



Aquidneck Island Land Trust

THE MERRITT NEIGHBORHOOD FUND

Grant Guidelines

The Merritt Neighborhood Fund

The mission of the Aquidneck Island Land Trust is to preserve the Island's natural character and open spaces for the lasting benefit of our community. The Merritt Neighborhood Fund was established in 1999 to honor the late Peter M. Merritt, the organization's visionary past president, for his decade of leadership. Peter had a vision to execute the mission of the Land Trust on a smaller scale to benefit individual neighborhoods across Aquidneck Island.

The purpose of the Fund is to provide neighborhood and community groups with modest funding to support preservation and land use projects to strengthen their community's identity and natural character.

The Fund's \$100 – \$2,500 grants encourage projects that strengthen community identity and character, and which model the ethic of land conservation and stewardship through community volunteerism. Sample projects include pocket parks, community gardens, and the transformation of neglected properties for community recreational and environmental benefit. If your project is awarded a grant, you will be required to submit a project report by the end of the calendar year in which the grant was awarded.

How to Apply for a 2026 Grant

Follow the funding criteria. Complete the Grant Application Form in its entirety. Include all required and optional attachments. Submit the completed proposal by the proposal submission deadline. No staples, please.

Grant Size: \$100 – \$2,500

Proposal Submission Deadline: March 13, 2026 | Funding Decision Deadline: April 22, 2026

Funding Criteria

- Without exception, all projects must be located in Newport, Middletown, or Portsmouth.**
- The subject property and proposed use must be consistent with the purpose of the Merritt Neighborhood Fund and mission of the Aquidneck Island Land Trust.
- Neighborhood groups and coalitions are encouraged to apply. To assure project accountability, grants above \$1,000 will only be awarded if the lead applicant is tax-exempt under IRS section 501(c) (3) or a municipal agency.
- Eligible projects should demonstrate:
 1. Clarity of purpose
 2. Feasibility of proposed improvements
 3. Potential for tangible impact
 4. Ability to engage volunteer and/or community support
 5. Sustainable funding
 6. Strong project management
 7. Quality of stewardship plan
 8. Community gardens must provide details for the garden's year-round sustainability (How will the garden be maintained and used during summer months?)
- The Fund will not make grants to individuals or to fund an organization's general operations.
- Applications may only be submitted for two consecutive years.
- All required permits must be issued to the lead applicant before any funds will be distributed.
- If you received a grant last year, you must have submitted the grant report for that project before applying again.
- Plat map of subject property with surrounding area and streets indicated.

2026 GRANT APPLICATION

For more information, please contact:

Leah Kossak, Marketing and Engagement Director, lkossak@ailt.org

Aquidneck Island Land Trust | 790 Aquidneck Avenue, Middletown, RI 02842 | (401) 849-2799 x 113



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See attached grant guidelines.

Name of Group or Organization _____

Contact Person _____

Additional Officers or Contacts _____

Mailing Address _____

Phone _____ Fax _____

Email _____

Federal ID# or Social Security # of Individual _____

Grant Amount Requested: \$ _____ Start & Completion Dates: _____

Overall Purpose/Mission of Neighborhood Group, Coalition or Lead Applicant:

Subject Property Information: Please provide a specific address & please include a plat map of the property with subject lot and surrounding areas/streets.

Subject Property Address _____

Current Property Owner _____

Plat # _____ Lot # _____

Please attach a sheet of paper describing the proposed project. Include: current uses and condition of the property's built as well as natural environment; description of what is envisioned or proposed; and the management plan to assure the property's stewardship once the project is completed. Please expand your plans to address the long-term sustainability of the project (e.g., for schools, how will the garden be maintained and used during summer months?). Proposed Project Description should not exceed two pages. Type preferred.

Government Permits

If any permits (e.g., municipal, RI Dept. of Environmental Management, CRMC) are required to fulfill this project, attach a copy of each required permit to this proposal.

_____ No special permits needed _____ Special permits are required and are attached

_____ Special permits are required but are not yet issued. Identify specific permit, status, and issuance date.

Financial Information

Total Projected Project Expenses \$ _____

Total Projected Project Revenues \$ _____

Project Funding – Confirmed Donations \$ _____

Project Funding – Pending Donations \$ _____

Project Funding – In-kind & Volunteer Support \$ _____

Attachments

- Detailed project line-item budget. Include a list of all confirmed & pending donors and the amount of the requested donation. Demonstrate financial sustainability.
- Copy of the lead applicant's IRS Form 501(c)(3) tax-exemption letter or commitment from the municipal agency.

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