



## **Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund Request for Proposals**

The Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund (GCEF), an outgrowth of the Greenpoint Environmental Benefit Projects Program, is a \$19.5 million grant program created by the NYS Attorney General's Office and the Department of Environmental Conservation (the State). Funding for the GCEF was obtained by the State in a settlement with ExxonMobil over oil and related environmental contamination at its Greenpoint, Brooklyn facility and in the surrounding community.

The overall goal of the GCEF is to secure significant environmental improvements in Greenpoint. More specifically, the GCEF is:

- Designed to support projects that address the community's environmental priorities, such as improving water quality, groundwater, open space, toxic pollution, and air quality; and
- Committed to a transparent and objective process, and to engaging and partnering with the Greenpoint community. This includes ensuring the community has a direct, continuing role in guiding the GCEF's development and implementation.

This is the first Request for Proposals for projects that address the community's environmental priorities. It is expected that project funds will be available through at least one additional grant cycle. However, the goal is to invest as much of the available funding in eligible projects as soon as possible.

The State established a Greenpoint Community Advisory Panel (CAP) -- a group of Greenpoint residents, representatives of local organizations and elected officials -- to provide direct, ongoing input to the State on the GCEF. The CAP has played a central role in guiding the Fund's development and implementation, including helping to create the process used for selecting a General Administrator for the GCEF, as well as for soliciting, evaluating, and selecting projects to receive grant funding.

In 2013, a partnership of National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the Greenpoint-based North Brooklyn Development Corporation (NBDC) was selected by the State through a competitive process to serve as the GCEF's General Administrator. The General Administrator is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the GCEF on behalf of the State.

## GRANT CATEGORIES, MATCH and SOLICITATION PROCESS

Grants will be available in three categories:

### Small Grants

Grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$25,000 will be available for smaller-scale environmental improvement projects involving a limited number of activities and/or locations. Examples of Small Grant projects include: installing a rain garden at a park; expanding tree boxes on a block; planting trees and/or native plant gardens at a school; holding a trash clean up event; conducting a reusable bag giveaway; and conducting an energy audit or an indoor air quality audit at a single public facility. **Match:** Applicants are *encouraged* to provide a matching contribution of cash or in-kind support. **Proposal Submission:** Applicants for Small Grants should submit a small grant proposal.

### Large Grants

Grants ranging from greater than \$25,000 to \$2,000,000 will be 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. Examples of Large Grant projects include: green street projects; greening public facilities inside and out; implementing a community-wide litter reduction or anti-idling campaign; and acquiring and improving open spaces. **Match:** Applicants for Large Grants 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). **Proposal Submission:** Applicants for Large Grants will have proposals processed in two stages: 1) Applicants must complete a pre-proposal (submission of a *pre-proposal is mandatory* in order to participate in the full proposal round); and 2) Applicants who have submitted pre-proposals determined to meet minimum standards will be invited to submit a full proposal.

### Legacy Grants > \$2,000,000

Grants greater than \$2,000,000 will be 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, for example, 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 or other specialized project characteristics require more funding than a Large Grant project. **Match:** Applicants for Legacy Grants are *encouraged* to 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). **Proposal Submission:** Applicants for Legacy Grants will have proposals processed in two stages: 1) Applicants must complete a pre-proposal (submission of a *pre-proposal is mandatory* in order to participate in the full proposal round); and 2) Applicants who have submitted pre-proposals determined to meet minimum standards will be invited to submit a full proposal.

