Release date: February 10, 2021

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement**

**Request for Proposals**

*Unifying Stormwater Technical Assistance Programs for Private Properties*

*in the Lake Champlain Basin*

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP), in cooperation with NEIWPCC, is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) to aggregate, share, and align existing non-regulatory stormwater education and outreach program’s tools and messages to implement an intentional and coordinated non-regulatory stormwater property assessment and homeowner education initiative in the New York and Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain Basin. The successful applicant will propose a project that completes the outputs described in the attached RFP according to the required project timeline. Up to $125,000is available to support this project, and it is anticipated that one successful project will be chosen.

This work is applicable to the Clean Water Goal of the LCBP’s long-term management plan - [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](http://plan.lcbp.org). This project is supported by funds awarded to NEIWPCC on behalf of the Lake Champlain Basin Program by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

This RFP is available on the Lake Champlain Basin Program website ([lcbp.org/grants](http://lcbp.org/grants)). To receive a copy of the RFP via U.S. Postal Service, contact the Lake Champlain Basin Program office at (802) 372-3213 or toll free at (800) 468-LCBP in New York and Vermont.

Applicants must submit proposals in electronic format ONLY. Please see the RFP and the attached proposal format information for complete details.

**DEADLINE NOTICE:**

Electronic versions of proposals must be RECEIVED by [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) no later than:

**March 12, 2021**

**Late, incomplete, or non-electronic proposals will not be considered**.

Successful applicants will be notified in April 2021. Although LCBP reserves the right to make no awards, we anticipate granting one award from this RFP.

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Request for Proposals**

*Unifying Stormwater Technical Assistance Programs for Private Properties*

*in the Lake Champlain Basin.*

**0. Overview**

Congress designated Lake Champlain as a resource of national significance with the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990. The Special Designation Act also established the Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) and authorized it to receive direct support from US EPA under the Clean Water Act. The LCBP coordinates, and funds, efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin’s water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources. The LCBP works in partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, businesses and citizen groups. These partners lead collaborative, non-partisan actions to address water quality and environmental challenges that cross political boundaries in a multi-national watershed. Management efforts are guided by the comprehensive management plan [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](http://plan.lcbp.org).

Since 1992, [NEIWPCC](http://www.neiwpcc.org/) has served as the primary program administrator of LCBP at the request of the Lake Champlain Steering Committee, and administers the program’s personnel and finances. NEIWPCC is a regional commission that helps the states of the Northeast preserve and advance water quality. NEIWPCC engages and convenes water quality professionals and other interested parties from New England and New York to collaborate on water, wastewater, and environmental science challenges across shared regions, ecosystems, and areas of expertise.

**I.** **Unifying Stormwater Technical Assistance Programs Background**

Developed lands can be a substantial source of nutrients and other pollutants to Lake Champlain and are estimated to account for approximately 16% (147 metric tons or 323,600 pounds) of the total phosphorus load to Lake Champlain each year. Nutrients and pollutants flow over developed land areas such as impervious pavement, lawns, and rooftops which shed rainwater quickly and do not allow stormwater to soak into the ground.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Many groups across the Lake Champlain Basin conduct non-regulatory stormwater outreach to private homeowners to reduce the amount of stormwater runoff coming from developed lands that may fall below the requirements for stormwater permits in their jurisdiction (New York or Vermont). This concurrent interest from different watershed groups to develop similar programming has led to a variety of messaging, site assessment tools, recommendations, and incentive structures across the region. A recent Stormwater Outreach and Education collaborative effort in the Lake Champlain region identified the need to better strategize and coordinate non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance on private lands to stretch resources and amplify collective messaging for stronger impact.

This grant opportunity capitalizes on that identified need to aggregate and share existing stormwater education and outreach tools and materials and will take the next step in aligning tools and messaging to implement an intentional and coordinated non-regulatory property assessment and homeowner education initiative across the New York and Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain Basin.

This unified approach to managing non-regulatory stormwater issues at small sites across the Basin will help document efforts to reduce phosphorus loadings in the urban land use sector to achieve the phosphorus TMDL for Lake Champlain. A TMDL is an estimate of the amount of a pollutant that a body of water can receive without impairing vital uses, such as drinking water supply or support of aquatic life. Because excess phosphorus from a variety of sources has impaired water quality in many parts of Lake Champlain, the states of Vermont and New York each maintain a phosphorus TMDL for their respective portions of the Lake’s basin.

