



Peconic Estuary Program Partners Grant Program

2014 Request for Proposals

<http://www.peconicestuary.org/projectdetails.php?pid=438>

History of the Peconic Estuary Program

THE NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM was established in 1987 by Section 320 of the Clean Water Act to promote comprehensive planning, conservation, and management of nationally significant estuaries threatened by pollution, development, or overuse. The Peconic Estuary Program (PEP) was accepted into the National Estuary Program in 1992. Today, the Peconic Estuary Program is one of 28 estuary programs in the United States and Puerto Rico administered by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The PEP is a partnership of local, state, and federal governments, citizen and environmental groups, businesses and industries, and academic institutions working together to protect and restore the natural resources of the Peconic Estuary ecosystem.

In 2001, the USEPA approved the Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) for the Peconic Estuary Program. There are an ambitious 340 management tasks included in the CCMP. Priority topics include harmful algal blooms, nutrient pollution, habitat and living resources, pathogens, toxic pollutants, and critical lands protection. A large component to successful completion of these tasks is public participation. This grant is intended to encourage local stakeholder involvement within the Peconic Estuary Program. The CCMP is available on the PEP website (<http://www.peconicestuary.com/ccmp/index.php>).

Purpose of the PEP Partners Grant Program

Public participation, education, and outreach are central to the PEP's mission to protect and restore the Peconic Estuary. The purpose of the Partners Grant Program is to provide funding to increase public understanding of the estuary's ecology and how humans impact it; promote stewardship of the estuary's ecosystem; and boost public participation in its restoration and protection. Through this grant program, the PEP works together with the community to achieve its goals for protecting and restoring the Peconic Estuary ecosystem.

Who Can Apply?

Proposals are welcome from individuals, organizations, and government agencies, including the following:

1. Nonprofit organizations (*i.e.*, 501(c)(3) or 501(c)(4) Internal Revenue Service status);
2. Government or public agencies within the Peconic Estuary watershed (*i.e.*, environmental commissions, planning boards, public works, parks, *etc.*);
3. Private businesses and professional organizations whose activities affect the Peconic Estuary; and
4. Educators in the Peconic Estuary watershed with projects that can serve as models for others.

NOTE: Only one proposal may be submitted per project supervisor. The project supervisor is responsible for the overall coordination of the project and is the project's principal decision-maker. However, partnering with other organizations, agencies, and individuals is strongly encouraged. If you are listed as the project supervisor in one proposal, you are still eligible to be a partner in other proposals.

Available Funding

Funding requests up to \$5,000 (maximum) will be considered. Due to limited funding, the PEP may fund a project at less than 100 percent of the requested amount.

Types of Projects Eligible for Funding

Projects should encourage people to participate in innovative restoration and protection activities to promote responsible leadership and public involvement. Projects should seek to achieve tangible environmental results, while including a strong public education and participation element. All projects should seek to increase awareness, knowledge, and understanding of priority issues and foster stewardship of the estuary's resources by promoting environmentally responsible behaviors and skills.

Priority Topics

Proposals should specifically identify which priority objective or action in the PEP's CCMP (see <http://www.peconicestuary.com/ccmp/index.php>) is being addressed by the proposed project. Based on the PEP's CCMP and recent strategic planning, the PEP has identified the following as top priority topics for this grant program in the Peconic Estuary watershed:

- Nutrient Pollution Reduction (specifically nitrogen)
- Climate Change and Sea Level Rise (resiliency)
- Preserving and Restoring Landscapes
- Stormwater Run-off Reduction via green infrastructure techniques

Proposals addressing these top priority topics are encouraged and will receive additional points in the evaluation process (see the "Project Objectives" section of the "Proposal Evaluation Criteria"). However, proposals on any PEP CCMP task will be considered.

Priority Audiences

The PEP encourages grant proposals to concentrate on under-targeted audiences to ensure PEP is addressing environmental justice concerns within the watershed. The PEP has identified the following under-targeted audiences as priorities for education and outreach:

- Spanish-speaking residents
- Water-dependent industries, especially commercial fishers, and

- Business community (business owners, builders and developers, realtors, *etc.*)

Project proposals that involve outreach to the under-targeted audiences listed above will receive additional points in the evaluation process (see the “Project Description” section of the “Proposal Evaluation Criteria”). However, proposals targeting any audience will be considered.

NOTE: Review the “Proposal Evaluation Criteria” section for more information on what makes a strong project proposal.

