



2017-2018 **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**.

These guidelines cover eligibility and applicant requirements for the 2017-2018 funding cycle of the Watershed Institute Grant Program. This year, there are two funding categories:

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

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

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 (and in some cases may not be appropriate).

Grant Size: \$1,000 to \$10,000, with in-kind matching 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. *Please note that, effective this year, priority will be given to applicants who have not received funding from the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation within the past calendar year. However, Dodge-funded organizations are welcome to apply and will not be excluded from consideration.*

Grants May Be Used For: Staff time, travel, project or event supplies/equipment, and consultant or expert time as approved by the Grant Review Committee and Institute Coordinator

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 4, 2017. LOI forms will be available at <http://thewatershedinstitute.org/twig>. By mid-August, we will invite eligible projects to submit complete proposals. This invitation does not guarantee funding, it merely serves as an eligibility screening and an opportunity for the Institute Coordinator to provide feedback.

Application Evaluation:

Once the LOI has been approved and a full proposal submitted, the application will be evaluated by the Grant Review Committee based 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 of 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)
- Whether or not the organization is currently a Dodge Foundation grantee (non-Dodge grantees will be given preference)

Notification and Award Allocation: Applicants invited to submit proposals will be notified of funding decisions by mid-November, 2017. Grant awards will be disbursed in full upon receipt of a signed grant agreement form.

Reporting: Grant recipients will meet with Watershed Institute staff prior to beginning the project and at the mid-year mark to determine project status and provide feedback. Recipients will be required to submit interim and final narrative and financial reports, including discussion of the project’s effectiveness in meeting the goals and outcomes as defined in the approved proposal. 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 4, 2017
Proposal Due	September 15, 2017
Signed Grant Agreement Due	December 1, 2017
Mid-term Meeting	April-May 2018
Interim Narrative and Financial Reports Due	July 2018
Final Narrative and Financial Reports Due	December 14, 2018

#2 - Expertise Grants

Expertise 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 (as pre-approved by the Institute Coordinator), 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 1st, 2016, 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 5, 2016 to December 15, 2017. The application is web-based and 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. Regarding travel costs and contracted consultant time, cost estimates and/or receipts may be requested by the Institute Coordinator.

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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