**II. Unifying Stormwater Technical Assistance Programs Collaboration**

This program is intended to be a collaborative effort among interested organizations within the New York and Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain Basin who currently support non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance programs geared toward private landowners. Input from these groups will be provided in coordinated meetings facilitated by the selected award applicant for this opportunity.

State input will be provided during the development of the aligned assessment tools and monitoring incentive structure to ensure that the information collected via the non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance programs can feed into each State’s required protocols for collecting, calculating, and reporting stormwater assessment, design, and implementation projects to account for their nutrient reduction goals.

Once fully developed, the aligned stormwater outreach tools, materials, and messaging will be made available for use by any organization in the Lake Champlain Basin for development of their own non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance program for private properties.

**III. Project Overview**

A contractor will be selected from this grant opportunity to work with organizations in the New York and Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain Basin who have existing non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance programs geared toward private landowners. The contractor will facilitate meetings to aggregate, share, and align existing stormwater education and outreach program’s tools and messages to implement an intentional and coordinated non-regulatory stormwater property assessment and homeowner education initiative in the Lake Champlain Basin.

The successful contract recipient will:

* Coordinate and facilitate up to six focus group meetings with interested organizations to evaluate and develop shared assessment tools, messaging, certification, monitoring and incentive structures.
  1. Assessment tools: create a property assessment tool and complementing best management practice recommendations for landowners consistent with participating programs across the Lake Champlain basin that includes each State’s data collection and calculation requirements for reporting stormwater projects to account for nutrient reduction goals.
  2. Messaging: create consistent messaging approaches to be used during public outreach and property assessments to minimize confusion for landowners. All messaging should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
  3. Certification: create a shared certification protocol and certification award with space for respective partner recognition.
  4. Monitoring and incentive structure: create a shared follow-up monitoring and re-certification structure that includes each State’s data collection, calculation, and reporting requirements for monitoring stormwater projects to account for nutrient reduction goals so that best management practices implemented by different landowners are equally accountable across the Basin.
* Coordinate 50 or more non-regulatory stormwater assessments on private properties following the newly created materials in collaboration with the local organizations participating in this process. The property assessment prioritization should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
* Coordinate the design and implementation of at least 5 best management practices identified in the stormwater assessments to treat or manage at least 10 acres of land for stormwater runoff.

This program most closely aligns with LCBP OFA Task Areas:

* Objective I.A.1.b: Support innovative management approaches likely to achieve results
* Objective I.C.3.b: Fund Research and Implementation Programs to Reduce Effective Impervious Surface Area
* Objective I.C.3.c: Fund design and implementation of GSI/LID projects in critical areas
* Objective I.C.4.b: Support Projects to Restore and Protect Riparian Forests & Corridors
* Objective I.C.4.c: Educate and Assist Landowners to Promote Clean Water Regulations on Forested Lands

**IV. Project tasks and outputs**

**Summary:**

The primary goal of this project is to aggregate and share existing stormwater education and outreach tools and materials and move Lake Champlain Basin-focused watershed groups toward closer alignment in tools and messaging to implement an intentional and coordinated non-regulatory property assessment and homeowner education initiative across the New York and Vermont portions of the Lake Champlain Basin. To achieve this goal, the following tasks, outputs, and outcomes will be successfully met.

