



Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program Request for Proposals

(Deadline for Applications – July 31, 2019)

Table of Contents

1. Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Overview	1
2. Geographic Focus	2
3. Eligibility.....	2
4. Examples of Potential Projects.....	3
5. Funding Priorities.....	4
6. Eligible Expenses.....	4
7. Project Evaluation Criteria.....	5
8. How to Apply (& Proposal Requirements)	5
9. Mini-Grant Project Timeline.....	6
10. Reporting Requirements	6
11. Contact Information	6
Appendix A – Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Network Fact Sheet.....	7
Appendix B – Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program Budget Form	8
Appendix C – Mini-Grant Program Proposal Evaluation Criteria.....	9

1. Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Overview

Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grants are intended to increase green infrastructure (GI) implementation capacity in small to mid-sized communities in the Great Lakes Basin by supporting selected communities with grants up to \$15,000 USD. Grants will support community projects that focus on developing strategies to overcome key institutional barriers to implementing GI in communities. The Emerging Champions Mini-Grants are part of a larger program called the [Great Lakes](#)

Green Infrastructure Champions Program¹ being undertaken by the Great Lakes Commission with financial support from the Erb Family Foundation. The goal of the program is to catalyze the adoption of GI practices and policies across the region by providing small to mid-sized municipalities and disadvantaged communities with resources they frequently lack. The mini-grants, in combination with a **Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Network**, are the means to achieve this goal.

The **Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Network** consists of pioneer champions (mentors) who have successfully implemented GI in their communities and emerging champions (mentees) who are eager and able to remove barriers and build capacity. The mentoring network fosters the transfer of knowledge and experience from existing GI practitioners from a diverse range of backgrounds and locations across the binational Great Lakes basin. Mini-grant recipients will join the network as mentees and be paired with a mentor identified by the Great Lakes Commission and their advisors. Please note that participation in the mentoring network does not guarantee an applicant will receive an award.

2. Geographic Focus

To be eligible to respond to this request for proposals (RFP), the proposed project must be located within the **Great Lakes basin**, inclusive of both the United States and Canada.

3. Eligibility

Toute documentation relative à ce programme de subvention, y compris les propositions, devrait être rédigée en anglais. Cependant, les candidats qui préfèrent communiquer en français sont fortement encouragés à soumettre des propositions. Dans ce cas, si vous avez besoin de traduire vos documents en anglais, veuillez s'il vous plait nous contactez par courriel à l'adresse suivante: gichampions@glc.org

Mini-grants are intended for U.S. or Canadian communities within the Great Lakes basin with fewer than 250,000 people that can demonstrate a commitment to overcoming barriers to GI implementation and are willing to participate in the GI Champions Mentoring Network. Eligible projects must focus on one or more of four key strategies for removing barriers to GI implementation:

- 1) Local code/ordinance review and revision
- 2) GI operations and maintenance training, procedures, and workforce development
- 3) Sustainable funding streams
- 4) Other projects that address barriers to GI implementation

¹ Further details about the GI Champions Program are available at <http://www.glc.org/work/champions> and in Appendix A.

Successful proposals will clearly demonstrate how the project will overcome actual barriers and facilitate GI implementation in the community. Projects where the primary component is direct GI installation (construction of rain gardens, vegetated roofs, bioswales, street trees, etc.) will not be considered for this round of mini-grants. However, proposed projects may have an installation component if it is designed to complement or accelerate one or more of the key strategies listed above. Projects that are required as part of permit obligations or legal judgement are not eligible.² Applicants are restricted to municipal government agencies (i.e. state and provincial government agencies are not eligible), regional authorities, or registered non-profit organizations serving eligible municipalities (i.e. regions with a population less than 250,000).

4. Examples of Potential Projects

Example activities that could be included as part of eligible projects include, but are not limited to:

Focus area 1 – Local code/ordinance review and revisions

- Performing an audit to identify and revise local codes/ordinances to allow for or support GI implementation
 - Example – [Tackling Barriers to Green Infrastructure: An Audit of Local Codes and Ordinances](#) (Wisconsin Sea Grant)
- Developing or reviewing local design standards
- Developing a GI advocacy plan in communities with ordinances restrictive to GI implementation

Focus area 2 – GI operations and maintenance (O&M) training, procedures, and workforce development

