2024 Applicant Webinar FINAL WEB

0:02
Hello everyone.

0:02
My name is Kelly Wenzel, Program Manager for New Jersey Audubon Watershed Restoration and Community Empowerment Program.

0:11
This is our 2024 Applicant Webinar.

0:14
So we'll go through who everyone is and tell you about the program and hopefully answer a lot of your questions up front.

0:26
So again, today, we'll be going through our partner organizations and explaining their roles a little bit, going over our focal areas, give you an overview of the program, discuss how to apply, how we're evaluating proposals and some unique components about this program, as well as tips and additional information.

0:47
This video is about 25 minutes long, so there are a lot of organizations involved in making this program a success.

1:00
This program is funded through a grant with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and is supported by US Fish and Wildlife Service as well as the coalition for the Delaware River Watershed.

1:15
The US Fish and Wildlife Service is the governmental agency under which our program sits.

1:21
They have the responsibility for conservation and management of fish, wildlife, and plants for the American people.

1:28
They're technical experts and can enforce and uphold laws related to conservation in the United States.

1:40
National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, also known as NIFWIF, is our direct funder for this project.

1:51

They're the funding arm that connects non federal partners with federal programs to disseminate funds related to conservation projects.

2:01
The Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed is the connector for this project.

2:05
With over 180 organizational members.

2:09
The CDRW has connections to various types of organizations throughout the watershed doing conservation work.

2:25
New Jersey Audubon is the lead organization in this program, offering funding directly to organizations who need planning and capacity building grant.

2:34
New Jersey Audubon is one of the oldest and largest conservation organizations in New Jersey.

2:41
We are a member, supported organization and not affiliated with National Audubon.

2:48
NJ Audubon and Niffwiff are working together to implement this program.

2:53
Nifwith has their set of focal areas which overlap nicely with New Jersey Audubon's focal areas.

3:02
New Jersey Audubon works in three conceptual landscapes, so when you are developing your projects, you should find ways to link these two organizations focal areas in one of New Jersey Audubon's conceptual landscapes.

3:30
As you can see here, New Jersey Audubon and Niffwiff also overlap on a few species of concern.

3:36
However, your projects do not have to focus solely on these species, however should consider all species when you are putting together your proposals.

3:49
The resources that the Coalition has put together are phenomenal.

3:53
When you're putting together a new program, even if you are already working in a quote UN quote diverse area, this toolkit will walk you through how to be inclusive and just in your work.

4:04
The Coalition's toolkit and lens for DEIJ are phenomenal, like I said before, and pretty much required reading at this point when you're putting together any program.

4:26
So I'm going to go quickly through what the program is and the requirements.

4:36
I encourage you all to reach out to me with any questions.

4:39
This is not a secret process.

4:42
We want you to have great applications and great projects.

4:45
So my way of thinking is no idea is a bad idea.

4:49
Be creative and take risks.

4:55
So just a little bit about the the grant itself.

4:59
So our overarching goals are to support and strengthen community based projects in the Delaware watershed, specifically doing conservation stewardship projects.

5:10
We're looking to build capacity of organizations that are new to grant making and may have never received federal funding before.

5:22
And we're also here to mentor grantees and federal grant making with the express intent of having you all apply for an if with or other federal grant in the near future.

5:36
So we are looking for planning and capacity building grants that fall under these categories.

5:46
We have about $220,000 in grant funds available.

5:51
Our grant banned is from $10,000 up to $75,000.

5:58
However, we estimate that most awards will range from 25 to $30,000.

6:04
Again, you must focus your project in the Delaware River watershed and that includes portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania and Delaware.

6:18
So our timeline is like I like to say tight and tidy.

6:24
So we are opening up our materials for review as of N1.

6:30
So you can look at things, download everything.

6:33
The portal for your application will open January 15th, so that's for the online portion.

6:41
The proposal deadline for everything all complete is March 15th, 2024.

6:52
Then we'll have our review process.

6:54
We hope to have our awards announced on or before June 1st, with your grant.

7:00
Being July 1st, 2024 to June 30th, 2025.

7:08
To be eligible for this grant, you must directly serve communities in the Delaware River watershed.

7:15
If your organization is housed outside of the watershed, that's fine.

7:21
Your project, though, must take place entirely in the watershed.

7:26
You must be a nonprofit, 501C3 organization, a tribal, government or organ organization recognized in your state, a community Development Corporation, things like that, and you must be able to complete your proposed project in the time frame allotted.

7:52

You may use grant funds for salary, fringe travel, equipment, materials and supplies contracts, all the usual sort of stuff that is asked for in a budget.

