



Request for Proposals to the Environmental Grants Program

About Westchester Community Foundation

The [Westchester Community Foundation](#) (WCF), established in 1975 as a division of The New York Community Trust, is a grantmaking foundation dedicated to improving Westchester County, New York. A community foundation, WCF brings together local individuals, families, foundations, and businesses to build a better community. Through permanent funds established by donors to support causes and issues they care about the Foundation makes grants to eligible nonprofits, schools, and municipalities making an impact to improve the quality of life in Westchester.

Through its competitive grantmaking program, WCF's environmental grants have supported nonprofits making significant progress to preserve open space, clean waterways, reduce greenhouse gas emissions, and protect biodiversity.

This year, the Foundation will prioritize strengthening municipal capacity to plan, execute, and/or secure funding for climate adaptation or climate mitigation projects, thus positioning them to be competitive for climate mitigation and climate adaptation funding opportunities available through primarily state, federal as well as private sources. The Foundation will also support policy advocacy to advance local climate solutions.

Overview

The Foundation will award grants from eligible applicants working to address environmental issues and accelerate climate mitigation and adaptation efforts in Westchester County. The availability of funds is contingent upon the quality of proposals received, and their alignment with the funding priorities of this Request for Proposals.

Grants are available for:

- Technical assistance to support municipal capacity to accelerate climate mitigation and adaptation projects; and
- Policy advocacy to advance local climate solutions.
- Grant range is \$25,000 to \$100,000.
- Projects may be less than 12 months but should be no more than 18 months.

Eligible Applicants: Technical Assistance

- **Municipalities and municipal units** (*e.g.*, city, village, towns, special purpose, public authorities/public benefit corporations/local public organizations such as housing authorities, schools, libraries etc.) Please note throughout this RFP, the terms “municipal” and “municipality” are inclusive of municipal units and shall mean “municipalities and municipal units”.

- **Nonprofit organizations** partnering with a municipality and/or municipal unit to provide technical assistance and support.
- **Academic institutions** partnering with a municipality and/or municipal unit to provide technical assistance and support.

Technical Assistance Funding Priorities

Technical assistance to support municipal capacity and inter-municipal partnerships to accelerate climate mitigation and adaptation projects, including but not limited to:

- Decarbonizing municipal properties and “greening” municipal operations.
- Enacting policies designed to accelerate reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. *Examples include* updating building codes to reduce energy consumption and reduce heat island effect and updating land-use policies to reduce vehicular traffic.
- Updating land-use policies to protect drinking water, and to enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
- Preparing or updating community climate mitigation adaptation plans or for project plans in communities that address these issues.
- Enacting policies that protect and increase tree canopy with a focus enhancing community resilience to climate change.
- Adapting municipal waste management services to divert organics from the waste stream, and to reduce waste while increasing recycling and composting.
- Reducing stormwater runoff from municipal properties and publicly installed surfaces (buildings, streets, parking lots, sidewalks, playgrounds) through innovations such as permeable surfaces and green infrastructure.
- Enacting building codes and land use policies resulting in effective stormwater capture. *Examples include* building and zoning codes which call for Green Infrastructure such as green roofs, permeable paving, rain gardens, bioswales etc.
- Updating building codes to make buildings more resilient to future flooding.
- Proactively addressing flood risk, including through updating land use policies to take current and predicted flood patterns into account, and collaborating with neighboring municipalities, the County, and state agencies on watershed planning and project implementation.
- Rectifying the disproportionate burden of climate risks and environmental degradation on disadvantaged communities, as defined by New York State ([See here](#)) These burdens include the negative public-health effects of polluted air, water, and land, and exposure to extreme heat. The State's interactive [map](#) link provides information about Disadvantaged Communities in Westchester County.

The proposed scope of work may include assessments and data collection; engineering studies; benefit and cost analysis using FEMA’s tool; plan development; permitting; community education and engagement focusing on land use and zoning policy initiatives; navigation to appropriate funding sources and preparation of grant submission.

Municipal applicants are expected to have taken full advantage of available technical assistance, guidance, and advice from existing government entities, including:

- [New York State](#)
- [Environmental Facilities Corporation](#)
- [New York Sea Grant/Sustainable and Resilient Communities](#) (for Long Island Sound watershed communities)
- [U.S. Environmental Protection Agency](#)
- Resources listed in the [U.S. Climate Resilience Toolkit](#)
- [Westchester County Department of Planning](#)
- [Westchester County Office of Emergency Management](#)

Foundation funding is intended to provide the **additional** technical assistance a municipality needs to be prepared to and successfully compete for available state and federal climate mitigation and climate resiliency funding.

Technical Assistance Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on how clearly the proposed project meets the funding priorities. To be competitive, the proposal should:

- Present a clear statement of the climate mitigation or adaptation issue the applicant seeks to address, with specifics about the nature of the issue, who will be impacted if the issue is successfully addressed, and why the issue is a priority.
- Highlight consideration of environmental justice concerns and how the project will benefit disadvantaged communities, if the project geography includes a disadvantaged community, as defined by the New York State Climate Justice Working Group. See Disadvantaged Communities Criteria and Map [here](#).
- Indicate the proposal's relationship to the municipality's Climate Smart Communities plan (or plans, if more than one municipality would benefit from the grant) and indicates what Westchester County, New York State, and/or federal technical assistance the municipality/municipalities has/have received.
- Indicate the relationship to any relevant regional climate resiliency work including watershed planning and management or shoreline resilience assessment/planning that has occurred/is occurring.
- Present a clear statement of the type of technical assistance that will be supported if the proposal is approved, and what that technical assistance will prepare the municipality/municipalities to accomplish, including but not limited to being prepared to submit a technically sound application for state, federal, or private funds to address the issue.
- Include a budget that is clear, reasonable, and justifiable. Project budgets will be compared to similar proposals to ensure proposed costs across budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.
- Present a clear and realistic timeline for implementation. Projects may be less than 12 months but should be no more than 18 months.

