Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program
2019 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Deadline: March 29, 2019 - 6:00 p.m. Eastern

New in 2019: A webinar for applicants will be offered on February 28, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern to discuss funding priorities and the application process, receive tips for submitting competitive proposals, and ask questions of GLC staff. Information to join the webinar is below. For more information, please contact Ken Gibbons, GLC Program Specialist at kgibbons@glc.org or 734-971-9135.

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I. Program Background and Objectives

Funding for the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program (GLSNRP) is provided by the U.S. Department of Agriculture – Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The GLRI is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (U.S. EPA)-led initiative designed to accelerate efforts to protect and restore the water resources of the Great Lakes Basin. Funding for GLSNRP supports work under GLRI Focus Area 3 aimed at controlling nonpoint source pollution and reducing nutrient runoff that contributes to harmful/nuisance algal blooms. This initiative uses outcome-oriented performance goals and measures to target the most significant problems and track progress in addressing them. Under the GLRI, U.S. EPA and its federal partners coordinate state, tribal, local, and industry actions to protect, maintain, and restore the chemical, biological, and physical integrity of the Great Lakes.

In accordance with the agreement between the Great Lakes Commission (GLC) and NRCS, the primary focus of grants issued under GLSNRP is the reduction of sediment and nutrients into the Great Lakes and their tributaries. In 2019, the GLC has committed to reducing 22,000 pounds of total phosphorus over three years, therefore phosphorus control projects are a priority for funding this year. Other nonpoint source control benefits may occur as a secondary result of projects and should be clearly articulated as such in the project proposal. Ideal GLSNRP projects demonstrate significant total phosphorus savings, while also controlling soil erosion and reducing sedimentation within the waterways of the Great Lakes Basin.

II. Grant Eligibility Information

All projects must clearly demonstrate how they will reduce total phosphorus contributions to the Great Lakes Basin and otherwise reduce the effects of sediment and nutrients to improve local water quality. It is anticipated that roughly $2,200,000 in funding will be available for project support contingent upon final authorization from the funder (NRCS). A twenty-five percent match will be required of each project. Projects must not be otherwise required by local, state, or federal regulation, including permits.

Applicants must be non-federal units of government or incorporated non-profit organizations. Eligible applicants include, but are not limited to: conservation districts, county and municipal governments, regional planning commissions, federally-recognized tribes, and state agencies. Examples of nonprofit organizations include watershed organizations, stream and lake associations, environmental groups, conservation groups, land conservancies and fish and wildlife groups. Only areas within the United States portion of the Great Lakes Basin are eligible for funding. U.S. federal agencies, public and private Canadian organizations, for-profit companies and private landowners cannot apply directly, but are encouraged to participate as project partners.

Applicants selected to receive a grant award will be required to enter into a project contract with the GLC. A project contract consists of standard "boilerplate" language[1] and the applicant's approved project description, work plan, time line, and budget information. **New in 2019**, contracts will include commitments to achieve estimated phosphorus reduction targets based on the applicant's approved work plan. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will likely result in cancellation of the grant award.

III. 2019 Project Solicitation

A. Funding Priorities and Restrictions

In 2019, GLSNRP is soliciting projects that facilitate the long-term reduction of total phosphorus inputs to waters of the Great Lakes Basin. Projects with additional benefits controlling erosion and other nutrient losses are encouraged. Such long-term reductions may be achieved through a mix of structural or engineered controls and, for agriculturally-focused projects, annual practices with an emphasis on long-term sustainability or behavior change. The program is particularly interested in creative approaches and local activities designed to promote sustainable change to reduce nonpoint sources of phosphorus.

[1] An Example Contract is available at https://www.glc.org/wp-content/uploads/GLSNRP-ExampleContract-2019.pdf. Please note that this is subject to change for the 2019 grant cycle.

Under this year's program, GLSNRP will fund two different project types: watershed scale and site-specific. Applications can be submitted for either of the two project types.

- A **watershed scale** project often focuses on providing support for identified practices in a specific watershed at different sites that are often noncontiguous. For these projects, the locations may be unknown at the time of the application. Identified practices may be annual or structural; however, methods to assure sustainable change over multiple years (including years beyond the grant performance period) should be articulated. Watershed scale projects should include a methodology to delineate high-priority areas within the proposed project area and engage with landowners. Preference will also be given to those watershed scale projects with a defined plan to assure performance.

