# colorlogo**2019 *Opportunities for Action***

# **Local Implementation Grants:**

# **GRANT GUIDELINES**

Local Implementation Grants Overview

The 2019 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](http://plan.lcbp.org)). Grant funds are anticipated through pending agreements with the Great Lakes Fishery Commission and U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. Two categories of grants are available: **(A)** **Pollution Prevention & Wildlife Habitat Conservation and (B) Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention.** A forthcoming RFP will address two further categories: Education and Outreach and Organizational Support.

Descriptions of these 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 LCBP staff prior to submitting your proposal if you need further explanation of the requirements and policies summarized here. Please note: These guidelines are not necessarily applicable to other LCBP grant programs.

No more than one unique application may be submitted by the same organization in any single category, though organizations may submit separate applications to different grant categories. Each application must be submitted to only one of the grant categories listed in Sections A and B below.

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 aquatic invasive species spread prevention procedures can be found at this link: <http://www.lcbp.org/water-environment/aquatic-invasive-species/aquatic-invasive-species-spread/>. If you have any questions regarding whether or not your project may require spread prevention measures, please contact **Meg Modley**, LCBP Aquatic Invasive Species Management Coordinator, at [mmodley@lcbp.org](mailto:mmodley@lcbp.org) or (802) 372-0215.

Applicants 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.

Applications must be submitted to LCBP by

**Thursday, October 31st, 2019**

Applications should be submitted to [grants@lcbp.org](mailto:grants@lcbp.org) in MS Word or a Word-compatible format. **Hardcopy or faxed submissions will *not* be accepted.** Letters of support or participation (e.g. for land access) may be provided in Word or PDF format.

**Grant applicants are required to follow the small purchase method** which is a relatively simple procurement procedure for purchasing supplies, equipment, and services that cost more than $10,000 and less than $250,000 (see Appropriate use of Funds below and find more info at <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>). **Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food.**

Successful applicants will be required to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. More details will be provided to the successful applicant at the time of contracting.

Lake Champlain Basin Program and *Opportunities for Action*

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](http://lcbp.org) (LCBP) and authorized it to receive direct support from US EPA under the Clean Water Act. LCBP works in partnership with government agencies from New York, Vermont, and Québec, private organizations, local communities, and individuals to coordinate and fund efforts that benefit the Lake Champlain Basin’s water quality, fisheries, wetlands, wildlife, recreation, and cultural resources. These 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/)*.*

**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 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 (MS Word or PDF versions of these letters are acceptable).
* A maximum of three additional letters of support may also be included.
* All letters must be submitted with the application.
* If projects will take place on private property, written landowner permission can be supplied with the application, and will be required at the time of workplan development.

Local Match Contribution (optional)

* While non-federal match is not required, applicants should clearly document any intended sources and uses 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, although additional federal funding may be included in the proposal to demonstrate the expanded scope of work.

Project Workplan Development

Applicants must submit a detailed project workplan **within thirty days** of LCBP grant award notification. This workplan is subject to the LCBP approval process before a contract will be issued. The workplan describes the project methods, tasks, timeline, outputs, outcomes, 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 should be expected by March 2020 for all grant categories identified in this RFP. Projects must be initiated within six months of award notification. Projects should typically be completed within one year of the official project start date. Expanded project time periods will be considered if appropriately justified.

Memorandum of Agreement

Following approval of the project workplan by LCBP, each award recipient will enter into a formal memorandum of agreement (MOA) with NEIWPCC, which administers local implementation grant funds on behalf of LCBP. The MOA will describe the project timeframe, LCBP supported task-based budget, and required outputs and outcomes. For more information, please see NEIWPCC’s [guide to electronic contracting](http://1o44jeda9yq37r1n61vqlgly-wpengine.netdna-ssl.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/NEIWPCC-Guide-for-Contractors.pdf). Some projects may be issued via purchase order, depending on the nature of work and other factors.

