
**New York State Department of Environmental Conservation
and New York Sea Grant**

**Marine and Coastal District of New York
Conservation, Education and Research Small Grants Program
2026 Request for Proposals**

New York Sea Grant (NYSG) in partnership with New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) is requesting proposals for projects that will result in fulfillment of the mission of the Marine and Coastal District of New York Conservation, Education and Research Board (Board), which is authorized under NYS Environmental Conservation Law (ECL) Article 13, Title 5 Section 13-0503, and establishes funding for this small grants [program](#).

Proposals due by May 19, 2026, at 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time

TIMELINE

- Funding Opportunity Release — March 24, 2026
- Applicant Guidance Webinar — April 21, 2026, 1:00 – 2:30 PM *EST*
- **Funding Opportunity Application Deadline — May 19, 2026, 5:00 PM EST**
- Award Notification — Week of July 6, 2026
- Project Duration — August 1, 2026, to July 31, 2027
- Final Reports due September 30, 2027

PURPOSE

Funding is available to 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organizations based in New York, to address the priorities established for the Marine and Coastal District of New York Small Grants Program. Eligible projects must be located within the geographic boundaries of the marine and coastal district of New York; a [map](#) is available on the NYS DEC website for reference. The stated program priorities for this funding include, however, are not limited to:

- a) Educational programs which raise public awareness and appreciation of the need for protecting, conserving, and restoring the state of New York's aquatic natural resources.
- b) Research relating to the marine and coastal district of New York.
- c) Production of informational materials in print, audio, video, electronic, or other media.
- d) Production and distribution of exhibits, public service announcements, and advertisements.

- e) Programs which promote angling and sport fishing through information and/or training.

SCOPE

Eligible projects under this funding opportunity may include, however, are not limited to activities that involve marine youth fishing camps or clubs; coastal and shoreline clean-ups and other coastal restoration activities to improve shoreline access; citizen science activities to support conservation and stewardship; interpretive signage; programs to increase public safety and awareness about marine and coastal sport fishing and heritage; piloting technology or methods to support conservation; developing tools to improve public access to marine and coastal resources and its related services; activities to enhance engagement in fisheries management planning, etc.

Projects that are not directly related to marine and coastal resource issues are not eligible for funding. Other activities that are ineligible for funding include efforts to: introduce limits on user access; promote a specific private entity; conduct activities concerning aquatic resources in freshwater ponds, lakes and rivers.

FUNDS AVAILABLE

Subject to available state funding, approximately \$85,000 is expected to be available for projects with a total budget between \$1,000-\$15,000.

WHO CAN APPLY

Private entities and individuals are not eligible to apply for this funding. Proposals will be accepted from Not-for-Profit entities physically located in New York, whose common purpose is to “*promote sport fishing, increase participation in recreational angling, increase public awareness and appreciation of aquatic natural resources, encourage conservation of fisheries resources, or promote research relating to the marine and coastal district of New York*” (NYS ECL [13-0501](#)). “Not-for-Profit” means an entity that is established pursuant to the not-for-profit corporation law, and includes:

- Non-Government Organizations (NGOs) and Not-For-Profit Organizations
- Educational institutions, including but not limited to public and private K9-12 schools, and higher education institutions
- Museums/Nature Centers and other outdoor informal educational facilities
- Trade Associations, Community and Civic Groups, Marine-Related Fishing Clubs
- Family and Youth Organizations (scouts, guides, family centers etc.)
- Indian nations recognized by the state or United States federal government whose reservation is located within the boundaries of New York State

PROJECT DURATION

Projects selected in this cycle must be completed within **one** (1) year from the award date. Expenditures incurred prior to award approval will not be reimbursed. Project extensions may be requested and will be subject to approval by the DEC.

BUDGET

Project budgets must not exceed \$15,000 to be considered for funding. This Marine and Coastal District of New York Conservation, Education and Research Small Grants Program is

administered as a **Cost Reimbursable Award (CRA)**, and successful applicants must submit invoices to New York Sea Grant for reimbursement.

ELIGIBLE COSTS

Specific examples of expenses associated with selected projects that are eligible for reimbursement include:

- Salary and wages for permanent and seasonal staff
- Honoraria and stipend for staff and volunteers
- Mileage and other ground transportation costs directly related to the project
- Professional services including engineering, architecture, graphics, consultants
- Capital or Permanent equipment (purchase/rental) that costs \$5,000 or more
- Supplies, materials, and expendable equipment
- Publication costs to prepare informational materials to raise public awareness
- Mileage and other ground transportation costs directly related to the project
- Enrollment fees for marine-related camps and seminars
- Construction and/or costs to upgrade infrastructure
- Costs to administer workshops, seminars, and training.

