

*This overview provides some helpful guidance to understanding and addressing the “triple bottom line” question in your CNEF application. Resourceful Communities staff is more than happy to talk through this question as you write your application. **Please do not hesitate to contact any staff member!** (<https://www.conservationfund.org/our-work/resourceful-communities/our-experts>)*

What is the Triple Bottom Line?

Resourceful Communities’ “triple bottom line” includes **environmental** stewardship, community **economic development** and **social justice** to address community challenges. Instead of looking at challenges as isolated issues, the triple bottom line approach emphasizes that challenges – poverty, -isms, resource loss – are connected. To be effective, solutions address these connections.

Proposed projects for the Creating New Economies Fund (CNEF) small grant program must incorporate the triple bottom line. This means your **project must result in environmental, economic and social justice benefits/ impacts.**

Here are some examples of triple bottom line impacts:

- **Economic Impacts:** These can be direct (creating a job or business) and/ or indirect (creating economic opportunity that may bring more direct economic impact in the future – such as job training or revenue generation).
- **Environmental Impacts:** Don’t just think about traditional environmental projects like recycling or planting trees! More important or relevant environmental impacts might support environmental justice efforts, getting people outside, helping people retain and/or use their land more sustainably.
- **Social Justice Impacts:** Do not confuse “social justice” (trying to achieve equitable economic, political and social rights and opportunities for everyone) with “social” (simply bringing people together).

Economic Impacts	Environmental Impacts	Social Justice Impacts
Creating or supporting a job	Providing environmental education	<i>Meaningfully</i> engaging people of color or low wealth
Generating additional income	Growing food more sustainably (fewer pesticides, growing year-round)	Overcoming barriers to participation
Helping develop new job skills	Protecting land and increasing landownership retention	Teaching advocacy skills
Helping teach “soft” skills to young people	Getting people outdoors and enjoying nature	Addressing racism or other injustices
Teaching business skills like: entrepreneurship, business planning or marketing	Reducing energy use and consumption	
Developing projects that have the potential to bring economic impact in the future (like agriculture, eco-tourism, value-added food productions, etc.)	Helping people understand what environmental justice is and how it impacts them	

This chart shows how moving from a single bottom line project to a triple bottom line project helps create more meaningful and significant impact.

Single Bottom Line Project	Double Bottom Line Project	Triple Bottom Line Project
Social Justice: Start an after-school program for low-income youth to improve school performance.	Social Justice & Environmental: Start an after-school program for low-income youth to improve school performance and incorporate outdoor activities such as herb gardening and plant identification.	Economic, Social Justice and Environmental: Start an after-school program for low-income youth to improve school performance and incorporate outdoor activities such as herb gardening and plant identification. Value added training and basic business skills provided.
Economic: Help farmers earn additional income by starting a farmers’ market where their produce can be sold.	Economic and Environmental: Help farmers earn additional income by starting a farmers’ market where their produce can be sold. Help farmers access USDA funds and training to help them protect land or grow food in more environmentally-friendly and sustainable ways.	Economic, Social Justice and Environmental: Help farmers earn additional income by starting a farmers’ market. Help low-income farmers access USDA funds and training to help them grow food in more environmentally-friendly ways. Provide transportation and accept EBT/ SNAP benefits at farmers’ market so that low-income residents can purchase healthy food at the market.
Social Justice: Provide cooking classes for low-income and elderly people to help them eat healthier and prevent diabetes.	Social Justice and Economic: Provide healthy “heritage” cooking classes that emphasize traditional dishes, healthy foods, and skills like canning, taught by elders (who are paid). Products created in class are sold to generate revenue.	Environmental, Economic and Social Justice: Provide healthy “heritage” cooking classes that emphasize traditional dishes and skills like canning, taught by elders (who are paid). Products are also sold. Most of the food used is sustainably grown by local farmers.
Environmental: Protect salamander habitat in an urban creek.	Environmental and Social Justice: Create the first public park in a low-income neighborhood, designed by local residents, that protects salamander habitat in an urban creek.	Environmental, Social Justice and Economic: Provide summer jobs for low-income youth to clear a city lot and create the first public park in a low-income neighborhood that protects salamander habitat in an urban creek.
Economic: Promote and help develop tourism in your region.	Economic and Environmental: Promote your region as an eco-tourism destination for hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking, etc.	Economic, Environmental and Social Justice: Promote your region as an eco-tourism destination for hunting, fishing, paddling, hiking, etc. Train low-income and unemployed residents to become tour guides or develop businesses related to eco-tourism.