
RI DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT



Announcement of Request for Proposals (RFP)

February 5, 2020

Climate Resilience Fund

All proposals due Monday, April 6th, 4:00PM

Submit written proposals to: RIDEM/Permit Application Center, 2nd Floor
235 Promenade Street
Providence, RI 02908

And via email to: elizabeth.stone@dem.ri.gov

**Applicants may request between \$25,000 and \$500,000
(exceptions for funding up to \$750,000 will be
considered).**

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (the Department or RIDEM) is pleased to announce the availability of grants from the Climate Resilience Fund to implement climate resilience projects for climate-driven challenges facing Rhode Island communities, both inland and coastal. In accordance with the Rules and Regulations for the Climate Resilience Fund 250-RICR-170-05-1 (Fund Regulations), this Request for Proposals (RFP) is seeking proposals for projects that will support governmental and non-profit entities in restoring and improving the climate resilience of vulnerable coastal habitats, as well as river and stream floodplains and related habitats, including projects that improve community resilience and public safety. The grant program and the criteria for evaluating and prioritizing applications are designed to enhance environmental sustainability and resilience across Rhode Island's communities as described in Rhode Island's first statewide resilience action plan, [Resilient Rhody](#). Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis pursuant to this RFP.

1. Purpose of Available Grants

The purpose of the grant program created by the Climate Resilience Fund is to receive, hold and administer the use of the \$5,000,000 portion of the 2018 RI Green Economy and Clean Water Bond and any future bond allocations earmarked for the same purposes. The funds will provide grants to governmental and non-profit entities for restoring and improving the climate resilience

of vulnerable coastal habitats, as well as river and stream floodplains and related habitats, including projects that improve community resilience and public safety.

The grants issued pursuant to these regulations will stimulate investments in climate resilience projects and help reduce risk across Rhode Island's communities. The grant program, and the criteria for evaluating and prioritizing applications, are designed to implement climate resilience projects for climate-driven challenges facing Rhode Island communities, both inland and coastal. In general, these funds should be used to enhance environmental sustainability and resilience across communities. Please note that resilience is defined as follows in the Fund Regulations: "the capacity of individuals, institutions, businesses and natural systems within Rhode Island to survive, adapt and grow no matter what chronic stresses and weather events they experience."

2. Applicant Eligibility

Applicants eligible to apply for grants pursuant to this RFP include governmental and non-profit entities that are proposing climate resilience projects to restore and/or improve the resilience of vulnerable coastal zones and rivers and stream floodplains and related habitats, in the face of climate change impacts (e.g. increasing precipitation, sea level rise, increasing temperatures, and severe weather events).

Applicants for funding: 1) must be the entity that legally controls the site where the project will be executed; or 2) must be partnering with an entity that has legal control of the site (with such partners clearly identified in the application). Private consultants are not eligible to receive grant awards directly on behalf of their clients. For projects involving land acquisition in accordance with Section 1.7 of the Fund Regulations, legal control of the site is not required and RIDEM shall require additional verification from property owners concerning the proposed climate resilience project.

Applicants must demonstrate administrative capacity to manage their grant funds and comply with applicable state and federal fiscal requirements including, but not limited to, accounting, recordkeeping, procurement, and reporting procedures. Applicants must also demonstrate ability to manage their project, document matching funds, and report on progress of deliverables specified in a grant agreement.

Please be aware that it is RIDEM's policy that financial assistance shall neither directly or indirectly benefit parties whose willful action or inaction has resulted in damage to the environment. At the Director's discretion, the Department may restrict, delay, or limit funding due to the occurrence of criminal, civil enforcement actions, or compliance matters. To be eligible for grants, applicants must disclose any existing violations and compliance actions related to their proposal. This includes the issuance of any Notice of Intent to Enforce.