## GRANT GUIDELINES

- 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 as shown at [www.gcefund.org/map.htm](http://www.gcefund.org/map.htm)
- Projects must be located in Greenpoint.
- Projects must primarily benefit the Greenpoint public.
- The primary benefit of projects must be an environmental benefit. An environmental benefit is an activity (project or program) that would result in improvement, restoration, protection, or reduction of risk to public health or the environment.
- Projects must provide a discernible environmental benefit.
- Projects must address environmental areas of concern to the community, including but not limited to: *water quality, groundwater, open space, reduction of toxic pollution, and air quality.*
- The following project types are ineligible to receive funding from the GCEF: capital campaigns; creation of endowments; event sponsorships; and projects for re-granting purposes.
- GCEF funding cannot be used for political advocacy, lobbying, boycotts, litigation expenses, terrorist activities, or activities conducted in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- Projects must also be consistent with the Consent Decree<sup>1</sup> (Consent Decree) for the ExxonMobil settlement, and the NY State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Environmental Benefits Policy.<sup>2</sup>
- Accordingly, a project cannot:
  - be a project of ExxonMobil, or others that are the result of legally mandated action(s) under local, state, or federal law and/or associated with administrative permit conditions or terms of settlement agreements;
  - be a project that ExxonMobil already intends to perform;
  - cover or reimburse costs the State would incur during the normal course of business, including payments for State staff, except that the DEC Commissioner or DEC General Counsel may authorize an EBP that includes the reimbursement of extraordinary expenses incurred by the DEC in the implementation or oversight of a specific EBP; or
  - generate revenue for the State.

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<sup>1</sup>Consent decree in the matter of State of New York v. Exxon Mobil Corporation, No. 07-CV-2902 (KAM/RML) (E.D.N.Y), ordered on March 1, 2011.

<sup>2</sup>New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Commissioner Policy, CP-37 / Environmental Benefit Projects (EBP) Policy.

In addition:

- a project shall not result in the State extending the time within which ExxonMobil must comply with the Consent Decree;
  - an educational project must be implemented by a third party not affiliated with ExxonMobil; and
  - a project must comply with all applicable laws and should be consistent with all applicable policies.
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- Recognizing that more technically complicated projects often require a phase of planning and design, applicants may request funding to support this phase of project development. Such funding may be used to support the preparation of conceptual designs, engineering plans, and detailed project budgets, to facilitate permitting processes, and to support other related tasks to position projects for successful implementation. Projects that receive grants for planning and design are welcome to return to the GCEF in subsequent grant cycles, to the extent they occur, to seek funding for project implementation.
  - Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state, tribal, and local governments, and academic and educational institutions. Individuals and for-profit businesses are **not** eligible applicants. Groups without 501(c) non-profit status may partner with an eligible applicant, including a fiscal sponsor. Fiscal sponsors are non-profit organizations that enable the movement of resources from funders to organizations that share the fiscal sponsor's mission. The fiscal sponsor handles donations and assumes fiduciary responsibility.
  - To ensure long-term maintenance and sustainability, projects should include local partners who have technical expertise, local knowledge, and a demonstrated commitment to the community's well-being. These partnerships may include non-profit organizations, local businesses and associations, government agencies, as well as residents of Greenpoint.
  - 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 bring significant matching contributions to the project.
  - Projects must begin implementation within six months of grant award and be completed within one to three years of the start date; variances from these requirements may be provided under exceptional circumstances.

## EXAMPLES OF COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES

Since the Fund's inception, the State and the CAP have led an outreach process designed to solicit input on the Greenpoint community's environmental improvement priorities. This outreach has engaged large numbers of Greenpoint residents, many of whom represent larger community associations and organizations, and generated a list of preliminary project ideas that the GCEF has organized into five project "themes".