- A **site-specific** project implements conservation practices at known locations designated in the application. In general, site-specific projects implement structural or engineered practices, such as streambank stabilizations, two-stage ditches, and other practices that provide water quality benefits for multiple years, including years beyond the grant performance period. Commonly, site-specific projects require land owner permission, permits, and engineering. Preference will be given to those site-specific projects with completed engineering, support from landowners (including long-term commitments for maintenance of installed practices for the life of the practice), and ability to quickly obtain necessarily permits.

Projects supporting a state-approved nonpoint source reduction plan (e.g., watershed plan) and/or a nine key elements plan will be given additional consideration for funding.

Under the program, water quality monitoring, research, and data analysis activities cannot be funded. However, soil testing and limited grab samples of surface water for outreach purposes are allowable expenses with adequate justification.

Purchases of equipment such as vehicles and/or field implements cannot be funded.[2] Grant dollars also cannot be used to fund technical assistance (i.e., personnel) to implement Farm Bill cost-share programs.

B. Project Funding, Size, and Timeframe

Funding
Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFP but are encouraged to focus their efforts on submitting a single "shovel ready" project application to be more competitive within the pool of applicants. Projects that are intended to be a continuation of a previously funded GLSNRP project should be appropriately disclosed within the project application. **The maximum funding request per project will be capped at $200,000.**

Funds may be used for both technical assistance and financial assistance. However, as described above, grant dollars cannot be used to fund technical assistance (i.e., personnel or consultants) with the sole purpose of implementing Farm Bill cost-share programs. The mix of technical and financial assistance will depend on the local situation. Applications with substantial technical assistance and consultant funding requests must justify the proposed amounts in their application.

Size
It is suggested that watershed scale project areas be limited to no more than four (4) USGS twelve-digit Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUCs) within an eight-digit HUC but can vary outside this range with justification.

Timeframe
Selected projects should begin on October 1, 2019 and must be completed within a three-year period, inclusive of

[2] Leasing of equipment using grant funds or as a match expense is allowable under this program. Lease to own arrangements for equipment should be disclosed within the grant application and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Retrofitting of existing equipment is also allowed with adequate justification and documentation of the disposition of purchased components.

the time required to obtain all permits and approvals. Applicants should account for possible permitting delays when planning the project timeframe. If a project can be completed in less than three years, please specify this within your proposal.

C. Eligible Project Areas

Projects must be located within the United States portion of the Great Lakes Basin.

Projects proposing work activity above significant dams within eligible areas should demonstrate that the project will provide sediment and phosphorus reduction to Great Lakes waters not already provided by the presence of the dam. A dam will be considered significant if it creates a reservoir that is more than five times the average width of the river channel below the dam.

D. Specific Project Requirements and Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal must:

- Show a direct and discernible reduction of nutrients and sediment, with emphasis on total phosphorus, into the Great Lakes Basin.
- Commit to estimated reductions in total phosphorus during the proposed three-year (or less) duration of activities. Those projects demonstrating the strongest return on investment of program dollars in terms of total phosphorus reductions will be a priority for funding.
- Address phosphorus and/or sediment problems from agricultural, urban, forest, range, and/or pastureland or other crucial land uses, with preference given to projects in areas with an identified need for phosphorus and/or sediment reductions.
- Encourage the development of new partnerships and networks to promote long-term benefits for sediment and nutrient reduction.
- Articulate any planning conducted to date or other preparatory activities that set the proposal on a course for success. Projects will be scored more favorably during the review process if the applicant can demonstrate specific planning that has occurred (e.g., coordination with landowners, completion of engineering plans, permitting) prior to the submittal of the application. If activities have not yet occurred but will be completed prior to the start of the project period, please describe that as well.
- Include a plan for implementation, including such items as: conservation practice types and amounts, timeline for implementation, and financial incentive methodologies;
- Identify a timeline for specific and measurable outcomes and/or deliverables, with particular emphasis on achieving identified total phosphorus reduction targets.
- Describe a strategy to keep the public, land users, elected officials, and government officials informed of project activities.
- Outline a plan to share project results and outcomes with the project funder and with the public through outreach and technology transfer, including potential attendance at one knowledge transfer conference convened by the GLC during the grant performance period.

E. Calculation of Load Reductions

Applicants will be required to estimate phosphorus and soil erosion reductions their project will achieve and briefly describe the methodology used to arrive at the estimates.

Note: There are two types of phosphorus, particulate and dissolved. Together they constitute what is termed total phosphorus. Conservation practices may reduce one or both types of phosphorus. Particulate phosphorus is phosphorus attached to soil particles. It can be controlled and reduced by the installation of traditional soil erosion/sediment control practices. Dissolved phosphorus is phosphorus in the water. Conservation practices designed to reduce dissolved phosphorus involve reducing phosphorus at its source, managing drainage water, and/or filtering.