- Training municipal staff on GI O&M procedures through workshops or webinars
 - Example – [National Green Infrastructure Certification Program](#)
- Developing a community-focused GI O&M manual or toolkit
 - Example – [Green Stormwater Infrastructure Maintenance Manual](#) (Philadelphia Water)
- Creating a volunteer maintenance program
 - Example – [Green Street Steward Program](#) (City of Portland, OR)
- Establishing partnerships with governments/private entities with expertise in GI engineering and maintenance
- Preparing job descriptions and required training/expertise for GI O&M
- Performing a GI workforce development study
 - Example – [Green Infrastructure Maintenance and Training and Workforce Development opportunities in Northeast Ohio](#) (Green for All)

² MS4 communities in the United States are eligible if the requested project funding does not cover regulated actions.

- Co-hosting trainings with adjacent communities to save on cost and create networking and information sharing opportunities

Focus area 3 – Sustainable funding streams

- Performing a feasibility study for or establishing a stormwater utility
 - Example – [Stormwater Utility Feasibility Study](#) (City of Urbana, IL)
- Designing offset programs including stormwater credit trading programs
 - Example- [Stormwater Retention Credit Trading Program](#) (Washington, D.C.)
- Developing a strategy to foster public-private partnerships for GI funding
- Creating a plan for long-term GI O&M funding

Focus area 4 – Other projects

- Performing a GI feasibility study
 - Example – [Green Infrastructure Feasibility Study](#) (City of Newark, NJ)
- Developing a community-specific decision tool for stormwater BMP selection that includes GI
 - Example – [Decision Tree for Stormwater BMPs](#) (Minnesota Department of Transportation)
- Creating GI education and outreach programs targeted toward developers and municipal staff
- Other ideas for projects that address institutional barriers to GI implementation

5. Funding Priorities

A total of \$60,000 USD is budgeted for the Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program with the Great Lakes Commission awarding multiple mini-grants, none of which will exceed \$15,000 USD. Priority for funding will be based on the applicant’s demonstration of political and institutional support for the work proposed (e.g., a resolution by local government, dedicated funding to complement the small grant, documented commitment of key constituents, etc.). Additionally, priority will be given to applicants that clearly demonstrate existing barriers to GI implementation in their community and how the proposed project will help to overcome these barriers. It is also a priority to award at least one of the mini-grants in each eligible nation. Matching funds are not required but bonus points are provided to applicants who can document either financial or in-kind services match (see Appendix C).

6. Eligible Expenses

Eligible expenses include salaries, travel, equipment, supplies, sub-contractor expenses, and other direct and indirect costs. General operating support is not eligible for funding since this program seeks to fund specific capacity-building projects. All expenses must be assigned to a line item on the required budget table included in Appendix B.

7. Project Evaluation Criteria

The proposal evaluation criteria are included in Appendix C. Applicants should refer to these criteria to craft their proposal.

8. How to Apply (& Proposal Requirements)

Proposals should be submitted electronically as a single PDF document to Victoria Pebbles (gichampions@glc.org). The entire document should not exceed 10 pages³ or a file size of 15MB.

Proposal components include:

1. Applicant Name and Contact Information
2. Geographic Area of Project
3. Project Focus Area(s): 1) Local code ordinance review/revision 2) GI operations and maintenance training, procedures and workforce development 3) sustainable funding streams 4) other projects
4. Project Description (including graphs, charts and tables that support the application)
 - a. Problem Statement. The problem statement should directly identify institutional barriers to GI implementation in the community and how this project will address these barriers. It should also speak directly to how the proposed project will benefit from being paired with a mentor or “pioneer champion” and will help catalyze the adoption of GI within the recipient community or municipal region, and beyond.
 - b. Project Activities and Deliverables
 - c. Stakeholder Support
 - d. Performance Capability and Experience
 - e. Performance Indicators
 - f. Project Timeline
 - g. Permits Required⁴
5. Project Budget
 - a. Budget Table (standard Excel-based form, attached as Appendix B)⁵
 - b. Budget Narrative (written justification of project line items included in Budget Table)

³ A page is defined as a standard letter size with 1” margins and no smaller than 12-point font.

⁴ If a green infrastructure installation project is proposed as part of the project, then the applicant should clearly identify any construction permits that would be required and their plan for securing the permits.

⁵ The Excel-based form should be converted to PDF and submitted as part of the 10-page proposal.

