Release Date: November 7, 2019

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Announcement**

**Request for Proposals**

***For Planter retrofits in the NY portion of the Lake Champlain Basin***

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is pleased to announce a Request for Proposals (RFP) for technical services to work with farmers to retrofit existing planting equipment (e.g. conventional corn planters) to enable no-till planting practices. Grant funds may support technical services for design and installation of retrofits as well as purchase of equipment and supplies needed for the retrofits. Up to $50,000 is available for this project for one successful applicant. This project will support the management of phosphorus and sediment loading and contaminants generated from New York’s agricultural lands by aiding pollution prevention efforts as outlined in the LCBP’s long-term management plan - [*Opportunities for Action*](https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/opportunities-for-action/)*: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*.

This Request for Proposals is available from the Lake Champlain Basin Program website. Look for the link on our homepage at [www.lcbp.org](http://www.lcbp.org). To receive a copy of the RFP via US 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 through NEIWPCC’s online portal.** Please see the RFP and the attached proposal format information for complete details.

**DEADLINE NOTICE:**

Proposals must be submitted no later than:

**December 20, 2019 at 12:00 PM EST (noon)**

LATE OR INCOMPLETE PROPOSALS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED.

The successful applicant will be notified by late January 2020. LCBP anticipates granting **one** (1) award from this RFP.

**Lake Champlain Basin Program Request for Proposals**

*Planter Retrofit funding opportunity for farms in the NY Lake Champlain Basin*

1. **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. 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*.

Since 1992, the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC) 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 congressionally authorized not-for-profit interstate organization whose membership includes all six New England states and New York State and whose mission is to help its member states to realize their individual and collective water program goals. ***For this RFP, LCBP will be using NEIWPCC’s electronic proposal submission portal. See section XI. for more information.***

1. **Background**

Proper management of agricultural runoff is a high-priority step toward improving water quality. Most agricultural nonpoint source pollution is due to erosion of soil particles containing high levels of nutrients. A successful way to mitigate soil erosion is through reducing tillage and promoting soil health gains using the **Residue and tillage management, No-till - NRCS 329 practice**. Research suggests that reductions to tillage at planting time can prevent soil erosion and effectively reduce nutrient and sediment pollution to waterways. Agricultural Best Management Practices (BMPs), including soil health practices, have received a great deal of attention in recent years in pollution reduction efforts, but few resources have been allocated toward more effective means of planting without tillage. Recent research has demonstrated that the use of no-till planters can reduce the impact on the landscape from traditional seeding techniques.

The scope of this Request for Proposals is for one successful applicant to support low-cost retrofits for corn planters in the New York portion of the Lake Champlain Basin for the 2020 growing season. These retrofits should adhere to the October 2017 Practice Standard from [USDA-NRCS New York (code 329)](https://efotg.sc.egov.usda.gov/references/public/NY/nyps329.pdf): Residue and Tillage Management, No-Till. Successful proposals will include efforts to make area farmers aware of the planter retrofit program funding opportunity, the solicitation of voluntary enrollment of current, privately-owned farm planters, and technical assistance by a qualified applicant for the retrofitting of the conventional corn planters with a cost-share conservation incentive. Farmer support for the program should be well-documented within proposals. Any farmer currently receiving payment for similar funding assistance from other state or federal programs is not eligible to receive payments through this funding opportunity. The applicant should draw on experience from other successful technical assistance for planter retrofit programs, but proposals should be carefully crafted to address the unique needs of farms in the Lake Champlain basin of New York.

This planter retrofit funding opportunity should include the support for a qualified technical service provider, marketing of the funding opportunity to farmers in the New York-portion of the Lake Champlain basin, and include a cost-share incentive for agricultural landowners. Photographic documentation of selected planters before, during, and the acreage used after retrofits will help gauge the success of the program. In addition to reducing nutrient runoff from agricultural lands, the project also will help decrease pollution to Lake Champlain as outlined in LCBP’s long term management plan: [*Opportunities for Action: An Evolving Plan for the Future of the Lake Champlain Basin*](https://www.lcbp.org/about-us/opportunities-for-action/). The final project deliverable will be a report documenting the outcome of the retrofit opportunity and degree of interest from the agricultural community. Success of the project also will be measured by how many acres were planted using the retrofitted planters and if the planted areas were in areas which contribute disproportionate quantities of phosphorus to nearby waterways. Acres adjacent to surface waters should be given highest priority for application with retrofitted planting equipment.