Grant Eligibility: Policy Advocacy

- Nonprofit organizations leading policy advocacy to strengthen and/or speed local climate solutions.

Policy Advocacy Funding priorities

Public policy advocacy to strengthen and/or speed local climate solutions in one or more of the following areas:

- Updated building codes to reduce energy consumption and reduce heat island effect.
- Updated building codes and land use policies resulting in effective stormwater capture.
- Updated land-use policies to reduce vehicular traffic.
- Updated land-use policies to protect drinking water, and to enhance biodiversity and habitat connectivity.
- Policies that protect and increase tree canopy with a focus enhancing community resilience to climate change.
- Improved municipal waste management services to divert organics from the waste stream, and to reduce waste while increasing recycling and composting.

Policy advocacy Evaluation Criteria

Proposals will be evaluated based on how clearly the proposed project meets the funding priorities and:

- Presents a clear statement of the climate mitigation or adaptation issue the applicant seeks to address through local policy reform, with specifics about the nature of the issue, who will be impacted if the issue is successfully addressed, and why the issue is a priority.
- Highlights consideration of environmental justice concerns and how the policy advocacy will benefit disadvantaged communities [as defined by New York State](#).
- Present a clear and realistic timeline for implementation. Projects may be less than 12 months but should be no more than 18 months.

Timeline

Information Session:	July 18, 2023, 12 noon, via zoom; Register here.
Proposals Due:	September 1, 2023
Grant Notification:	On or about November 30, 2023

Application Requirements

Your application should include the following:

- A. **A Project Narrative** limited to five single-spaced pages using a 12-point font that includes the following:
 - Applicant's information:

- Municipality: population, demographics, geographic size, and characteristics; municipal agency/agencies that will lead on this project
- Nonprofit: organization’s mission, history, and major programs; staff who will lead on this project
- Academic institution: mission; academic department that will lead on this project.
- A description of the climate mitigation, adaptation, or resiliency challenge to be addressed, and why this challenge is a priority.
 - For technical assistance proposals, include a concise description of the scope of work that will be secured through/provided through the grant; and what the technical assistance will prepare the municipality/municipalities to accomplish.
 - For policy advocacy proposals, include a concise description of the environmental policy the project addresses and the goal of the advocacy campaign.
- The project timeline, major activities, and deliverables. Where consultants are proposed describe the responsibilities of staff and consultant in delivery of the project.
- Qualifications: For this project, describe organizational/municipal department qualifications; staff or consultant qualifications. Where consultants are proposed, describe the experience and qualifications needed for this project.
- For proposals including intermunicipal collaboration: identify all collaborating municipalities and provide a brief history of this collaboration and its goals as they relate to this proposal. Supporting letters from all collaborating municipalities are required. See section on required documents.
- For proposals from nonprofit organizations or academic institutions to provide technical assistance to a municipality or multiple municipalities: provide a brief description of the relationship between the organization/academic institution and the municipality/ municipalities and any history of previous work together. A Memorandum of Understanding between the technical assistance provider and the municipality/all municipalities is required. See section on required documents.

B. Project Budget

- For municipal applicants: eligible expenses are for consulting only. Provide specific cost for the proposed consultant’s services. Provide budget justification that describes the specific services to be provided by the consultant (Scope of Work).
- For all other applicants: include expenses such as staff time and other organizational costs, and sources of revenue, i.e., the names of other foundation, government, and corporate funders and the amount you expect to receive from each. Please specify whether grants are committed or pending.
 - Administrative costs for nonprofit organizations: Westchester Community Foundation provides support for administrative costs up to 20 percent of total program/project costs. Administrative costs include such things as general administration and management expenses (e.g., management staff salaries and benefits), infrastructure costs (e.g., rent and utilities, equipment depreciation, technical licenses), and other costs that are incurred for the benefit of all the programs within the organization (e.g. marketing costs, fundraising expenses), not just the program you’re seeking funding for.
 - For academic institutions: overhead costs for grant administration may not exceed five percent of the total project budget. Administrative costs related to carrying

out the proposed grant activities, including space, materials and supplies, and technology for project staff, are not subject to the five percent limit, and should be identified separately in the proposed itemized project budget.

C. Required Documents

- For proposals including intermunicipal collaboration: a supporting letter from all collaborating municipalities affirming that municipality’s commitment to the project described in the proposal.
- For nonprofit organizations and academic institutions proposing to provide technical assistance to a municipality/municipalities: a signed Memorandum of Understanding between the applicant and each participating municipality affirming the municipal commitment to addressing the mitigation/adaptation challenge that is the subject of the proposal.
- For nonprofit organizations: current list of board of directors with professional and/or community affiliations; board approved budget for current fiscal year.

Submission Directions

1. Merge items A-C (listed above) into a single PDF file, using the following file format: “Applicant Organization Name.pdf.”
2. Submit your proposal by email to 2023RFP@wcf-ny.org by 5 p.m. September 1, 2023.

Direct RFP content questions to Tara Seeley, WCF Senior Program Officer, at tseeley@wcf-ny.org. Questions will be answered after Monday, July 10, 2023.