**Tasks:**

1. **Coordinate and facilitate up to six focus group meetings** with interested organizations to evaluate and develop shared assessment tools, messaging, certification, monitoring and incentive structures.
   * The work product will be the meeting summaries and a list of each meeting’s identified action items.
2. **Create a property assessment tool and complementing best management practice recommendations** **for landowners**.
   * The work product will be the assessment tool and documents describing the newly aligned best management practice recommendations for homeowners. The documents should describe how the assessment tool includes each State’s data collection and calculation requirements for reporting stormwater projects to account for nutrient reduction goals.
3. **Create consistent messaging** approaches to be used during public outreach and property assessments to minimize confusion for landowners.
   * The work products will be documents describing the newly aligned messaging strategies, drafted press releases, and drafted social media posts. All messaging should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
4. **Create a shared certification protocol and certification award**.
   * The work product will be the newly aligned certification protocol and certification award, with space for respective partner logos.
5. **Create a shared follow-up monitoring and re-certification** structure that includes each State’s data collection requirements for monitoring stormwater projects to account for nutrient reduction goals so that best management practices implemented by different landowners are equally accountable across the Basin.
   * The work product will be a document describing the newly aligned monitoring and re-certification structure and a document that describes the approach partner organizations will follow to ensure consistency in application of the program across organizations.
6. **Coordinate 50 or more non-regulatory stormwater assessments** on private properties following the newly created materials in collaboration with the organizations participating in this process. The property assessment prioritization should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
   * The work product will include copies of the completed stormwater assessments with associated pictures, best management practice recommendations, and State nutrient reduction reporting requirements.
7. **Coordinate the design and implementation of at least 5 best management practices** identified in the stormwater assessments to treat and/or manage at least 10 acres of land for stormwater runoff.
   * The work product will be copies of the best management practice designs that contain the State nutrient reduction reporting requirements, if applicable, and pictures of the installed best management practices.

**Outputs**

1. Up to six focus group meetings to evaluate and develop shared assessment tools, messaging, certification, monitoring and incentive structures.
2. Assessment tool available for organizations, including best management practice recommendations for homeowners.
3. Consistent public outreach and assessment messaging approaches to be used during public outreach and property assessments to minimize confusion for landowners. Messaging should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
4. Shared certification protocol, award, and follow-up monitoring and re-certification so that the similar projects installed by different homeowners are equally accountable.
5. At least 50 parcels totaling at least 50 acres of private lands assessed for stormwater impact. Parcel assessment prioritization should emphasize the inclusion or target of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
6. 50 homeowners receiving direct non-regulatory technical assistance in property assessment and project design and implementation.
7. 5 best management practices installed with 10 acres of stormwater run-off treated or retained on-site.

* \*All work product documentation will recognize partner organizations for this program, with relevant logos.

**Outcomes**

1. Consistent messaging, certification, and follow-up across the Lake Champlain Basin will amplify the voice of stormwater work and the value to homeowners for participating.
2. Use of common messaging across partner organizations will help improve efficacy of education efforts and minimize confusion.
3. Leveraging a regional partnership will help align incentive payments and cost-shares for related projects across the Lake Champlain Basin.
4. Private landowners across the Basin, including those in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities will receive an equivalent level of non-regulatory technical assistance, consistent recommendations for implementation, and consistent incentives to participate.
5. Non-regulatory stormwater technical assistance programs collecting State-required data for stormwater assessment, design, and implementation projects will allow for each State to report a more complete nutrient reduction dataset for the Lake Champlain TMDLs.

**Success of the development of the program will include the following metrics:**

1. Engagement of local organizations in the focus group meetings to development of the newly aligned program: number of participants and organizations represented.
2. Creation and group consensus on the development of the shared assessment tools, messaging, certification, monitoring and incentive structures.
3. Messaging emphasizes or targets the inclusion of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities.
4. Number of stormwater assessments and acres assessed on private properties utilizing the newly created materials within this grant period (50+ assessments)
5. Number of stormwater best management practice designs created (5+ BMP designs).
6. Number of stormwater best management practices implemented (5+ BMPs implemented) and acres of developed lands treated for stormwater runoff (10+ acres treated).

