



## **LONG ISLAND SOUND STEWARDSHIP FUND REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP) 2021**

**Proposal Due: Friday, January 15, 2021**

**All applications must be submitted electronically (see application instructions for link)**

**\*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 advocacy) to access, improve and benefit from Long Island Sound, its waterways, and surrounding lands. Up to \$400,000 is expected to be available for grants in 2021. The most competitive proposals will incorporate multiple values including sustainability, resilience and diversity, equity and inclusion. The availability of funds is contingent upon the quality of proposals received, and their alignment with the priorities in this RFP. The LISSF aims to:

- support nongovernmental organizations working on issues and projects related to the [Long Island Sound Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#);
- help build stronger nongovernmental organizations working in the Long Island Sound watershed in Connecticut and New York;
- foster collaboration and innovation around conservation and environmental quality;
- accelerate the “next best step” for proven tools and strategies to reduce pollution, restore habitat, conserve species, enhance community resilience, support inclusive management, and engage people around the Sound; 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: Community Foundation of Eastern Connecticut, Community Foundation of Middlesex County, Fairfield County’s Community Foundation, Fred & Gilda Nobel Foundation, Jeniam Foundation, Lily

Auchincloss Foundation, Long Island Community Foundation, McCance Foundation, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, New York Community Bank Foundation, New York Community Trust, Pamela and Richard Rubinstein Foundation, Rauch Foundation, Rockfall Foundation, and 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 [LISSF 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

**Collaboration** to foster organizations working together 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 new 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 to foster improvement in the health and living resources of the Sound
- 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 application 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:

- Water quality and habitat restoration to support on-the-ground projects that reduce or prevent water pollution, restore habitat or sustain fish and wildlife
- Design/planning to support activities that set the stage for on-the-ground implementation of water quality or habitat restoration
- Education and public community/engagement to support public participation, education and stewardship activities

## **SIZE OF GRANT AWARDS**

The *LISSE* has two categories of grants:

- **Capacity Building, Network Building, and Piloting Tools & Strategies.** 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 \$100,000 should demonstrate regional value and scope, partnerships, and bigger impact to Long Island Sound and communities and constituencies served.
- **Small Projects with Big Impacts:** Grants are expected to range from \$3,000 to \$10,000.

## **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 months and be completed within 15 months after notification of grant award projected to be March 2021. Projects requesting the maximum award amount must start within three months and be completed within 24 months.

## **GRANT GUIDELINES**

- Applicant organizations may submit up to two proposals per organization.
- Proposals must be submitted electronically through the link on the instruction page.
- Funds *may not* be used for:
  - Activities prohibited to 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**

Proposals will be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria:

- **Program Priorities** – Proposed project 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** – Proposed project formally engages relevant technical and/or local partners to support development and delivery as needed. This criteria is particularly relevant for “Collaboration” proposals and for proposals aiming for diversity, equity and inclusion.
- **Technical Merit** – Proposed project is 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 or programs with measurable results.
- **Communication** – Proposed project includes a plan to communicate information about it to appropriate audiences.

**TIMELINE**

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

✓ Proposal Due Date	1/15/2021
✓ Review Period	Winter 2021
✓ Grant Notification	Starting March 2021
✓ Grant contracting	Commences April 2021

**HOW TO APPLY**

See the attached Grant Application Instruction page and follow the link provided.

**Questions about this RFP, please contact Tripp Killin**, Jeniam Foundation [Tripp\\_Killin@yahoo.com](mailto:Tripp_Killin@yahoo.com) or **Lynn Dwyer**, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation [Lynn.Dwyer@nfwf.org](mailto:Lynn.Dwyer@nfwf.org)

**Questions about the application and associated documents, please contact Jeannie DeMaio**, Long Island Community Foundation [jdemaio@licf.org](mailto:jdemaio@licf.org)