# CVNHP Logo-082310

# A Request for Proposals

# For

# 2015 CVNHP Conservation & Community Grants

# (Deadline for Submission: August 28, 2015)

## Request for Proposals

The Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP) and the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) issues this Request for Proposals (RFP) for 2016 Conservation & Community Grants to mark the 2016 centennial anniversary of the National Park Service (NPS) and celebrate conservation efforts in the region. Projects should focus on providing enhanced access to conserved lands, conservation and interpretation of artifacts and museum collections, interpretation of natural and cultural resources, and/or other conservation-based topics that serve the public. All funded projects should be accessible by the public by June 1, 2016.

The CVNHP/LCBP will provide grants of up to $5,000 to interpret historic conservation achievements in the CVNHP and showcase modern conservation efforts. The total amount of funding available for this grant category: up to $25,000. Grant awards are contingent on the anticipated FY2015 funding from the NPS to the CVNHP.

## Grant Guidelines

These guidelines are provided to help you prepare competitive grant proposals. They also provide additional information on what to expect if you are offered an award. Please read the entire RFP carefully before proceeding with your proposal. We encourage you to call the CVNHP coordinator Jim Brangan at 802-372-3213 if you need further explanation of the requirements and policies summarized here. Additional guidance and forms will be distributed to those organizations receiving award offers.

## Notice of August 28, 2015 Proposal Deadline

All parties considering responding to this Request for Proposals should note that the deadline for receipt of proposals by the CVNHP/LCBP is **4:30 p.m. Friday, August 28, 2015**. **All grant applications must be submitted electronically**. Applications should be sent via e-mail to both [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) AND [jbrangan@lcbp.org](mailto:jbrangan@lcbp.org). The application, including the budget should be submitted in Microsoft (Word, Publisher, Excel, etc.), or in a comparable format.  **Original applications formatted as a PDF will not be accepted**, however, copies of letters of support may be submitted as PDF documents. Paper copies of applications will not be accepted.

We expect to award recipients by October 30, 2015.

## Program Overview

The authorizing legislation of the CVNHP, the *National Heritage Areas Act of 2006* (Public Law 109-338), states that the heritage area was established to recognize the importance of the historical, cultural, and recreational resources of the Champlain Valley; to preserve, protect, and interpret those resources; to enhance the tourism economy; and to encourage partnerships among state/provincial and local governments and non-profit organizations in New York, Quebec, and Vermont to carry out the purposes of the legislation.

The CVNHP Management Plan is a stand-alone module of *Opportunities for Action, An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin (OFA).* This inclusion strengthens awareness of environmental issues among partners in the tourism, cultural heritage, and recreation professions, while also informing environmental, agricultural, and other science-based authorities of heritage-based social, educational, and economic issues and opportunities.

The 2015 CVNHP Conservation & Community Grants support the implementation of actions and tasks described in [the Cultural Heritage and Recreation chapter of *Opportunities for Action*](http://plan.lcbp.org/ofa-database/chapters/cultural-heritage-and-recreation-resources)*.*

## Eligibility

The following are eligible to apply for 2015 CVNHP Conservation & Community Grants:

* Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees;
* Organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation status.
* Projects must be within the [CVNHP region](http://www.champlainvalleynhp.org/images/CVNHP-simple-map.jpg) or the Lake Champlain Basin.
* **NOTE:** Private businesses, individuals, and state government agencies may collaborate with an applicant, but are not, themselves, eligible to apply under this grant program.
* **NOTE:** Any organization with an existing CVNHP/LCBP award that has overdue workplans, reports, or other deliverables is ineligible and should not apply.

## Selection Criteria

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, based on the information provided in your application. A confidential peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award recommendations to the LCBP. The LCBP will make all decisions on project awards. The decisions of the LCBP are final and may not be appealed.

1. (25 Points) Extent to which the proposed project provides:

* enhanced access to conserved lands, and/or
* conservation and interpretation of artifacts and museum collections, and or
* interpretation of natural and cultural resources, and/or
* other conservation-based topics that serve the public.