**III. Summary of other project requirements**

1. Following initial notification of the award, a workplan must be approved by the LCBP before a contract agreement can be executed and the work initiated. The workplan will detail the logistical elements of the project, including deliverables and project timeline. Information about the LCBP grant process, workplan development guidelines, and reporting requirements can be found on the LCBP website at: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>. The successful applicant will enter into a contract with NEIWPCC in order to complete the work and will be compensated upon completion of workplan deliverables.
2. Grant applicants are required to follow the small purchase method which is a relatively simple and informal method (procurement procedure) for purchasing supplies, equipment, and services that cost more than $10,000 and less than $250,000. This procurement procedure is applicable to proposals submitted in response to this RFP if the primary applicant is not a for-profit organization. The purpose is to ensure fair and open competition for purchases supported by LCBP/federal funding. If the applicant plans to use LCBP funding to obtain supplies, equipment or contractual services to complete its proposed workplan, then it must follow federal procurement regulations:
   * Procurement of supplies and services that do not exceed $10,000 may be made without soliciting competitive quotes if the price is considered reasonable.
   * Procurement of supplies, equipment and services that are greater than $10,000 and do not cost more than $250,000 require that the recipient obtain multiple price quotes through a documented competitive process. Good faith efforts to obtain services from disadvantaged business enterprises should also be made, including contacting the small business administration and minority business development agency to inform them about the opportunity for businesses to submit price quotes as part of the competitive process. At least three price quotes for the contract work must be secured. The selected item or service does not need to be the lowest cost if it does not meet your requirements or you can otherwise demonstrate that the higher price offers the “best value.” Justification must be provided for the outcome of the bid process. This process may take place prior to the submission of a proposal for LCBP funds. For further information, see the small purchase method described here: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>
3. The successful applicant will prepare brief quarterly reports documenting progress on each task in the project (see attached Proposal Format Requirements). A final report fully documenting the project’s results will be required at project completion.
4. When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style and may be published as part of the Lake Champlain Basin Program’s Technical Report Series, located here: <http://www.lcbp.org/media-center/publications-library/technical-reports/>. Some content of this report may also be used for future LCBP or NEIWPCC public outreach materials.
5. The successful applicant will complete the project according to the following schedule (subject to change):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposals due to LCBP | March 12, 2021 |
| Applicants notified of funding decisions | April 2021 |
| Detailed project workplan due | May 2021 |
| Project start date | July 2021 |
| Project deliverables and draft final report due | March 2023 |

1. All materials and work products, regardless of physical form or characteristics, produced as a result of this project shall be made available to LCBP and NEIWPCC in a suitable file format. LCBP and NEIWPCC shall have an unrestricted right to use any materials, software, maps, studies, reports, and other products or data generated using assistance funds or specified to be delivered. The contractor shall not obtain, attempt to obtain, or file for a patent, copyright, trademark or any other interest in any such materials, or work products without the expressed, written consent of LCBP and NEIWPCC, and subject to any other approvals required by state or federal law. Reports and other deliverables will credit LCBP, EPA, and NEIWPCC as funding partners for any work completed under the project contract.
2. The successful applicant will be required to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. More details will be provided to the successful applicant at the time of contracting.

**IV. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and non-government agencies. Federal, state, and provincial government entities are ineligible to apply to receive funding through this opportunity. The selected contractor will be responsible for the completion of all project tasks. Individuals and representatives from organizations that participated in the development or review of this RFP and its contents are ineligible to apply.

**V. Proposal evaluation and selection criteria**

Proposals received in response to this RFP will undergo an external peer review, and will be judged according to the following criteria:

* + - 1. Knowledge of the Lake Champlain Basin and stormwater best management practices (20 points).
      2. Demonstrated experience developing aligned tools, materials and certificate programs to achieve stated goals of this grant opportunity (35 points).
      3. Demonstrated meeting facilitation experience and ability to collaborate with stakeholders (20 points).
      4. Clarity, conciseness, and adherence to the proposal guidelines (10 points).
      5. Appropriateness of budget and budget justification, describing how the awarded funds will be used to produce the set of deliverables, outputs, and outcomes described above (10 points).
      6. Proposal emphasizes the inclusion of audiences in traditionally underserved, minority, low-income, or tribal communities (5 points).

**VI. Available funds, match requirements, and indirect costs**

A total of $125,000 may be made available for a project to be supported under this RFP. No in-kind or cash match is required, though match will be considered favorably during budget review.

LCBP and NEIWPCC encourage 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. Use of some grant funds for indirect costs is also allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or refer to [OMB Circular A-87 (Revised)](https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/omb/circulars_a087_2004/#atta). ***Sections D, E,*** and ***F*** of **Attachment A** provide an overview of direct and indirect costs. **For projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 10% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 10% of direct match contributed, unless a higher federally negotiated indirect rate is in place, and proof of that negotiated rate is provided.** The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>

**VII. Appropriate Use of Funds**

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

**VIII. Notification of Award**

Award notification to applicants is expected by April 2021. The award recipient may be asked to submit a revised workplan, timeline, and task-based budget at this time. Project work cannot begin until a contract is signed by both parties. LCBP and NEIWPCC will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the contract start date. Payment for costs incurred will be on a reimbursement basis per the contract payment schedule and contingent upon completion of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables.