8:06

We also are including indirect costs, also known as overhead, which will generally be 10% unless for some reason you have a negotiated rate.

8:17

Projects should address habitat, water quality, stormwater, or public access to water and the outdoors.

8:24

Again, as it relates to Nifwif and New Jersey Audubon's focal areas and conceptual landscapes stated earlier, what we cannot fund are individuals for profit corporations or international organizations.

8:48

We also cannot support ongoing litigation or legal requirements, advocacy, fundraising, lobby lobbying, and other things dictated by the federal government.

9:06

If for some reason you find that you do not meet these eligibility requirements, please reach out to me if you if you think you have a great project, And I will work with our partners at NIFWIF, US Fish and Wildlife, and the Coalition to see if there's someone out there that you can either partner with or contract with to realize your vision.

9:37

So we have a high commitment to DEIJ and I've added the A there for accessibility.

9:45

Basically we are looking to fund and serve underserved and underrepresented communities with this funding.

9:54

However, if your project takes place in, you know, suburban Bucks County, Pennsylvania, but it's going to have a big impact on habitat or water quality, we're not going to turn you away if it's a great project.

10:09

What we really want to see in your applications is a snapshot of the communities that you will be working with because that will give us sort of an overall view of the context of the work that's being done.

10:24

So our goal is to have around 40% of the funds go to underserved communities so that we align with the United States Environmental Protection Agency's Justice 40 initiative.

10:36
But a good project is a good project, so don't let that dissuade you.

10:50
New Jersey Audubon is also looking for projects that specifically increase accessibility.

10:56
Accessibility can look like many things, so we look forward to your creativity.

11:03
So compliance is tricky.

11:05
Normally individual grantees are responsible for meeting federal compliance.

11:09
However, New Jersey Audubon is going to be the technical lead and liaison to NIFWIF for this.

11:15
So after your word is granted, New Jersey Audubon is going to take the lead on providing whatever compliance is necessary.

11:28
However, we're going to turn this into a learning opportunity so that you understand the process, what we did, how we did it so that you are informed should you decide to apply for a federal grant in the future.

11:45
So we're looking specifically for two types of grants, capacity building and planning grants.

11:52
A capacity building grant is often used with words like organizational development or institution building.

11:59
A capacity building grant is money that will give you a nonprofit to work on new strategies, develop competencies, improve processes and systems to improve efficiency.

12:16
So with this type of support, you all can move into a position where you then have a greater capacity to serve others.

12:25
Planning grants are sought by agencies for projects to plan strategy or initiative that needs to be developed from the beginning stages of an idea.

12:38
And the outcome of a planning grant is usually a plan of action, some sort of product, program, design or solution.

12:55
Planning grants are typically one time awards of funds that enable you to then organize and coordinate A comprehensive plan so that you have a strategy going forward for implementation.

13:11
So this program is unique in that New Jersey Audubon will be working with you the entire time to build up your skills and capacity.

13:19
We'll do all the compliance necessary as I said before.

13:23
And we will also be doing a pre assessment of your skills and capacity so that we have a better understanding of your knowledge and skills and where there are some gaps so that we can provide workshops and networking opportunities around those gaps.

13:40
So we will work together with our partners to help you build stronger networks.

13:47
So we are looking for grants, you know with greater grace greatest watershed impact, innovative partnerships, the desire to seek federal funding in the future and we will give you technical assistance with navigating you know the federal grant platforms and process assistance with compliance other professional development.

14:21
Expect an open dialogue and collaborative communication.

14:24
Again this is not a secret process and I would love to see your sites and do in person opportunities for networking.

14:35
So our assessment tool will help us determine what workshops are needed and or desired by you.

14:40
I don't want to impose learning on you, I want us to learn together.

14:45
So these are just some of the topics that I've been thinking of, but these are certainly not written in stone by any means.

14:52
The dates on the right hand side are semi firm unless you know they become huge obstacles and we will also have an opportunity to meet in person at the coalition conference in September as well as maybe one or two grantee networking opportunities in person in the cooler months.

15:16
And then I hope to do again project site visits in the spring.

15:25
So how to apply this should be relatively easy and straightforward.

15:30
It's an it's a two step process.

15:35
So the two step process.

15:37
So first you go to our fancy application portal which is a Microsoft form and fill that out.

15:45
There is APDF version available on our resource hub so that you can see all of the questions and construct your answers in a Word document beforehand so you can cut and paste all of those answers in there.

16:02
The second part is your file attachments.

16:05
So there is a dedicated e-mail that is outlined in the RFP where you will e-mail your application packet, and that packet includes in one Excel document with four tabs.

