



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONNECTING TO OUR WATERWAYS: NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY HARBOR & ESTUARY PROGRAM 2016 PUBLIC ACCESS AND STEWARDSHIP GRANTS

The New York-New Jersey Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP), in partnership with the Hudson River Foundation, is requesting proposals for projects promoting stewardship of the Estuary and access to/from our waterfront and waterways through community engagement and education, particularly in underserved areas. These connections are critical to fostering and expanding an engaged and informed constituency involved in caring for decision-making affecting the ecological health of the Harbor and its living resources. A total of approximately \$40,000 is available for awards to up to four grantees in 2016. This Request for Proposals (RFP) includes the following information:

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I. BACKGROUND

The NY-NJ Harbor & Estuary Program (HEP) was authorized in 1987 by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and is one of 28 National Estuary Programs in the country. The Program is an ongoing effort to protect, conserve, and restore the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary, designated as an Estuary of National Significance under the Clean Water Act and a complex ecological system in the midst of a major urban center. Participants in the Program include representatives from local, state, and federal environmental agencies; scientists; citizens; businesses; and environmentalists, among others.

The Hudson River Foundation (HRF) seeks to make science integral to decision-making with regard to the Hudson River and its watershed and to support competent stewardship of this extraordinary resource. This purpose is pursued through support of scientific research; communication to expand knowledge about the river among the scientific community, policy makers, and the public at large; initiatives to enhance management of the Hudson ecosystem; education about the River; and physical improvements to the riverfront. The Hudson River Foundation is the host of HEP and the Foundation will be the contracting entity for this RFP.

HEP recently conducted a Public Access and Stewardship Assessment of all publicly accessible waterfront spaces in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary region. The stewardship, enhancement, and efforts to increase these public spaces are a key focus of this RFP.

II. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

Funding is available for organizations to conduct projects promoting stewardship and public access in the context of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary, particularly in underserved areas. Projects **must** include public involvement through community engagement and **specifically foster the connection** between the proposed activities, the community, and the estuary environment. To view previously funded projects, visit: www.harborestuary.org/grants.htm. Potential project foci include, but are **not limited to**:

- Establishing new public access to the estuary (e.g. through planning, implementation, and/or community engagement).
- Enhancing existing public access to/from the estuary (e.g. improving site stewardship; enabling boating access, swimming or fishing access; hands-on programming and events focused on the harbor estuary; and place-based waterway protection and awareness campaigns).
- Increasing the connection between underserved populations and publicly accessible waterfront spaces, especially those identified in the 2016 report, *Connecting with our Waterways: Public Access and its Stewardship in the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary*.¹

III. GEOGRAPHIC SCOPE

Projects must take place within HEP's core area (see <http://goo.gl/maps/hTTZt>).

IV. GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

Eligibility: Non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status, public and private primary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, counties, and municipalities. Organizations without 501(c)(3) status may apply, but they must partner with another organization with 501(c)(3) status that can serve as a fiscal agent. Given two equally promising projects, preference will be given to organizations or projects that have not been funded by HEP in the past five years. Collaboration is encouraged but not required. Preference will be given to projects conducted or led by entities that have a demonstrated knowledge of local issues and on-the-ground experience and relationships with the community.

Projects that are part of state permit requirements are not eligible for funding. No funding under this agreement shall be used to directly or indirectly support the placement of fill, pilings, or platforms in open waters, near shore waters, or wetlands to create artificial islands or serve as infrastructure for commercial development or new land for purposes other than habitat restoration.

Schedule:

Announcement of Request for Proposals	April 6, 2016
Full Proposals Due	May 11, 2016
Projects Selected (subject to change)	May 20, 2016
Project Period (subject to change)	June 1, 2016 - November 1, 2017
Final Report	January 8, 2018

Funding: A total of approximately \$40,000 is available. While there are no grant size requirements it is expected that two to four grantees will be selected.

Once an agreement is signed, grantees will receive an advance of 75% of the total grant. Following submission of a final report and invoice indicating expenditure of this advance at the end of the project the final payment of 25% will be granted. Processing time is approximately 30 days, provided that

¹ Available online at www.hudsonriver.org

progress and final reports have been submitted. Funds can be used to support salary, fringe, travel, supplies, and professional services, but must be directly related to the proposed project and not for general operation of the organization. Food costs are ineligible. Cost share or match is not required but is encouraged. Cost share may be in the form of cash or in-kind contributions, but must be clearly described in the proposal (in-hand, sought, committed) and must be verifiable.

Deliverables and Conditions: Award recipients are required to provide brief interim progress report and invoices, complete the project in a timely manner, and submit a brief final report. Guidelines for these reports will be distributed with the grant award. Award recipients must acknowledge HEP/HRF funding using language identified in the agreement and logos provided by the entity for any public presentations or printed materials.

Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements: Data collection or analyses conducted solely for educational purposes (no data published, posted or distributed in any manner) does not require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). If you do plan to publish, post, distribute, analyze, or otherwise use data collected through monitoring or other means (including data collected previously by you or others), you will be required to develop a QAPP that is approved by EPA before work can begin (once submitted, this process can take two months or more). In this case, please **get in touch with us prior to submitting your proposal**. If your project requires a QAPP but this is not properly addressed in your application, it will make your proposal less competitive. A QAPP is a written plan of why, how, and where you intend to collect and requires a level of planning and documentation greater than is needed for other projects. For this reason, small projects (\$10,000 or less) should not include data collection for purposes other than education, unless an approved QAPP is already in place.

IV. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Please submit a proposal electronically (preferably as a single PDF file) to Stewardship@hudsonriver.org, with HEP Public Access - Organization Name in the subject line, following the guidelines in **Appendix A: Proposal Application Instructions**. **The proposal must be received in full by May 11th, 2016 at 5 pm EST, with no exceptions.**

V. PROPOSAL EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Proposals will be evaluated by a panel of reviewers. Any given member of the Review Panel will abstain from reviewing applications where a conflict of interest may arise. For your reference, the complete evaluation criteria are provided in [Appendix D](#).

VI. NOTIFICATION OF AWARDS

HEP expects to provide award notification to applicants on or about May 20, 2016. Award recipients may be asked to modify their proposed work plan, timeline, and budget at this time. Projects cannot start until the contract is signed by both parties. HEP will not pay for expenses incurred prior to a contract being in place. Payment for costs incurred will be contingent upon completion of the interim progress and final reports and project deliverables. If the project requires a QAPP, no environmental data activities may begin until the QAPP has been approved by EPA. HEP reserves the right to modify, postpone or cancel this solicitation and to reject all applications.

VII. DISCLAIMERS

HEP and the Hudson River Foundation assume no responsibility for the safety of applicants or those involved in carrying out the project. Applicants must present a clear plan on how they will address any safety and liability issues. The selected grantees will be required to obtain adequate insurance.

VIII. CONTACTS

Please address any inquiries to Kate Boicourt (kate@hudsonriver.org or 212-483-7667).

APPENDIX A: PROPOSAL APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Proposals should be written using 12-point standard font and 1-inch margins. All applications **must contain** a title page and work plan including timeline and budget.

PROPOSAL APPLICATION PACKAGE

I. COVER LETTER

Please include a cover letter, printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the lead organization that is applying.

II. TITLE PAGE

The title page must adhere to the format provided in [Appendix B](#) and include all of the following information, using a maximum of one single-spaced, 8.5" x 11" page with 12-point font and 1" margins. For your convenience, an electronic version of the title page is available as a Microsoft Word document at www.hudsonriver.org.

- A. **Title:** Use the exact project title as it appears throughout the proposal.
- B. **Project Leader:** Provide the name, title, and affiliation of the project leader (i.e., lead principal investigator).
- C. **Contact Information:** Provide the complete contact information for the Project Leader, including mailing address, phone and fax numbers, email address, and web site address.
- D. **Project Location(s):** include the geographic location of the project.
- E. **Project team:** Provide the names, titles, affiliations, and complete contact information for each of the additional investigators or support staff from the organization(s) applying.
- F. **Project Cost:** Provide the total funding requested from HEP and total project match (if any).
- G. **Previous Funding:** Indicate whether you have received funding from HEP in the previous five years, and from which grant program.
- H. **Federal Tax Identification Number (FID)** If the applicant is working with a fiscal sponsor, provide the sponsor's FID.
- I. **DUNS Number²:** A DUNS number is a unique, non-indicative 9-digit identifier that verifies the existence of a business entity globally. If you have a fiscal sponsor, provide the sponsor's DUNS number. Contractors must provide a DUNS number. Individual consultants are exempt from this requirement. If you do not have a DUNS number at the time of applying, please indicate if you are in the process of obtaining one.
- J. **Abstract:** accurately describe the project being proposed including any important details such as objectives and how they relate to those of the RFP, methodology, and expected outputs and outcomes. **The abstract must fit within the title page.**

III. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

The proposal narrative **must not exceed six pages (pages exceeding the limit will not be reviewed)**. Cover letters, title page, letters of support, and site or design plans (if applicable) do **not** count toward the page limit. The narrative must include:

² Obtaining a DUNS number is free for all entities doing business with the Federal government. Under normal circumstances the DUNS number is issued within 1-2 business days when using the web form process (<http://fedgov.dnb.com/webform>).