INELIGIBLE COSTS

The following costs associated with selected projects are not eligible for reimbursement:

- Catered meals
- Fringe for staff personnel who work on the project
- Fees associated with application processing or other administrative charges
- Fees for legal services
- Expenses incurred prior to project approval
- Sales and use tax
- Costs to defray outside funding, e.g., contributing to match funds for other projects

COST SHARE REQUIREMENTS

Matching funds are not required and should not be included in the application.

GENERAL COMPLIANCE

Proposals should identify environmental issues, permits, license and/or other government approvals that are necessary for the project. Project Leaders are responsible for complying with all federal, state, and local laws, rules, and regulations, as well as obtaining any State and local government permit and license prior to project implementation. Contracts will not be executed unless written proof of approval is submitted to New York Sea Grant. Acceptable documentation includes a letter of support, copy of lease or permit, rental or cooperative agreement, or title of ownership.

SUBMISSION

Proposals must be submitted through New York Sea Grant's grant management portal at www.nyseagrant.org/eSeaGrant. Applications must be received no later than **May 19, 2026, at 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time.**

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Applicants are encouraged to use the forms provided on the website at www.nyseagrant.org/marinesmallgrants. These documents include: Title Page, Form 90-2 Project Summary, Project Narrative, Budget Justification, and Form 90-4 Budget. Other documents that are necessary to complete your application are the Curriculum Vitae (CV) for key project personnel, and optional Letters of Support. A description of these documents is provided in this announcement, and applicants who fail to submit a complete package or follow the guidelines will not be reviewed.

1. Title Page

This form is used to identify the project leaders, project duration, and summarize the main objectives and reasons for the project.

2. Project Summary Form 90-2

Use this form to identify key personnel, contact information, and project abstract.

3. Project Narrative

This section contains the main body of the proposal, and it should be concise. Applicants must use single line spacing and 12 point Times New Roman font. This document includes the following section headings:

- Rationale Statement: describe the problem or need and explain the reason why the work is being performed. (200 word limit)
- Statement of the Project Objectives: objectives must be specific and actionable, quantifiable, and trackable; recommend no more than 3-4 objectives. (150 word limit)
- Expected Outcomes: describe the resulting changes, benefits or impacts. (200 word limit)
- Deliverables: identify direct, tangible products or services from this work (150 word limit)
- Target Communities and/or Audiences: describe the specific group of people who are most likely to be interested in this work (75 word limit)
- Activities or Methods: describe the procedures/techniques (method), approaches, strategies to achieve the objectives and engage target audience, to ensure project success (500 word limit)
- Implementation Timeline: identify interim steps and milestones
- Evaluation: describe methods to evaluate the effectiveness or value of the project. Common tools include surveys, interviews, direct observation, performance metrics, etc., this section is optional. (150 word limit)
- Marine and Coastal District License Plate Awareness Outreach: This small grant program is funded entirely by subscriptions to the MCD striped bass license [plate](#). Describe any planned outreach effort (if any) to increase public awareness about this fund. Note: This specific outreach is optional and not a requirement for funding. (100 word limit)
- Partners and/or Collaborators: identify key partners and/or collaborators and describe their role in supporting this work (50 word limit)

