



# GREENPOINT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND

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## Frequently Asked Questions

This document provides answers to prospective applicants' frequently asked questions about the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF) and applying for grant funding from the program, including:

- **General Program Information**
- **Match Requirements**
- **Eligible Projects, Activities and Other Application Questions**
- **Applicant Eligibility and Partnerships**
- **Proposal Review and Grant Selection**
- **Accountability and Community Engagement**
- **Applying For a Grant**
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### General Program Information

#### 1. **What is the Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF)?**

The Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund – or GCEF – is a \$19.5 million grant program created by the New York State Office of the Attorney General and Department of Environmental Conservation (collectively, the State). Funding for the GCEF was obtained by the State in a settlement with ExxonMobil over its Greenpoint oil spill.

#### 2. **How will the money be used?**

The overall goal of the GCEF is to secure significant environmental improvements in Greenpoint. More specifically, the GCEF is designed to fund projects that address the community's environmental priorities, including, but not limited to: improving water quality, groundwater, open space, reduction of toxic pollution and air quality.

#### 3. **What types of grants are available?**

Three types of grant funding are available:

- **Small Grants:** Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$100,000 are available for smaller- or medium-scale environmental improvement projects.
- **Large Grants:** Grants ranging from greater than \$100,001 to \$600,000 are available for environmental improvement projects that have a more significant scale and scope than Small Grants. These projects



typically will involve multiple sites and/or projects at a single site that integrate multiple environmental benefits.

- **Legacy Grants:** Grants ranging from \$600,001 to \$4,250,000 are available for environmental improvement projects that provide exceptional benefits to the Greenpoint community. Such projects would provide one or more environmental benefits (e.g., air quality, water quality or open space, etc.) and as a result of special characteristics of the projects – e.g., their size or scale, the need to acquire land, the number of Greenpoint residents they serve, their expected life, the level of community support for the project – require more funding than a Large Grant project.

**4. What type of project is eligible for funding under the GCEF?**

Eligible projects are those that provide a discernible environmental benefit. An environmental benefit is an activity (project or program) that would result in the protection, improvement, or restoration of an environmental media (i.e., air, water, land) for the purpose of improving public health or the environment.

<b>What is an environmental benefit project?</b>	<b>What is not an environmental benefit project?</b>
Design and develop a new park space; resurfacing basketball and tennis courts with pervious pavement; installing solar-powered lighting; holding park cleanups; installing dog waste stations; and providing or improving public access to natural areas.	Recreational improvements to ball fields, tennis courts, playgrounds, dog parks or gray (i.e., not green) improvements to or maintenance of existing gray park infrastructure (benches, fencing, standard lighting) or provision of enhanced operating support for parks (maintenance or other staffing).
Planting a community garden with native plants.	Planting a community garden with ornamental trees, bushes, flowers and vegetables (i.e., ornamental or operational plantings involving nonnative species).
Installing green infrastructure to reduce localized flooding.	Neighborhood and household preparedness strategies to respond to natural disasters like floods.
Increasing the number of textile recycling bins; increasing textile recycling options/locations; sponsoring a textile recycling drive and educating students and community members about the need to recycle clothing and other personal items to keep it out of local landfills	Programs or projects that solely involve creating a new or enhancing an existing program selling or donating used textiles or other personal items.
A project to increase bicycle-friendly locations and facilities, bike-sharing etc. focused on boosting the share of trips taken by these pollution-free vehicles.	Programs or projects to promote exercise.
Improving soils with compost; increasing environmental stewardship at a public garden by adding rainwater collection system, native plants, and renewable energy.	Urban agriculture, i.e., cultivating, processing, and distributing food in or around Greenpoint. Animal husbandry, aquaculture, agroforestry, , and horticulture projects or programs. Programs and projects to promote healthy eating,
Integrating communication, outreach and education tools as part of the delivery of an environmental benefit project.	Stand-alone website enhancements, media campaigns, videography or mapping of GCEF projects or other environmental projects in Greenpoint.

**5. Is there a pre-determined allocation of funds among project categories or grant types?**



No, it is the State's desire to fund as many high quality projects as possible. The final allocation of funds will depend on the number of project proposals received, the results of their evaluation, and the input of the community.

