

**New York Sea Grant  
Great Lakes Basin - Small Grants Program  
2023 Request for Proposals**

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) in partnership with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) is requesting proposals for new projects that serve to benefit the environment and economy of New York's Great Lakes basin by demonstrating the application of ecosystem-based management (EBM) to local watershed challenges. The small grants program is made possible by the New York State Environmental Protection Fund and Article 14 of Environmental Conservation Law.

**Proposals due on March 1, 2023, by 4:30 PM EST**

**Timeline:**

- RFP announced – January 4, 2023
- Webinar series – Wednesdays at 11:30am, January 25-February 15, 2023
- Proposal submission deadline – March 1, 2023
- Award notification – April 1, 2023
- Project term dates – May 1, 2023 – October 31, 2024
- Projects must be completed – October 31, 2024

**INTRODUCTION to the PROGRAM:**

With guidance from planning initiatives by New York State agencies and NYSG, the Great Lakes Basin Small Grants Program (<https://www.nyseagrant.org/glsmallgrants>) is intended to support stakeholder-driven efforts to restore and revitalize the state's Great Lakes region and demonstrate successful application of EBM (refer to Evaluation of Proposals on page 5 for EBM criteria).

New York State published an interim copy of *New York's Great Lakes Basin Action Agenda*, commonly referred to as the Great Lakes Action Agenda (GLAA), an action plan for the application of EBM principles in New York's Great Lakes basin. This document identifies pressing problems and actions which will benefit from holistic approaches needed to protect natural resources, environmental quality, and economic development. The complete document may be found at [https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/regions\\_pdf/glaai.pdf](https://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/regions_pdf/glaai.pdf). (Please note that the updated 2022 GLAA is not yet finalized and therefore the 2014 interim GLAA is the focus of this RFP.)

The small grants program is designed to directly support new projects that help implement the goals of the GLAA. Funding for existing projects may not be considered. Funding that significantly enhances and builds upon a prior project may be considered as long as the proposed activities are distinct.

**PROJECT PRIORITIES:**

NYSG is soliciting proposals (up to \$50,000 in total costs) for projects that implement both the goals of the GLAA, as well as actions specifically identified in locally supported community plans pertaining to water quality, natural resources, or sustainable land uses (i.e., Coastal Lakeshore Economy and Resiliency Regional Plans, Comprehensive Plans, Harbor Management Plans, Hazard Mitigation Plans, Local Waterfront Revitalization Plan's, Natural Resource Management Plans, Resilient NY flood mitigation studies, Watershed Management Plans, etc.). The proposed project needs to come directly from a plan as originally proposed and be clearly identified in the proposal by plan name, and where the specific activity is identified. Additionally, eligible proposals must identify at least one or more goals and actions from the GLAA that your proposed activity will be focused on. As applicable, projects should prioritize the implementation of natural and nature-based activities to maximize ecosystem and public benefits, consistent with the NYS Community Risk and Resiliency Act's [\*Using Natural Measures to Reduce the Risk of Flooding and Erosion\*](#) guidance document.

**Proposals should also demonstrate how an EBM approach will be applied to achieve ecological, social/community, and economic benefits.**

Project examples include, but are not limited to:

- Floodplain restoration project to benefit aquatic habitat, water quality and reduce flood risk
- EBM-based shoreline study that recommends nature-based approaches for shoreline management and coastal process restoration
- Climate-smart comprehensive plan that supports community revitalization goals, open space preservation and water-dependent recreational assets
- Reviews and/or updates to municipal codes or policies that integrate resilience measures into local law

Civil works, property acquisition, and infrastructure projects will not be considered for this funding. Applicants seeking support solely for continued operation or maintenance of an existing project or program will not be prioritized.

It is anticipated that a total of \$460,000 will be awarded to approximately 9 proposal requests.

For additional information about projects previously funded through this program, please visit <https://www.nyseagrant.org/glsmallgrants>.

**WHO CAN APPLY:**

Proposals will be accepted from the following entities located in New York's Great Lakes Basin:

- Not-for-profit organizations,

- County and local government (e.g., County Departments, cities, towns, villages, etc.),
- Public agencies, such as regional planning entities, environmental commissions and soil and water conservation districts; and,
- Educational institutions, including, but not limited to, public and private K-12 schools, Colleges, and Universities.

**DURATION OF PROJECTS:**

Projects must be completed by October 31, 2024.

**BUDGET SIZE:**

Budget requests cannot exceed \$50,000 total costs.

**COST-SHARE REQUIREMENTS:**

Match is not required.

**HOW AND WHEN TO SUBMIT:**

Full proposals must be submitted by **4:30 pm EST on March 1, 2023**. They must be submitted electronically through New York Sea Grant's electronic submission website <https://www.nyseagrant.org/glsmallgrants>, which will not accept proposals submitted after 4:30 pm EST.

**PROPOSAL FORMAT:**

A standardized application cover sheet, 90-4 budget form, and Subcontractor Form are available through the website link above and **must** be used with each proposal. All proposal components should be submitted as one document.