Types of Projects Ineligible for Funding

GRANTS CANNOT BE USED FOR FUNDRAISING PURPOSES, LOBBYING, OR POLITICAL ADVOCACY.

Grant monies cannot be used for costs outside the grant’s scope of work, and generally cannot be used to:

1. Purchase software, equipment, food, entertainment, or promotional materials (such as t-shirts, hats, *etc.*);
2. Support general operations, overhead, or make interest payments; and
3. Attend conferences, trainings and meetings.

Projects outside of the Peconic Estuary watershed cannot be supported. The Peconic Estuary Program study area includes all and/or parts of the following towns and villages: Riverhead, Southold, East Hampton, Southampton, Shelter Island, Brookhaven, North Haven, Dering Harbor, Sag Harbor, and Greenport. Please review the Peconic Estuary Watershed Boundary map, <http://www.peconicestuary.org/maps.php>, and consult with PEP staff to make certain your project is within the Peconic Estuary.

Requirements for a Complete Application

1. **Proposal Cover Page:** Submit an original, signed copy. <http://www.peconicestuary.org/projectdetails.php?pid=438>
2. **Project Narrative:** The Project Narrative is the most important part of the proposal. This is where you describe the proposed project. A clear, concise, and complete description of the project is of primary importance in the proposal’s evaluation. The Project Narrative has eight parts (A. through H., below). Before you begin to write the Project Narrative, carefully review the “Proposal Evaluation Criteria.”

NOTE: The “Project Narrative” is NOT to exceed five pages of text (single-spaced, 12 point font), excluding maps and graphics. Use the headings listed in bold below.

- A. **Project Title:** Give your project a concise, descriptive name.
- B. **Project Objectives:** Identify the objectives of the project and their relevance to the priority tasks of the PEP CCMP (<http://www.peconicestuary.com/ccmp/index.php>). Does the project address one of the PEP’s top priority topics?
- C. **Project Description:** Describe the proposed project, including its purpose, target audience(s), and how you intend to accomplish your objectives. What will your

project produce and what will be its outcomes? Does the target audience(s) include any of the under-targeted audiences identified as a priority by the PEP? What is your plan for implementing the project? Be detailed and try to anticipate questions that a reviewer might have if they are unfamiliar with the project or idea. As appropriate, describe current conditions or problems and how your project will improve them. Describe (quantify, if appropriate) the anticipated project benefits.

NOTE: If your project will entail environmental data collection via monitoring, sampling, and/or analysis or the use of secondary data, an approved Quality Assurance Project Plan is required before you begin any work. If you need additional information about a Quality Assurance Project Plan, contact the PEP Director at: Alison.Branco@suffolkcountyny.gov

- D. **Evaluation Plan:** In this section, clearly describe a well thought-out method for how you will determine if the project has met its intended objectives. This is where you will describe how project results and successes will be measured. Have you established definitions for the success of your project? If so, make that clear in your proposal. What tools or mechanisms will you incorporate into the project so that you will be able to measure its overall effectiveness or success? How will you measure whether your target audience(s) understanding of their role in estuary stewardship has increased because of the project? Evaluation should be planned for and is not an after-thought of an already completed project.
- E. **Public Relations/Outreach Plan:** How do you intend to spread the word about your project? A proposed public relations plan should include a list of media contacts (print, radio, TV, *etc.*) you will use to ensure that the public learns of your project, as well as a description of other plans for outreach via the internet, newsletters, social media, websites, *etc.*
- F. **Project Timeline:** Describe the key milestones, their expected dates, and estimated date of completion. Projects **MUST BE** completed within 18 months of contract execution.
- G. **Personnel and Partners:** List all personnel involved in the project, their corresponding role(s), and agency/organization affiliation(s). Identify the project supervisor. Partnerships with other organizations are strongly encouraged. All proposals, regardless of scope, should reflect some measure of community support or involvement.

NOTE: If multiple partnering organizations or groups are involved with the project, a letter of support **MUST BE provided from each listed project partner with the proposal.**

- H. **Organizational Capacity:** Although prior grant experience is not required, the Grant Review Committee would like you to briefly describe your organization's experience in facilitating projects of this scope or size. Identify the key staff responsible for the proposed project. If you are applying as an individual (not part of an organization), describe how you personally are qualified to accomplish your project's objectives.
3. **Proposal Budget Summary:** Follow the detailed budget guidance below to fill out the Budget Summary that can be found here:
<http://www.peconicestuary.org/projectdetails.php?pid=438>

NOTE: 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.