The following list of project themes and associated project types broadly reflects environmental improvement priorities that have emerged thus far from the Fund's community outreach process:

- **Green Streets and Other Community Greening.** The installation of a selection of environmental benefit projects along neighborhood streets to improve local water and air quality, reduce energy consumption, reduce the heat island effect, and improve neighborhood aesthetics. Example projects include: installing rain gardens; replacing impervious surfaces with pervious concrete or other permeable materials; expanding tree boxes and planting street trees; creating native plant gardens and community gardens in open space; installing green roofs; implementing campaigns to reduce litter; and installing solar-powered trash cans. Project proposals could include some combination of these or other practices that increase the environmental benefits of neighborhood streets in the community.
- **Waterfront Restoration and Infrastructure.** The creation of public access to the waterfront and efforts to restore its natural functions. Example projects include: acquiring and developing land for waterfront parks, including street-end parks; stabilizing river and stream banks and reconnecting natural floodplains; restoring wetlands; planting shade trees and native plants for cooling and to serve as natural buffers; installing rain gardens, pervious pavers, and other bio-retention practices to better filter water; and enhancing the usability of the waterfront through green projects.
- **Greening Community Buildings, Facilities and Infrastructure.** The reduction of the environmental impacts, both inside and out, of schools, libraries, community centers, the firehouse, and other community buildings. Example projects on these sites include: conducting indoor air quality audits and energy audits; painting "cool white roofs"; installing high efficiency lighting, solar electricity generation, or cisterns to capture and reuse rainwater; creating rain gardens; installing green roofs; planting shade trees; and planting native plant and pollinator gardens to provide habitat for butterflies, bees, and songbirds.
- **Parks and Open Space.** The acquisition, creation, and enhancement of parks and public spaces, including playgrounds and sports fields, as well as undeveloped areas. The purpose of such projects may be to reduce air and water pollution impacts in Greenpoint, while also providing recreational opportunities and enhancing community quality-of-life. Example projects include: design and development of new park space; resurfacing basketball and tennis courts with pervious pavement;

installing solar-powered lighting; planting native trees and shrubs; holding park cleanups and installing dog waste stations; and providing or improving public access to natural areas.

- **Environmental Education and Stewardship.** The fostering of careful and responsible management of Greenpoint's environment, and the promotion of broad public environmental awareness. Example projects include: increasing public understanding and appreciation of natural resources and the environment; engaging students and citizens in monitoring air and/or water quality, and communicating data to the community; launching behavior change campaigns to tackle issues such as pet waste, car idling or littering; developing outreach, training and incentive programs to help residents and businesses implement environmental benefit projects on private property; providing "green jobs" training and work experience opportunities for young people.

### **HOW TO APPLY TO THE GREENPOINT COMMUNITY ENVIRONMENTAL FUND**

Proposals must be submitted electronically through NFWF's online application system, *Easygrants*. To make a submission:

- Review 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 [www.nfwf.org/easygrants](http://www.nfwf.org/easygrants) to register in the online system (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login).
- Click on "Apply for Funding."
- Select a "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options. If you are seeking grant funding between \$5,000 and \$25,000 (i.e., a Small Grant), select "Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund: Small Grant." If you are requesting funding of greater than \$25,000 (i.e., a Large or Legacy Grant), select "Greenpoint Community Environmental Fund: Large/Legacy Grant."
- Follow the instructions in *Easygrants* to complete your application. Once you start an application, you may save it as it is being prepared, and return later to complete and submit it.

### **GRANT SCREENING, REVIEW, and AWARD PROCESS**

#### **Proposal Screening**

The General Administrator will screen all proposals submitted to ensure they meet minimum standards, i.e., they are complete, meet the above Grant Guidelines, and are feasible in terms of methods, budget, and timeline. Proposals will also be screened by members of an Independent Review Committee (IRC) comprised of neutral subject-matter experts with no relationship to any of the proposals under consideration by the GCEF to identify potential impediments to successful project completion.

