



**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
SOLICITED BY THE
NEW YORK-NEW JERSEY HARBOR ESTUARY PROGRAM
IN PARTNERSHIP WITH THE NEW ENGLAND INTERSTATE
WATER POLLUTION CONTROL COMMISSION:**

STEWARDSHIP GRANTS 2010-2011

1. Summary

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), in partnership with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), is requesting proposals for stewardship projects addressing the following priority topics:

- A. Green Infrastructure Demonstration
- B. Shoreline Cleanup
- C. Education and Other Stewardship Projects

A total of approximately \$168,000 is available, including \$80,000 for Green Infrastructure Demonstration, \$ 18,000 for Shoreline Cleanup, and \$70,000 for Education and other Stewardship projects. Proposals may address more than one priority topic. Preference will be given to organizations that have not been previously funded by HEP.

2. Background on the Harbor Estuary Program and NEIWPCC

Designated as an Estuary of National Significance under the Clean Water Act, the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary is a complex ecological system in the midst of a major urban center. 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 develop and implement a plan to protect, conserve, and restore the estuary. As asserted in its mission statement, “the New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program works to shape policy and implement actions that positively impact the health of the Estuary by convening a partnership of interested stakeholders, utilizing sound science to analyze the issues, and working to carry out recommendations that are environmentally and economically responsible.” Participants in the Program include representatives from local, state, and federal environmental agencies; scientists; citizens; businesses; and environmentalists, among others. NEIWPCC is a not-for-profit interstate agency that serves and assists its member states (Connecticut, Maine,

Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island and Vermont) by coordinating activities and forums that encourage cooperation among the states, educating the public about key water quality issues, supporting research projects, training environmental professionals, and providing overall leadership in water management and protection.

NEIWPCC is a partner of the NY-NJ HEP and supports its efforts by helping to manage HEP's Grants Programs, and by performing other activities.

Geographic area of interest

The NY-NJ Harbor Estuary encompasses the waters of the New York-New Jersey Harbor and the tidally influenced portions of all rivers and streams flowing into it. The "core area" of the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary Program extends from Piermont Marsh on the Hudson River to an imaginary line at the mouth of the Harbor connecting Sandy Hook, New Jersey and Rockaway Point, New York (the Sandy Hook-Rockaway Point Transect). This core area includes the bi-state waters of the Hudson River, Upper and Lower Bays, Arthur Kill, Kill Van Kull, and Raritan Bay. In New Jersey, it includes the Hackensack, Passaic, Raritan, Shrewsbury, Navesink, Rahway, and Elizabeth Rivers, as well as Newark and Sandy Hook Bays. In New York, it includes the East, Harlem, and Bronx Rivers, Jamaica and Flushing Bays, and the Long Island Sound up to the Throgs Neck Bridge. Land boundaries coincide with the Hudson-Raritan Estuary study areas defined for the region's Comprehensive Restoration Plan. A map of these areas and a list of zip codes is posted with this RFP at <http://www.neiwpcc.org/nynjep.asp>.

3. Schedule

a) Announcement of Request for Proposals	March 12, 2010
b) Sign up for webinar*	March 22, 2010
c) Informational Webinar*	March 24, 2010
d) Notice of Intent to submit a proposal Due	March 29, 2010
e) Full Proposals Due	April 23, 2010
f) Projects Selected	May 21, 2010
g) Project Period	June 7, 2010-August 1, 2011
h) Final Report	Due August 15, 2011

*For details, please see section 12. **Application Process.**

4. Overview

The New York-New Jersey Harbor Estuary Program (HEP), in partnership with the New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission (NEIWPCC), is requesting proposals for stewardship projects within the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary. This is part of an initiative to promote and enhance stewardship (i.e., the careful and responsible management of something entrusted to one's care) within the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary while contributing to the achievement of HEP's major goals, as established in its Action Plan (available at http://www.harborestuary.org/reports/HEP_Action_Plan-061708.pdf).

