



2014 *Opportunities for Action* Local Implementation Grants: GRANT GUIDELINES

Local Implementation Grants

The 2014 Local Implementation Grants support local community involvement in the implementation of the comprehensive management plan, *Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin* (plan.lcbp.org). Grant funds are anticipated through agreements with the National Park Service, Great Lakes Fishery Commission and Environmental Protection Agency with appropriations supported by U.S. Senator Patrick Leahy. Five categories of grants are available: **(A) Pollution Prevention & Wildlife Habitat Conservation, (B) Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention, (C) Education and Outreach, (D) Organizational Support, and (E) Water Trail Development Grants.**

Descriptions of the five categories of Local Implementation grants – including the purpose, eligibility information, and selection criteria for each – are provided below. Please read this information carefully and match your proposed project with the most appropriate grant category before proceeding with your application. These descriptions are followed by general guidelines that pertain to all grants and should help you prepare a competitive grant application. We encourage you to contact the LCBP if you need further explanation of the requirements and policies summarized here. PLEASE NOTE: These guidelines are not applicable to other LCBP grant programs.

No more than one unique application may be submitted by the same organization in any single category. Each application must be submitted to one (and only one) of the following categories: Pollution Prevention & Wildlife Habitat Conservation, Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention, Education and Outreach, Organizational Support, or Water Trail Development.

ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application. More information about invasive species spread prevention procedures can be found on the LCBP website, here: <http://www.lcbp.org/water-environment/aquatic-invasive-species/aquatic-invasive-species-spread/>.

Groups with current LCBP contracts must be in good standing (i.e. all deliverables that are due have been received by LCBP) to be eligible to apply for additional funds. New project work must be distinct from currently contracted work in both objectives and deliverables. Extensions of ongoing projects with new tasks and deliverables will be considered if groups demonstrate satisfactory progress on the current grant.

PLEASE NOTE: An electronic copy of your application MUST be received in the LCBP office in Grand Isle, VT by 4:30 PM, Wednesday, November 5, 2014. Submissions should be made via email to grants@lcbp.org in MS Word or a Word-compatible format. Hardcopy or faxed submissions will not be accepted.

Lake Champlain Basin Program and *Opportunities for Action*

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is a partnership among the States of New York and Vermont, the Province of Québec, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, other federal and local government agencies, and many local groups, both public and private. Created by the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990 and reauthorized in 2002, the LCBP's goal is to work cooperatively to protect and enhance the environmental integrity and the social and economic benefits of the Lake Champlain Basin, primarily through implementation of *Opportunities for Action*. Successful implementation of the plan is achieved by developing partnerships among natural resource agencies, citizens, and other lake and watershed stakeholders throughout the Basin. Since 1992, the LCBP has sponsored 784 local projects.

Opportunities for Action (November 2010) calls for actions addressing water quality, toxic substances, living natural resources, recreation and cultural heritage resources, economics, education and outreach, monitoring, and data management. The plan also calls for the active involvement of local communities.

Opportunities for Action is available from the LCBP office or online at <http://plan.lcbp.org>

Grant Guidelines for all Local Implementation Grants

All local grants will be reviewed by an external review committee and evaluated based on the selection criteria listed for each grant category, described fully below. The following guidelines pertain to all Local Implementation Grant applications. They are provided to help you submit a competitive grant application.

Letters of Participation and Support

- Signed letters confirming the participation of each major partner involved with your project (if any) must be attached to your application.
- A maximum of three additional letters of support may also be included. If more than three letters of support are included with your application, only the first three received will be considered.
- All letters must be submitted with the application.
- Be aware that if projects will take place on private property, written landowner permission will be required at the time of workplan development.

Local Match Contribution (optional)

- While non-federal match is not required, applicants should clearly document the intended source(s) and use(s) of such match contributions in the budget section of your application.
- General volunteer hours (work days, trainings, etc.) for optional in-kind match are usually calculated at \$10-15 per hour. Specialized volunteer work (computer consulting, accounting, etc.) can be calculated at a higher rate.
- Funds from federal government sources may not be used for matching contributions.

Project Workplan Development

Within sixty days of LCBP grant award notification, applicants must submit a detailed project workplan, which is subject to the LCBP approval process before a contract will be issued. The workplan describes the project's methods, timeline, deliverables and budget. If a project is selected for funding, LCBP staff will provide the grant recipient with workplan guidance. We strongly encourage all applicants to visit the LCBP website for more information on the LCBP grant process: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>.