**6. How long will the GCEF funding be available?**

It is anticipated that 2015 will be the final cycle of grants under GCEF.

**7. Do projects need to be located in Greenpoint?**

Yes. Projects **must** be located in Greenpoint. Projects must also primarily benefit the Greenpoint public. For the purposes of the GCEF, Greenpoint is defined as the area of Brooklyn, NY encompassed by 11222 Zip Code and the entirety of McCarren Park (a Program area map can be found at [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org)).

**8. Are indirect expenses allowed in project budgets?**

Yes, however the GCEF caps allowable indirect expenses at 15% of the grant request.

**9. When must projects start and end?**

All projects must begin implementation within six months of grant award. Small Grants will be awarded in October 2015. Large and Legacy grants will be awarded in December 2015. Small and Large Grants must be completed within two years of the start date. Legacy Grants must be completed within three years of the start date. Variances may be provided under exceptional circumstances.

## **Match Requirements**

**10. Is there a match requirement? Does the match need to be all cash?**

- Small Grant applicants are **encouraged** to provide a matching contribution of cash or **in-kind** support.
- Large Grant applicants are **encouraged** to provide a 1:1 match that can be any combination of cash or **in-kind** support (i.e., GCEF grant funds should make up a maximum of one-half of the total project costs).
- Legacy Grant applicants **must** provide a 2:1 match that can be any combination of cash or **in-kind** support (i.e., GCEF grant funds should make up a maximum of one-third of the total project costs).

**11. Is the requirement for a match a greater burden for small organizations than it is for large organizations?**

A match contribution is encouraged, not required. The GCEF also uses a broad definition of match (see below). While the Program believes that matching contributions are important elements of projects, in the proposal evaluation process the presence and size of a match is one of a number of project elements (e.g., environmental benefit provided, soundness and feasibility of the work plan) that will be evaluated. Because of this, GCEF does not believe that small organizations are unfairly disadvantaged through the encouragement of a matching contribution.

**12. What constitutes an in-kind match?**

In-kind matching contributions may be: goods (e.g., donated plants, gloves and shovels etc.); services (e.g., donated legal, engineering, or construction services); volunteer hours for general labor (e.g., plantings or cleanups); or property (e.g., donated land for a park). NOTE: Any difference between the actual organizational indirect rate requested from the GCEF and the 15% GCEF cap on the indirect rate may be used as a matching contribution (i.e., "foregone indirect"); and/or the entirety of organizational indirect rate may be used as match.

**13. When do matching funds have to be secured in order to qualify and be counted?**

Matching contributions may be secured up to one year in advance of the date grants are awarded. Small Grants will be awarded in October 2015. Large and Legacy grants will be awarded in December 2015. You also may continue to secure matching contributions over the life of the grant. A grant recipient will need to certify that all matching funds are secured and in the amount proposed by the project end date.

**14. What are eligible and ineligible forms of match?**

Matching contributions may be in the form of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, or property. Services rendered in connection with the preparation of a pre-proposal or full proposal and/or negotiation of the contract between the grant recipient and GCEF, or services rendered in connection with fundraising, will not qualify as matching contributions. All matching contributions must be voluntary in nature. Funds presented for fulfillment of mitigation, restitution, or other permit or court-ordered settlements are not eligible forms of match. Costs used to satisfy a grant recipient's matching requirement **may not** be used as match or cost sharing on other grants.

**15. What documentation is required for matching contributions?**

Throughout the life of a grant, each time a grant recipient submits a payment request, the recipient will be asked to provide a brief update on progress towards meeting match. At the end of the grant, the recipient submits final reports including a final financial report that includes a section on match. This section shows the grant recipient's matching contributions entered in their original proposal and asks the recipient to detail how the match at the end of the grant compares to what was originally proposed. The grant recipient is self-certifying the matching contribution, without submitting back-up documentation to GCEF. However, the grant recipient must retain, at its place of business, detailed time records for contributed services and original receipts and appraisals of real property and comparable rentals for contributed property in the event of an audit of the recipient.

