



2010 Watershed Institute Grant Program Request for Proposals

Introduction

The purpose of the Watershed Institute is to provide New Jersey's watershed groups with the knowledge, skills and resources they need to be strong and sustainable organizations protecting their local environments, and to foster a unified watershed movement to ensure clean water and healthy habitats throughout the state. The Institute accomplishes this by holding workshops and idea sharing meetings; encouraging group coordination on state policy issues; administering a grant program; providing one-on-one assistance to groups; and distributing relevant information through publications, a listserv and a website. The Watershed Institute is a program of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association.

The Institute is accepting applications for the 2010 funding cycle of the Watershed Institute Grant Program. This grant program was established to encourage watershed protection efforts throughout New Jersey. It aims to help small, citizen-based watershed groups establish themselves as independent and self-sustaining organizations with robust programs that protect and restore New Jersey's natural resources.

Funding for this grant program is provided to the Institute by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection, and the William Penn Foundation.

Objectives

The Institute is looking for proposals that:

- Enhance the overall health and capacity of the applicant organization;
- Increase the applicant's presence in the community;
- Provide the potential for the applicant to become financially stable;
- Develop new, or enhance existing, programs designed to improve the health of the environment;
- Provide opportunities for partnerships with various stakeholders; and/or
- Conduct research and further understanding of local issues.

Deadlines

Letter of Inquiry Due	June 8, 2010
Proposal Due	August 31, 2010
Signed Grant Agreement Due	November 9, 2010
Mid-term Meeting	April/May 2011
Final Narrative and Interim Financial Reports Due	July 26, 2011
Project Completion	October 31, 2011
Final Financial and Updated Narrative Reports Due	November 21, 2011

Eligible Entities

Nonprofit environmental groups that meet at least quarterly, have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status, and conduct work in New Jersey are eligible to apply for funds. If your organization is not classified as tax-exempt, you may not use a conduit organization. Priority will be given to New Jersey-based watershed groups. Applicants who are not watershed groups or do not reside in New Jersey must detail how the proposed project will further this grant program's goal of protecting and restoring watersheds throughout New Jersey.

Grant Size

Grant awards may range from \$1,000 to \$20,000, with the majority ranging from \$3,000 - \$15,000. Visit the Institute's website at www.thewatershedinstitute.org for summaries of previous grants. In-kind matching is strongly encouraged, but not required.

Eligible Projects

Projects must be completed by October 31, 2011. They must enhance the viability of the organization and be relevant to its mission. Projects should fall under one or more of the following five categories:

1. Science

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Monitoring, such as chemical, biological, and visual water quality monitoring*; habitat assessment; or other data gathering activities.
- b. Planning, such as watershed management planning, characterization and assessment work, or similar planning and analysis work.

2. Conservation

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Restoration, such as streambank, lake, shore or other similar restorations.
- b. Stormwater mitigation, such as detention basin retrofit, rain garden installation, or other comparable projects.

3. Policy

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Local policy work.
- b. Regional policy work.
- c. Statewide policy work, including coordination efforts with other watershed groups.

*Water quality monitoring funds are available for developing new, or enhancing existing, monitoring programs at all four tiers identified by the NJDEP Volunteer Monitoring Program. All water quality monitoring projects must include the development of either a study design and/or Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), depending on the tier. Guidance on tiers, study designs, and QAPPs is available at <http://www.state.nj.us/dep/wms/bwqsa/vm/>. The study design and/or QAPP must be submitted to, and approved by, the NJDEP Volunteer Monitoring Program prior to beginning monitoring activities. Water quality monitoring grantees must also submit data to the NJDEP E2 data management system and make that data available to the public for viewing.

4. Education

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Public programming.
- b. School programming.

5. Organizational Health

The development and/or implementation of the plans listed below:

- a. Strategic plans.
- b. Fundraising plans.
- c. Communications/marketing plans.
- d. Board development plans.
- e. Program/project evaluation plans.**
- f. Other plans recognized by both the applicant and the Institute as a need specific to the applicant.

Grants May Not Be Used For

Capital projects (rent, site improvement, utilities, etc.), endowments, general operating support, land acquisition, entertainment, lobbying and political activities, or litigation.

How To Apply

Letters of Inquiry (LOI) must be submitted to the Institute by mail, postmarked by June 8, 2010, or by email by 5 p.m. June 8, 2010. LOI forms are available on the Institute's website at <http://www.thewatershedinstitute.org/resources/twig>, or may be obtained by contacting the Institute directly. Institute staff will provide feedback on the LOI, and full proposals will be requested for eligible projects. Applicants will be notified by July 7, 2010 if they are invited to submit a full proposal. Invitation to submit a proposal does not guarantee funding. Full proposals will be due postmarked by August 31, 2010.

Proposal Evaluation

A review committee will evaluate all applications. Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

- Extent to which the application addresses one or more of the objectives of this grant program;
- Demonstration of a strong need in the watershed and/or for the group, and the degree to which project would fulfill the identified need;
- Presence of clearly stated and relevant goals for the project;
- Feasibility and accuracy of the project, including the budget, timeline, outputs/deliverables, and outcomes;
- Size of the organization: groups with smaller operating budgets will be given favorable consideration;

** Refer to the Watershed Institute's Program Evaluation resource guide for details on what evaluation is and why it is important, a brief overview of evaluation techniques, and a listing of additional resources to guide you. The guide can be found at http://www.thewatershedinstitute.org/capacity/program_development/eval%20guide.pdf.

- Previous accomplishments and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposed activities;
- Past performance on grants from the Institute, if applicable; and
- Type of organization: New Jersey-based watershed groups will be given favorable consideration.

Notification and Award Allocation

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in early October 2010. Grant agreements must be signed and returned to the Institute by November 9, 2010. Grant awards of \$5,000 or less will be disbursed in full upon receipt of the signed grant agreement. In the case of larger awards, half of the award will be disbursed initially, with the balance released after the mid-term meeting.

Mid-Term Meeting and Reporting

Watershed Institute staff will schedule a mid-term meeting with award recipients approximately halfway through the project’s implementation to determine project status and provide feedback. Award recipients will be required to submit a 2-3 page final report and interim financial report by July 26, 2011, including an evaluation of the project and its effectiveness in meeting the objectives. An update to the final narrative, along with the final financial report, will be due November 21, 2011. Grant recipients will also be asked to track any press hits regarding their projects and provide a listing of the dates, sources, and topics of such hits, along with sample copies of newspaper or web-based articles, to the Institute. Recipients of the grants may be asked to share their experiences at informal discussions with other watershed associations.

Contact Information

The Institute would be happy to address any questions or concerns you may have regarding the grant program:

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“When we pay attention to nature’s music, we find that everything on the earth contributes to its harmony.” -Hazrat Inayat Khan