9. Mini-Grant Project Timeline

1. April 2, 2019: RFP Release Date
2. July 31, 2019: Proposal Deadline (submit electronically to gichampions@glc.org)
3. Early September 2019: Announcement of Mini-grant Awards
4. November 1, 2019: Project start date; initial payment of grant award (half of total project amount)
5. February 28, 2020: Interim Progress Report
6. August 31, 2020: Final Report
7. September 30, 2020: Final payment of grant award upon successful grant completion

10. Reporting Requirements

The grant recipient is required to submit an Interim Progress Report and a Final Report and to deliver a PowerPoint presentation via webinar to the GI Champions Mentoring Network. Reporting forms and templates will be provided to grant recipients. Reports will be submitted electronically to gichampions@glc.org by February 28, 2020 and August 31, 2020 respectively.

11. Contact Information

All inquiries regarding the Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Program and the Mini-Grant RFP should be directed to:

Victoria Pebbles
Program Director
Great Lakes Commission
1300 Victors Way, Suite 1350
Ann Arbor, MI 48108
734-971-9135, ext. 130
gichampions@glc.org





How the Green Infrastructure Champions Network can help you!

What is green infrastructure?

Green infrastructure (GI) is a series of practices that mimic nature to manage stormwater. GI includes nature-based solutions like bioswales, rain gardens, or natural forests and systems that imitate nature like pervious pavement. These practices help restore the natural hydrological regime by allowing rainwater to infiltrate where it lands.

When rain falls on impervious surfaces like streets, sidewalks, parking lots, and buildings, it flows over these surfaces and enters storm sewers. As it flows, the water picks up and carries suspended solids, nutrients, and other contaminants. Traditional stormwater infrastructure is designed to move stormwater through pipes to a treatment plant or a nearby waterway. Stormwater discharges can threaten water quality and rain can overwhelm the system, resulting in flooding. GI can mitigate these concerns by capturing and treating rainfall at its source.

Why should my community care about green infrastructure?

Implementing GI can have many environmental, economic, and health benefits for your community. In addition to improving water quality and reducing flooding, GI can also help improve air quality, reduce atmospheric carbon dioxide, and create habitat.

Additionally, increased green space has been shown to increase property values and recreational opportunities, benefiting both businesses and homeowners. Permeable pavements, green roofs, and other types of GI can also reduce energy costs by reducing the amount of heat reaching and being absorbed by buildings.

Finally, research is increasingly showing that trees, plants and green space can have a positive impact on community health. Studies have linked access and proximity to green space with decreased levels of inner-city crime, higher longevity, and reduced stress.

What is the GI Champions peer-to-peer mentoring network?

The GI Champions peer-to-peer mentoring network connects experienced GI practitioners with individuals that would like to bring GI to their communities. The mentoring network fosters the transfer of knowledge from experienced GI practitioners to a broader network of communities across the binational Great Lakes basin. “Pioneer Champions” that have successfully implemented GI in their community are paired with “Emerging Champions” that are eager to expand GI implementation in their community. Champions meet monthly (by phone or in person) to discuss challenges, answer questions, and provide guidance and feedback. Emerging Champions are eligible to apply for small grants to help catalyze the mentorship network and build GI capacity in their community.

The Champions network is run by the Great Lakes Commission, which has a long history of facilitating collaboration to advance solutions to our region’s economic and ecological issues.

How do I get involved?

Visit www.glc.org/work/champions/network to get involved!

Appendix B – Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program Budget Form

The purpose of this Budget Form is to provide the Great Lakes Commission with complete information about your project’s projected expenses. You may use this form or any other format that includes similar specificity. Please make sure to include all costs in the "Total Project Costs", including any Matching Funds ("in-kind" or financial contributions from your operating budget or other sources). Please itemize amounts within categories (for example list equipment, supplies, etc. separately) either on the form or through the required budget narrative. Add categories or lines where necessary. You may delete these instructions when printing the form to save space. This form is available for download as an Excel workbook at <http://www.glc.org/work/champions/mini-grants>.