3. Project Eligibility

As outlined in the Fund Regulations, the following types of costs are eligible to receive grant monies from the Climate Resilience Fund:

- Environmental consulting
- Engineering consulting
- Permitting
- Plantings, reforestation, landscaping

- Construction
- Materials
- Professional survey services
- Land acquisition in accordance with §1.7(A) of the Fund Regulations
- Monitoring
- Personnel costs directly related to the performance of the project
- Community engagement

Examples of types of costs that are ineligible to receive grant monies from the Climate Resilience Fund include:

- Pre-award costs, unless incurred within ninety (90) days of application approval and pre-approved by the Department.
- Administrative costs including clerical support, monthly utility expenses, the purchase of office equipment, personnel costs associated with fundraising for the nongovernmental entity, etc.
- Lobbying costs.
- State or federal penalties or fines.
- Land acquisition activities that do not meet the requirements set forth in §1.7(A) of the Fund Regulations.
- Response costs for emergency response actions caused or exacerbated solely by the applicant or their agents or assigns.
- Proposed projects associated with unresolved litigation (administrative or judicial) with the Department or conditions or activities that have violated or are violating statutes or regulations administered by the Department shall be ineligible to receive Fund monies without the express written consent of the Director and the resolution of said litigation or violation(s).

Please be aware that the Department and the State of Rhode Island take no responsibility for project work done outside the term or scope of a valid grant agreement or prior to full approval of an agreement. Agreements are not valid until the Rhode Island Department of Administration issues the appropriate encumbrance (i.e. purchase order (PO) or PO release). All agreements must be signed and dated by an authorized agent of the applicant and the Department.

Eligibility of expenses may vary with the type of grant application. Eligible expenses may include the costs of personnel salary and fringe, travel, supplies, constructions, and contractual services directly related to the project. With respect to personnel, the Department generally will not subsidize salaries of existing governmental staff, but rather encourages such expenses to be allocated as match.

4. Available Grant Categories

In accordance with the Fund Regulations and the goals of this RFP, a “climate resilience project” shall mean projects that restore and/or improve the resilience of vulnerable coastal zones and rivers and stream floodplains and related habitats, in the face of climate change impacts (e.g. increasing precipitation, sea level rise, increasing temperatures, and severe weather events).

The following categories of grants for Climate Resilience Projects will be considered either alone or in combination:

1. **Nature-Based Solutions** - projects that protect or enhance Rhode Island's natural systems in the face of projected climate change impacts. Projects can include green infrastructure projects that utilize vegetation and pervious surfaces to manage coastal, riverine, and inland flooding, erosion and storm damage. Projects can also include the restoration of natural shorelines and riparian habitats so as to enhance the protection of communities.
2. **Removal, Relocation or Redesign of Infrastructure** - engineering and construction projects to redesign, relocate or remove vulnerable facilities and infrastructure (e.g., culverts, dams, buildings/facilities, roadways/evacuation routes in both coastal and riverine areas).

Climate resilience projects shall be designed to demonstrate tangible, on-the ground solutions to climate driven challenges facing RI communities, both inland and coastal. Proposed climate resilience projects must demonstrate that a project conducts on-the-ground implementation, not solely research or planning.

Applications for funds to support resilience planning processes will not be considered. Necessary resilience planning processes that have identified possible resilience projects should be completed before the project start date. However, projects that have a minor amount of planning remaining that is needed to inform final siting or design of climate resilience projects may be considered.

Climate resilience projects that involve the acquisition of land shall be considered so long as the acquisition is deemed part (50 percent or less) of the overall cost of the project. Projects focused solely on land acquisition will not be considered.

Climate resilience projects with the primary purpose to undertake scientific research, data analyses or vulnerability assessments will not be considered. However, funds can be utilized for data collection as part of monitoring activities to track progress and determine the effectiveness of the implemented climate resilience project.

Climate resilience projects should show a clear nexus between climate change impacts to the ecological/environmental health of the area that is the subject of the application and the proposed resilience actions and outcomes. Applications for funds should highlight:

- the specific climate change impacts that the project is designed to address;
- both the expected near-term (0-10 years) and long-term (10-25 years) benefits to improve ecosystems and community resilience; and
- how the project is consistent with state resilience plans, local hazard mitigation plans, and all applicable laws.

5. **Project Time Periods**

The grant awards will be authorized via grant agreements for a specified period of time. Due to greater emphasis being placed on the timeliness of expenditures by the State, projects that will be completed in one or two year time periods will be favored. With adequate supporting justification, the Department will consider longer project time periods for larger, more complex projects. Projects not initiated within a reasonable timeframe or that fall substantially behind schedule once underway may have their grant awards rescinded or reduced. The Department

encourages applicants to take into consideration and to plan adequate time for procurement and obtaining permits and other necessary approvals in their project schedule.