1. **Project Tasks and Deliverables**

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) seeks proposals for technical services to retrofit traditional corn planters into no-till planters in the New York portion of the Lake Champlain basin. Proposals should be set up as a cost-share incentive to agricultural landowners. Proposals should include the following workplan components:

1. Identify agricultural operators with planters eligible for retrofitting to their no-till planters on fields near or adjacent to a surface water flowing into Lake Champlain.

2. Work with landowners to maximize voluntary participation in the project with a cost-share program and promote awareness of agricultural BMPs.

3. Offer a minimum of 7 planters to retrofit in the New York portion of the Lake Champlain basin following the appropriate USDA NRCS practice standard for Residue and Tillage Management, No-till, 329-CPS-1, by December 31, 2020.

4. Document the success of the no-till plantings with photographs of a subset of selected sites prior to no-till planting, after germination, and more than 30 days post-no-till planting. Include the number of acres planted with the retrofitted equipment.

6. Provide outreach to the farm community to build support for future no-till planting efforts.

7. Develop a final report documenting the outcomes of the preceding steps.

**IV. Summary of Other Requirements for the Selected Proposal**

The selected applicants will be required to complete the following additional tasks:

1. Within thirty days of LCBP grant award notification, applications must submit a detailed project workplan that will be subject to the LCBP approval process before a contract will be issued. The workplan describes the project methods, tasks, timeline, outputs, and task-based budget. As you develop the task-based budget, keep in mind that payments will only be made for completed tasks. Payments for partially completed tasks will not be processed. 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/>. The successful applicant will enter into an agreement with NEIWPCC in order to complete the work and will be compensated upon completion of workplan deliverables.
2. 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 are unsure about the QAPP 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, NEIWPCC/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 at this link: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/qapp/>.
3. 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/
1. The successful applicant will prepare and submit brief quarterly reports documenting progress on each objective and task in the project (see attached Proposal Format Requirements). A final report fully documenting the project results will be required at project completion.
2. When approved, the final report will be edited for content and style in consultation with the successful respondent 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 public outreach materials.
3. The successful applicant will complete the project according to the following schedule (subject to change):

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Proposals Due to LCBP | December 20, 2019 at 12:00 PM EST (noon) |
| Applicants Notified of Funding Decisions  | January 31, 2020 |
| Detailed Project Workplan Due  | February 15, 2020 |
| Project Start Date  | March 15, 2020 |
| Project Deliverables and Final Report Due | June 30, 2021 |

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, NEIWPCC, and EPA or the Great Lakes Fishery Commission (GLFC) in a suitable file format. LCBP, NEIWPCC, and EPA or GLFC 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, NEIWPCC, and EPA or the GLFC as funding partners for any work completed under the project contract.
2. GIS data produced under this project must adhere to the requirements of EPA’s National Geospatial Data Policy (see <https://www.epa.gov/geospatial/epa-national-geospatial-data-policy>). Specifically, the selected contractor must provide documentation for all produced data, including source information for each digital data layer (i.e., scale and accuracy, map projection, coordinate system, etc.), and specific information about the data layer itself (i.e., method used, geographic extent of data layer, file format, date of creation, staff contact, description and definition of data fields and their contents, related files, if any, and description of data quality and quality assurance methods used). The EPA Metadata Editor (EME) was developed to simplify and standardize metadata development and is a recommended tool for streamlining production of required metadata. The EME and related training materials can be downloaded from <https://edg.epa.gov/EME/>. Specific technical guidance on geospatial deliverables and acceptable formats can be found at <https://www.epa.gov/geospatial/epa-region-2-gis-deliverables-guidance>. GIS data produced under this project will be submitted to LCBP as a deliverable.
3. NEIWPCC requires its contractors to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. Contractors must submit proof of adequate insurance coverage on an annual basis for the duration of the project. The Contractor shall, at its sole expense, obtain and maintain in force, and shall require any subcontractor or assignee to obtain and maintain in force, both for the benefit of the Commission, the following kinds and amounts of insurance:
	* Workers' Compensation Insurance. The policy shall cover the obligations of the Contractor in accordance with the Workers' Compensations Law and Disability Benefits Law covering all operations under the Contract, whether performed by it, or by its subcontractor.
	* Liability and Property Damage Insurance. Unless otherwise specified, each policy shall have limits not less than: $2,000,000 combined (Bodily Injury & Property Damage); $3,000,000 aggregate, single limit per occurrence.