- A. **Labor:** In this section, list all staff members, volunteers, and/or professional consultants involved in the project. Include an estimate of the number of hours each person/group will be contributing to the project and their hourly rates. Be as specific as possible. Example: Five “Horseshoe Crab Survey” volunteers (6 hrs/week each for 7 weeks at prevailing rate of \$20/hr). See the “Sample Proposal Budget Form” for additional guidance.

NOTE: Labor costs requested from the PEP MUST NOT exceed 50% of the total amount requested from the PEP without justification. Example: If the total requested from the PEP is \$2,000, the Total Labor Costs MUST NOT exceed \$1,000. If there is a genuine need for a project to exceed this cap, and justification is provided, proposal reviewers will consider it. If no justification is provided for exceeding the 50% cap, the proposal will be DISQUALIFIED and will not be considered for funding.

- B. **Non-Expendable Equipment:** PEP funds CANNOT be used to purchase non-expendable equipment. Non-expendable equipment is any individual piece of equipment that costs more than \$250 and will not be consumed by the project. However, costs incurred by your organization for non-expendable equipment can be used to meet the matching funds/in-kind services requirement.
- C. **Expendable Equipment:** The applicant MUST specify exactly what expendable equipment will be purchased with the requested funds.
- D. **Travel:** Estimate the total number of miles traveled (MUST be directly related to the project activities) and multiply by the prevailing rate (\$0.56 per mile for car travel as per federal reimbursement rate for 2014).
- E. **Office Support:** Only office support directly related to the project activities can be listed. Items include materials and supplies (MUST specify), telephone, postage, copying and printing (MUST specify), and other (MUST specify).
- F. **Miscellaneous:** The applicant MUST specify what these costs are – both for funding requested from the PEP and for matching funds/in-kind services.
- G. **Total Costs:** Total the sum of each budget category.

Matching Funds/In-kind Services: The applicant MUST provide a minimum of 33% in matching funds or in-kind services from other sources. Proposals that provide more than the minimum match requirement are encouraged and will earn additional points (see “Proposal Evaluation Criteria”). Proposals that do not meet this minimum requirement will not be considered.

NOTE: Volunteer time is one way to come up with the match/in-kind portion of the budget. Volunteer time is valued at \$20/hour. Use a simple form to track the volunteer time involved with your project. This form will become part of your final reporting requirements to the PEP upon completion of the project.

4. **Letters of support from any partner organizations identified in your proposal:** For more information, refer to the “Personnel and Partners” section on the previous page.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

100 Total Possible Points

* = component of the Project Narrative

Project title* (1 point)

Project Objectives* (15 points)

What is the project's relevance to the priorities, objectives, or actions of the PEP's CCMP? Has this been clearly identified? **(10 points)**

Does the project address one of the PEP's top priority topics? **(5 points)**

Project Description* (45 total points)

- a. Is this section of the proposal thorough and easy to understand? Does it clearly describe the project and how it meets the purpose of this grant program? **(5 points)**
- b. What is the project's potential to increase knowledge, skills, and/or change behaviors? **(15 points)**
- c. How well has the target audience(s) been identified and defined? Does the project use an effective delivery method to reach the target audience(s)? **(10 points)**
- d. Does the target audience(s) include any of the under-targeted audiences identified as a priority by the PEP? **(5 points)**
- e. Are the anticipated outcomes of the proposed project clearly identified? **(5 points)**
- f. Is the project transferable to other audiences? What is the project's potential to serve as a demonstration to other groups? Could another group easily implement the project idea? **(5 points)**

Evaluation Plan* (10 points)

Are definitions for the success of the project established? What tools or mechanisms are incorporated into the project to measure its overall effectiveness or success? Will the project measure whether there has been an increase in the understanding of the target audience's role in estuary stewardship as a result of the project?

Public Relations/Outreach Plan* (5 points)

Is there an effective plan for outreach through traditional media outlets (print, radio, TV) and/or newsletters, social media, websites, *etc.*?

Project timeline* (3 points)

Partnerships* (5 points)

Partnerships are strongly encouraged, but not required. In "Project Narrative" you are required to list all personnel and partners involved with the project. See the "Project Narrative" section of this document for more details.