Project Name		
1. Personnel - Salaries	Hrs	Amount
Position A		
Position B		
Position C		
Subtotal - Salaries	0.0	\$0.00
2. Personnel - Fringe		\$0.00
3. Travel		\$0.00
4. Equipment (office or construction)		\$0.00
Item 1		
Item 2		
5. Supplies and Materials (office or construction)		\$0.00
Item 1		
Item 2		
6. Contracts		\$0.00
Contract Recipient 1		
Contract Recipient 2		
7. Other Costs		\$0.00
Meetings or Workshop Cost		
Postage/Printing/Reproduction		
Other (specify)		
8. Total Direct Costs		\$0.00
9. Indirect Costs		\$0.00
10. Total Requested Funds:		\$0.00
11. Matching Funds (optional)		\$0.00
12. Total Project Costs		\$0.00

Appendix C – Mini-Grant Program Proposal Evaluation Criteria

1. Problem Statement, Project Activities and Deliverables (25 points)
 - a. Does the problem statement clearly articulate the need for the proposed project? Are barriers that the project will address clearly identified? Does the statement explain how the project will address these barriers and build capacity in the community?
 - b. Do the identified barriers create a distinct disadvantage for this community compared to communities with robust GI programs?
 - c. Does the project focus align with the Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program goals? Does it clearly align with one or more of the focus areas?
 - d. Are the project tasks/activities reasonably conceived to address identified barriers and support the stated deliverables?

2. Stakeholder Support (20 points)
 - a. Is there evidence of broad stakeholder support for the project, such as letters of support⁶ or other correspondence from participating organizations and municipal officials?
 - b. Are the right stakeholders engaged to accomplish the identified activities?
 - c. Is there evidence that the project will respond to the identified GI implementation issues and has the ability to address those issues?

3. Performance Capability & Experience (20 points)
 - a. Does the proposal describe how the project and the recipient community will benefit from being paired with a GI Pioneer Champion as part of a Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Peer-to-Peer Mentoring Network?
 - b. Is there evidence of experience and/or capability to implement the proposed project activities either “in-house”, through engaging the GI Champions Mentoring Network, or through consultants?
 - c. Has the project been designed so that activities supporting the project will have lasting impact after grant funding ends? The funded project work should be completed when the grant term ends but the project should have an impact beyond project completion. Such evidence might include a timeline for phased implementation of a larger green infrastructure planning effort made possible by removal of barriers or estimates of future funding for GI projects that may become available through development of a sustainable funding scheme.

⁶ Letters of support are not required but can be an effective method to demonstrate stakeholder engagement. However, letters of support will count towards 10-page maximum limit so only include succinct and directly applicable letters.

- d. If the project has a GI installation component, is there a description of required, local, state and/or federal permits that may be required? Is there a plan for maintenance of the GI feature?
4. Performance Indicators (20 points)
- Has the applicant described how progress and success will be tracked and what indicators⁷ will be used to track progress and success?
 - Are the performance indicators (i.e. ways to measure progress) well written and well aligned with the project activities? Will they effectively track progress toward removing identified barriers?
 - Is there evidence that data or other relevant information is or will be readily available to support the indicators (e.g., to measure progress/success)? Is the data or information that will be used to assess progress and success already being produced as part of the community's existing efforts or will new information/data need to be collected?
5. Project Timeline (5 points)
- Is the project schedule realistic and achievable within the mini-grant program timeline (12 months)?
 - Are the products, activities, and deliverables clearly identified and incorporated in the timeline?
6. Budget (10 points)
- Are the budget items clearly described in the Budget Narrative?
 - Does the budget seem appropriate to implement the proposed project?
7. Financial Match (+5 points)
- Is there documented match (either monetary or through in-kind services)? If yes, is the match appropriate to accomplish the proposed project activities?

⁷ The exact indicators presented will vary based on project focus and activities but should endeavor to estimate progress toward removal of barriers to GI implementation, as well as attendant socio-economic benefits from the project. Examples of potential indicators for each focus area are outlined below:

- Local code/ordinance review and revisions:** Recommended changes for codes/ordinances, political actions taken to address restrictive codes, plan of action for altering existing codes, number of planned projects made possible by code revision
- GI operations and maintenance training, procedures, and workforce development:** # of employees receiving training, # of workshops held, expanded project life of existing GI installations made possible through training
- Sustainable funding streams:** % of stormwater funding transferred/converted to a dedicated stormwater budget, plan of action for implementing new programs, economic or social measures that demonstrate feasibility of funding programs (e.g. interest indicated by city officials, willingness expressed by taxpayers to fund a stormwater utility, or demand from developers to participate in a credit trading program)