Subawardees must comply with all requirements and responsibilities of this subaward and with all U.S. EPA General Terms and Conditions under the prime agreement as outlined at <http://www2.epa.gov/grants/grant-terms-and-conditions#General%20Terms%20and%20Conditions>. Subawardees are required to submit a Subrecipient Risk Assessment Form with their proposal (see Appendix E). This form includes a requirement to attach an audit in some cases. If a Subawardee fails to submit or complete this form their proposal may be eliminated from consideration.

**V. Eligibility**

Eligible organizations include colleges, universities, nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, and non-federal, non-state government agencies. The selected contractor will be responsible for the completion of all project tasks, though subcontracted work may be permitted as described in the grant application. Individuals and representatives from organizations that participated in the development or review of this RFP and its contents are ineligible to apply.

**VI. 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. Demonstrated knowledge of existing agricultural BMP programs.

2. Demonstrated familiarity with agricultural community in the NY portion of the Lake Champlain Basin

3. Proximity of identified areas to U.S. EPA listed 303d impaired waterways:

NY: <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/31290.html> or proximity of field edges to streams draining directly to Lake Champlain.

4. Technical merit and applicability of the proposed product toward priority objectives identified in this RFP.

5. Potential for the project to enhance the technical capabilities to support no-till farming practices within the Lake Champlain Basin. Proprietary products are not acceptable project deliverables.

6. Clarity, conciseness and adherence to the proposal guidelines.

7. Demonstrated ability to create documents and products that are accessible to and can be used by local partners working to address nutrient loading and cycling issues within the Lake Champlain Basin.

8. Appropriateness of budget and budget justification, describing how the funds awarded and how funds contributed by participating farmers will be used to produce the set of deliverables described in Section II.

**VII. Available Funds and Match Requirements**

A total of $50,000 may be made available for this project. Applicants may budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, meeting expenses, and subcontracts. Some allocation of project funds for indirect costs also is acceptable (see below). No in-kind or cash match is required, though match will be considered favorably during budget review. LCBP anticipates granting one (1) award from this RFP.

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/

**VIII. Appropriate Use of Funds**

1. 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.
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.
* Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food or beverage.
1. **Direct and Indirect Costs:**

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

**IX. Notification of Awards**

Award notification to applicants is expected in 2020. The award recipient may be asked to submit a revised workplan, timeline, and 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.

**X. Period of Performance**

Work is expected to begin in **late March, 2020** and is to be completed no later than **June 30, 2021**.

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

1. Please follow the format outlined in the attached Technical Proposal Format Requirements.

2. Proposals must be submitted by no later than **12:00 PM EST (noon)** on December 20, 2019. No late submissions will be considered. Applicants **must submit their proposals electronically** through the NEIWPCC portal. Unless prior approval is given, proposals received through e-mail, postal delivery, or any other delivery method will not be accepted.