4. Budget Form 90-4
Use this form to prepare the budget.
5. Budget Justification
Budget Justification should list key milestones and deliverables related to the project and identify the reason for and breakdown for each budget category. Specific examples of eligible expenses under each budget category include:
 - a. Salary & Wages: Salary and wages for staff who work on the project. Identify the recipient by name and dollar amount being requested.
 - b. Capital or Permanent Equipment: Individual equipment that costs at least \$5,000 must be identified by name, model, and dollar amount. Explain if this estimate was obtained from a vendor quote, catalogue or prior knowledge. Note: Applicants must obtain the relevant permits and other legal requirements to operate this equipment, as required by law.
 - c. Expendable Supplies & Materials: Includes rain gear, fishing equipment, fish ID guides, touch tanks, t-shirts and hats to raise public awareness, water, juice, light snacks, etc.
 - d. Travel/Transportation: Reimbursement for staff or volunteer use of their personal vehicle. These costs include fuel and mileage allowance which must be estimated using the [IRS Standard Mileage Rate](#).
 - e. Publication and Documentation: Cost to prepare or reproduce materials to raise public awareness, including brochures, flyers, factsheets, posters, videos, etc.
 - f. Professional Services: Identify these services and costs including graphic designer, consultant, engineer, etc.
 - g. Other Costs: Includes costs to administer a workshop, seminar, conference (including nominal speaker fees, school bus rental, stationery, venue and A/V rental, etc.); vessel and equipment rental; marine camp and seminar enrollment fees; gift cards or prizes for participants; nominal honorarium or stipend paid to volunteers; professional services (consultants, engineers, graphic design), etc. Provide a breakdown of items needed and include a justification for each.
 - h. Indirect Costs: Indirect Cost Rate on proposals submitted under this solicitation is limited to 18% (applied against a Modified Direct Costs base), with no on- or off-campus disparity. Indirect Cost Rate and Administrative Fee are synonymous for the purpose of this funding opportunity.
6. Curriculum Vitae (CV)
Include a brief biological sketch for the Project Leader and Co-Project Leader, if applicable. Include the name, address, phone, fax and email address. CVs must not exceed one page for each key personnel, and multiple CVs must be consolidated into a single PDF file.
7. Optional Letter of Support
Applicants may include no more than three (3) letters of support from partners or other organizations; these documents are optional and multiple letters must be consolidated into a single PDF file.

PROPOSAL EVALUATION

Applications that are complete and received within the deadline will be evaluated by a technical review panel consisting of a representative involved in extension or outreach, government agency, and the Marine and Coastal District of New York Conservation, Education and Research Board.

Proposals will be evaluated based upon the following criteria:

- Ability to address multiple program priorities established for this funding opportunity (30 points)
- Anticipated impacts measured by the number of communities, participants, volunteer hours, acres restored, etc. (20 points)
- Ability to engage new and underrepresented audiences, including low income households, minorities, immigrants, senior citizens, veterans, persons with disabilities, etc. (20 points)
- Interactive, applied and ‘hands-on’ approaches for engagement (20 points)
- Multilingual or translation (5 points)
- Multidisciplinary partnerships (5 points)

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR SELECTED PROJECTS

Audit Statements: Successful applicants who are subject to an annual audit in accordance with OMB Circular A-133, must submit a recent A-133 audit report or URL link to this document. Successful applicants who do not receive an annual audit should disregard this requirement.

FUNDING GUIDELINES

Successful applicants will receive an award letter and contract from Cornell University. Project leaders must not initiate any activity before completing this administrative procedure. Project leaders will receive instructions about reporting and other accounting paperwork that is necessary for expense reimbursement. Progress reports must be submitted to New York Sea Grant through eSeaGrant. A final report accompanied by an evaluation statement about the project, if appropriate, must be submitted to New York Sea Grant.

HOW TO APPLY

1. Download this document (2026 MCD Announcement) containing the instructions to prepare your application.
2. Download the application forms that are provided at www.nyseagrant.org/marinesmallgrants.
 - Look under **Related Links** column and click on “2026 Funding Request for Proposals”
 - Download the **forms**:
 - 2026 MCD Application
 - 2026 MCD 90-4 Budget 1-year
 - 2026 MCD Budget Justification
3. **Guidance Webinar:** Interested applicants are encouraged to attend the guidance webinar on **April 21, 2026, 1:00-2:30 pm** EST hosted by NY Sea Grant to review the requirements and application process, and facilitate Q&A. Attendance is not a prerequisite for funding, and participants must preregister at www.nyseagrant.org/marinesmallgrants or directly at: https://cornell.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_7SOZuYp3RxeXEwq9ignILQ.
4. Complete all documents to support the application package.
5. Applications must be submitted through eSea Grant at www.nyseagrant.org/eseagrant. First time eSea Grant users must create an account to submit their application. **Before proceeding to the eSea Grant Submission Platform, download the eSeaGrant User Guidelines document that is provided for instructions.**
 - Download document 2026 eSeaGrant User Guidelines and follow instructions

Contact Antoinette Clemetson at aoc5@cornell.edu or call (631) 824-4407, if you have questions about this funding opportunity or experience difficulties registering for the webinar.



<https://dmv.ny.gov/plates/marine-and-coastal-district-of-new-york-environmental>