

LONG ISLAND SOUND STEWARDSHIP FUND 2022 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Proposals Due: Wednesday, February 2, 2022

All applications must be submitted electronically. No mailed or emailed proposals will be accepted.

OVERVIEW

The Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund (LISSF) is a competitive grant program seeking proposals to restore and protect the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. We are interested in empowering communities of all kinds (including communities typically underrepresented in environmental programs and projects) to access, improve and benefit from Long Island Sound, its waterways, and surrounding lands. Up to \$500,000 is expected to be available for grants in 2022. The most competitive proposals will incorporate multiple values including sustainability, resilience, diversity, equity, and inclusion.

The LISSF aims to:

- support nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working on issues and projects that address the strategies and [Implementation Actions](#) of the [Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#) (CCMP). The CCMP also identifies three principles that are important to consider in taking any specific action: resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice. We welcome submissions that incorporate these cross-cutting issues into the proposal.
- help build stronger NGOs working in the Long Island Sound watershed in Connecticut and New York (Capacity Building);
- foster collaboration and innovation (Collaboration);
- accelerate the “next best step” for tools and strategies (Piloting Tools and Strategies);
- complete small projects that can serve as an example in a community or region (Small Projects Big Impacts); and
- support communities and organizations in advancing environmental justice and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

THE LONG ISLAND SOUND FUNDERS COLLABORATIVE

The [Long Island Sound Funders Collaborative](#) (the Collaborative) is a group of funders with missions that include clean waters, thriving habitats, and sustainable communities. While most of the funders are not solely focused on this goal, we aim to build our effectiveness through collaboration. Since its inception, the Collaborative has worked together to learn about the myriad issues facing the Sound and possible solutions. The LISSF pools our investments to support projects that address pressing challenges and provide for a healthy, productive, and resilient Sound now and into the future. LISSF is administered by the Long Island Community Foundation (LICF). Foundations providing support for grants under this RFP are:

Long Island Community Foundation, New York Community Trust, Auchincloss Foundation, Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Eder Family Foundation, Fairfield County's Community Foundation, Fred and Gilda Nobel Foundation, Jeniam Foundation, McCance Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New York Community Bank Foundation, Pamela and Richard Rubinstein Foundation, Rauch Foundation, Rockfall Foundation, Westchester Community Foundation.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

All projects must address issues within part of the Long Island Sound watershed in the states of Connecticut and New York as shown on the [Boundary Map](#).

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

- 1. Capacity Building** to increase the effectiveness of organizations that focus on restoration and protection of the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. Capacity building can occur in every part of an organization, including programs, management, operations, technology, governance, fundraising and communications. Some examples:
 - Strategic plan development
 - Communication plan development
 - Fundraising plan development
 - Board and leadership development
 - Technology improvements (such as software, compatibility efforts, and training; equipment is not included)
 - Accounting and budgeting improvements
 - Incorporating members of underserved communities into your organization and/or within direct project delivery
 - Financial management or donor management, volunteer, or administrative software
 - Website design, brochure materials, printing and postage, presentation materials
 - External technical assistance to address organizational challenges
 - Organization, program, and service assessment or evaluation

- 2. Collaboration** to foster organizations working together for the first time, or in new ways to accomplish a common goal and to achieve greater impact focused on improving the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. More competitive proposals will be about innovative ways of collaborating. Some examples:
 - Project management, design, tools, support and/or services that bridge gaps in technical capacity of multiple partner organizations
 - Multi-organizational agreements
 - Conducting regional forums, meetings or events that provide a space for collaboration and information-sharing
 - Developing new partnerships or integrating and/or merging existing organizations or programs
 - Technical assistance, training, resources, and/or leadership to facilitate action among multiple partner organizations

3. **Piloting Tools & Strategies** to increase environmental and natural resource impact, or to foster the “next best step” for applicability or scalability across the Sound. Activities may include scoping and design to set the stage for large, multi-year projects. Some examples:
 - Advancing tools and strategies to improve water quality
 - Advancing tools and strategies to restore coastal habitats or improve coastal resilience
 - Advancing tools and strategies to increase the knowledge and engagement of the targeted constituencies or the public
 - Field application of new technologies and management approaches

4. **Small Projects with Big Impacts** to clean waters, restore habitat, sustain wildlife, and engage the public in restoration and protection of the health and living resources of Long Island Sound. Big impact includes activities with the promise to accelerate local water quality improvements, natural resource restoration, and community outreach and engagement. Some examples of projects or activities for which funds may be requested may be found under “Implementation Actions” in the CCMP. Examples include:
 - Infrastructure and/or habitat restoration projects that reduce or prevent water pollution, or sustain fish and wildlife
 - Design/planning to support activities that set the stage for on-the-ground implementation of water quality improvement or habitat restoration
 - Education and engagement activities

SIZE OF GRANT AWARDS

The LISSF has two categories of grants:

- Capacity Building, Collaboration, and Piloting Tools & Strategies Priorities. Grants are expected to range from \$15,000 to \$200,000. Please note that few, if any, grants will be made at the maximum award level of \$200,000. This is the most competitive category of funding. Proposals requesting grants in excess of \$50,000 should demonstrate regional value and scope, significant and robust partnerships, and dramatic impact to the Long Island Sound and the communities and constituencies served.
- Small Projects with Big Impacts: Grants are expected to range from \$5,000 to \$15,000.

