



Community Match Fund - Frequently Asked Questions

Match Funding Eligibility

Who can access funding through the Sustainable CT Community Match Fund? Anyone with a great idea for a project that fits with Sustainable CT's mission of building more sustainable and resilient CT communities. Municipalities, public schools, nonprofits, community groups, and individuals can all participate in the Community Match Fund.

I see projects must be in Sustainable CT-registered towns to qualify for match funding. What should I do if my town/city isn't registered yet? We can help you encourage your municipal staff and elected officials to register! Registration is an easy process and just requires a vote from your town officials. For information on the registration process click [here](#) or reach out to the Sustainable CT team for help getting the process started.

What if my project involves multiple towns/cities? Great! We encourage projects that span multiple towns/cities. Each town affected by and supporting your project is eligible to receive extra points towards Sustainable CT certification if they collaborate on your project.

If it involves multiple towns/cities do they all need to be registered with Sustainable CT? Yes. If your project spans multiple municipalities each one must be registered with Sustainable CT.

Can I use the Community Match Fund for general operating support for my organization? The Community Match Fund is intended to support discrete projects and cannot be used to provide general organizational support or funding for maintaining ongoing programs. Overhead, regular operating expenses, and/or prorated costs for existing staff's time spent on a project are not eligible for funding through this program.

How the Match Works

How do I get approved for match funding? Step one is to simply share your project idea with the Sustainable CT team! Email or call Abe Hilding-Salorio, Sustainable CT's Community Outreach Manager, at hildingsalorioa@easternct.edu or 860-465-0256 or schedule a call [here](#).

That conversation is an opportunity for you to introduce your project and determine whether the project aligns with the Community Match Fund's criteria. If the project sounds like a good fit Abe will then provide you further instructions on how to formally apply.

If I'm approved for match funding, am I guaranteed to receive a specific amount? No, this is a challenge match, not a grant. Your team needs to raise a dollar to receive a dollar, and no amount of match funding is guaranteed in advance. If you begin a campaign, but then stop fundraising for several months, there is no guarantee that match funding will still be available later. Funds will be distributed on a first-come, first-served basis to all participating campaigns, so that funding flows toward projects with the most urgent funding needs and active teams.

How does the match funding work and what happens if I don't meet my goal? Sustainable CT will provide their matching funds once your project has reached its crowdfunding goal. Remember, this is a challenge match, and you must raise your half of the funds in order to activate Sustainable CT's match. In the event that you don't hit your fundraising goal, but your project can be scaled down and accomplished with a reduced budget, Sustainable CT may choose to provide a match to whatever you've raised through your fundraising campaign.

How much match funding can I receive on my campaign? \$15,000 is the maximum amount that will be matched in each campaign crowdfunding with the Sustainable CT Community Match Fund (for a total budget of \$30,000). This cap helps ensure that many projects will have access to funding. However, we expect the majority of participating projects will be much smaller, with lower budget goals, since \$15,000 is a significant amount to raise through crowdfunding.

How do I know if match funding is still available for my project? When you share your project idea, the Sustainable CT team will alert you in the case that match funds are running low and you may not be able to access the maximum amount; then you can decide if you would like to go forward with fundraising or not. If you are already participating in the Sustainable CT Community Match Fund but have not yet met your fundraising goal, we'll alert you when matching funds begin to run low.

What if my project is small and I don't need \$15,000? Or what if I don't think I can raise that much? That's fine! This program is appropriate for small-scale grassroots projects and we have lots of experience supporting smaller campaigns. You are not required to try to use the full \$15,000 in match funding and we hope to support many small grassroots projects through this program.

Should the goal I set on my fundraising page include the amount of match funding I hope to receive? No, it should reflect only the amount that you need to raise through your crowdfunding campaign, which should be 50% of your total funding need. For example, if you need \$4,000 to implement your project, your public goal on your crowdfunding page would be \$2,000, because once you raise that \$2,000, Sustainable CT will match it, fully funding the project.

