



Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program Request for Proposals

(Deadline for Applications – July 31, 2017)

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1. Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Overview

Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grants are intended to increase green infrastructure implementation capacity in the Great Lakes Basin by supporting selected emerging communities with grants up to \$20,000 USD. Grants will support self-identified community projects that demonstrate how the project will overcome actual barriers and facilitate GI implementation in the community. The Emerging Champions Mini-Grants are part of a larger project called the [Great Lakes Green](#)

Infrastructure Champions Pilot 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 green infrastructure (GI) practices and policies across the region by providing mid-sized municipalities 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 been successfully implementing GI in their communities and emerging champions (mentees) who are eager and able to remove barriers and build capacity. The mentoring network will foster the transfer of knowledge and experience from existing municipal GI practitioners from a diverse range of municipality types 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 to assist the emerging champions.

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 United States and Canada.

3. Eligibility

Mini-grants are intended for U.S. or Canadian municipalities with fewer than 500,000 people who can demonstrate a commitment to participate in the Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Peer-to-Peer Mentorship Network through implementation of GI projects. Eligible projects include GI pilot installations, educational programming, developing partnerships and/or alliances with other agencies, or community GI planning efforts. Projects focused on policy, planning or educational programming must demonstrate clearly how the project will overcome actual barriers and facilitate GI installation in the community. 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 population less than 500,000).

¹ Additional details about the Great Lakes Green Infrastructure Champions Pilot Program are at <http://www.glc.org/work/champions> and in Appendix A.

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

4. Examples of Potential Projects

Examples of eligible projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- GI³ pilot installations
- community GI planning efforts
- educational programming for municipal staff to increase GI implementation
- educational outreach for citizens on GI
- municipal or citizen-based workshops designed to eliminate barriers or build capacity
- development of strategic partnerships and/or alliances with other agencies through workshops or planning efforts
- removal of institutional or policy barriers (e.g., assessment and clarification of local roles and responsibilities; development or review of local design standards, by-laws, or ordinances)

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 three or four grants of \$15,000 to \$20,000 USD each. A priority for funding will be based on whether the applicant can demonstrate 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.). 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 pilot investigations. 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.

³ In the context of this RFP, green infrastructure is defined as using natural systems to manage stormwater and mitigate water quality issues. Pilot installations could include rain gardens, vegetated roofs, rainwater harvesting systems, bioswales, porous pavement, street trees, etc.

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 pages⁴ or a file size of 15MB.

Proposal components include:

1. Applicant Name and Contact Information
2. Geographic Area of Project
3. Type of Project (e.g., pilot installation; policy/planning; education; or other)
4. Project Description (including graphs, charts and tables that support the applications)
 - a. Problem Statement. The problem statement should speak directly to how the proposed project will benefit from being paired with a mentor or “pioneer champion” and will help to catalyze the adoption of GI within the recipient community or municipal region, and beyond.
 - b. Project Objectives, Activities and Deliverables
 - c. Stakeholder Support
 - d. Performance Capability and Experience
 - e. Performance Metrics
 - f. Project Timeline
 - g. Permits Required⁵
5. Project Budget
 - a. Budget Table (standard excel-based form attached as Appendix B)⁶
 - b. Budget Narrative (written justification of project line items included in Budget Table)

9. Mini-Grant Project Timeline

1. June 1, 2017: RFP Release Date
2. July 31, 2017: Proposal Deadline (submit electronically to gichampions@glc.org)
3. Early September, 2017: Announcement of Mini-grant Awards
4. October 1, 2017: Project start date. Initial payment (half of total project amount) of grant award
5. February 28, 2018: Interim Progress Report
6. August 31, 2018: Final Report
7. September 30, 2018: Final payment of grant award upon successful grant completion

⁴ A page is defined as a standard letter size with 1” margins and no smaller than 12 point font.

⁵ If a green infrastructure implementation project is proposed, then the applicant should clearly identify if any construction permits would be required and their plan for securing the permits.

⁶ The excel-based form should be converted to PDF and submitted as part of the 10 page proposal.

10. Reporting Requirements

The grant recipient is required to submit an Interim Progress Report and a Final Report and to deliver a power point slide presentation via webinar to the GI Champions Network. Reporting forms and templates will be provided to grant recipients. Reports will be submitted electronically to gichampions@glc.org by February 28, 2018 and August 31, 2018 respectively.