There are three possible outcomes of the initial screening:

1. Where a proposal for a Small, Large or Legacy Grant does not meet minimum standards, the General Administrator will follow up with the applicant and provide guidance about how the proposal may be adapted to meet these standards in the current or any subsequent grant cycle. The General Administrator also will follow up with an applicant where significant impediments related to the proposed project are identified.
2. Small Grant proposals will be evaluated and selected based upon ***the extent to which*** they meet minimum standards. Once selected to receive funding, successful grantees will receive a notification of award and instructions on contracting. The General Administrator will follow up with applicants of any projects not selected for funding and provide guidance on how the proposal may be adapted for the purpose of any subsequent grant cycle.
3. Large Grant and Legacy Grant pre-proposals that meet minimum standards will be provided with detailed instructions on how to prepare a full proposal. Where pre-proposals may be strengthened, e.g., through additional technical assistance or partnerships, the General Administrator will reach out to applicants to provide guidance. In some cases, applicants may be asked to scale back a Large Grant for consideration as a Small Grant.

### **Large and Legacy Grant Full Proposal Review**

Full proposals for Large Grants and Legacy Grants will be reviewed by the IRC (comprised of neutral subject-matter experts with no relationship to any of the proposals under consideration). Proposals will be evaluated and scored based on ***the extent to which*** they meet the criteria listed below. IRC scores and associated review comments will be used to guide decision-making on the selection of projects for funding. The scoring criteria (and approximate associated weighting) are:

- **Environmental Results (35%)** -- The project will secure a discernible environmental benefit for the Greenpoint public. Legacy grants may secure significant additional benefits to the community.
- **Work Plan (20%)** -- The project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan.
- **Budget (20%)** -- The budget is cost-effective, reasonable, and leverages other partner contributions.
- **Greenpoint Partnership (20%)** -- An appropriate community-based partnership exists to implement and sustain the project, and the project has significant community support.
- **Communication and Dissemination (5%)** -- The project has a plan to communicate information about the project (e.g., benefits, partners, sources of funding) to Greenpoint residents and other appropriate audiences.

Following the IRC evaluation, a draft slate of potential projects for GCEF funding will be shared with the CAP and community. Final selection of projects to be funded will be made by the State.

## **NEED HELP DEVELOPING A PROPOSAL?**

### **Workshops and Webinars**

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to attend a GCEF workshop or webinar. These events will provide a broad overview of the grant program and tips for using the *Easygrants* online application system. Visit [www.gcefund.org](http://www.gcefund.org) for information about dates, locations, and times and to register for a GCEF webinar or workshop.

### **One-on-One Assistance**

One-on-one technical assistance is also available to help develop a proposal or to use the Easygrants online application system.

- For questions about developing a proposal, send an email to either: [gcefund@northbrooklyn.org](mailto:gcefund@northbrooklyn.org) or [lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org](mailto:lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org).
- For questions about using the Easygrants online system, send an email to: [john.wright@nfwf.org](mailto:john.wright@nfwf.org)

*In your email, please indicate your question or the type of assistance you desire.*

Have a general question?

- Lynn Dwyer, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, (631) 637-3488, [lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org](mailto:lynn.dwyer@nfwf.org)
- Laura Treciokas, North Brooklyn Development Corporation, (718) 389-9044 ext. 15 [gcefund@northbrooklyn.org](mailto:gcefund@northbrooklyn.org)
- Courtney Kwiatkowski, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, (202) 857-0166, [courtney.kwiatkowski@nfwf.org](mailto:courtney.kwiatkowski@nfwf.org)

### **Important Dates to Remember!**

- Wednesday, October 23, 2013, 11:30-1:00pm: Applicant Workshop
- Wednesday, October 30, 2013, 1:00pm-2:30pm: Webinar for Prospective Applicants
- Wednesday, November 13, 2013, 6:30pm-8:00pm: Applicant Workshop
- Wednesday, December 18, 2013: Small Grant full proposals and Large/Legacy pre-proposals due
- Late February 2014: Announcement of Small Grant funding
- Mid-March 2014: Invitations issued for Large and Legacy Grant Full Proposals
- Mid-May 2014: Large and Legacy Grant full proposals due
- September 2014: Community Meeting(s) on Draft Slate of Large and Legacy Grants
- October 2014: Announcement of Large and Legacy Grant funding