Goals and Rationale: Describe the issue(s) that the project will address. Summarize the major goal(s) and motivation of the proposed project and how they relate to the goals of this RFP. Explain **why** this project is important, what you expect to accomplish, and the expected benefits.

Work Plan: Provide the following information about the proposed project. If your project requires permits, clearances, or additional insurance, please make sure to address these issues in this section. Please reference any relevant plans or existing technical studies.

- **Course of Action:** Describe the specific actions you will take to carry out the project from start to finish. Please review HEP’s Public Access and Stewardship Assessment and describe where and how your project will create, improve, or otherwise connect people to the estuary. Does this project build on specific existing efforts in the area and how will this new project expand or complement these existing efforts? If there may be any safety considerations, please explain how those will be addressed. Explain plans to deal with the short- and long-term management if the project requires maintenance (e.g. eco-dock installation).
- **Environmental Monitoring or Data Collection:** Will you be collecting any data as part of your project? How will the data be used? Please read “Quality Assurance & Quality Control Requirements” on page 3 of the RFP and **contact HEP/HRF in advance of submitting this proposal.**
- **Personnel:** Define the role of all individuals who will be involved in the project, including contractors, and briefly indicate their relevant experience/skills. Describe the role of partner organizations in the project and attach letters of commitment, if applicable.
- **Location & Community Connections:** Please indicate where the project will take place and your connections to that community.
- **Communication and engagement:** Identify your target audience/participants. How many participants do you seek to attract and how will you recruit and keep them engaged during any planning process? Will you be reaching out to new audiences and do you plan to engage new participants beyond those who are normally served by your organization? What is the take-home message you intend to get across and how will you communicate it? Do you have specific plans to share materials, lessons learned, and/or other resources with other organizations?
- **Underserved communities:** Will your project be conducted in or particularly targeting an underserved community (e.g. limited access to the water, low income, high percent youth and/or people of color, high growth rate)? How will your project engage these communities? Please refer to HEP’s Public Access and Stewardship Assessment. .
- **Expected Results:** List the outputs and outcomes that will result from the project. Outputs are the material things produced, including products created, people served, and activities carried out (for example, three community stewardship events, two educational kayak tours, one public access site plan). Outcomes are the expected changes or benefits derived from the project.
- **Evaluation:** Indicate how you plan to evaluate the success of your project. Consider which outputs and outcomes (or suitable indicators) you will realistically be able to measure and how you will define success for your project. This should be in line with your project goals and results.
- **Timeline:** Provide a detailed timeline for meeting project objectives and identified tasks and deliverables. Projects should be completed within the period identified for this RFP. All

timelines should be stated in terms of Week or Month #1, #2, #4, etc. rather than specific dates. Project start dates may change based on the date an agreement is established.

- **Budget:** Please provide an itemized budget on a separate page using the budget form provided in [Appendix D](#). **In addition** to the budget form, please provide any relevant details to supplement this information (e.g. on subcontractors, travel expenses, and items listed under “other costs”). Please also indicate the source(s) of all matching funds listed on the Budget Form and whether the funds are in-hand or being sought.
- **Attachments:** include any relevant attachments only if directly related to your project. All attachments count toward the page limit, except for letters of support and site plans.

IV. LETTERS OF SUPPORT

Please include any letters of support from partnering organizations, or other parties that support your proposed project. Letters of support do **not** count towards page limits.

APPENDIX B: TITLE PAGE FORMAT

Title:

Project Leader:

Project Financial Contact:

Contact Information:

Project Support:

Total Funds Requested from HEP: \$

Total matching funds: \$

Federal Tax Identification Number:

DUNS Number:

Project Abstract

The abstract must fit within this title page, using a maximum of one single-spaced, typed 8.5" x 11" page with 12-point font and 1" margins (remove this instructional text when completing page and prior to submitting proposal).

APPENDIX C: BUDGET FORM

PROJECT BUDGET		
BUDGET CATEGORY <i>(Add/remove itemizing lines below major categories as necessary, but do NOT delete major categories)</i>	MATCH*	GRANT REQUEST
A. PERSONNEL (list individual names and titles below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
B. FRINGE BENEFITS ____% of ____ (e.g., 10% of total personnel costs) TOTAL:	\$	\$
C. TRAVEL (estimate number/purpose of trips below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
D. EQUIPMENT** (itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
E. SUPPLIES (itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
F. CONTRACTS (identify & itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
G. OTHER (identify & itemize below) TOTAL:	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (SUM OF A-G)	\$	\$
I. INDIRECT COSTS ____% of ____ (e.g., 10% of total direct costs) TOTAL:	\$	\$
J. TOTAL PROJECT COST (SUM OF H+I)	\$	\$

* Please list the source(s) of these funds and if they are in-hand, expected, or will be sought

