Lake Champlain Basin Program is offering an emergency response grant funding opportunity to local watershed partners within the Lake Champlain Basin to provide organizational support during the COVID-19 pandemic. The intent of this grant category is to provide relief to watershed organizations struggling to maintain daily operations during this pandemic. Grant funds have been made available with Great Lakes Fishery Commission resources dedicated to the Lake Champlain basin.

This is a one-time re-programming of unobligated existing funding for programs that had not yet been initiated, and the LCBP does not anticipate offering future grant opportunities of this nature. Existing agreements with NEIWPCC on behalf of LCBP will be honored as written. The grant program has been made available to support Lake Champlain-focused organizations facing significant financial challenges resulting from Stay Home orders and/or changes to or cancellation of spring work plan(s) as a result of the current COVID-19 pandemic; these funds are not anticipated to support organizations who have alternate means to obtain funding such as the CARES Act or Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan support. We appreciate careful consideration of your organization’s need for these funds as funding is extremely limited.

A description of this grant funding – including the purpose, eligibility information, and selection criteria – is provided below. Please read this information carefully before proceeding with your application. This description is followed by general guidelines that should help you prepare a competitive grant application. We encourage you to contact LCBP staff prior to submitting your proposal if you need further explanation of the requirements and policies summarized here. Please note: These guidelines are not applicable to other LCBP grant programs.

- No more than one unique application may be submitted by the same organization.
- Applications with field-based components will not be accepted for this grant opportunity.
- Grant award funding may not be used for the purchase of food or to provide entrance fees to facilities.

Applicants with current LCBP contracts must be in good standing (i.e., all deliverables that are due have been received by LCBP) to be eligible to apply for additional funds. New work must be distinct from currently contracted work in both objectives and deliverables.

An electronic copy of applications MUST be received by

1:00 PM EST Friday, April 24, 2020

Proposal submissions should be made via email to grants@lcbp.org in MS Word or a Word-compatible format. Hardcopy or faxed submissions will not be accepted.

Successful applicants will be required to maintain workers compensation and liability insurance. More details will be provided to the successful applicant at the time of contracting.

Lake Champlain Basin Program and Opportunities for Action

The Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP) is a partnership among the States of New York and Vermont, the Province of Québec, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the National Park Service, NEIWPCC, other federal and local government agencies, and many local groups, both public and private. Created by the Lake Champlain Special Designation Act of 1990 and reauthorized in 2002, the LCBP’s goal is to work cooperatively to protect and enhance the environmental integrity and the social and economic benefits of the Lake Champlain Basin, primarily through implementation of Opportunities for Action. Successful implementation of the plan is achieved by
developing partnerships among natural resource agencies, citizens, and other lake and watershed stakeholders throughout the Basin. Since 1992, the LCBP has sponsored over 1000 local projects. *Opportunities for Action* (updated June 2017) calls for actions addressing water quality, toxic substances, living natural resources, recreation and cultural heritage resources, economics, education and outreach, monitoring, and data management. The plan also calls for the active involvement of local communities. *Opportunities for Action* is available online at [http://plan.lcbp.org/](http://plan.lcbp.org/)

### Grant Guidelines

All applications will be reviewed by an external review committee and evaluated based on the selection criteria listed below. The following guidelines are provided to help you submit a competitive grant application.

#### Local Match Contribution

There is no match requirement for this grant opportunity.

#### Project Workplan Development

If your application is approved for funding, your award notification will explain if LCBP/NEIWPCC has sufficient information to move forward with your award. If this is the case, we will contact you to confirm your award and then issue a purchase order to your organization.

You may receive requests for clarification or adjustments to your application in your award letter. An acceptable amended application must be received within five business days of receipt of the award notification before a purchase order will be issued. We strongly encourage all applicants to visit the LCBP website for more information on the LCBP grant process: [http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/](http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/).

#### Project Time Period

Award notification should be expected by May 5, 2020. Workplans must be submitted within five days following award notification. Projects must be initiated within one week of award notification. Projects must be completed within 90 calendar days of the official project start date. **Expanded project time periods will not be considered.**

#### Contract Agreement

Following approval of the project workplan by LCBP, each award recipient will enter into an agreement (i.e. purchase order) with NEIWPCC, which administers local implementation grant funds on behalf of LCBP. The agreement will describe the deliverables to be completed, LCBP supported task-based budget, and required outputs

#### Payment Procedures

- Funds will be available on a reimbursement basis only in response to your invoices documenting the eligible costs you have incurred. Invoicing will be based on 100% completion of tasks and outputs identified within the workplan budget.
- Groups should expect a three week turn-around time from when the LCBP receives your invoice to the time when you receive payment.
- **The LCBP cannot reimburse for work done prior to or after the official contract dates.** If you anticipate project work extending beyond the contract end date, contact LCBP immediately to discuss whether you may be eligible for an amendment to your project that extends the timeline.
- Following LCBP approval of invoices, payment will be issued by NEIWPCC.