5. Funds Available and Eligibility

A total of approximately \$168,000* is available for the following priority topics:

- \$80,000 for two **Green Infrastructure Demonstration projects**—one in New York and one in New Jersey. Budget requests should not exceed \$40,000.

- \$18,000 for **Shoreline Cleanup projects**. HEP intends to fund twice-a-year clean-ups in two to three sites in New York and the same number in New Jersey. HEP anticipates the budget per cleanup to range between \$1,000 and \$2,000. It is acknowledged, however, that individual events may be more or less expensive, depending on the location and complexity of the cleanup. HEP will consider applications for more complex and expensive cleanups as long as the budget section clearly justifies the requested amount.

- \$70,000 for **Education and other Stewardship projects**. HEP expects to select one to three substantive projects in this category.

Matching funds are not required but are encouraged. The contribution of in-kind services, *pro bono* work or other match will be favorably reviewed. If the project costs exceed available HEP funds, the applicant will need to demonstrate in the **budget** section how the additional funds will be provided.

Funds are available to cover expenses directly related to the proposed project (including wages and consultant fees), but not for general operating expenses. Organizations will receive payment on a reimbursement basis upon submission of invoices.

Groups that are eligible to receive funding are: municipalities, public and private primary and secondary schools, universities, and non-profit organizations with 501(c)(3) status. Preference will be given to organizations that have not been previously funded by HEP.

***NOTE:** A portion of the funding for these projects needs to be expended by August 31, 2010. Projects that can expend and request reimbursement, at least for a portion of their expenses, by August 31 are encouraged. In the event that an applicant is chosen for a project that specifies an amount that will be spent by August 31, 2010 and the amount is not spent by that date, those funds will be lost. All projects must be completed by August 1, 2011.

6. Project Objectives

The award recipient(s) will develop and carry out a project that:

- 1) Targets a **specific audience** (e.g., residents of a given neighborhood or town, elected officials, business/industry, youth, and teachers, among many others).
- 2) Creates an **installation** and/or conducts a **specific action(s) that benefits the Estuary**.
- 3) Includes an **educational/outreach component** to deliver a defined message to its target audience. The message must communicate the reasons for conducting the project and

how it connects to, and improves, both the Estuary’s environment and the participants’ lives—ultimately helping foster stewardship for the Estuary.

- 4) Leads to specific **behavior changes and/or ecosystem improvements**.

7. Project Priorities

The following **priority topics** will be the focus for this round of proposals (all projects must address the project objectives described in the previous section):

A. Green Infrastructure Demonstration

Approximately \$80,000 is available for the planning and installation of green infrastructure demonstration projects for stormwater management. HEP expects to select two projects (one in New York and one in New Jersey) with a budget of no more than \$40,000 per project. The project must include:

- 1) Installation of green infrastructure features for stormwater management. The United States Environmental Protection Agency defines green infrastructure as a set of approaches and technologies that infiltrate, evapotranspire, or reuse stormwater or runoff on the site where it is generated to maintain or restore the natural hydrologic regime of a land area. The disconnection of impervious surfaces from the stormwater infrastructure, installation of rain gardens, green roofs, rain barrels, bio-swales, tree boxes, and permeable pavers, are some common examples of projects eligible for funding. **Green infrastructure installation projects that are part of state permit requirements (New Jersey Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [NJPDDES] or the New York State Pollutant Discharge Elimination System [SPDES]) are not eligible.**
- 2) An education component to increase awareness of stormwater and nonpoint source pollution issues and their relationship to the health of the estuary and the well-being of community members.

Proposals must explain how the chosen green infrastructure practice will be designed and constructed (including, if applicable, permission by the site owner to carry out the project and how the current uses of the selected site will be affected) and its short- and long-term maintenance, management and protection. Projects must include signage that would educate passers-by about its benefits to the community and the environment, especially in relation to the Estuary. The incorporation of stormwater monitoring is encouraged but not required.¹

IMPORTANT NOTE: If your project involves any digging, you must make sure that no buried pipes, cables, or other structures will be damaged. **Call 811 before you dig.**

¹ Projects including collection and/or analysis of environmental data require completion of a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); see Section 10. and Appendix A.