Organizational capacity* (3 points)

Do the organization/individual's experience, skills, and strengths match the proposed project responsibilities? See "Project Narrative" guidance for more detail.

Proposal Budget (10 total points)

- a. Is the budget clearly, completely, and properly filled out? Does the proposed budget represent good value for PEP **(7 points)**
- b. Do the proposed matching funds/in-kind services exceed the 33% match requirement for this grant program? **(3 points)**

NOTE: The applicant MUST provide a minimum of 33% in matching funds or in-kind services from other sources. Proposals that provide more than the minimum match requirement are encouraged and will earn the additional 3 points. Proposals that do not meet the minimum requirement will not be considered.

Proposal presentation and appearance (3 points)

Is it neat, clean, and organized? Are the sections of the "Project Narrative" clearly identified? Have all of the above criteria been adequately addressed?

How to Apply

Proposals MUST be received by the PEP Office no later than 5:00 p.m. on Monday, December 1, 2014. Proposals, including all required attachments, must be submitted by email. Any proposals and/or attachments must be received by the PEP by the above-specified deadline. The entire proposal must be submitted as a single PDF document. **Emailed proposals should have "PEP Partners Grant Program Proposal" in the subject line and should be sent to:** Alison Branco, PEP Director, at Alison.Branco@suffolkcountyny.gov

Review and Selection Process

Proposals will be distributed to the members of the PEP Partners Grant Review Committee. The Grant Review Committee members will carefully review and score each proposal according to the "Proposal Evaluation Criteria." Scores will be tallied and used to rank proposals. The Committee will meet to discuss the proposals and make funding recommendations to the PEP's Management Committee. **The PEP will announce the grant recipients by January 30, 2015. Organizations associated with any submitted proposals will not participate in the discussion and ranking of proposals to avoid any potential conflict of interest.**

Committee members and reviewers may be disqualified from reviewing proposals with respect to which they have any actual or potential conflicts of interest. An individual may not serve on a review panel if he/she has any direct personal/familial or financial relationship or connection with any of the proposals to be reviewed or any of the applicants. In addition, individuals who have other types of relationships with the proposals being reviewed or any of the applicants cannot serve on a review panel if that relationship would impair or influence their objectivity or impartiality in reviewing proposals and the conflict of interest cannot otherwise be mitigated or avoided. Some situations that may constitute a conflict of interest include the following:

- Principal investigators, consultants, or any other participants in proposals cannot serve on review panels to review proposals submitted in response to a solicitation/announcement.
- The application or proposal being considered is from the reviewer's parent institution or member organization. This applies to subcontractors or sub-recipients.
- The reviewer and the applicant are related through family or have been related as a student or thesis/post-doctoral advisor.
- The reviewed is a member of the board of directors, or similar body, of any organization acting as project supervisor or project partner.
- The reviewer will benefit directly from the project, e.g., as a consultant or paid

collaborator.

DISCLAIMER: Following the Review Committee’s evaluation of the proposal, it is possible that additional information may be required of the grant applicant in order to make a final funding decision.

Responsibility of Awardees

If your organization is awarded a PEP Partners Grant, it will enter into a formal “contract” with Suffolk County. That agreement will detail what is expected of each party. Here are some key items:

- Projects **MUST** include specific recognition of the funding provided by the PEP; the PEP logo must be included on all printed and web materials related to the project.
- Receipt of a signed, fully executed agreement will be required for any payments. The final payment will not be made until the final report with attachments (see section below) is submitted and a presentation about the project is made to the PEP. Except in special circumstances and with prior approval, final reports and all other required materials are due within 30 days of the end date for the grant’s period of performance.
- Upon completion of the project, a final report is required. The final report **MUST** include the following for issuance of final payment:
 - a. detailed project report;
 - b. final budget and financial report, including a detailed ledger of grant-funded and match expenditures (adequate supporting documentation such as invoices and time sheets should be maintained by the awardees for all project-related expenditures for preparation of the ledger sheet, but need not be submitted);
 - c. photographic documentation (preferably digital photos or video) of the project; and
 - d. press release and/or article (500 words or less) for inclusion in *Peconic Press*, the newsletter of the PEP.

A hard copy or electronic copy of all materials should be submitted. **The final report is due within 30 days of the end date for the grant’s period of performance, unless previous arrangements are made with the PEP.** The final report becomes the property of the PEP and can be used by the PEP without any restrictions or other considerations.

Questions?

Contact:

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