WHO MAY APPLY

Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c)3 organizations and educational institutions.

GRANT PERIOD

All projects must start within three months of notification of a grant award.

Recipients of grants under \$100,000 have 15 months to complete the project.

Recipients of grants \$100,000 and over have 24 months to complete the project.

GRANT GUIDELINES

- Applicant organizations may submit up to two proposals per organization.
- Funds may not be used for:
 - Activities prohibited by 501(c)3 organizations

- Scientific research. Those interested in funding for research should consider the [Long Island Sound Study Research Grant Program](#)
- Marketing efforts that serve to generally promote solely the applicant organization and its initiatives
- Building or capital or acquisition campaigns, endowments, sponsorships, or to address budget deficits
- Incomplete applications, or applications requesting funds below the minimum or above the maximum allowable award amount, will not be considered for funding.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

- Program Priorities – addresses one or more of the program priorities outlined in this Request for Proposals. The proposal has specific, measurable performance outcomes to evaluate success.
- Partnerships – formally engages relevant technical and/or local partners to support development and delivery as needed. Criteria is particularly relevant for “Collaboration” proposals and for proposals aiming for diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Technical Merit – technically sound and feasible, and the proposed project sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline.
- Budget – Costs are allowable, reasonable, and clearly budgeted.
- Qualifications – The applicant organization has experience relevant to delivery of the proposed project and/or a proven track record of success in implementing projects with measurable results.

HOW TO APPLY

All applications *must* be submitted electronically through the **grants portal [here](#)**. You will need to fill out the proposal cover sheet for the *Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund 2022 RFP* and submit the materials listed below as a single PDF (less than 25 MB).

Submission Materials

1. Proposal coversheet for the Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund 2022 RFP. Please make sure the top of the Proposal Cover Sheet you fill out says it is for this specific RFP, not The Trust’s regular competitive grants program or another RFP. Details on how to complete this form are provided in the Submission Process section of this RFP.
2. LISSF proposal narrative (**prepare using the [outline provided](#); include the headings**)
3. LISSF expense budget form (**[form provided](#)**)
4. Current Year, Board-Approved Operating Budget (*Note: if you are a university, submit operating budget for your specific department only.*)
5. Letters of Support (maximum of 4) from partners that are directly involved in project delivery. *Recommended where relevant, but not required.*
6. Financial documents that include:
 - IRS Tax Exempt letter
 - Current Board of Directors list
 - Current (2020 or later) GAAP Audited Financial Statements or if a GAAP is not available, a current Balance Sheet/Income Statement

- IRS Form 990 (if not available in GuideStar) or the version you file
 - For entities that do not file a 990, provide EIN or FEIN
 - Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) number. To create one:
<https://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>
7. If applying with a funds administrator (fiscal sponsor or agent) please also attach the following documents:
- Funds administrator’s IRS Tax Exempt letter
 - A letter from the funds administrator signed by the organization’s executive director stating agreement to serve as an administrator for the applicant, explaining the relationship to the applicant, and disclosure of any fees charged.
 - Current (2020 or later) GAAP Audited Financial Statements
 - Current board list of funds administrator’s organization
 - Funds administrator’s IRS Form 990 (if not available on GuideStar).
 - Funds administrator’s DUNS number

Submission Directions

1. Assemble and merge items **2 to 6** (or 2 to 7 if using a funds administrator) from the Submission Materials section into a single PDF file no more than 25 MB in size, name it in the following format: *“Applicant Organization Name.pdf”*.
2. Complete a *Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund 2022 RFP* [Proposal Cover Sheet](#). For purposes of the staff and board ethnicity breakdown, please provide information for the entire institution, not just the department where the work may occur. These fields cannot be left blank. Applications without this information will not be considered.
3. Because you will need to submit the proposal and the Proposal Cover Sheet together, we recommend making sure your proposal is in a single PDF prior to starting the Proposal Cover Sheet. You will know you have been successful in submitting both when after uploading the document you see “You have successfully uploaded your PDF” on your screen.
4. Once uploaded, check the certification box at the end and click submit. You will get an email confirming the proposal has been received. This email will include—as a PDF attachment—the Proposal Cover Sheet you just completed. The email will be sent to the email address entered in the “Information about Person Completing this Form” field on the Proposal Cover Sheet.
5. Please note communications about the successful receipt of your submission will be by email. Therefore, add noreply@nycommunitytrust.org to your address book so this important communication does not get caught in spam filters.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund program page of the Long Island Community Foundation website. Click [here](#).

Applicant Webinar [register here](#): Friday, December 10, 2021, 2:00pm to 3:30 pm EST

Proposal Due Date: Wednesday, February 2, 2022

Grant Notification & Contracting commences: April 2022

Questions about this RFP? Please consult [Frequently Asked Questions](#) and plan to participate in the webinar.

Other questions: LISF@nfwf.org

Questions about the Grant Application Instructions? Contact Jeannie DeMaio, Long Island Community Foundation jdemaio@licf.org