**IX. Period of Performance**

Work is expected to begin in **summer 2021** and is to be completed no later than **March 31, 2023** (see specific deliverable deadlines in Section II above).

1. **Schedule and Requirements for Proposal Submission**

* Please follow the format outlined in the attached Proposal Format Requirements.
* Submit an electronic version of your proposal to [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) no later than **March 12, 2021**. Please be sure you receive email notification that your application was received. Electronic submissions must be in MS Word compatible format.

1. **Contact Information**

Please direct all inquiries to:

Lauren Jenness

LCBP Environmental Analyst

802-372-0223

[ljenness@lcbp.org](mailto:ljenness@lcbp.org)

**Proposal format requirements**

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed a 6-page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited and investigator resumes, supplemental material, and letters of participation or support.

**TITLE:** Concise and descriptive.

**POINT OF CONTACT:** Name, position, organization, address, telephone, and email of the person who will be the point of contact.

**AUTHORIZED REPRESENTATIVE:** Name, position, organization address, telephone, and email of the person who is authorized to sign the contract.

**ABSTRACT:** Brief description of proposed work.

**INTRODUCTION:** Overview of the project and what it will accomplish in relation to the RFP.

**TASKS:** Describe in detail the tasks that will be performed, including methods and approaches.

**DELIVERABLES AND OUTPUTS:** Detailed description of the items that will be sent to LCBP as documentation of work completed through the award, and the elements of the projects that are not delivered to LCBP, such as outreach efforts. Quarterly progress reports and a final report (including GIS data) are required deliverables.

**OUTCOMES:** Provide a description of the anticipated impact or change in condition (i.e. behavior or environment) that you are trying to achieve through this award. Outcomes may be short-term or long-term.

**SCHEDULE:** Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of the major tasks and deliverables and outputs. Quarterly progress reports are due on the last day of December, March, June, and September. Work is to be completed within the specified performance period in the RFP.

**DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Cost breakdown by major tasks and budget categories (e.g., personnel, equipment), linking costs to specific tasks/deliverables wherever possible. Breakdown should show costs to be covered by the LCBP award and other sources (if applicable), as well as any match amounts and totals. (1 page, not included in the 8-page maximum total for the proposal).

**SUPPLEMENTAL MATERIALS** (not counted as part of the 8-page limit) may be provided to demonstrate social marketing products delivered or developed by the applicant team for previous opportunities.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **EXAMPLE** Budget Spreadsheet | | | | | | |  |  |
| ***Line Item*** | | **Task 1** | **Task 2** | **Task 3** | **Task 4** | **Task 5**  (add or remove columns as needed) | ***Line Item* *Totals* for All Tasks** | Proposed Match (if any) | *Line Item* *Totals* + Proposed Match |
| Personnel | | $500 | $1,200 | $800 | $495 | $1,000 | $3,995 | $3,000 | $6,995 |
| Fringe | | $150 | $360 | $240 | $149 | $300 | $1,199 | $1,000 | $2,199 |
| Travel | | $0 | $100 | $300 | $100 | $0 | $500 | $400 | $900 |
| Supplies | | $0 | $200 | $0 | $2,000 | $500 | $2,700 | $1,000 | $3,700 |
| Professional Services | | $0 | $0 | $0 | $2,500 | $0 | $2,500 | $1,000 | $3,500 |
| **Total Direct** | | **$650** | **$1,860** | **$1,340** | **$5,244** | **$1,800** | **$10,894** | **$6,400** | **$17,294** |
| Indirect | | $78 | $223 | $161 | $629 | $216 | $1,307 | $0 | $1,307 |
| **TOTAL BUDGET** | | **$728** | **$2,083** | **$1,501** | **$5,873** | **$2,016** | **$12,201** | **$6,400** | **$18,601** |

1. Lake Champlain Basin Program. *2018 State of the Lake and Ecosystem Indicators Report*. Grand Isle, VT. June 2018. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)