



2011 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 2011 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 and the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection.

Objectives

The Institute is looking for proposals that fulfill one or more of the following objectives:

- Improve the health of the environment through the development of new, or enhancement of existing, programs;
- Ensure the sustainability of the applicant organization and its work by enhancing the overall health and capacity of the organization;
- Identify watershed needs, further the understanding of local issues, and guide program direction by conducting research;
- Strengthen support for the organization and its programs by increasing the organization's presence in the community; and/or
- Leverage the organization's resources and further its work by providing opportunities for strategic partnerships.

Deadlines

Letter of Inquiry Due	June 8, 2011
Proposal Due	August 23, 2011
Signed Grant Agreement Due	November 9, 2011
Mid-term Meeting	April/May 2012
Interim Narrative and Financial Reports Due	July 24, 2012
Project Completion	October 31, 2012
Final Narrative and Financial Reports Due	November 21, 2012

Eligible Entities

Nonprofit environmental groups that 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. Applicants that are not watershed groups or do not reside in New Jersey must detail how the proposed project will protect and restore NJ watersheds. Priority will be given to New Jersey-based watershed groups.

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, 2012. 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: Science, Conservation, Policy, Education, and Organizational Health. Review the Institute's Project Development Resource Guide for useful resources for developing your projects. It can be downloaded from the Institute website at <http://www.thewatershedinstitute.org/resources/twig/>

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, such as strengthening local ordinances.
- b. Regional policy work, such as coordinating with county governments on water quality management planning.
- c. Statewide policy work, such as coordination efforts with other watershed groups and advocating for stronger statewide protections.

* Projects involving the collection and use of environmental data must include the development of a Quality Assurance Project Plan or a monitoring plan, if your organization does not already have one of these plans for the proposed project. The study design and/or QAPP must be submitted to, and approved by, the NJDEP prior to beginning monitoring activities. Water quality monitoring grantees must also submit data to the NJDEP volunteer E2 data management system or the NJ Water Quality Data Exchange, and make that data available to the public for viewing.

4. Education

Examples include, but are not limited to:

- a. Public programming, such as nature talks and walks.
- b. School programming, such as class presentations and field trips.

5. Organizational Health

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

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

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 5 p.m. on June 8, 2011, or by email by 5 p.m. on June 8, 2011. 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 June 28, 2011 if they are invited to submit a full proposal. Invitation to submit a proposal does not guarantee funding. Full proposals will be due postmarked or emailed by 5 p.m., August 23, 2011.

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 the 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, and outcomes;
- Impact of the project: funds will be directed to projects where the investment of funds will have the greatest impact on the environment and the organization.
- Previous accomplishments, and qualifications of the organization to carry out the proposed activities;
- Past performance on grants from the Institute, if applicable;

- Type of organization: New Jersey-based watershed groups will be given favorable consideration; and
- Financial security of the organization and/or capacity for the project to establish such security for the organization.

Notification and Award Allocation

Applicants will be notified of funding decisions in early October 2011. Grant agreements must be signed and returned to the Institute by November 9, 2011. 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 interim narrative report and an interim financial report by July 24, 2012, including an evaluation of the project and its effectiveness in meeting the objectives. An update to the interim narrative, along with the final financial report, will be due November 21, 2012. Grant recipients will also be asked to track any press hits regarding their projects. 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 regarding the grant program:

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"Water is the most critical resource issue of our lifetime and our children's lifetime. The health of our waters is the principal measure of how we live on the land." - Luna Leopold