6. Match Requirements

“Match” refers to the funds or services used to conduct a project that are not borne by grant funds. All projects match must: (1) relate directly to the project for which the match is being applied; (2) be reasonably valued; and (3) be supported by documentation. Match is an indicator of commitment to a project and is considered in proposal eligibility and rank.

Climate Resilience Funds will be available to eligible applicants in the form of grants of up to seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible costs. Applicants must be able to match at least twenty-five percent (25%) of eligible costs. Grants for less than seventy-five percent (75%) of eligible costs may be awarded.

Match may include: (1) cash; (2) the value of non-cash, in-kind contributions (e.g. value of equipment donated for use of the project); or (3) the value of goods and services directly contributed to the project.

Examples of actions that might be used as eligible match include the following:

- Cost of value-per-hour rate multiplied by the number of hours performing work associated with the project proposal, tasks such as labor to undertake resilience measure(s), bid or subcontract development, development of designs of resilience measure(s), permit reviews including attending relevant meetings, conducting public meetings, or similar work relating to the project but not directly funded by the grant;
- Cost of materials, supplies, or equipment rentals used for the project; and
- Cost of construction of approved resilience measure(s), including labor, equipment, and materials.

7. Updated RFP Information

During the application period, as the need arises, the Department may post additional information concerning this RFP and funding opportunity on its website. This may include clarification of commonly asked questions. Potential applicants are advised to periodically check the Department’s website.

8. Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will receive an initial screening by representatives of the Department for basic eligibility criteria. To be awarded a grant, applicants must possess adequate fiscal and project management capabilities. Past performance on prior Department grants will be taken into account when assessing organizational capacity to effectively manage a project. Eligible proposals will be referred to the Review Committee as described in the Fund Regulations. The Review Committee will evaluate the eligible proposals consistent with the scoring criteria listed below in order to make recommendations (subject to final decision by the Director).

Scoring criteria:

- The extent to which the project addresses climate change impacts, and improves and/or restores ecosystems and habitats (30%);

- The beneficial environmental impact to land, waters, fish and wildlife, and overall public benefits (20%);
- The extent to which the project addresses equity in overburdened communities (10%);
- Readiness and timeliness to proceed (10%);
- The extent to which the project helps improve and maintain continued public access to natural resources (10%);
- Project viability and match (10%);
- Ability of applicant to complete the project, including financial solvency, past experience of similar projects and likelihood of success (5%); and
- Ability of the applicant to perform required/necessary long-term maintenance where applicable (5%).

Please note that a good geographic distribution of projects is desired by RIDEM and the Review Committee.

9. How to Apply – Final Submission Deadline – Monday, April 6, 2020

Final proposals must be received by the Department no later than 4:00 p.m. on Monday April 6, 2020. The proposal must include mandatory application forms, and other supporting materials as appropriate; e.g. letters of support, photographs, etc. The Department encourages that proposals be sent electronically and via hard-copy. Please refer to the Appendix for details and final application forms.

Applicants may request a de-briefing on their application package scoring after awards are announced. At least one member of the Review Committee shall be present for the de-briefing and requests for de-briefings shall be made in writing within thirty (30) days of the relevant grant announcement and shall be accommodated within ninety (90) days of the request.

10. Preparing the Proposal for Final Approval

For projects that are selected, the Department may request the applicant to modify project proposals based on comments received during project evaluations and the selection process. The applicant must submit the revised project proposal/scope of work to the Department prior to final approval. The Department will conduct a final review of the proposal in coordination with appropriate agencies and, if satisfied that all review comments have been adequately addressed, the final proposal or scope of work will become the basis for the grant agreement that will be executed to formalize the grant award.