**Eligible Projects, Activities and Other Application Questions**

**16. What are ineligible projects or activities?**

Information on ineligible types of projects and activities can be found on pages 3-4 of the Request for Proposals.

**17. How many grant proposals may be submitted by an organization?**

There is no limit on the number of proposals that may be submitted by an eligible applicant.

**18. Can you clarify the exclusion of capital campaigns?**

The GCEF is designed to fund on-the-ground projects that will provide a discernible environmental benefit for the Greenpoint public at the completion of the grant. Capital campaigns that raise funds for future work are, therefore, ineligible.

**19. Is scientific research -- including health studies -- eligible for funding?**

The GCEF is designed to fund on-the-ground projects that will provide a discernible environmental benefit for the Greenpoint public. Pure research or studies conducted solely for the purpose of documenting environmental or public health conditions or for testing a research hypothesis are ineligible. Research or studies that are needed to be conducted as a part, and in support, of a larger program or activity that will lead to a discernible environmental benefit for the Greenpoint public may be eligible.



**20. Is a bioremediation or other environmental remediation project eligible for funding?**

If the project meets all of the eligibility requirements included in the Request for Proposals, yes. In particular, the proposer should specify that the project is not being performed as part of an environmental remediation mandated by a local, state or federal law.

**21. Can the GCEF be used for land acquisition?**

Funds can be used for the acquisition of land for the purpose of providing a discernible environmental benefit for the Greenpoint public, including creating parks and public spaces, and improving public access to natural resources.

**22. Is a planning and design proposal eligible for funding if the proposer does not have site control?**

Yes, but the proposal should include a description of the steps necessary to obtain site control. At the same time, a planning and design proposal in which site control is or will soon be in place would be a stronger proposal than one without it.

**23. Are salaries for an Executive Director considered eligible costs?**

Typically, only the time that an Executive Director spends on the project funded by the GCEF would be eligible for funding.

**Applicant Eligibility and Partnerships**

**24. My organization does not have 501(c) status, is it possible to apply for funds?**

Groups without 501(c) non-profit status may partner with an eligible applicant, including a fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors are non-profits who offer their legal and tax exempt status to enable the movement of resources from funders to organizations without such status. Fiscal sponsors generally provide this service to organizations and/or projects that align with their mission. The fiscal sponsor handles donations and assumes fiduciary responsibility for projects. The engagement of a fiscal sponsor typically involves a fee-based contractual arrangement.

An organization without 501(c) nonprofit status that wants to apply for GCEF funds should: 1) contact a fiscal sponsor to determine and formalize the role, responsibilities, and cost of potential grant management; 2) request all legal and financial documents required by the GCEF from the sponsor (refer to “Tips for Preparing a Application” at [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org) for a list of documents); and 3) develop the application in concert with the fiscal sponsor (the fiscal sponsor will be the grantee of record under the GCEF and, for this reason, it must be aware of and approve all aspects of the project as well as formally submit the full GCEF application).

For more information about the purpose and activities of a fiscal sponsor refer to the document Fiscal Sponsorship Information at [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org) or go to: [www.grantSPACE.org/Tools/Knowledge-Base/Funding-Research/Definitions-and-Clarification/fiscal-sponsorship](http://www.grantSPACE.org/Tools/Knowledge-Base/Funding-Research/Definitions-and-Clarification/fiscal-sponsorship)

**25. Can a for-profit company be a fiscal sponsor?**

No, only a not-for-profit is eligible to act as a fiscal sponsor.

**26. Does the fiscal sponsor have to be involved in environmental work?**

No.



**27. Are for-profit entities eligible to receive grants?**

No. However, for-profit entities may participate as partners and/or subcontractors on projects led by eligible applicants. Please refer to page 4 of the Request for Proposals for a complete description of eligible applicants.

**28. Are any specific partners required?**

There are no partnership requirements for projects that are led by organizations or agencies based in Greenpoint. However, projects led by organizations and agencies that are **not** based in Greenpoint must demonstrate strong local partnerships in the community and are strongly encouraged to include significant matching contributions.