11. Contact Information

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

Victoria Pebbles

Program Director

Great Lakes Commission

2805 S. Industrial Hwy. Suite 100

Ann Arbor, MI 48104

734-971-9135, ext. 130



Fred A. and Barbara M.
Erb Family Foundation



How the Green Infrastructure Champions Network can help you!

What is green infrastructure?

Every year, trillions of gallons of rainfall wash into North American rivers and lakes. This stormwater runoff can include raw sewage and other pollutants that contaminate drinking water, sicken people and wildlife, and strain municipal water systems. Many communities and businesses are turning to **green infrastructure (GI)**, a cost-effective approach to water management that uses technology like green roofs, rain gardens, tree cover and permeable pavement. GI mimics the natural water cycle by cleaning rain where it falls, reducing runoff and improving the health of surrounding waterways and communities.

Why should my community care about green infrastructure?

Implementing GI can have many environmental, economic, and health benefits for your community. GI helps improve water quality by reducing the runoff of pathogens, chemicals and sediment. GI can also help improve air quality and reduce smog. As our climate changes, implementing GI can help communities manage flooding and drought and protect coastal areas.

GI can also help communities deal with reduced budgets by – in many cases – reducing infrastructure capital costs as well as wastewater pumping and treatment costs. 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 will connect experienced GI practitioners with individuals that would like to bring GI to their communities. The mentoring network will foster 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 will be paired with “Emerging Champions” that are eager to expand GI implementation in their community. Champions will meet monthly (by phone or in person) to discuss challenges, answer questions, provide guidance and feedback. Emerging Champions will be able to apply for small grants to help catalyze the mentorship network and build GI capacity in their community.

The Champions network will be 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/network>.

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 Objectives, Activities, and Deliverables (25 points)
 - a. Does the problem statement clearly articulate the need for the proposed project? Does it address a barrier or build capacity within the community?
 - b. Are the project objectives clear and well written?
 - c. Do the project objectives align with the Great Lakes Emerging Champions Mini-Grant Program goals?
 - d. Are the project tasks/activities reasonably conceived to support the stated project objectives deliverables and deliverables?

2. Stakeholder Support (20 points)
 - a. Is there evidence of broad stakeholder support for the project such as letters of support⁷ or other correspondence from participating organizations and municipal officials?
 - b. Are the right stakeholders engaged to meet project objectives?
 - c. Is there evidence that the project responds to known GI implementation issues and has the ability to address those issues?

3. Performance Capability & Experience (20 points)
 - a. Is there evidence that 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. Is there evidence 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. For a green infrastructure implementation project, the proposal should provide evidence of a maintenance or monitoring plan. For other projects, such evidence might include a timeline for phased implementation of a larger green infrastructure planning effort or continued dissemination of educational materials through municipal websites or workshops.

⁷ 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 this is an implementation project, is there a description of required, local, state and/or federal permits that may be required?
4. Performance Metrics (20 points)
 - a. Has the applicant described how progress and success will be measured and what metrics⁸ will be used to measure progress and success?
 - b. Are the project metrics (i.e. ways to measure progress) well written and well aligned with the project objectives and activities?
 - c. Is there evidence that the data is or will be readily available to support the metrics (e.g., to measure progress/success)? Is it part of the community's existing ability to build capacity to implement green infrastructure or will new information/data need to be collected?
 5. Project Timeline (5 points)
 - a. Is the project schedule realistic and achievable within the mini-grant program timeline (9-12 months)?
 - b. Are the products and deliverables clearly identified and incorporated in the timeline?
 6. Budget (10 points)
 - a. Are the budget items clearly described in the Budget Narrative?
 - b. Does the budget seem appropriate to implement the proposed project?
 7. Financial Match (+5 points)
 - a. Is there documented match (either monetary or through in-kind services)? If yes, is the match appropriate to meet the proposed project objectives?

⁸ The exact metrics will vary based on project objectives, but should endeavor to estimate reductions in stormwater runoff as well as attendant socio-economic benefits from the GI project. Metrics should be quantifiable. Examples of metrics (i.e. ways to measure progress) include reduction in stormwater volume, number of workshops or focus groups held, number of rain barrels distributed, square footage of rain gardens implemented, educational materials distributed, etc.