



2026 Grant Guidelines

Land Acquisition Grants from the Priscilla Alden Sears Memorial Fund

The Priscilla Alden Sears Memorial Fund is a Field of Interest fund, established by bequest in 2023 for the preservation of open space and wildlife habitats on Cape Cod. The fund is currently endowed and income-only, meaning that available, spendable funds vary widely from year to year. To honor the intent of the founding donor, The Cape Cod Foundation is pleased to be offering land acquisition grants available to Land Trusts and other eligible organizations on Cape Cod.

TIMELINE The current grant application opens on February 24, 2026, and closes on March 23, 2026.

ELIGIBILITY Grants are open to qualified 501(c)(3) public charities with a primary purpose of preservation and/or conservation, and to Tribal entities on Cape Cod. Barnstable County only.

REQUESTS Up to \$50,000

APPLY All applications will be submitted through The Cape Cod Foundation's online [grant management system](#). Please [click here](#) to learn more about using our system prior to completing an application.

PROPOSALS ACCEPTED FOR

Financial assistance to qualified 501 (c)(3) organizations for the acquisition of land for the purpose of conservation, restoration, and/or preservation on Cape Cod. Identified land must be intended entirely for conservation with or without new or increased public access. Requesting organizations must have a plan in place to acquire the specific parcel within 18 months of receiving the grant.

GRANT SIZE AND EXPECTED TOTAL EXPENDITURE

Grants are up to \$50,000. Depending on need and available funds, The Cape Cod Foundation may award up to four grants. Grant size cannot be more than 25% of the total purchase price for the parcel.

APPRAISAL REQUIREMENTS

Applications must include a valuation or appraisal. Valuations must be dated no earlier than one year prior to the application submission deadline. Suggested requirement: parcels with an estimated total project cost equal to or greater than \$500,000: One full narrative appraisal by a certified or licensed real estate appraiser. Parcels with an estimated total project cost less than \$500,000: One narrative appraisal as specified above OR a contracted market analysis by an appropriate party. It is not our intention to force Land Trusts to seek additional appraisals to meet this requirement. If an organization has an appraisal prepared outside of these suggestions, contact The Cape Cod Foundation to make an alternate arrangement.

RESTRICTIONS

Funding from the Sears Fund is directed toward purchase of specific parcels of land for conservation purposes, with reasonable expectations to purchase within the next 18 months. Once acquired, land cannot be dedicated to commercial use, housing, or other projects, nor can it be restricted for private use. Grants are not intended for general operating support, program support, legal or accounting fees, reimbursement of past land purchases, or for the general purpose of saving toward land acquisition without a specific parcel in mind. Land must be wholly in Barnstable County. Recipients within the last 3 years are not eligible for new funding. Land Acquisition grants are not issued for the same parcel more than once.

Towns and municipalities are excluded from this grant opportunity for 2026.

The Cape Cod Foundation will not make grants of more than 25% of the expected purchase price. In addition, organizations must demonstrate that some of the funding has been raised or committed before submitting a request to The Cape Cod Foundation. Although we have not identified a specific threshold, it is not our intention to be a “first dollar” funder.

REPORTING

Organizations will be asked to submit a brief progress report every 6 months with the progress of fundraising up to and including the acquisition of the identified parcel. If land is not acquired 18 months after the grant is awarded, a conversation will happen regarding status and possible extension. If there is no longer a specific timeline for purchase, or if the land cannot be purchased, the organization agrees to return the funding to The Cape Cod Foundation, so it can be reassigned to another land acquisition project in line with the intended impact of the Sears Fund. Every funded project will be asked to submit a final report once the parcel is purchased.

PILOT PROJECT

The first few grant cycles are being viewed as a pilot as we learn about the most effective way to share grant dollars for land purchase /conservation. During the pilot, both applicants and grantees may be asked to contribute additional feedback and suggestions periodically throughout the grant period. Thank you in advance for your participation.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Grants should be acknowledged as from the “Priscilla Alden Sears Memorial Fund of The Cape Cod Foundation.” Further guidelines for recipients are found [here](#).

DATES AND DEADLINES

The grant application opens on February 24, 2026, and closes on March 26, 2026.

CONTACT

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