For projects focused on reducing particulate phosphorus and sediment, phosphorus and soil erosion reduction goals should be estimated using the U.S. EPA Region 5 Spreadsheet or STEPL model, as appropriate for the proposed project. (Used to estimate particulate phosphorus reductions, both the Region 5 and STEPL spreadsheet models are available online at: http://it.tetratech-ffx.com/steplweb/models$docs.htm.)

For projects focused on reducing dissolved reactive phosphorus, include an estimation of anticipated load reductions supported by references to scientific literature, monitoring results from similar projects, or other reliable sources of information.

New in 2019: Applicants may wish to assist our federal government partners by testing a new load estimation tool now available for use in the Great Lakes Basin. Those willing to test the USDA's online Nutrient Tracking Tool (NTT), available at http://ntt.tiaer.tarleton.edu/welcomes/new?locale=en should indicate their intention within the proposal. A webinar will be offered on March 13, 2019 at 10:00 a.m. Eastern to demonstrate use of the tool, include estimation of reductions in dissolved reactive phosphorus and incorporation of tile drainage. Winning proposals testing the NTT will not be required to also calculate reductions using the Region 5 Spreadsheet or STEPL models but may be asked to provide necessary inputs for comparison to the GLC.

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F. Budget Information

All applicants must submit itemized project budgets for the proposed work along with appropriate justification for project expenses. Project budgets should not be increased arbitrarily to meet the suggested maximum amount, and should be representative of the project's proposed size, scope, and geographic location.

Refer to sections III. A and B, above, for additional funding restrictions under the program.

New in 2019: It is recommended that applicants include funding within their project budget to support travel to and participation at a 1- or 2-day conference for GLSNRP grant recipients in or near Ann Arbor, Michigan, during the late summer or early fall of 2020. The GLC hopes to recruit grant recipients to share innovative work and lessons learned and will also seek leading experts on sediment and nutrient control to present on the latest research supporting successful approaches in the Great Lakes Basin.

G. Indirect Costs

Indirect costs are those incurred by the applicant for a common or joint purpose benefiting more than one cost objective or project, and otherwise not readily assignable to specific cost objectives or projects as a direct cost. Common examples of indirect costs are the necessary facilities and administrative costs associated with the day-to-day business functions of an organization (e.g., rent, utilities, insurance, accounting services).

Applicants are not required to include indirect costs within their GLSNRP project budgets and may opt to: (1) forego part or all of their indirect costs as a grant expense, or (2) include part or all of their indirect costs as match for the project (allowable only if costs are not otherwise supported by a federal source). **Applicants must explicitly describe within the budget narrative section of their application whether their indirect costs will**

be attributed to the grant portion of the budget and/or the match portion of the budget, and fully describe the method and rate used to calculate the indirect costs.

If the applicant has a current federally approved negotiated indirect cost rate (e.g., fixed, predetermined, final or provisional), this may be referred to as a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement or NICRA. Applicants with a current NICRA who choose to include indirect costs as a grant or match expense must use their negotiated rate to calculate indirect costs for the project budget and will be required to submit a valid negotiated indirect cost agreement with their proposal. Applicants wishing to deviate from their approved NICRA to recover a lesser indirect rate must explicitly describe the voluntary deviation within their grant application materials.

For multi-year projects, grant recipients with an approved NICRA shall be approved to recover indirect costs at the approved rate in effect at the time the eligible costs are incurred by the recipient. If selected for funding, grant recipients will be required to submit to the GLC any subsequent approved NICRAs received during the project period.

Applicants who have never negotiated an indirect cost rate with the federal government or do not have a current approved NICRA may elect to charge indirect costs at de minimis rate of 10 percent of Modified Total Direct Costs (MTDC), as defined by 2 CFR 200.414 ("Indirect (F&A) costs"), for the period of the grant agreement or until the applicant obtains an approved NICRA.

H. Match Requirement

Match is a financial commitment made by the grant recipient and/or its partner entities to help implement the project, and can be cash, in-kind, or a combination of both. Cash is any money received from any source, other than from federal sources, that is part of the applicant's annual budget and audit process and will be utilized in the implementation of the project. In-kind includes services or financial contributions to the project not paid for with the grant or other federal funds.