11. Project Administration

11.1 Grant Agreements

Grants will be awarded on a competitive basis. Successful applicants will receive a Grant Agreement template specifying the amount, duration and conditions of the award. The Grant Agreement will be in the form of a binding contract. Grantees must fill out the applicable information where prompted in the Grant Agreement template electronically and submit the completed Grant Agreement via email for final Department approval within forty-five (45) days of receiving their Grant Agreement template. Other requirements to secure funding shall include the following:

- Recipients will be required to sign, accept, and return the original signed Grant Agreement to the Department within forty-five (45) days of the date of approval. Failure to execute the agreement within the forty-five (45) days may result in the cancellation of the grant award and may result in these funds being awarded to the next highest rated project. Recipients are allowed to submit a written request for an extension beyond forty-five (45) days;
- Recipients will have ninety (90) days from the date of the acceptance of the Grant Agreement to provide proof of the necessary grant match by letters of credit, letters from city/town councils, loan agreements, dedicated escrow accounts or any other pre-approved proof of matching funds. Recipients are allowed to submit a written request for an extension beyond ninety (90) days to provide proof of the necessary Grant match; and
- The recipient is responsible for obtaining all necessary permits or approvals from any federal, state, or local agency with authority over the project or project area. Copies of these permits/approvals must be submitted to the Department for inclusion in the project file before the first payment request.

All grant payments will be paid in the form of reimbursement payments for eligible expenses incurred in accordance with an approved project. Please refer to Section 3 above for examples of eligible and ineligible costs. In general, up-front costs or prepayment will not be allowed; however, if, at the sole discretion of the Director, such costs are small compared to the overall value of the project or are clearly demonstrated to be necessary for the success of the project, and sufficient documentation and collateral are presented, they may be considered.

Please note that for organizations with limited funds available for upfront payments, the RI Infrastructure Bank has established a Stormwater Project Accelerator program that offers upfront capital for green stormwater infrastructure projects that will eventually be funded through reimbursable state or federal grants. For more information about the Stormwater Project Accelerator see <https://www.riib.org/spa> or contact the RI Infrastructure Bank.

Requests for reimbursement must include an invoice and documentation of the incurred, eligible costs. The type of documentation required to receive reimbursement will be detailed in the grant offer and/or grant agreement. Grant recipients must enter into an agreement with RIDEM to establish mutually agreeable terms for completing the project. Items in the agreement include, but are not limited to:

- Scope of work including tasks, schedules and deliverables (the approved project proposal is usually incorporated as the scope of work);
- RIDEM and grantee responsibilities, including interim and final reporting requirements;
- Statement of the project's total budget, matching budget, and grant;
- Statutory and regulatory requirements for contracting such as competitive bidding, fair-share allotments, i.e., minority-owned and women-owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE);
- Requirements for subcontracting;
- Project payment schedule and payment terms; and
- Record-keeping and reporting.

Payments will be made on a reimbursement basis in accordance with the payment schedule and

terms contained in the Grant Agreement. Reimbursement is tied to performance targets and payments are not scheduled more frequently than once a month.

For grant awards less than \$100,000, there will only be one (1) reimbursement payment which will occur at the completion of all performance targets outlined in the Grant Agreement.

For grant awards greater than \$100,000, no more than three (3) reimbursement payments will be permitted. Each payment shall be at the completion of the approved performance targets as outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Grant recipients will be required to provide regular progress reports to RIDEM. Projects are expected to be completed in the timeframe of the grant agreement. Timeframes will be negotiated in the range of 6-24 months. Time extensions will be granted with specific/appropriate justification.

- 11.2. **Pre-project and Pre-contract Costs** - RIDEM and the State of Rhode Island take no responsibility for project work done outside the term or scope of the grant agreement or prior to full approval of a grant agreement. Applicants should NOT anticipate any funding for work that is done before approval of a grant agreement. Agreements are not valid until the Rhode Island Department of Administration issues the appropriate encumbrance (i.e., purchase order). All agreements must be signed and dated by an authorized agent of the grantee and RIDEM.
- 11.3 **Procurement** - The expenditure of funds pursuant to these grants is subject to state law governing procurement, including requirements for competitive bidding and goals for participation by minority or woman business enterprises (MBE/WBE). In general, where consultant, engineering or construction services are to be obtained, a competitive process is required. Where a municipality has retained engineering or consultants under a prior competitive solicitation, RIDEM may allow that arrangement to be utilized for a project, provided adequate documentation is provided that the services sought were within the anticipated scope of services under the original solicitation, and that the manner of pricing is consistent with applicable requirements. RIDEM reserves the right to review and approve the award of any contract or subcontract.
- 11.4 **Permitting** - Many grant projects will require a permit from RIDEM or CRMC or review by another governmental agency (e.g. RI Historical Preservation & Heritage Commission) to proceed. Applicants should consider the time needed to acquire permits and other agency reviews and plan projects accordingly. Failure to obtain and comply with permits is generally considered a material breach of a grant agreement and may jeopardize project funding.
- 11.5 **Suspension, modification or revocation** - The Director may suspend, modify or revoke any awards in the event that subsequent examination reveals any data included in an application form, submittal, reimbursement request, plan or sketch to be incorrect or not in compliance with this RFP.
- 11.6 **Indirect (Overhead) Costs** - Indirect costs are costs that are not readily attributable with a specific project; e.g. rent, heat, utilities, etc. Entities proposing to use an indirect rate must have an approved current rate.