Project Time Period

Award notification is expected by late **December, 2014**. Workplans must be submitted within sixty days following award notification. Projects must be initiated within six months of award notification. Usually, projects should be completed within one year of the official project start date. Other time periods will be considered if warranted. ***Do not expect to begin work on a project before early March, 2015.***

Memorandum of Agreement

Following approval of the project workplan by LCBP, each award recipient will enter into a formal memorandum of agreement with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), which administers local implementation grant funds on behalf of the LCBP. The MOA will describe the project's timeframe, LCBP supported budget, and required deliverables. Recipients will enter into MOAs with NEIWPCC via an electronic agreements process. For more information, please see NEIWPCC's guide to electronic contracting: <http://www.neiwpcc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/GuidetoContractProcess.pdf>

Quality Assurance Project Plans

Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs) are required for all activities involving the collection, generation, compilation, management, analysis, evaluation, and/or use of environmental data. When necessary the successful applicant will prepare a QAPP as part of the project workplan. It is possible that some grants might not require a QAPP – depending on the scope of the workplan. Please contact LCBP staff if you think your project might require a QAPP. The QAPP must be fully-approved by LCBP before any environmental data collection or analysis activities can begin on this project. For projects requiring a QAPP, LCBP will not pay for any data collection or analysis activities started prior to development and receipt of a fully-approved QAPP. The QAPP development and approval process can be quite lengthy (up to 90 days, depending on the size of the project), so please make sure that an appropriate amount of time has been allocated to this step in the project budget and timeline. More information about the LCBP QAPP process can be found on the LCBP website, here: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/qapp/>. **Please contact Stephanie Castle, LCBP Technical Associate, at scastle@lcbp.org or 802-372-0220 prior to submitting your application if the proposed project involves data collection or analysis. Please note: Projects for the 2015 field season are appropriate for this funding cycle. The earliest a new QAPP will approved will be April 2015 so applicants should not plan for projects requiring a QAPP before that time. Exceptions for generic or continuing QAPPs will be considered.**

Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Measures

ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application. If you have any questions regarding whether or not your project may require spread prevention measures, please contact Meg Modley, LCBP AIS Management Coordinator, at mmodley@lcbp.org or (802) 372-0215.

Payment Procedures

- LCBP funds will be available on a reimbursement basis only in response to your invoices documenting the eligible costs you have incurred. Invoicing will be based on completion (or partial completion) of deliverables identified within the workplan budget.
- Groups should expect a 4 to 6 week turn-around time from when the LCBP receives your invoice to the time when you receive payment.
- **The LCBP cannot reimburse for work done prior to the official MOA start date or after the MOA end date.** If you anticipate project work extending beyond the MOA end date, contact the LCBP immediately to discuss whether you may be eligible for an amendment to your project that extends the timeline.
- Following LCBP approval of invoices, payment will be issued by NEIWPC.

Reporting and Publicity

Your contract will require you to submit brief progress reports at the close of each calendar quarter and a final project report at the conclusion of your grant. Also, you may be asked to prepare press releases citing the LCBP as a funding source at the project's inception and conclusion. LCBP report templates are at: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>.

Funding Acknowledgements

All press materials and printed products from your project must acknowledge the Lake Champlain Basin Program, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission, and the original source of federal or non-federal funding. Each local implementation grant MOA will contain a funding acknowledgement statement that grant recipients should use on their project-funded products. Additionally, inclusion of the LCBP and NEIWPC logos, available from the NEIWPC website (<http://www.neiwpc.org/contractors/guidance.asp>), may be appropriate on published materials supported by the grant.

Appropriate Use of Funds

About Direct and Indirect Costs:

The LCBP encourages groups to budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, mailings, phone costs, office supplies, etc. However, use of some grant funds for indirect costs also is allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or look refer to http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004. **Sections D, E, and F of Attachment A** provide a nice overview of Direct and Indirect costs. **For projects in responseto this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 21% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 21% of direct match contributed.**

Restrictions

LCBP grant funds **cannot be used** to produce for-profit products or to cover costs associated with regulatory compliance or direct fundraising efforts. Grant funds also cannot be used for land purchases, endowment funds, or lobbying or legislative advocacy of any kind.

LCBP Staff Support

Because they do not participate on the review committees that make award decisions, LCBP staff members are available to assist applicants in the interpretation of these application guidelines and in the development of their applications. **All** applicants are encouraged to contact the LCBP office before submitting applications. Once awards are announced, LCBP staff can assist with the development of a more detailed workplan and Quality Assurance Project Plan, as needed, and will be available throughout the duration of the project.

A. Pollution Prevention & Habitat Conservation Grants

PURPOSE:

This grant category supports projects up to \$20,000. Requests for more than \$20,000 will not be considered. Projects may address any of the priorities identified in *Opportunities for Action*, but those that address **reducing nonpoint source inputs of phosphorus, toxic substances from urban and/or agricultural areas, or projects that target improvement of wetland, riparian or aquatic habitat (e.g. riparian plantings or aquatic organism passage projects) to restore and maintain a healthy and diverse fish & aquatic life community** will rank higher in the review process. Projects that incorporate flood-resilient practices will be awarded up to five extra points in the selection criteria. ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project **MUST** provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application.