The following list provides some examples of acceptable match, but is not intended to be exhaustive:

- Technical and/or administrative assistance provided by the applicant, other entities, or persons not paid for with the grant or with federal funds.
- All or a portion of the applicant's indirect costs not otherwise paid for with the grant or with federal funds.
- Use of local and state agency vehicles other than those of the applicant.
- Cost-share agreements from landowners.
- Unpaid members of local task forces, watershed councils, work groups, citizen groups, etc. are considered volunteers, and may be calculated at the prevailing national minimum wage (currently $7.25/hour) unless justification is provided for a higher rate. Additional skilled labor may be charged at a higher rate with additional, detailed justification.

Match may <u>not</u> include activities that would otherwise be deemed ineligible for direct funding support under GLSNRP (e.g., water quality monitoring, research, data analysis activities, equipment purchases other than retrofitting of existing equipment). Match cannot be accumulated prior to the official start date of the project contract (October 1, 2019) or earned after completion of the project contract.

Match committed through the project application will become part of the applicant's contractual obligation if the project is selected for funding. Match projections should be realistic and achievable. Letters of commitment are required as a means of assuring adequate match. See Section V for details. **A match of 25% of the total project cost (grant expenses, plus match) is required for all applications; however, match commitments beyond the 25% limit will strengthen your application.** See the Grant Application Template for additional details on calculating the minimum match required for your project.

IV. Grant Requirements

A. Applicant Capacity

Each successful applicant must have the ability to:

- Hire or contract for technical assistance (e.g., personnel).
- Provide office space, administrative support, computer and other equipment, general office supplies, and other items to perform the proposed implementation effort.
- Enter into a legally binding contract with landowners for the life span of the practice.
- Provide a plan to maintain the implemented practices over their life span.
- Design and install all implementation practices according to USDA-NRCS standards and specifications and applicable state standards. Applicants are encouraged to use the services of a certified professional engineer or agronomist for this purpose as appropriate.
- Obtain all necessary federal, state, and local government permits and approvals where necessary for the proposed work prior to the expenditure of funds for those activities requiring permits.
- Achieve the total soil and phosphorus reduction savings as specified in the project proposal.
- Use the STEPL or Region 5 modeling tool. Please consult with Ken Gibbons, GLC Program Specialist (kgibbons@glc.org or 734-971-9135) if assistance is needed in using either modeling tool.
- Initiate/take advantage of outreach opportunities throughout the project period.
- Provide before, during, and after pictures of the implementation, media events, and other activities of interest to the project.
- Abide by all local, state, and federal laws, rules, ordinances and regulations in the performance of this project and conduct all work in a lawful and safe manner, consistent with the standards and level of care normally provided for comparable work.
- Track conservation practice implementation progress using the procedures provided.
- Provide administrative capacity to submit reports of expenses and activities as well as provide other documentation as needed.
- Provide the minimum levels of liability insurance coverage or self-insurance (see details below).

B. Grant Reporting

Progress Reports
Progress reporting must be submitted at least quarterly, even if no project activity has occurred during the reporting period. Reports will be due fourteen days after the end of each quarter of the federal fiscal year, which runs from October 1 through September 30.

Progress reports must include a signed (electronic or hard copy) invoice for reimbursement, a load reduction reporting form describing the conservation practice(s) installed during the quarter, and a narrative report of the project's activity during the period. Before, during, and after photos will also be required.

Final Report
A final project report using the report form and instructions provided at https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/final_report, as well as a final invoice for all remaining eligible project expenses and a final load reduction reporting form will be required within sixty (60) days of the completion of the project.

C. Administrative Requirements

Funds and Reimbursement
This is a reimbursement-based program. Applicants must assure that adequate financial systems are in place to assure the submittal of accurate invoices and supporting documentation on a quarterly or monthly basis.

There will be one upfront payment (10% of grant amount) at the start of the project, which will occur after the GLC receives the signed contractual agreement from the grantee.

Except for the first payment, all subsequent payments to the grantee are made in arrears, based on signed invoices submitted at least quarterly to the GLC using the forms provided to successful applicants. Reimbursement may take up to 90 days to be processed once submitted.

Financial Audit

Applicants that are regularly subject to an independent financial audit in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards should submit a copy of their most recent audited financial statements with their proposal (via the Web Application Form). All applicants will be asked to briefly describe within their project application the administrative capacity and internal controls that exist to assure that grant funds will be managed properly. Organizations with proof of a recent successful audit will be specifically recognized in the evaluation of proposals.

Open Records

All successful applicants will be required to provide open access to all data, records, financial information, and other materials generated by or associated with the funded project (within the limits of state and federal regulations). It is essential that successful applicants maintain detailed records of all expenses and activities as well as copies of submitted reports for future audits. Project results must also be disseminated in a manner that ensures accessibility to others.