**Equipment refers to items that cost \$5,000 or more each. Items of lesser cost are considered supplies.



APPENDIX D: REVIEW CRITERIA *FOR REFERENCE ONLY - DO NOT FILL OUT***

Score: 0 = not at all addressed/poor; 1 = fair; 2 = good; 3 = excellent

	This project...	SCORE
Relevance to RFP goals	Increases awareness and understanding of the local waterfront and the larger estuary.	
	Addresses the objectives of this Request for Proposals.	
Strength of proposal: Course of action	Clearly targets a key audience to engage in estuary education, stewardship, and/or public access.	
	Makes a good case why the project is needed (1-2); makes a good case in reference to the context of the 2016 report, <i>Connecting with our Waterways: Public Access and its Stewardship in the New York – New Jersey Harbor Estuary</i> (3)	
	Has goals that are clear and appropriate to the scope of the project.	
	Includes a course of action that is well thought-out.	
Strength of proposal: evaluation	Addresses permit, insurance, safety, maintenance, QAPP, and/or other issues.	
	Has outputs and outcomes that are clearly stated, and relevant to HEP.	
	Has outputs and outcomes that are realistic and commensurate with the requested funds.	
Likelihood of success	Includes an evaluation plan that is adequate and clearly presented.	
	Is likely to achieve its intended goals and reach its target audience.	
	Has a timeline that is well developed, realistic and likely to be met by August, 2017.	
Cost effectiveness	Is being proposed by an applicant that has adequate experience and qualifications to carry out the project.	
	Includes a budget that is clearly presented, reasonable, and adequate to accomplish the project.	
	Fills a need not currently met. HEP funds enable a new initiative or add new component to existing one.	
	Is likely to have a lasting impact beyond the project period.	
Community connections	Could serve as a model or be replicated in other areas.	
	Provides for a cash or in-kind match to funding provided by HEP/HRF.	
	Is proposed by an applicant that makes an effort to engage new audiences and/or involve underserved groups/individuals (plan for reaching these audiences is clearly described by the applicant).	
Community connections	Is being proposed by an applicant with a demonstrated established presence and support within the targeted community and location.	
	Is proposed by a small community organization.	

Additionally, given two equally-scoring and reviewed proposals, preference will be given to the organization that has not received funding in the past five years.

APPENDIX E: ADDITIONAL GUIDANCE, TIPS, AND RESOURCES

Tips for a Successful Application

1. Clearly depict the rationale behind your program so reviewers can better understand the WHAT (what you want to accomplish) WHY (what is the motivation for your project), HOW (how you are going to do it), and HOW you will determine if your project was successful. Consider using a logic model as a tool to frame your project in a clear manner (resources listed below).
2. **Provide all information** required in a single proposal package (PDF). Reviewers can only evaluate your project based on the information you provide; if it is incomplete, your score will be reduced. This includes properly addressing whether your project will require preparing a quality assurance project plan (QAPP).
3. **Be concise and focused.** Successful applications will be complete and succinct. Reviewers will not evaluate pages beyond the limit and relevant information in the wrong place may be redundant or make other information hard to find, hurting your score.
4. **Be organized.** Follow the structure provided on the proposal package and include each piece of information in the correct section.
5. **Consider that reviewers will be using specific criteria.**
6. **Match** (the contribution of in-kind services, *pro bono* work, or other types of funds) **will be favorably reviewed but is not required.**
7. **Finding partners to expand expertise, resources, or community connections:** strategic partnerships with other organizations to leverage a broader impact will be favorably reviewed. Resources to find partners include the Online Stewardship Network, a searchable database of organizations within the region, available through OASIS: <http://goo.gl/kSst8>.
8. For the **results and evaluation** section, describe realistic, concrete changes that you can measure and provide a clear plan for the evaluation; see “program evaluation tools” under “more information and resources” (below).

More Information and Resources: the following resources may be helpful in developing your proposal:

- Harbor Estuary Program Website: www.harborestuary.org
- Grant writing tools (these might help with general issues, but remember to address what is requested in this particular RFP):
 - Non-Profit Guides: www.npguides.org
 - EPA’s Tips On Writing a Grant Proposal: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>
- Logic Models:
 - University of Wisconsin Extension provides many resources. To quickly get a sense of logic models, consult the [diagram](#) and [examples](#), especially for “Water Quality Program with Evaluation Questions and Indicators” and “Teaching about the environment.”
 - <http://friendsnrc.org/evaluation-toolkit/evaluation-planning/logic-models>
- Program evaluation tools
 - My Environmental Education Evaluation Resource Assistant (MEERA) provides lots of useful tools and examples <http://meera.snre.umich.edu/>
 - University of Wisconsin (UW) Extension Program Development & Evaluation: <http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande/>