Total amount of funding available for this grant category: \$275,000

ELIGIBILITY:

- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees;
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions;
- Natural Resource Conservation Districts (VT) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NY);
- Organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation status, or citizen groups such as watershed or lake associations working in coordination with such an organization, that applies on their behalf and will manage the grant funds; and
- Private businesses, individuals, and state government agencies may collaborate with one of the above groups, but are not eligible to be the primary applicant under this grant program.
- Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must either have or be able to acquire a DUNS number. Please see <http://neiwpc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, based on the information provided in your application. An external peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award

recommendations to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will make all decisions on project awards. The decisions of the Steering Committee are final and may not be appealed. ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application.

1. (30 points) Merit of the project and the extent to which the project will result in tangible benefits or improvements that can be clearly measured toward pollution prevention or reduction or habitat conservation.
2. (15 points) Extent to which the project addresses any of the applicable pollution prevention or habitat conservation priorities in *Opportunities for Action* (2010 edition).
3. (20 points) Extent to which the objectives and tasks support the project concept and are feasible within the proposed schedule. Deliverables should demonstrate task completion and support project continuation.
4. (10 points) Feasibility of the proposed methods.
5. (5 points) Capacity of the organization for carrying out the project.
6. (5 points) Incorporation of a flood resilience component in the project.
7. (5 points) Incorporation of a long-term maintenance plan into the project beyond the life of this grant
8. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget, relative to project objectives. The total funding request must be within the limit of the grant category. Vague or inflated budgets will not be competitive.

B. Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants

PURPOSE:

This grant category supports projects up to \$15,000. Requests for more than \$15,000 will not be considered. Projects may address any of the priorities identified in *Opportunities for Action*, but those that address the following areas will rank higher in the review process:

- Reducing the spread and impact of aquatic invasive species;
- Establishing or expanding early detection and monitoring programs;
- Supporting boat launch or other lake/river access greeter programs designed to inform lake/river users and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

Total amount of funding available for this grant category: \$175,000

ELIGIBILITY:

- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees;
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions;
- Natural Resource Conservation Districts (VT) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NY);
- Organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation status, or citizen groups such as watershed or lake associations working in coordination with such an organization, that applies on their behalf and will manage the grant funds; and
- Private businesses, individuals, and state government agencies may collaborate with one of the above groups, but are not eligible to be the primary applicant under this grant program.
- Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must either have or be able to acquire a DUNS number. Please see <http://neiwpc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, based on the information provided in your application. An external peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award recommendations to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will make all decisions on project awards. The decisions of the Steering Committee are final and may not be appealed. ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some

assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application.

1. (30 points) Merit of the project and the extent to which the project will result in tangible benefits or improvements that can be clearly measured toward aquatic invasive species spread prevention.
2. (20 points) Extent to which the project addresses any of the applicable aquatic invasive species spread prevention priorities in *Opportunities for Action* (2010 edition).
3. (20 points) Extent to which the objectives and tasks support the project concept and are feasible within the proposed schedule. Deliverables should demonstrate task completion and support project continuation.
4. (10 points) Feasibility of the proposed methods.
5. (10 points) Capacity of the organization for carrying out the project.
6. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget, relative to project objectives. The total funding request must be within the limit of the grant category. Vague or inflated budgets will not be competitive.

C. Education and Outreach Grants

PURPOSE:

The Education and Outreach Grants provide up to \$7,500 to eligible groups to inform students and/or adults about key Lake Champlain issues identified in the management plan *Opportunities for Action*. The objective is to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment on a basin issue so that informed decisions and constructive actions will benefit Lake Champlain. Hands-on stewardship activities for citizens are strongly encouraged. Requests for more than \$7,500 will not be considered.

Total amount of funding available for this grant category: \$140,000

ELIGIBILITY:

- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees;
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions;
- Natural Resource Conservation Districts (VT) and Soil and Water Conservation Districts (NY);
- Organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation status, or citizen groups such as watershed or lake associations working in coordination with such an organization, that applies on their behalf and will manage the grant funds; and
- Private businesses, individuals, and state government agencies may collaborate with one of the above groups, but are not eligible to be the primary applicant under this grant program.
- Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must either have or be able to acquire a DUNS number. Please see <http://neiwpc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria, based on the information provided in your application. An external peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award recommendations to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will make all decisions on project awards. The decisions of the Steering Committee are final and may not be appealed. ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application.

1. (25 points) Extent to which the project will inform adults and students about Lake Champlain issues, specifically topics included in *Opportunities for Action*.
2. (25 points) Merit of the project and the extent to which the project will result in tangible products or benefits that can be measured. The proposed methods and capacity of the organization for carrying out the project should be feasible.