**29. What is a community facility?**

A community facility is a building that is used to provide educational, health, recreational, religious or other essential services for the community it serves. Schools, libraries, senior and daycare centers, churches and fire and police stations are common examples of community facilities.

**30. If the Independent Review Committee (IRC) is comprised of neutral party technical experts, how will community support/need be incorporated into the review process?**

The State and the GCEF's General Administrator are in the process of designing the IRC project evaluation process. Community support and need will be incorporated into this process and an important element of the evaluation of projects. Further, community "preferencing" events will be (s) to be held in Fall 2015 to solicit community input on large and legacy proposals before final funding decisions are made (see below).

## **Proposal Review and Grant Selection**

**31. What will be the process for selecting projects and how is the GCEF ensuring that the process for selecting projects for funding is fair?**

The proposal evaluation criterion, review, and award process is described on pages 7-10 of the Request for Proposals and will be applied to all categories of grants. The process for selecting projects is three-pronged.

- All Small Grant proposals will be reviewed by the General Administrator to ensure they meet minimum standards, i.e., they are complete, meet the Grant Guidelines, and are feasible in terms of methods, budget, and timeline. The GA will score each proposal meeting minimum standards and deemed feasible. The scores will be used by the State to guide its decision-making on the selection of projects to be funded.
- All Large or Legacy Grant proposals will be reviewed by an Independent Review Committee (IRC). The IRC, a panel established by the State, will be comprised of neutral subject matter experts with no relationship to any proposals under consideration for funding.

**32. How will the community be engaged in project selection?**

It is GCEF's goal to invest in projects that address the Greenpoint community's environmental improvement priorities. This goal includes a commitment by the State to engage and partner with the community, and follow a transparent and objective process. GCEF will use "community preferencing" – public events which provide Greenpoint residents an opportunity to express their preferences among the projects under consideration for funding by GCEF – is central to this commitment. This process, which was used as a part of the selection of projects to receive Large and Legacy Grant awards in 2014, ensures that Greenpoint residents have a direct role

in guiding the selection of those projects that will be implemented in the community.

Following the IRC review process and the State's selection of projects to participate, several community preferencing events will be held in Greenpoint to assist the State in the selection of Large and Legacy projects to receive 2015 GCEF grant.

## **Accountability and Community Engagement**

### **33. How is the Greenpoint community involved in development and implementation of the GCEF?**

The State is committed to ensuring the GCEF is developed and implemented in a transparent and objective process, and to engaging and partnering with the Greenpoint community throughout the process. This includes ensuring the community has a direct, continuing role in guiding the GCEF's development and implementation, through:

- An active outreach process that has introduced the GCEF to the Greenpoint community and solicited input on the community's environmental improvement priorities.
- Establishment of the Greenpoint Community Advisory Panel (CAP) to provide direct, ongoing input to the State on the GCEF. The CAP is a diverse group of Greenpoint residents, representatives of local organizations and elected officials.
- Regular community meetings to keep residents updated about the GCEF and to seek their continuing feedback on it.
- Creation of a GCEF website -- [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org) -- to ensure community access to the latest information on the Fund, including: GCEF news and updates, Requests for Proposals, calendars, public presentations and fact sheets, and CAP membership and CAP meeting minutes.
- Engagement of North Brooklyn Development Corporation (NBDC) as co-General Administrator of the GCEF to lead the program's collaboration with the community. NBDC is a Greenpoint-based not-for-profit founded in 1979 that has an established track record of developing and implementing successful programs in the community. Conducting Community Preferencing. Through these events, Greenpoint residents have a direct role in guiding the selection of those projects that will be implemented in the community. Following the IRC review process and the State's selection of projects to participate, several community preferencing events will be held in Greenpoint to assist the State in the selection of Large and Legacy projects to receive 2015 GCEF grant.

### **34. Who is responsible for day-to-day management of the GCEF?**

A partnership of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and NBDC was selected by the State through a competitive process to serve as the General Administrator for the GCEF. The General Administrator is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the GCEF on behalf of the State. Since its creation by Congress in 1984, NFWF has become one of the world's largest conservation grant-makers working with both the public and private sectors. Since its founding, NFWF has made more than 12,100 grants through competitive processes distributing \$2.1 billion to projects. NBDC is a Greenpoint-based community not-for-profit founded in 1979 that has an established track record of developing and implementing successful programs in the community.