To submit your proposal, go to <http://neiwpcc.org/about-us/working-with-neiwpcc/contractor-proposal-submissions/> and follow the instructions provided for uploading your file(s). Select the RFP opportunity: “LCBP RFP: Planter Retrofits” and fill in the required information. It is highly preferred that the proposal and all supporting information are submitted as a single PDF document. This requires Adobe Acrobat or similar Adobe product (the free Adobe Reader does not allow the conversion of documents into PDF format), or a scanner. If multiple files are to be submitted, you will need to create an archive file (.zip, or .rar) containing all of the files you wish to submit. The file name should be in the following format: “LCBP Planter Retrofit\_NAME OF YOUR ORGANIZATION.” Once you have clicked the “submit” button, please allow adequate time for your submission to process and do not hit the back button or close your browser window. The process is not considered complete until you have reached the confirmation page. If submitted successfully, you will receive an email from NEIWPCC (mail@neiwpcc.org) with the subject line “RFP Submission Confirmation” confirming your submission. For questions regarding submission of proposals, contact Heather Radcliffe, NEIWPCC, hradcliffe@neiwpcc.org, (978)349-2506.

**The NEIWPCC proposal submission site will lock out submissions following the noon deadline (EST) on December 20, 2019. Therefore, it is critical to submit early to ensure receipt of proposal factoring in the potential for technical difficulties.**

**XII. Contact Information**

For information regarding the RFP topic, contact:

Myra Lawyer

NYSDEC Region 5

1115 State Rte 86, PO Box 296

Ray Brook, NY 12977

(518) 897-1241

myra.lawyer@dec.ny.gov

 For information regarding the proposal submission process, contact:

Heather Radcliffe

New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission

650 Suffolk Street, Suite 410

Lowell, MA 01854

(978) 349-2506

hradcliffe@neiwpcc.org

**Technical Proposal Format Requirements**

Proposals should adhere to the following format and should not exceed a 5-page maximum length (font size 12), NOT including budget information, references cited, or investigator resumes.

**TITLE:** Concise and descriptive.

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

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

**TRACKING INFORMATION:** Federal Tax Identification Number, DUNS Number, and Certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE): (Yes or No)

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

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

**OBJECTIVES AND TASKS:** List the project objectives and describe in detail the tasks that will be performed, including methods and approaches.

**DELIVERABLES:** Detailed description of the planned products from each task of the project. Quarterly progress reports and a final report are required deliverables.

**SCHEDULE:** Timeline showing anticipated dates for completion of all tasks and deliverables. Quarterly progress reports are due on the 10th day of January, April, July, and October. Work is to be completed within the specified performance period in the RFP. Note that payments will be made for completed tasks only. If your project includes a large objective that requires multiple payments, it should be broken into multiple tasks with appropriate corresponding timeframe and budget.

**BUDGET TABLE AND DETAILED BUDGET JUSTIFICATION:** Complete details for all costs by major budget categories (i.e. personnel, supplies, professional services), linking costs to specific tasks. Note that payments will be made based on this task schedule and can only be made for completed tasks. Budget justification should show costs to be covered by the LCBP award and other sources (if applicable), as well as any match amounts and totals. This section is not included in the 10-page maximum total for the proposal. See example provided below. Task-based budget templates are available below and on the LCBP website: <http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/>

**No-till Planter Retrofits- Equipment Guide**

*Approved retrofits, maintenance items, and parts*

**Examples of acceptable Planter Retrofit equipment includes:**

---Single-disc Fertilizer Openers (liquid or dry)

---Heavy-duty Down Pressure Springs

---Row cleaners/Residue Mangers w/Floater wheels/Depth Bands

---Heavy-duty (3.5mm) Double Disc Openers

---Chrome Alloy or Tungsten Carbide Seed Tube Guard (rock guard)

---Keeton Seed Firmers

---Mojo Wire

---Adjustable Down Pressure Closing Wheel Tailpiece

---Updated Closing Wheels

---Drag Chains

---Row Markers

**Recommended General Planter Maintenance**

**NOT COVERED UNDER THE COST- SHARE AGREEMENT**

---Parallel Arm Bushings

---Gauge Wheels

---Arm Bushings

---Wheel Bearings

---Seed Meter:

--- Rebuild/Calibration

---Precision Planting Seed Meters

---Seed Tube Replacement

*This list is not an endorsement of any brands or manufacturers. Program participants are encouraged to find local equipment manufacturers and sources to meet their individual needs.*