

## LONG ISLAND SOUND STEWARDSHIP FUND 2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

### Proposals Due: Friday February 3, 2023

All applications *must* be submitted electronically (see “Grant Application Instructions”). No mailed or emailed proposals will be accepted. Applications must be received before 11:59 PM on February 3<sup>rd</sup>.

### 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 2023. 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). Your proposal should be related to the CCMP and its Implementation Actions. The CCMP also identifies three cross-cutting principles that are important to consider in taking any specific action: resilience to climate change, long-term sustainability, and environmental justice. You may address these principles in your proposal where relevant;
- help build stronger NGOs working in the Long Island Sound watershed in Connecticut and New York (Capacity Building);
- foster new collaboration and innovation (New 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 include: Long Island Community Foundation, Auchincloss Foundation, Burnham Family Foundation, Eder Family Foundation, Fidelity Charitable (Mrs. Sofia J. Garcelon), Jeniam Foundation, McCance Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New York Community Bank Foundation, New York Community Trust, Pamela and Richard Rubinstein Foundation, Rauch 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 [Long Island Sound Study Boundary Map](#).

### **PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

**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

**New 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 about roles and responsibilities in a coalition
- 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

**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 testing of new technologies and management approaches

**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 follow and may also be found under “Implementation Actions” in the CCMP. Examples include:

- Green infrastructure/Low Impact Development to improve water quality and/or habitat restoration projects to sustain fish and wildlife
- Design or 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 different size limits on grants:

- For the Capacity Building, New 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.
- For Small Projects with Big Impacts Priority, 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**

Projects under \$100,000 must start within three (3) months and be completed within fifteen (15) months after notification of grant award projected to be April 2023. Projects requesting the maximum award amount must start within three (3) months and be completed within twenty-four (24) months.

## 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
  - General operations grants
- 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.
- 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.
- Partnerships – formally engages relevant technical and/or local partners to support development and delivery as needed. This criterion is particularly relevant for “New 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.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the Long Island Sound Stewardship Fund program page of the Long Island Community Foundation.

- Applicant Webinar register [here](#) Tuesday, December 13, 2022, 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm, EST
- Proposal Due Date: Friday February 3, 2023
- Review Period: February to April 2023
- Grant Notification & Contracting commences: April 2023

## HOW TO APPLY

- Review the [Grant Application Instructions](#) and prepare based upon these instructions
- Submit electronically through the proposal submission [portal](#)
- Questions about this RFP? Please consult [Frequently Asked Questions](#), and plan to participate in the webinar. Other questions: [info@lisfc.org](mailto:info@lisfc.org)
- Questions about the Grant Application Instructions contact [Jeannie DeMaio](#), Long Island Community Foundation