### **35. What is being done to ensure responsible fiscal management of these funds?**

One of the reasons that the State selected NFWF as one of the General Administrator partners is because they are the preeminent environmental program manager in this country. NFWF maintains robust financial systems



that ensure accurate and up-to-date accounting of the GCEF funds at all times. GCEF funds are segregated and managed to ensure that activities and transactions can be tracked, accounted for, and reported separately at all times. NFWF accounts for all funding sources in accordance with "Generally Accepted Accounting Procedures," established standards for the accounting industry. In addition, NFWF will track the fiscal activity, e.g., invoicing and payment, of each project funded by the GCEF on an individual project-specific basis. Fiduciary services are supported by NFWF's Finance and Accounting department, consisting of 12 full-time employees. Finally, pending disbursement to projects, NFWF-administered funds are invested by professional investment managers based on individual Investment Policy Statements. Taken together, these elements ensure the rigorous fiscal management of the GCEF funds throughout their lifecycle.

## **Applying For A Grant**

### **36. Are applications submitted on paper or online?**

All applications must be processed online through the NFWF *Easygrants* ([www.nfwf.org/easygrants](http://www.nfwf.org/easygrants)) application system. Paper applications will not be accepted.

### **37. How do I apply online?**

Review the Request for Proposals and background materials available at the GCEF website: [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org). When you are ready to start your application, follow the link to the "Applicant Website" to register in the online system.

### **38. How do I get help using the online application system?**

For Easygrants technical support or problem-solving, send an email to [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto:Easygrants@nfwf.org) or call the Easygrants Helpdesk at 202-595-2497. (Helpdesk hours are 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM EST, Mon-Fri; leave a message at other times). Please include your name, proposal ID # (the number assigned to your proposal by Easygrants), e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to (i.e., Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund), and a description of your assistance need.

## **Applicant Assistance**

### **39. How may I get help in deciding if my project idea is eligible for funding or with other issues related to developing a proposal?**

One-on-one assistance is available to help applicants develop proposals. To request one-on-one assistance, send an email to [gcefund@northbrooklyn.org](mailto:gcefund@northbrooklyn.org) or [lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org](mailto:lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org). Please include information on the type of assistance required. GCEF will either provide a written response or schedule an appointment to discuss the topic in more detail.

### **40. Does GCEF offer technical assistance to prospective applicants?**

GCEF offers specialized technical assistance to help applicants develop elements of a GCEF proposal (e.g., assessing permitting, design, environmental metrics, quality assurance, etc.). To request technical assistance, please send an email to [lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org](mailto:lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org) and include information on your technical assistance needs.

### **41. How may I link up with other prospective applicants?**

The GCEF offers a couple of ways to help people come together to share ideas. If you are thinking about a project idea or submitting a proposal:

- Call or send an email to Filip Stabrowski, North Brooklyn Development Corporation, (718) 389-9044 ext. 15, [gcefund@northbrooklyn.org](mailto:gcefund@northbrooklyn.org). NBDC maintains a record of what project ideas are being discussed in the community. Part of the General Administrator's role in this process is intended to be matchmaker and, accordingly, will put you in contact with others with common ideas or interests.
- Attend the GCEF Community Meeting on Monday, May 4, 2015, 6:30pm-8:30pm at Warsaw, 261 Driggs Avenue. A portion of this meeting will be dedicated to networking.
- Participate in one of GCEF's several planned Applicant Workshops. For a list of these workshops, visit the GCE website ([www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org)) or contact the GCEF Community Liaison at 718-389-9044 x15.

#### **42. Who do I contact with general questions?**

Please contact one of the following:

- Filip Stabrowski, North Brooklyn Development Corporation, GCEF Community Liaison, (718) 389-9044 ext. 15, or [gcefund@northbrooklyn.org](mailto:gcefund@northbrooklyn.org).
- Lynn Dwyer, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, (631)627-3488.