Can I apply match funding to any donation? Yes, but with some restrictions. A town contribution, donation from a nonprofit, grants, other funding sources, and individual donations are all eligible for matching funds, provided you also plan to crowdfund from individuals the majority of your goal. Match funding is meant to make it easier for you to reach out to your networks broadly and to engage and involve the community in your project, not to double a single grant or a couple of large donations. We encourage you to seek out as many donors as possible to effectively build a sense of community investment in your project.

Please note that all campaigns must receive a minimum of twenty donations from different sources to receive match funding, and no more than 35% of your fundraising goal can come from grants or other institutional sources. Additionally, if any one donation equals more than 35% of your total crowdfunding goal, Sustainable CT will only match that donation up to the 35% threshold. The additional funding can be passed through to your campaign, but it will be unmatched. (The 20 minimum donation threshold may be waived for smaller projects that make a good-faith effort to crowdfund.)

When will I receive match funding? Once you've finished your crowdfunding campaign and have completed the check-out process with Patronicity you'll receive the total you raised plus match funding as one lump sum, via bank transfer or check. Patronicity's fees will be retained from that total. Patronicity's standard fees are set at 5% of the crowdfunding funds raised. Additionally, there is a 2.9% + \$0.30/transaction credit card fee collected by Stripe, the payment processor used by Patronicity. Patrons have the option to cover all fees at checkout thus reducing overall fees incurred. We find that on average 80% of online donors tend to do so, thus reducing overall fees to under 4%. These fees are calculated based only on donations received; there is no fee on the Sustainable CT match dollars applied to your campaign.

What if a donor wants to contribute by check? That's fine! Patronicity does not require that check or other offline donations be sent through to them in order to be reflected in your crowdfunding dollars raised. If a donor wishes to donate by any offline method, they can simply contribute to you directly. To register that donation and have it reflected on your project's crowdfunding page you'll have to log an offline donation through Patronicity. Then, before closing out your campaign you'll need to authenticate the donation by sending Patronicity a photo of the check (if applicable) and a copy of the bank deposit slip.

About the Community Match Fund

How is this program funded? The Community Match Fund is generously funded through the support of the Smart Seed Fund, the Emily Hall Tremain Foundation, and the Connecticut Green Bank.

How long will match funds be available? This will depend on how many projects participate. Funding will be distributed on a first-come basis as participating leaders fundraise, but we currently expect to have enough funding to support campaigns into 2021.

What reporting is required later if I participate? While there are no formal grant reports to fill out, reporting on project implementation is required for all project that receive Sustainable CT Community Match Funds. Sustainable CT is interested in learning about the work that you do and will request some basic information as well as photos. This information will be collected through surveys sent out when you finish your crowdfunding campaign and shortly after when your project should have been completed (this projected date for project implementation will be based on information that you provide).

Reporting on project implementation through these surveys is required for all projects that receive Sustainable CT Community Match Funds. The photos shared from your implemented project may be used in public reports or blog posts to help share the power of your work and inspire other leaders.

Eligibility for Certification Points

What is all this talk about ‘points’? I’m not sure I understand. Sustainable CT’s statewide certification program encourages towns to complete specific actions to receive points that count toward different levels of sustainability certification. [Read more here](#). If you’re not very familiar with Sustainable CT’s work, you can get your questions answered during your initial phone call with their Community Outreach Manager.

How can my town get points toward its sustainability certification through my match-funded project? If your project aligns with one of Sustainable CT’s actions then your town can submit for points when applying for Sustainable CT certification.

How do I know how many points my town is likely to get for our match-funded project? The number of points that your town is eligible to receive depends on which action your project aligns with, and whether other towns are involved in the project. When you speak with the Sustainable CT team to get your project approved for match funding, they will confirm for you and your town’s Sustainability Team which action or objective your project aligns best with.

What if my project is eligible for match funding, but not for points? While this scenario is unlikely, if it happens, that’s ok! For certification, actions are reviewed annually by the Sustainable CT team. We can’t guarantee in advance that any action submission or Community Match Fund project will receive points towards certification.

Other Questions?

Contact Sustainable CT’s Community Outreach Manager, Abe Hilding-Salorio, at hildingsalorioa@easternct.edu or by phone at 860-465-0256 or 860-249-6680.