- 11.7 **Fiscal Assurances** - Sponsors will be subject to fiscal assurances per terms of the project agreement. Fiscal assurances include but are not limited to the audit requirements established by the State of Rhode Island.
- 11.8 **Stop Payment** - The Director may take appropriate action to stop payment of and/or seek the return of grant funds expended for any project where: (1) the applicant has obtained said grant based upon incomplete, false, misleading or erroneous information; or (2) the applicant has not completed the work approved under the grant in accordance with any and all conditions of approval issued by the Director in the grant award.

Appendix A: Final Application Content & Forms

Your completed application should include the following:



FORM A: Required Applicant and Project Information



FORM B: Budget Detail



Narrative Project Description (see instructions below)



Site/Location Map
(if applicable)



(Recommended)

Other Supporting Material
(Pictures, data, letters of support, etc.)

INSTRUCTIONS FOR NARRATIVE PROJECT DESCRIPTION

A narrative project description is required. In general, the description should require no more than 3-5 pages. The narrative should address the following elements.

Purpose: Provide a brief, clear statement of the project purpose, including as applicable:

- Resilience issues to be addressed (including, but not limited to, the nature of the problem to be addressed, the waterbody(s) involved, the properties affected, the frequency/severity of flooding/inundation, habitats improved, infrastructure impacted).
- The primary driver(s) (environmental, economic, political, etc.) for the project.
- Information about how climate change projections and data will be considered and incorporated into the project design.
- Information about how the project will improve and maintain continued public access to natural resources.
- Information about how the project addresses equity in overburdened communities.
- Information about how the project will improve community resilience at, adjacent to and beyond the project site.
- Type of category the resilience project falls under (removal, relocation or redesign of infrastructure or nature-based solutions, or a combination of both).

Project Approach and Tasks:

- Provide a concise overview of project approach; identify and describe major tasks.
- Total amount of requested funding from the Climate Resilience Fund.
- Provide a rationale for the selection of the technical or nature-based approach to the resilience project.
- Describe how key decision makers and community leaders have been consulted on the necessity and benefits of the proposed project.

Management and Coordination:

- Describe who will manage the project; how contracting and subcontracting will be done; be clear on who is responsible for each major task.
- Describe if and how other agencies and organizations will participate or be partners in the project, including letters of commitment or support if available.
- Characterize current organizational capacity to undertake the proposed project.
- Describe past project management experience.

Maintenance: Identify the general requirements and responsibility for any necessary or required long-term maintenance.

Public Outreach/Public Participation: Describe how the project results will be shared via public outreach and/or if any public participation is anticipated.

Final Products as Related to Resilience:

- Both the expected near-term (0-10 years) and long-term (10-25 years) benefits to improve ecosystems and community resilience.
- How the project is consistent with state resilience plans, local hazard mitigation plans, and related plans.

Project Schedule & Milestones: Estimated schedule (typically 1-2 years from the time the project contract is signed), key milestones, and anticipated completion dates.

FORM A
Climate Resilience Fund

Project Name/Title

Grant Amount Requested

Match Amount (min. 25%)

APPLICANT INFORMATION & SIGNATURE

Organization Name

Contact Name **Title**

Street **City** **Address**
Zip Code

Mailing Address (if different from Street Address)

Telephone **Email**

Executive Director/Mayor/Town Manager

Authorized Agent Signature (Required)

Name & Title of Authorized Agent

Type of Organization Non-Profit Governmental

In **NO MORE THAN 150 WORDS**, please provide an overall summary of the proposed project.