**1. Cover Sheet:**

Title; project lead and project team; contact information, including address, telephone, and email; amount requested.

**2. Project Description:**

The main body of the proposal must be succinct and be no longer than five single-spaced pages with 1-inch margins in 12-point Times New Roman font (not including the cover sheet, biographical sketch of top three personnel, required letters of support, timeline, budget justification, cost reasonableness statement, budget form, and project summary form). Provide:

- Identify the GLAA goal(s) and specific action(s) that the project addresses
- Identify the locally supported plan including the specific action identified that your proposal addresses
- Project Summary
- Goals and Methods
- Objectives, Activities, Outputs, Outcomes, and Deliverables

- Briefly describe how the project integrates or applies EBM principles (Refer to Evaluation of Proposals on page 6 for EBM criteria)
- Personnel and Collaboration
- Project Location: all projects must be located within and/or directly related to New York's Great Lakes basin (See map at: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/25562.html>)

### **3. Personnel and Partners:**

List the key personnel involved in the project, identifying the project lead. Include a brief biographical sketch (2 page maximum per person) for the three top personnel. Include name, address, phone, fax, and e-mail address for each. If you are working with other partner organization(s), state the name of the organization and how the partnership will work. These pages do not count toward the 5-page project description.

### **4. Letters of Support for projects occurring on public property:**

Applicants are required to provide a letter of support from municipal governments if the proposal includes activities on public lands. These pages do not count toward the 5-page project description. General project support letters are not required and will not be considered in the evaluation process.

### **5. Timeline:**

Schedule for starting and completing the project. These pages do not count toward the 5- page project description. *Projects must be completed by October 31, 2024.* Be sure to include your tasks, project measures and deliverables in your timeline. Please limit timelines to 1 page.

### **6. Budget Justification:**

Budget justifications should reflect key project milestones, deliverables, and schedules to support invoicing. These pages do not count toward the 5-page project description. For each budget category, identify the funding amount, why, who, when and where the requested funds will be used. Budget categories include the following:

- Labor Costs: List each person separately. Provide basis for labor costs.
- Fringe Benefits: Provide explanation of how fringe benefits are applied and documentation for the rate or dollar amounts assessed.
- Permanent Equipment: Provide make, model and dollar amount. Explain whether price was determined from vendor quote, catalogue price, or past experience. Permanent equipment includes items like fish tanks, graduated cylinders, monitoring equipment, textbooks, etc.

- d. Expendable Supplies and Equipment: Provide a list of expendable supplies and equipment needed for the project.
- e. Travel/Transportation: Describe nature and purpose.
- f. Other Costs: Provide breakdown for items needed and include a justification.
- g. Indirect Costs: Indirect costs at 18% of Total Direct Costs (TDC) for entities that have a current federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Indirect costs at the de minimis rate of 10% of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC) for entities that do not have a current federally negotiated indirect cost rate. Provide a copy of the current federally negotiated indirect cost rate agreement.

**7. Cost Reasonableness Statement:**

Cost reasonableness statements should identify how costs were determined and how they are appropriate and competitive (i.e., used market rates, competitive salaries, etc.). These pages do not count toward the 5-page project description. Budget justifications and cost reasonableness statements are not the same.

**8. 90-4 Budget Form:**

Use the provided form to detail the project's budget. These pages do not count toward the 5-page project description.

**9. Subcontractor Commitment Form:**

Please complete and submit with proposal.

**ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF SUCCESSFUL APPLICANTS:**

- **Certificate of Liability Insurance**: Applicants will need insurance coverage. At this time, do not include proof of insurance. However, should funding be awarded you will be required to provide proof of insurance, Workman's Compensation and Disability benefits.
- **Audited Statements**: Please be aware that if you are successful, in order to process the award, we will require a recent Single Audit or recent audited financial statements.
- **Permits/Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)**: For all projects requiring permits or a QAPP, all necessary permits must be obtained prior to receiving the award. For specific QAPP requirements see the QAPP section at the end of the RFP.
- **Documentation of Ownership and Public Interest in Property**: Prior to receiving the award, successful applicants must be able to document adequate ownership rights in and to the subject property, and that the ownership or use of the subject property is of a public nature.

- **Municipal Endorsement:** Prior to receiving the award, successful applicants must provide a municipal endorsement and authorization to conduct the proposed project on municipal property.

## **EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS:**

All proposals that are complete and meet the deadline will be evaluated by a technical review team consisting of, at a minimum, members of New York Sea Grant, NYSDEC, and other State agencies.