Insurance

Successful applicants must agree to provide the minimum levels of liability insurance or self-insurance coverage as indicated below (including coverage for their employees working on the project) and will be responsible for all deductibles. The grantee will be required to provide a certificate of insurance coverage to the GLC as part of the grant contract. Grantees electing to provide self-insurance coverage will be required to provide documentation describing how recovery of damages, which may arise out of the Grantee's performance of services under the terms of the award, will be covered as part of the grant contract. The grantee must require that all contracted personnel or entities used by the grantee in performing the project work maintain the required insurances contained in this section for the duration of the grant period.

1. Commercial General Liability with the following minimum coverage:
    - $2,000,000 General Aggregate Limit other than Products/Completed Operations
    - $2,000,000 Products/Completed Operations Aggregate Limit
    - $1,000,000 Personal & Advertising Injury Limit
    - $1,000,000 Each Occurrence Limit

    Grantee must list the GLC as an ADDITIONAL INSURED on the Commercial General Liability certificate or an acceptable alternative method with written permission from the GLC.

2. If a motor vehicle is used to provide services or products under this contract, the grantee must have vehicle liability insurance on any auto including owned, hired and non-owned vehicles used in the grantee's business for bodily injury and property damage as required by law.

3. Workers' compensation coverage must be provided according to applicable laws governing the employees and employers work activities in the state in which the project is located.

4. Employers liability insurance with the following minimum limits:
    - $100,000 each accident
    - $100,000 each employee by disease
    - $500,000 aggregate disease

V. Application Submission Information

The following items must be submitted for all grant applications. Additional instructions, templates, and the web application form are available at: https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/apply. Incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

- Required: Completed Web Application Form
- Required: Completed Grant Application Template
- Required: Completed GLSNRP Budget Form
- **New in 2019** - Required: A regional map depicting the general area of work within the Great Lakes Basin
- **New in 2019** - Required: A local map depicting specific areas of work or potential work
- **New in 2019** - Required: Commitment letters articulating the terms of any applicable match toward the project, including any match to be provided by the applicant entity, should be provided to the extent available at the time of application. All match contributions committed to the project must be detailed prior to the award of funds.
- Optional: Up to three site photos that document or explain the problem addressed within the proposal
- Supporting Documents (as applicable):
    - Applicant's Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NICRA) – Required of applicants using a federal approved rate to calculate indirect costs within the project budget
    - Applicant's most recent financial audit – Required of applicant entities who conduct a regular independent financial audit

All other information provided by the applicant – including reports and general letters of support – will not be considered, reviewed, or returned. Information provided in the grant application becomes public information and may be shared with others upon request.

If you are unable to submit the Grant Application materials via the online system, you must notify the Contact Person listed below to determine an acceptable alternative method for submitting your application materials prior to the application deadline.

If you require additional submittal instructions or assistance, please contact Laura Kaminski, GLC Grants and Contracts Manager (laurak@glc.org or 734-971-9135), prior to the application deadline.

VI. Submittal Deadline

Complete applications – including all required supporting documents – must be received by the GLC by **6:00 p.m. EDT on March 29, 2019**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding unless the applicant has received permission to submit a late application from GLC staff prior to the deadline.

A confirmation email will be sent to the email address provided within the Web Application Form verifying that the application has been submitted successfully.

VII. Review and Selection Process

Proposals meeting all criteria identified above will be reviewed and evaluated through the Sedimentation and Nutrient Reduction Task Force coordinated by the GLC. The task force is comprised of representatives from each of the eight Great Lakes states as well as federal agencies. A list of task force members can be found at https://www.glc.org/work/sediment/taskforce. Applicants are encouraged to contact their state's task force member to discuss this RFP and the details of proposed projects.

Applicants may also be contacted for clarification of project or applicant details. The GLC (on behalf of the Task Force) reserves the right to offer grants for amounts other than those requested and may request changes to the proposed work plan prior to approving a project for funding.

Final grant decisions are anticipated in early summer 2019. All applicants will be notified of the status of their application on or around that time.

VIII. Contact Information

Please direct any questions pertaining to the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program application process to either of the following two individuals:

Application Content and/or Project-Specific Questions:

Nicole Zacharda, Program Manager
Great Lakes Commission
1300 Victors Way, Suite 1350
Ann Arbor, MI 48108-5203
734-971-9135 (ext. 6084)
nzacharda@glc.org

Project Budget and/or Application Submittal Questions:

Laura Kaminski, Grants and Contracts Manager
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laurak@glc.org