Please describe property status/ownership of location of climate resilience project.

Please describe any land acquisition activities that are proposed as part of the climate resilience project (if applicable).

GRANT APPLICATION CATEGORY / AMOUNT REQUESTED (Complete all that apply).

Removal/Relocation/Redesign of Infrastructure
Amount Requested

Nature-Based Solution
Amount Requested

Total Grant Amount Requested

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Please list the person(s) responsible for managing the project.

Full Name

Title

Address City

State

Zip Code

Email

Phone

Please include any additional relevant information on your proposed project management team.

Describe the timeframe for the proposed project, including start dates and anticipated duration.

If known or applicable, please identify any local officials or neighborhood organizations that have been contacted regarding the proposed project and any known support or opposition.

PROJECT LOCATION

Please provide the street address or description of project area.

FEMA Flood Hazard Zone: 100 - Year 500 - Year V - Zone

→ **IMPORTANT: Please Attach Project Map Location**

→ If the project is in a coastal area, please either attach a map OR describe below what coastal flooding could look like in the future under different scenarios utilizing the STORMTOOLS mapping tool (STORMTOOLS can be accessed via <https://www.beachsamp.org/stormtools/>)

PUBLIC BENEFITS OF THE PROJECT

Please describe any other larger, public benefits that the project will promote or encourage.

RELEVANT SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Please utilize this part of the application to expound on earlier areas of the application or other relevant information that may aid us in processing this application.

FORM B: BUDGET DETAIL

TABEL A: Project Tasks¹, Deliverables, Schedule² and Estimated Cost

Task #	Description and Task	Deliverables	Schedule	Requested Amount	Match	Total Task Cost
			Totals			

1. Tasks much include progress and final reports.
2. Please express as month # in which the task is expected to be completed from start of the project (i.e. Month 2).

Table B: Projects Costs By Budget Category

Budget Category						Requested Grant Amount	Match Amount	Total Cost of Category
1. Salary and Fringe ¹								
Name	Title	Salary	Percent Time Charged to Project	Fringe (as percent of salary)	Total Salary Cost			
2. Indirect Costs ²								
3. Supplies ³								
4. Equipment ⁴								
5. Travel and Training ⁵								
6. Contractual ⁶								
7. Construction ⁷								
8. Other ⁸								
Totals								

Specify source(s) of match:

1. *Include salaries and fringe benefits paid for work performed on the project. "Salary" should include the rate per hour by position. "Fringe benefits" are employment benefits given in addition to wages or salary, such as health, retirement, etc. Grant funds are typically not used to pay municipal employee's salaries; these expenses should be used as match.*
2. *Indirect can only be charged by those entities that have an approved rate. **Please include copy of signed agreement if budget includes indirect costs.***
3. *Includes expendable items, such as office, field and lab supplies, film, postage, equipment costing less than \$1,000, books, etc.*
4. *Includes any items of equipment costing more than \$1,000.*
5. *Includes transportation costs incurred during work, such as tolls, costs of using vehicle (vehicle costs = number of miles x mileage rate)*
6. *Includes procured services not provided by grantee, such as consultants, engineering and design services, etc. You must identify tasks and outputs for each contractor. If contractual work has not yet been bid, provide estimated costs.*
7. *Includes costs associated with construction, including permit fees.*
8. *Includes costs not described by previous categories.*

HOW TO SUBMIT AN APPLICATION – Deadline is Monday, April 6th at 4:00PM

Submit the completed and signed application, along with all attachments, to:

RI Department of Environmental Management
Permit Application Center, 2nd Floor
235 Promenade Street, Providence, RI 02908

And by email to:

Elizabeth Stone
elizabeth.stone@dem.ri.gov

If you have any questions on this application, RIDEM staff are available to assist you. Please contact Elizabeth Stone at elizabeth.stone@dem.ri.gov or 401-222-2771.

**Applicants may request between \$25,000 and \$500,000
(exceptions for funding up to \$750,000 will be
considered).**