The Team will evaluate complete proposals based on the following criteria:

- Proposal must clearly identify and link to one or more of the actions and associated milestones listed under a GLAA Goal, as well as the specific locally supported plan they are drawn from;
- Degree to which the project integrates EBM principles and describes how they will be applied, including how this project will consider and achieve a balance of ecological, economic, and social/community values or benefits as well as how the proposed project utilizes sound scientific information and/or data to achieve a balanced solution, while:
  - Focusing on a particular place with natural boundaries (i.e., subwatershed);
  - Supporting sustainable activities in and uses of the ecosystem;
  - Prioritizing the health and integrity of the whole ecosystem over the needs of a single activity, species or interest;
  - Considering interactions within and/or among ecosystems;
  - Integrating ecological, social, economic and institutional perspectives and concerns;
  - Including the participation of stakeholders;
  - Promoting coordination and/or collaboration among various stakeholders and management entities;
  - Using and/or generating scientific information to inform decision-making, and;
  - Implementing adaptive management.
- Appropriateness of the project's defined measurable outcomes or deliverables regarding the project goals and whether they can be completed within the project term (18 months).
- Prior experience of the project team.
- Demonstrates coordination with appropriate partners, to avoid duplication of effort.
- Appropriateness of budget.
- Project must be located within and/or directly related to New York's Great Lakes basin.
- Inclusion of an outreach component to support broad scale communication and/or application of project results.

- Degree to which the project will present opportunities to maximize implementation of the GLAA.
- Degree to which the project builds local and/or organizational capacity for future related projects.
- Projects demonstrating benefits to an Environmental Justice community, or other disadvantaged or underserved area are encouraged. Applicants may reference resources included on [NYSG's Environmental Justice Mapping Tools guidance sheet](#).

### **FUNDING GUIDELINES:**

Applicants selected for an award will receive a subaward from Cornell University under Prime Award #CM04068 Project MOU OSP91507. The subaward must be fully executed before invoicing can commence. Funds are available for specific costs associated with project implementation and for general overhead expenses as outlined in section 6 Budget Justification. The selected projects will require invoicing for reimbursement, including a copy of all receipts. If you are selected for funding, in addition to electronic copies of any products produced, you will be required to send progress status reports and invoices at the end of each calendar quarter, and a final report along with an evaluation of your project, electronically, to the New York Sea Grant office.

### **WEBINARS:**

A four-part webinar series will be held during the open application period, occurring each Wednesday at 11:30am-12:30pm, beginning on January 25, 2023, through February 15, 2023. The first webinar will provide information about the application process while subsequent webinars will provide an opportunity to learn about previously funded projects through presentations from project leaders.

Please register at: <https://www.nyseagrant.org/qlsmallgrants>. If you have questions or difficulties registering, please email Megan Kocher at [mk2236@cornell.edu](mailto:mk2236@cornell.edu), or call (716) 645-3611.

### **For more information, contact:**

Megan Kocher, New York Sea Grant, [mk2236@cornell.edu](mailto:mk2236@cornell.edu), (716) 645-3611

---

### **QAPP REQUIREMENTS:**

**Quality Assurance:** Quality assurance applies to all programs/projects that involve the collection, generation or use of environmental data associated with the mapping, modeling, monitoring, and assessment of water quality data intended for use by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) for its regulatory purposes. This includes the design or use of water quality focused environmental technology. Guidance and resources for DEC's quality assurance can be found on

[DEC's quality assurance webpage](#). Activities associated with these types of programs/projects, conducted in the field or laboratory, shall be:

1. Performed in accordance with an effective quality system for planning and assessing environmental measurements and tests, and for conducting required quality assurance and quality control procedures to promote and maintain the accuracy and reliability of environmental measurements and test results. An effective Quality System includes a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) based on guidance provided by the USEPA Guidance for Quality Assurance Project Plans (QA/G-5 May 2006), or American National Standard ASQ/ANSI E4:2014: Quality management systems for environmental information and technology programs—Requirements with guidance for use, approved February 4, 2014.
2. The fulfillment of the data verification, validation, and usability component of QAPP is to be documented in a Data Usability Assessment Report (DUAR).
3. Performed by a laboratory certified by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) under the Environmental Laboratory Approval Program (ELAP) pursuant to Section 502 of the Public Health Law. This requirement shall not apply to specific parameters where NYS DOH ELAP has not issued a certificate for the specific parameter.
4. Performed in a manner that ensures all requisite quality control and calibration requirements are met, including field testing, sample collection, preservation, and record-keeping. Basic quality assurance and quality control requirements defined in 40 CFR Part 136.7 shall be followed as well as any specific method requirements.
5. Required to submit environmental monitoring data electronically to US EPA Water Quality Exchange (WQX) following the guidance as set by US EPA's WQX Submission Instructions.
6. Covered under the Publicity clause (article IV.G.) of the Master Contract for Grants – Standard Terms and Conditions. Specifically, the Contractor agrees that any work products, including but not limited to, water quality data or environmental information; measured, generated, or developed under this contract shall not be released, published, cited, or shared in draft or final form without prior written authorization from the Department.
7. At a minimum, performed in accordance with water quality standards in 6 NYCRR Part 703 and/or guidance values in Technical and Operational Guidance Series (TOGS) 1.1.1. Projects designed to assess water quality or inform regulatory decisions must measure parameters with applicable water quality standards and/or guidance values.