



2015-2016 **Grant Program** **Announcement**

Overview

Since our establishment in 2000, the Watershed Institute has focused on promoting the health and resiliency of New Jersey's watersheds by strengthening, connecting, and mobilizing watershed organizations. We strive to build capacity and partnerships among watershed organizations and the broader conservation community in order to inspire a shared vision for watershed protection. The Institute is a program of the Stony Brook-Millstone Watershed Association, generously funded by the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation.

We are now accepting applications for the 2015 funding cycle of the Watershed Institute Grant Program. This year, there are two funding categories available:

1. Project Grants (\$1,000 - \$10,000) – pg. 2

2. Expertise Grants (up to \$500) – pg. 4

This year's grant program builds off of the program from the previous year, which was developed with input from watershed organizations, expert peers, conservation allies, and the Dodge Foundation. Eligible projects will align closely with one or more of the following Targeted Actions, which we have identified as critical steps in the effort to improve watershed health throughout the state.

Actions

- *Water Quality Science and Education:* Promote data-to-action efforts of organizations monitoring water quality, increase accessibility of water quality information, and improve communication to the public on why good water quality is important to environmental and community wellbeing

- *Stormwater Policy*: Promote collaborative efforts with state, county, and municipal officials (where practical) to advocate for improved stormwater rules and ordinances beyond the current minimal and often ineffective requirements
- *Green Infrastructure*: Educate landowners, municipal decision-makers, and the public on the role of impervious cover in flooding, using green infrastructure as a solution, and green infrastructure best practices (including the importance of long-term maintenance)
- *Climate Change Resiliency*: Incorporate resiliency and adaptation into all aspects of future projects, planning, and policy efforts, and increase the accessibility of information and appropriate tools regarding climate change impacts

#1 - Project Grants

These grants are for projects that implement one or more of the above Actions. Examples include, but are not limited to:

- Organize events, comprehensive outreach campaigns, and associated communications
 - Municipal official/landowner trainings and outreach campaigns related to *green infrastructure, stormwater, water quality science* or *climate change* actions
- Translate water quality data for the public and decision-makers
 - design watershed-specific outreach materials
 - launch a clean water public education campaign
 - use water quality data for advocacy related to *stormwater policy* or *green infrastructure* actions
- Conducting project-specific water quality monitoring*, such as
 - monitoring the effectiveness of infrastructure
 - monitoring restoration efforts and outcomes
 - targeted monitoring to inform future study areas or projects
- Utilize technical/expert assistance during project implementation
 - Consult soil or plant expert, climate change expert, GIS specialist, or communications consultant for outreach and media strategies

*All water quality monitoring MUST be accompanied by a plan for education/outreach around the collected data. While protocols for data quality assurance are required for any project, a DEP-approved QAPP is not required in all cases (although it is recommended to strengthen the proposal).

Grant Size: \$1,000 to \$10,000. In-kind matching is strongly encouraged, but not required.

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. Organizations not classified as tax-exempt may not use a conduit organization. Priority will be given to New Jersey-based watershed organizations.

Grants May Be Used For: Staff time, travel, project or event supplies/equipment, and consultant or expert time

Grants May Not Be Used For: Capital projects (e.g., rent, site improvements), endowments, general operating support, land acquisition, entertainment, organizational health/general capacity building, lobbying, political activities, or litigation

How to Apply: Letters of Inquiry (LOIs) must be emailed to the Institute by August 3, 2015. LOI forms are available at <http://thewatershedinstitute.org/twig>. By mid-August, we will invite eligible projects to submit complete proposals. This invitation does not guarantee funding, as it is meant to serve primarily as an eligibility screening.

Application Evaluation:

Once the LOI has been approved and a full proposal submitted, the application will be evaluated by the Grant Review Committee on the following criteria-

- Extent to which the application addresses the priority Actions
- Presence of clearly stated and relevant goals for the project
- Feasibility and accuracy, including the budget, timeline, outputs, and outcomes
- Impact of the project on the environment, the organization, and the community
- Extent to which the project serves as a model for replication by other organizations
- Extent to which the project builds partnerships among organizations
- Qualifications of the organization and project team to carry out the proposed activities
- Past performance on grants from the Institute, if applicable
- Type of organization (New Jersey watershed organizations will be given preference)

Notification and Award Allocation: Applicants invited to submit proposals will be notified of funding decisions by early November, 2015. Grant awards will be disbursed in full upon receipt of a signed grant agreement.

Reporting: Grant recipients will meet with Watershed Institute staff mid-year to determine project status and provide feedback. Recipients will be required to submit brief interim and final narrative and financial reports, including discussion of the project’s effectiveness in meeting the goals and outcomes. Recipients may be asked to share their experiences with other environmental organizations at one or two events throughout the year.

Timeline:

Letter of Inquiry Due	August 3, 2015
Proposal Due	September 7, 2015
Signed Grant Agreement Due	November 20, 2015
Mid-term Meeting	April-May 2016
Interim Narrative and Financial Reports Due	July 8, 2016
Project Completion	December 2, 2016
Final Narrative and Financial Reports Due	December 16, 2016

#2 - Expertise Grants

These grants may be used for one of two purposes. The first, known as an *Internal Expertise Grant*, is to increase an organization's internal expertise by supporting staff participation in trainings, meetings, and conferences that relate to the Targeted Actions (as listed above). In this way, the organization's staff will be better informed about and better able to effect change in the areas of the Actions. Examples of eligible events include, but are not limited to, the New Jersey Land Conservation Conference, the ANJEC Environmental Congress, Train the Trainer workshops, etc.

The second type, known as an *External Expertise Grant*, is to support an organization's efforts to secure external expertise on an issue relating to the Targeted Actions. In this case, the grant is to be used as matching funds to solicit and retain an outside professional to provide analysis or expert opinion that the organization is not able to develop internally. Examples of external experts include, but are not limited to, environmental consultants, botanists, GIS specialist, etc.

Grant Amount: up to \$500*

*For External Expertise Grants, a 50-50 match is required (up to \$500)

Eligibility: Nonprofit environmental groups that have 501(c)(3) tax-exempt status and conduct work in New Jersey are eligible to apply for funds. Organizations that received Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation funding within the last year are not eligible for Expertise Grants. Organizations not classified as tax-exempt, may not use a conduit organization. Priority will be given to New Jersey-based watershed organizations and to organizations are not current Project Grant awardees. Before applying for funds to sponsor attendance at an event, applicants should first seek out other event-specific scholarship opportunities.

Grants May Be Used For: Registration/participation fees, travel costs, expert/consultant time.

Grants May Not Be Used For: Capital projects (e.g., rent, site improvements), endowments, general operating support, land acquisition, entertainment, organizational health/general capacity building, lobbying, political activities, or litigation. Event planning falls under the Project Grants.

How to Apply: Starting November 2nd, 2015, applications will be accepted on a rolling basis at least 2 weeks in advance of the requested event or activity. Eligible events or activities will occur during the granting period of December 14, 2015 to December 2, 2016. The application is web-based and is available at: <http://thewatershedinstitute.org/twig>.

Application Evaluation: Applications will be evaluated on how effectively the proposed activity would help the organization increase its internal expertise or benefit from external expertise as it relates to the Actions.

Reporting: Grant recipients will be asked to provide a brief report of their activities following their attendance at an event or their work with an outside expert.

Contact Information

We would be happy to address any questions or comments you might have regarding the grants program, the application process, eligibility, etc. The Institute Coordinator is available to respond to your inquiries and can assist you in the development of your application if necessary.

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