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. **Please contact LCBP staff if you think your project might require a QAPP or if you are uncertain about this requirement**. The QAPP must be fully-approved before any environmental data collection or analysis activities can begin on this project. For projects requiring a QAPP, LCBP/NEIWPCC 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 complexity and scope 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 at this link: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/qapp/>. Please note: Projects for the 2020 field season are appropriate for this funding cycle. The earliest a new QAPP could be approved will be April, 2020 so applicants should not plan for projects requiring a QAPP before that time. Exceptions for generic or continuing QAPPs will be considered.

Payment Procedures

* 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 100% completion of tasks and outputs identified within the workplan budget.
* Groups should expect a four to six 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 or after the official MOA or purchase order period.** If you anticipate project work extending beyond the MOA end date, contact 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 NEIWPCC.

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/NEIWPCC as a funding source at the project inception and conclusion. LCBP report templates may be found 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 agreement will contain a funding acknowledgement statement that grant recipients should use on their project-funded products. Additionally, inclusion of the LCBP and NEIWPCC logos, available from the LCBP Grant Tools webpage <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>, may be appropriate on published materials supported by the grant. To determine what level of crediting is appropriate, consult your designated LCBP Project Officer.

Appropriate Use of Funds

1. Contractors are now 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 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, contact LCBP.

1. Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food.

**Direct and Indirect Costs:**

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. 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. **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.** The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/

# **Restrictions**

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 endowment funds, lobbying, or legislative advocacy of any kind.

LCBP Staff Support

LCBP staff members are available to assist applicants in the interpretation of these application guidelines while proposals are being developed. All applicants are encouraged to contact the LCBP office *before* submitting applications. Once awards are announced and until the date they are due, LCBP staff can provide guidance for the development of a more detailed workplan, budget, and QAPP as needed. After projects are awarded, staff will be available to assist throughout the duration of the project.

A. Pollution Prevention & Habitat Conservation Grants

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 31, 2019**

**PURPOSE:**

This grant category supports projects with total budgeted costs up to $20,000. Projects may address any of the priorities identified in *Opportunities for Action*, such as:

* Reducing non-point source inputs of phosphorus;
* Reducing toxic substance inputs from urban and/or agricultural areas;
* 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 and aquatic life community;
* Implementation of flood resilience practices

**Anticipated number of awards:** 12-15

**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://neiwpcc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

**SELECTION CRITERIA:**

An external peer review committee will evaluate applications and make award recommendations to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will make all final decisions on project awards. Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

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* (2017 edition).
3. (20 points) Extent to which the outputs and tasks support the project concept and are feasible within the proposed schedule.
4. (10 points) Feasibility of the proposed methods.
5. (10 points) Capacity of the applicant to successfully complete the project.
6. (5 points) Incorporation of a long-term plan for the project beyond the life of the grant (e.g., a long-term maintenance plan for an implementation project).
7. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget relative to project objectives.

B. Aquatic Invasive Species Spread Prevention Grants

**APPLICATION DEADLINE: October 31, 2019**

**PURPOSE:**

This grant category supports projects with total budgeted costs up to $15,000 that aim to prevent the introduction of aquatic invasive species to and/or from the Lake Champlain Basin and to limit the impact and spread of these species within the Basin. Projects may address any of the priorities identified in *Opportunities for Action* and 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 or river access greeter programs designed to inform lake or river users and prevent the spread of aquatic invasive species.

**Anticipated number of awards:** 10-15

**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://neiwpcc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuidefoContractors.pdf> for more information about DUNS and how to acquire a DUNS number.

**SELECTION CRITERIA:**

An external peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications, and make award recommendations to the Lake Champlain Steering Committee. The Lake Champlain Steering Committee will make all final decisions on project awards. Applications will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

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* (2017 edition).
3. (20 points) Extent to which the objectives and tasks support the project concept and are feasible within the proposed schedule.
4. (10 points) Feasibility of the proposed methods.
5. (10 points) Capacity of the applicant to successfully complete the project.
6. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget relative to project objectives.