#### Reporting and Publicity

Your contract will require you to submit a final project report briefly outlining deliverables completed with these
LCBP funds at the conclusion of your grant. Quarterly reports will not be required for this grant opportunity. If press releases are generated for this grant, they must cite the LCBP/NEIWPCC as a funding source. LCBP report templates may be found at: http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/.

**Funding Acknowledgements**

All press materials and printed products from your project must acknowledge the Lake Champlain Basin Program, NEIWPCC, and the original source of federal or non-federal funding. Each local implementation grant agreement will contain a funding acknowledgement statement that grant recipients should use on their project-funded products. Additionally, inclusion of the LCBP and NEIWPCC logos, available from the LCBP Grant Tools webpage http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/, may be appropriate on published materials supported by the grant. Please note that NEIWPCC will have a new logo expected to be used following April 22nd. To determine what level of crediting is appropriate, consult your designated LCBP Project Officer.

**Appropriate Use of Funds**

**About Direct and Indirect Costs:**
LCBP encourages groups to budget costs that are associated with the project as direct expenses, including personnel costs, travel, project supplies, mailings, phone costs, office supplies, etc. Use of some grant funds for indirect costs is also allowable, subject to both the provisions of OMB Circular A-87 and LCBP approval. If you need further guidance, contact the LCBP or refer to OMB Circular A-87 (Revised), Sections D, E, and F of Attachment A provide an overview of direct and indirect costs. For projects in response to this RFP, the indirect budget should not exceed 10% of the direct project budget, and indirect offered as match should similarly not exceed 10% of direct match contributed, unless a higher federally negotiated indirect rate is in place. The LCBP Indirect Policy can be found here: http://www.lcbp.org/about-us/grants-rfps/grant-toolkit/

**Restrictions**

LCBP grant funds cannot be used to produce for-profit products or to cover costs associated with regulatory compliance or direct fundraising efforts. LCBP grant funds also cannot be used for land purchases, endowment funds, or lobbying or legislative advocacy of any kind.

**LCBP Staff Support**

Because they do not participate on the review committees that make award decisions, LCBP staff members are available to assist applicants in the interpretation of these application guidelines while proposals are being developed. All applicants are encouraged to contact the LCBP office before submitting applications. Once awards are announced and until the date they are due, LCBP staff can provide guidance for the development of a more detailed workplan, budget, and QAPP as needed. After projects are awarded, staff will be available to assist throughout the duration of the project.
2020 LCBP Emergency Relief Grants: Watershed Organizational Support

APPLICATION DEADLINE: 1:00 PM EST April 24, 2020

PURPOSE:
This COVID-19 pandemic response Emergency Relief Watershed Organizational Support Grant category provides up to $5,000 to provide relief to watershed organizations struggling to maintain daily operations during this pandemic.

Anticipated number of awards: 20-30 awards. Partial awards may be issued based on number of applicants and demonstrated need in the application.

ELIGIBILITY:
Specific Qualifying Information: All organizations seeking grants in this category must have nonprofit 501(c)(3) status (NY Soil and Water/VT Natural Resource Conservation Districts are also eligible) AND must have an organizational mission statement focused on achieving water quality improvements in the Lake Champlain watershed, including groups based in New York, Vermont and Quebec. Regardless of organization type, eligible applicants must have a DUNS number. Please see http://neiwpcc.org/contractors/contractor-docs/DUNSGuideforContractors.pdf for more information about DUNS.

Examples of Eligible Expenses:
- Costs associated with converting existing in-person programs to on-line programs;
- Office utility/rent payments during the grant award period;
- Purchase of office supplies, such as computers and printers;
- Purchase of remote meeting software during the grant award period (i.e. WebEx, GoToMeeting, etc.);
- Staff salaries (must demonstrate in the application how the funding amount requested does not overlap with CARES Act or Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan support);

Examples of Ineligible Expenses:
- New research and field-based projects
- Long-term strategic planning initiatives
- Acquisition of new software or hardware that does not boost the ability of the organization to function remotely

SELECTION CRITERIA:
An external peer review committee will evaluate and rank applications, and make award recommendations to the Lake Champlain Executive Committee. The Lake Champlain Executive Committee will make all final decisions on awards.

1. (40 points) Demonstrated organizational need for these emergency funds in relation to the COVID-19 pandemic and clear explanation of what the funding will be used for (including demonstration of whether or not funding was received through CARES or Small Business Administration’s Economic Injury Disaster Loan support).
2. (30 points) Merit of the proposal and the extent to which the proposal will result in tangible benefits or assistance for the organization that can be clearly measured.
3. (20 points) Demonstration of organization’s adaptation to the pandemic situation while supporting water quality protection efforts/OFA.
4. (10 points) Appropriateness and clarity of the proposed budget, relative to proposed objectives.