3. (20 points) Extent to which the project encourages hands-on activities for citizens and/or reaches new audiences. Extent to which the project enhances other education and outreach efforts in the basin (VT, NY and QC).
4. (10 points) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates the commitment to work with other partners and/or leverage other funding sources to achieve project goals. Multi-jurisdictional projects are encouraged. Projects taking place on private land should show a clear benefit to the surrounding community.
5. (10 points) Knowledge or experience with education and outreach related to Lake Champlain, and the applicant's past performance on similar projects, if applicable.
6. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget, relative to project objectives. The total funding request must be within the limit of the grant category. Vague or inflated budgets will not be competitive. Clarity and conciseness of proposal, adherence to format and relevance to RFP.

NOTE: Grant funding is not eligible for paying admission fees to institutions.

D. Organizational Support Grants

PURPOSE:

The Organizational Support grants provide up to \$4,000 to support increased organizational capacity and long-term effectiveness of watershed organizations working to implement elements of *Opportunities for Action*. Only organizations with 501(c)(3) status are eligible to apply and documentation of nonprofit status is required. The intent of this grant category is to assist watershed organizations with the early stages of their development or to assist established watershed organizations in strengthening their organizational capacity.

Total amount of funding available for this grant category: \$60,000

ELIGIBILITY:

Specific Qualifying Information: All organizations seeking grants in this category must have nonprofit 501(c)(3) status, AND must have an organizational mission statement focused on achieving water quality improvements in the Lake Champlain watershed. Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must either have or be able to acquire a DUNS number. Please see <http://neiwpc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

Examples of Eligible Expenses:

- Purchase of software for improved database or financial management (such as GIS or bookkeeping and accounting software);
- Follow up field assessment checks of success/failure of plantings and other field based projects.
- Strategic planning or other types of board development; and
- Training of staff or volunteers for:
 - a) volunteer recruitment and management;
 - b) grant writing;
 - c) membership recruitment and retention; and
 - d) field techniques/field data collection.

Proposals for regular on-going operational expenses are not likely to be competitive.

SELECTION CRITERIA:

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

1. (40 points) Extent to which the proposal will strengthen the capacity of eligible organizations. (See above for eligibility guidelines).

2. (30 points) Merit of the proposal and the extent to which the proposal will result in tangible benefits or improvements that can be clearly measured.
3. (30 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget, relative to project objectives. The total funding request must be within the limit of the grant category. Vague or inflated budgets will not be considered competitive.

D. Water Trail Grants

PURPOSE:

The Champlain Valley National Heritage Partnership (CVNHP) Water Trail Grants provide up to \$7,500 for projects that involve active participation from youth and students in the research, development and implementation of a non-motorized water trail in their community. A secondary goal of this program is to introduce young people to the professional recreation, planning, historian, naturalist and interpretive fields.

Total amount of funding available for this grant category: \$22,500

ELIGIBILITY:

The following are eligible to apply for 2014 CVNHP Water Trail Grants:

- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees;
- Organizations with 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation status.
- Must be within the [CVNHP region or the Lake Champlain Basin](#).
- Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must either have or be able to acquire a DUNS number. Please see <http://neiwpc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

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 Steering Committee. The LCBP Steering Committee will make all decisions on project awards. The decisions of the Executive Committee are final and may not be appealed. ALL grant proposals submitted in response to this RFP with field-based components to their project MUST provide some assurance of invasive species spread prevention measures in their application.

1. (30 Points) The extent to which the proposed project involves active participation from youth and students in the research, development and implementation of a water trail in their community.
2. (30 Points) Extent to which the applicant demonstrates the commitment to work with partners to achieve project goals and the extent to which this cooperation will enhance the effectiveness of CVNHP/LCBP funding. Partners with the following areas of expertise should be identified:
 - planning (e. g. interpretive or recreation planning),
 - environmental education,
 - water safety,
 - cultural resources,
 - invasive species spread prevention.
3. (20 Points) Merit of the project, including all of the following:
 - The extent to which the project will result in tangible products and benefit that address the tasks identified in [the Cultural Heritage and Recreation chapter of *Opportunities for Action*](#).
 - Clarity and conciseness of proposal, adherence to format and relevance to RFP.
 - If applicable, the applicant's past performance on similar projects will also be considered.

4. (20 Points) Appropriateness and clarity of the 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 will be embedded in the contract as a requirement.

Partial Funding

Each year, the LCBP receives applications for many more worthwhile projects than its resources can support. Because the LCBP seeks to support as many of these projects as possible, grant review committees may recommend offering only a portion of the funding requested in an application. In such cases, the 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 LCBP sponsors other grant programs. There also are several other funding opportunities for projects within the Lake Champlain Basin. Please visit the LCBP website (<http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/>) for more information.