, if the staff is actively participating in structured training, education, or service-learning activities that are central to the program's objectives, and their compensation is essential to enabling their participation, then those costs would be allowable.

What is the difference between general operating support and general programmatic support?

General programmatic support is tied to a specific project or program within the organization, whereas general operating support is tied to an organization's overall activities, including operating expenses such as salary and overhead that are not directly tied to the project or program.

What are Norfolk Southern's philanthropic focus areas and what is Norfolk Southern looking to invest in?

Norfolk Southern's focus areas can be found here. Grants should align with one or more Norfolk Southern's focus areas as outlined in each grant's program guidelines document located at the bottom of this page: Grant Guidelines & Eligibility Requirements | Norfolk Southern.

My organization's grant request was rejected because the W9 form is missing information or was not completed correctly. What should I do?

You may email NSCommunityImpact@nscorp.com with an updated Federal W9 form for your application to be reconsidered. Please visit the IRS website: How to complete Form W-9 (irsvideos.gov) to ensure your form has been completed correctly and to its entirety. **Note: Forms must be the latest IRS version (Rev. March 2024) and have a wet signature.**

What is an impact report and when does it need to be uploaded?

Organizations will receive an email from CyberGrants if an impact report has been assigned to their account within 14 days of approval with an assigned due date (90-180 days). The impact report asks questions about how funding has been used. Organizations that do not complete this requirement may not be eligible for future grants.

What is a tax acknowledgement letter? How does an organization send a tax acknowledgement letter?

Organizations will receive an email from CyberGrants when a tax acknowledgement letter has been assigned to their account with a due date. On the report, there is a template provided that can be used. If you chose to use your own, please see information about what should be included in the letter here.

How do I access the tax acknowledgement report or impact report?

Approved grant recipients will receive an email saying that reports have been assigned to their account within 14 days of grant approval that will be due with assigned due date (within 90-180 days). To access the report, log in to the account that was used to apply for the grant. On the welcome page, there will be a section called Require Reporting with the assigned impact reports that are due. Click the link "due" to get into the reports. Once complete, click submit. The impact report works just like the application with electronic questions and a place to upload files. On the tax acknowledgement report, there is a template that can be used. Please be sure to answer all questions and use a wet signature. **Tax acknowledgement letters should be uploaded through CyberGrants only and not sent via mail or email.**

Does an organization need to create multiple accounts for different application types?

No, an organization can use the same account to apply each year across each application type. However, different links will take you to each application type.

I am having trouble logging into my grant application account, who should I contact?

Issues logging in or creating an account are handled by the CyberGrant's support team by selecting "Need Support?" at the bottom of the login page. Please note, you must log into the same account type that the application was created with (i.e., Company email login or Bonterra Nonprofit Hub).

How can I login if the person who set up my organization's Bonterra Nonprofit account is no longer with the organization?

Select "get started" on the Bonterra login page. Select "U.S. Internal Revenus Service (IRS)" (school districts select "NCES". Enter and Search for the organization by tax id in the field "Charity name or number". If the organization populates, select "view" and it will likely say in red text "This organization has already been claimed". Select "Request Access" and fill out the request with contact information. The Bonterra Support team will reach out to update information on the account.

How can I verify if my organization is within 30 miles of your network?
Visit NSites (nscorp.com) to enter your organization's address and see where it is located in comparison to our tracks.

Can multiple applications still be submitted, with only one potentially being selected?
We request that your organization only submit one application so that we know which has the highest need for your organization since we can only select one.

What should an organization do if they are approved for a different grant amount than requested and it doesn't cover the entire project?
Unfortunately, there may be times when Norfolk Southern is unable to grant the full request amount. In those cases, rather than reject the grant, we hope that providing some grant funding may benefit the organization. If the grant request was for a specific item such as equipment and you wish to purchase alternative equipment, please reach out to NSCommunityImpact@nscorp.com.

Who is eligible to apply for the In-Kind Donation Grant?
Organizations must align with one of Norfolk Southern's focus area and qualify as a tax-exempt nonprofit organization based as either a public 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code as listed in the IRS Master File, or state, county or municipal government entity that seeks to serve the needs of the community at large.

What type of materials are donated through the In-Kind Donation Grant?
Donations are limited to materials that are available and are subject to change. Examples of materials that would be eligible for donation are furniture, cabooses, rail, containers, and signal material. Note: At this time, rail ties are not available through this grant; any inquiries regarding rail ties should be directed to National Salvage: Home | National Salvage (nssccorp.com).

Who is responsible for the transportation of donated materials?
The donation recipient is solely responsible for pickup and transport of donated material within 60 days of approval.

When are Community Disaster Relief grants available?
Applications are available periodically at the discretion of the NS Community Impact team following severe weather events that impact communities within our network. The application period typically remains open for 3 to 6 weeks but will vary depending on ongoing recovery efforts and the nature of the disaster.

How much funding is awarded for the Community Disaster Relief grant?
Grant amounts are determined based on the severity of the event and the community's recovery needs.