B. Shoreline Cleanup:

Approximately \$18,000 is available for projects that would adopt publicly accessible estuary shoreline areas (e.g., beaches, wetlands, and stream corridors) within a community for twice-a-year cleanups similar to those coordinated by the NJDEP coastal Adopt-a-Beach program (see http://www.state.nj.us/dep/watershedmgt/adopt_a_beach.htm). Applicants would be responsible for recruiting volunteers, working with their municipalities, conducting the two cleanups, and submitting their results as part of the final report (see Section 9. Deliverables).

Projects are expected to foster volunteer stewardship of waterfront areas, increase awareness of floatable debris as a problem in the Estuary, reduce litter on our shorelines, and reduce harm to fish and wildlife. Preference will be given to sites that are not currently served by existing cleanup programs.

C. Education and other Stewardship Projects

Approximately \$70,000 is available for other types of projects promoting stewardship of the Estuary and awareness of its resources and environmental problems:

- **Estuary education:** projects that involve formal or informal educational activities concerning Estuary-related topics (e.g., host a public seminar series, or adapt existing curricular materials and conduct a field trip for students or a teacher enrichment program). Projects that take place outdoors and/or include participatory activities will be preferred. New curriculum development will be considered for funding only if the applicant can show a compelling need for new materials.
- **Other projects** promoting stewardship are eligible but must address at least one of HEP's major goals, as established in its Action Plan (available at http://www.harborestuary.org/reports/HEP_Action_Plan-061708.pdf). Examples of projects that could be funded include (but are not limited to): enhancing a habitat restoration project by adding an educational component (e.g., developing and installing signage and a viewing platform), maintenance of a restored wetland, streambank stabilization/restoration (e.g., by planting trees and native species). **Public access events are not eligible for funding under this program.** Potential applicants are advised to contact the HEP office to inquire about the suitability of their projects.

Collaboration between partners is encouraged but not required. Applicants may wish to team up with one or more organizations that bring specialized expertise and experience, especially for green infrastructure projects. Applicants in need of assistance finding potential partners may consult the Online Stewardship Network, a searchable database of organizations within the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary region, available at www.harborestuary.org/stewardshipdatabase.htm. Another useful resource is the map of stewardship groups available through the OASIS mapping project (be aware that the "stewardship organizations" layer is being updated, but currently includes only organizations in NYC <http://www.oasisnyc.net/oasismap.htm>).

8. Proposal Evaluation Procedures

All proposals will be reviewed and evaluated by a Stewardship Program Review Team. Applications will be evaluated based solely on the information provided in the proposal. Note that any given member of the Review Team will abstain from reviewing applications where a conflict of interest may arise. Criteria for project evaluation include:

- Practicability
- Expected benefits
- Cost effectiveness
- Adequate plan for project evaluation
- Professional merit
- Timeline

The rating criteria are available for download together with this RFP at <http://www.neiwpc.org/nynjep.asp>.

9. Deliverables

In addition to quarterly progress reports, award recipients will submit a final report in electronic format containing:

- A **summary of the project** including a brief description of the goals, course of action (including a summary of the message conveyed), accomplishments, lessons learned, 4 to 6 pictures of the activities with captions (please make sure to obtain clearance to share or post these pictures), and project evaluation (including numerical indicators of the project's success, such as number of participants engaged or number of trees planted).
 - Green infrastructure projects must include any plans, drawings, pictures, lists of plants used, and other project details as applicable, as well as an estimate of the amount of water diverted from the stormwater system, including an explanation of how this estimate was derived.
 - Shoreline cleanup projects must include the following data for each cleanup event/location: number of volunteers, estimated amount of debris collected, and length of shoreline covered. Applicants are also welcome to submit estimates of the types of debris collected, especially any large/unusual/noteworthy items or observations such as abandoned boats, tires, and entangled wildlife.
- Electronic and hard copies of any **materials** developed as a part of this funded project.

