

THREESTAR PROGRAM EXPANSION & TIMELINE

2025



MISSION

ThreeStar serves to promote economic and community prosperity, through collaboration, to positively impact every Tennessean.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ThreeStar assists communities with connecting stakeholders and partners to strengthen community capacity and to implement actionable projects. In January 2025, TNECD will allocate \$6 million in rural economic opportunity funding to expand the ThreeStar program, which has been praised for its promotion of community development and flexible grant opportunities.

ELIGIBLE GRANTEES

ThreeStar Certified counties, cities/towns, economic development organizations, main street organizations, chambers of commerce, and qualified entrepreneur support organizations within certified counties.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Grants up to \$1 million for governmental entities in distressed counties and up to \$250,000 for local government, non-profit and community partners for projects that align with community goals.

TIMELINE | PROGRAM KICKOFF WINTER 2025

Competitive applications are accepted on a rolling basis to be awarded quarterly. Distressed county applications accepted in February. Other applications accepted in June.

Important program parameters can be found in the ThreeStar Guidelines [here](#).



THREESTAR CERTIFICATION PROCESS OVERVIEW

BEFORE THE THREESTAR MEETING

1. Revise County Asset Inventory.
2. Identify and recruit ThreeStar Taskforce members.
3. Hold a TNECD-facilitated meeting to develop ThreeStar priority goals and/or send existing community strategic or master plans to be considered for approval.
4. Submit Joint Economic and Community Development Board (JECDB) meeting minutes.

AFTER THE THREESTAR MEETING

5. Edit and revise any draft goals with ThreeStar Taskforce members to meet SMART standards.
6. Develop all action steps and timelines for each of the six (6) SMART goals.
7. Complete ThreeStar certification application by entering all information into Smart Simple.
8. Complete ThreeStar grant application by entering all information into SmartSimple.



PROGRAM TIMELINE | FISCAL YEAR 2026 – 2027

□ JANUARY 15, 2025

Grant application opens for distressed counties.

□ FEBRUARY 1, 2025

Due date for all counties to upload into the SmartSimple system.

□ FEBRUARY 28, 2025

Due date for distressed county ThreeStar goals and grant applications.

□ FEBRUARY 1 – APRIL 30, 2025

Open period for at-risk and all other counties to hold a local TNECD-facilitated community conversation with ThreeStar Taskforce Members for goal development. Counties have the option to submit county plans (by Feb. 1, 2025) for review/approval to use for guiding goal development. If the submitted plan does not meet TNECD approval, the community is required to schedule and host a local TNECD-facilitated community conversation during this period.

□ JUNE 1, 2025

Due date for all counties to upload into the SmartSimple system:

- Joint Economic and Community Development Board (JECDB) meeting minutes and interlocal agreement defining the local JECDB (TCA 6-58-114) or state approved sufficiently-similar organization.
- Three (3) priority long-term goals and three (3) priority short-term goals along with activity steps and timeline submitted for each goal written in SMART format.

□ JUNE 1, 2025

Grant application opens for all eligible applicants .

□ JULY 1, 2025

Eligible communities who meet the requirements receive two-year certification.