1. (20 Points) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates a commitment to work with partners to achieve project goals and the extent to which this cooperation will enhance the effectiveness of CVNHP/LCBP funding. Project principles’ knowledge of cultural and/or natural conservation and experience related to teaching the arts will be considered.
2. (15 Points) Extent to which the project will result in tangible outcomes and benefits that address the tasks identified in [the Cultural Heritage and Recreation chapter of *Opportunities for Action*](http://plan.lcbp.org/ofa-database/chapters/cultural-heritage-and-recreation-resources)*.*
3. (25 Points) Appropriateness and clarity of the project timeline, deliverables and proposed budget, relative to project objectives. The total funding request must be within the limit of the grant category. While matching funds and in-kind support are not required, proposals that include a non-federal match are considered more competitive in the grant review process. Applicants should be aware, however, that because optimal matching support may make a proposal more competitive, any match proposed may be embedded in the contract as a requirement.
4. (15 Points) Merit of the project, including clarity and conciseness of the proposal, adherence to format, and relevance to RFP. If applicable, the applicant’s past performance on similar projects also will be considered.

## Letters of Participation and Support

* Signed letters of participation confirming any major partner’s involvement with your project (if any) must be attached to your application. If a non-profit organization is applying for a grant on behalf of a learning institution, a letter is required from that institution confirming its commitments in the proposed task.
* Up to three letters of support may be included.
* All letters must be submitted with the application.
* Be aware that for projects to take place on private property, written landowner permission will be required at the time of application.

## Project Workplan Development

All grant awards will be contingent upon the applicant subsequently submitting a more detailed project workplan, and CVNHP/LCBP approval of that workplan. The workplan, which the applicant must submit **within 60 days** after the award notification, describes the project’s methods, timeline, deliverables and budget. If a project is selected for funding, CVNHP/LCBP staff will provide the grant recipient with workplan guidance.

## Payment Procedures

Successful applicants will be invited to enter into an award contract with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, which is the fiscal agent for the CVNHP/LCBP. There will be a very short timeline for contractual agreements to be finalized.

* ***CVNHP/LCBP funds will be available on a reimbursement basis only*** in response to your invoices documenting the eligible costs you have incurred.
* Groups should expect a 4-to-6 week turn-around time from when the CVNHP/LCBP receives your invoice to the time when you receive payment.
* **NOTE: *The CVNHP/LCBP cannot reimburse you for work done prior to your official contract start date or after the contract end date.***
* Funds to support awards are subject to the constraints that apply to all federal grants (see **Appropriate Use of Funds; *(2) About Restrictions that Apply***, below).

## Project Time Period

***Award notification is expected by October 30, 2015.*** Projects must be completed by October 31, 2016 with final reports and invoices received by the LCBP no later than April 30, 2017.

## Appropriate Use of Funds

1. **About Direct and Indirect Costs:**

The LCBP encourages groups to budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including salaries, travel, project supplies, mailings, phone costs, office supplies, etc. However, the use of some grant funds for general overhead, known as indirect costs, is allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 (local governments) or Circular A-122 (not-for-profits) and LCBP prior approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP staff or look online at [**http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a087-all.html**](http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars/a087/a087-all.html)**.** This web page is very helpful. You will find that **Attachment A**, ***Section D* – Composition** provides an excellent overview of direct and indirect costs, ***Section E*** gives the definition of direct costs, and ***Section F*** gives the definition of indirect costs.

1. **About Restrictions that Apply**

Grant funds ***cannot be used for the following:***

* to produce for-profit products to be sold,
* to produce events for which an admission fee is charged,
* to cover costs associated with regulatory compliance,
* for any form of fundraising efforts,
* for land purchases, easements or endowment funds,
* for lobbying or legislative advocacy of any kind.

Other restrictions also apply to all federal grants, but those above are noted here.

## CVNHP/LCBP Staff Support

Because they are not members of the review committees making award decisions, CVNHHP/LCBP staff may assist applicants in the interpretation of application guidelines, but will not preview any grant application materials. All applicants are encouraged to contact the CVNHP/LCBP office before submitting applications. Once awards are announced, CVNHP/LCBP staff will assist with the development of a contract, workplan and budget details. A CVNHP/LCBP project officer will oversee the administration of the contract.

## Partial Funding

The CVNHP/LCBP may offer only a portion of the funding requested in any application. In such cases, the CVNHP/LCBP will provide guidance to the applicant on how the awarded grant funds should be applied. Vague or inflated budgets will not be competitive.

## Other Grant Programs

In addition to these grants, the CVNHP/LCBP sponsors other grant programs. There are also several other funding opportunities for projects within the CVNHP region and the Lake Champlain Basin. Please visit the [CVNHP website](http://www.champlainvalleynhp.org/resources.htm) (<http://www.champlainvalleynhp.org/resources.htm>) for more information.