HEP and/or NEIWPC may post this report online or otherwise distribute it to facilitate the implementation of similar initiatives in the NY-NJ Harbor Estuary and beyond.

10. Collection and Use of Environmental Data

Environmental data collection and/or data analysis require the applicant to have an EPA/NEIWPCC-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) before the start of work (see Appendix A). Because QAPP development can extend the project schedule and add to the project costs, carefully evaluate whether new environmental data collection and/or data analysis are needed.

QAPP development may be funded as part of the project provided that the applicant has properly accounted for it and included it in the budget and timeline. Guidance is provided in Appendix A.

Data on the types and amounts of debris collected during shoreline cleanup events will require a QAPP if used to inform any decisions.

Green infrastructure projects that include a monitoring component will require a QAPP. If you are unsure whether your project requires a QAPP, or have any other questions, please contact the HEP office prior to submitting your proposal.

11. Postponement/Cancellation

HEP and NEIWPCC reserve the right to postpone or cancel this solicitation and to reject all applications. Funding of projects is contingent on NEIWPCC's receipt of federal funding.

12. Proposal Package and Application Process

Please complete the proposal package available for download with this RFP at <http://www.neiwpcc.org/nynjep.asp> and submit electronically as a single file in Portable Document Format (PDF). If you cannot submit electronically, you may mail ten (10) hard copies of your proposal. The proposal (with 12-point standard font and 1-inch margins) **must not** exceed 10 pages (15 pages for green infrastructure projects), including site map, budget and attachments with the only exception of letters of recommendation, which will not count toward the page limit. Pages in excess of the limit will **not** be reviewed.

- **An informational webinar will be conducted on March 24, 2010 from 3 to 4:30 pm.** HEP **strongly recommends** that potential applicants participate in this webinar, which will provide guidance on how to prepare a successful application, explain when a QAPP is required, and address potential applicants' questions. **Please email the HEP Office by March 22** at gabriela@harborestuary.org to sign up for the webinar and receive instructions on how to connect (any changes will be announced at www.harborestuary.org and <http://www.neiwpcc.org/nynjep.asp>)

- **A Notice of Intent to submit a proposal is kindly requested by March 29, 2010.** This notice of intent (available for download at <http://www.neiwpcc.org/nynjep.asp>) to submit a proposal is appreciated but not required, and does **not** obligate the organization to submit a full proposal. This notice is requested to help HEP and NEIWPCCC plan and speed up the review process, ultimately benefitting applicants.
- **Full applications must be submitted by 5:00 PM on April 23, 2010, with no exceptions.**

For additional feedback, applicants may contact HEP staff at any time with general questions and to inquire about the suitability of their projects. Inquiries may be addressed to Gabriela Munoz (212-637-3793 or gabriela@harborestuary.org)

13. Time, Date, Place and Manner of Requested Response

Responses to this solicitation must be received no later than **5:00 PM EST on April 23, 2010**. No hand deliveries, faxes, or late responses will be accepted.

- **Please email (preferred)** your application as one complete file to Susy King, NEIWPCCC, sking@neiwpcc.org

If submitting 10 hard copies, please mail responses to:

New England Interstate Water Pollution Control Commission

Attn: Susy King

Boott Mills South

116 John Street

Lowell, MA 01852-1124

Phone: 978-349-2521

Email: sking@neiwpcc.org

Please address any inquiries to:

Gabriela Munoz

Phone : 212-637-3793

Email: gabriela@harboestuary.org

14. Tips for a Successful Application

1. When developing your project and workplan, and preparing your proposal, please **keep in mind the project objectives and priority topics** listed in Sections 6 and 7.
2. Please carefully fill out and **provide all information** required on the proposal form in each field. This is extremely important as it will determine the rating of your proposal. Reviewers can only evaluate your project based on the information you provide to us; if it is incomplete, it will hurt your score. Closely follow the directions and answer directly any questions posed.

3. **Be concise and focused, and get to the point.** The most successful applications will be both complete and succinct. Provide only the information that is requested. Remember that reviewers will not evaluate pages beyond the page limit, so do not waste precious space with irrelevant information (you may provide additional *relevant* information as an attachment).
4. **Be organized.** Follow the structure provided on the proposal form and include each piece of information in the section where it is requested. This will increase your chances of success and speed up the evaluation process. Consider that reviewers will evaluate specific aspects of your proposal (see next tip). Relevant information in the wrong place may not be noticed, hurting your score.
5. **Keep the rating criteria in mind.** These criteria tell you how each section of your proposal will be evaluated by the reviewers. Make sure to address all aspects clearly and thoroughly.
6. We encourage you to submit PDF files to avoid formatting and/or software compatibility issues. Free PDF writer software is available online; contact us if you need assistance.
7. Do not hesitate to contact the HEP Office if you have any questions or need help.

More Information and Resources

The following resources may be helpful in developing your proposal:

- Harbor Estuary Program Website: www.harborestuary.org
 - Background on the Stewardship Program: <http://www.harborestuary.org/stewardship.htm>
 - HEP committee and work group contacts: <http://www.harborestuary.org/about.htm>
- Grant writing tools (these might help with general issues, but remember to address what is requested in this particular RFP):
 - Grant Proposal Writing Tips from the Corporation for Public Broadcasting: www.cpb.org/grants/grantwriting.html
 - Non-Profit Guides: www.npguides.org
 - EPA's Tips On Writing a Grant Proposal: <http://www.epa.gov/ogd/recipient/tips.htm>
 - Minnesota Council on Foundations' Writing A Successful Grant Proposal: <http://www.mcf.org/mcf/grant/writing.htm>
- 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/>
 - An Interactive Teleconference on Using Logic Models in Program Evaluation (CYREFnet) - www.cyfernet.org/interactrain/logicmodels.html
- Green infrastructure resources:
 - Low Impact Development (LID): <http://www.epa.gov/nps/lid/>
 - Green Infrastructure: http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=298
 - NJ Stormwater Best Management Practices Manual, low impact development chapter (this includes examples on how to estimate reductions in stormwater runoff): http://www.njstormwater.org/tier_A/pdf/NJ_SWBMP_2%20print.pdf

APPENDIX A: QUALITY ASSURANCE PROJECT PLANS (QAPPS)

Proposed projects that involve the collection, analysis, or manipulation of environmental data, which are selected for funding, will require an EPA/NEIWPCC-approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). The use of “secondary data” to make environmental decisions also requires a QAPP. The term “secondary data” refers to previously collected data describing environmental conditions (which may have been collected by other entities, not just the current grantee). Secondary data can include (but are not limited to) historical data, information from computer databases, computer models, research projects, and surveys.

Preparation of a QAPP does require a level of planning and documentation greater than is needed for other projects. QAPP preparation is intended to facilitate the project planning and development process and to assure that the data used or provided (both grantee-generated and secondary data) are of known and adequate quality.

Grantees need to include preparation and implementation of this plan into their budgets and timelines. Keep in mind that it usually takes several months to complete the QAPP writing and approval process. In no case should environmental data activities proceed before the QAPP is submitted to and approved by both NEIWPCC and EPA.

If your project requires a QAPP, or if you are unsure whether a QAPP is needed, we encourage you to contact us prior to submitting your proposal, so we can better assist you and point you to useful resources. Guidance materials are available from the EPA (http://www.epa.gov/region02/qa/qa_documents/air_h20_qapp04.pdf and <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5-final.pdf>) and NEIWPCC (<http://www.neiwpcc.org/quality/quality-docs/qapp31march06.pdf>) websites. In addition, HEP and NEIWPCC can provide or arrange for further assistance in planning for a QAPP as needed.