16:20
That's your where your budget, your budget narrative, a work plan, and your community engagement plan exist.

16:29
We are also asking for a 990 tax form for your most recent filing, as well as support materials.

16:36
Support materials include things like letters of support, a basic site plan, maybe a photo or two of your location.

16:46
We don't need thick packets of you know information or site plans.

16:52
We don't need 20 letters of support.

16:55
Letters of support should come from partners you're planning on working with who support your project.

17:03
If for some reason you do not have a 990 tax form, maybe your brand new organization, you have all your other paperwork but you just haven't filed yet, we can work with you to create a document where it describes all the information that would be in a 990.

17:24
We are also trying an alternative application so these can be videos or shared presentations without human faces.

17:36
So like this one, you're not seeing my face which go through the complete application as outlined in the RFP.

17:46
When you do the online application, if you are going to do a video submission, you click yes, I'm going to do a video and it takes you to basically the end of the form so that you can just then submit.

18:03
Once you I see that come through what will happen is we will connect and I will give you specific instructions on how to upload your video and you know what should be included in the video.

18:17
But basically, if you're doing a video or online presentation, you are running through the application, but rather than writing it, you are explaining it or showing it to us visually.

18:36
And again, the process is simple.

18:38
I ask a couple of favors so that organizing your information is easier for me.

18:48
So when you're naming your file attachments, if you could kindly name everything 2024_ your organizational abbreviation, which is the one that you give me in the online application.

19:03
So that's why it's important to do that first and then the file name.

19:07
So in this case, New Jersey Audubon is abbreviated NJA, so you would label that file 2024_NJA_packet.

19:18
The same thing with the 990 or your support letters or other supporting documents.

19:24
When you e-mail me your application packet, I have a special e-mail just for that so it doesn't get lost in my work emails.

19:31
I just ask that you put the subject as 2024.

19:36
You know your organization name and application.

19:39
So it'd be 2024 New Jersey Audubon application.

19:43
And this way I know how to organize all of the data.

19:51
So evaluation.

19:52
I am making the rubric available for you all to look at as you put together your proposals.

19:58
It's the teacher and me.

20:00
I can't let you fly blind.

20:01
So it's general proposal preparedness.

20:05
Is it complete?

20:06
Is it on time?

20:07
Technical merit?

20:08
Means is your work feasible?

20:12
Does it make sense?

20:13
Is it clear budget and cost effectiveness?

20:17
Did you include a budget?

20:19
Does the budget makes sense?

20:20
Can you explain your costs?

20:23
Program goals and strategies are just that.

20:28
If you can make your goals SMART goals, that is even better conservation context.

20:35
So where does your project fit into the larger scheme of things?

20:39
How will it impact the larger watershed and then partnership and community impact?

20:44
Who are you working with and why Do they have certain expertise?

20:49
That kind of information and you don't have to write a dissertation, but just make sure it's clear and concise and tells us all we need to know.

21:00
So this is a lot of information.

21:02
So we've created a resource hub at njaudubon.org/watershed dot Dash grants where we will have our resources up there, resources from Nifwif, resources from the Coalition, and resources from the USEPA.

21:24
That is where the EJ screen tool will be found.

21:30
So just to go over what's where the NIFWIF resources, our materials are our own.

21:38
However, they were informed by the NIFWIF RFP for their larger grant ask for the Delaware River program.

21:50
So looking through their materials, specifically the Toolbox Letters of Support Best Practices and the metrics guidance, which we are not asking you to supply metrics per SE, but you can at least see what those look like.

22:14
The USAUSEPA resources, like I said, you can learn more about the Justice 40 initiative.

22:21
The EJ screen tool link will be there along with complete directions.

22:27
The directions are very good actually.

22:29
I taught myself it's not that difficult.

22:33
And Enviro Atlas, which is just a cool way to visualize your focal species and habitats related to them as well as the CDRW resources, is there.

22:48
DEIJ Resource Hub and Toolkit is there and fully accessible.

22:54
Again, this is a great product for any program that you're starting.

23:04
Some tips for success.

23:07
I always say explain your project is this.

23:09
If you're explaining it to your grandmother who knows nothing about conservation or stewardship for the environment, print.

23:17
I know printing is passe, but print and read and reread the RFPA couple times.

23:22
Highlight underlines that you don't miss anything, address everything and respond to all the requirements.

23:31
Explain how your project is unique and delivers impact.

23:35
Include context and details.

23:37
Our reviewers will be from all walks of life within the conservation realm, so don't assume that we understand your project.

23:46
Don't assume that we understand your geography or anything about anything.

23:52
Make it clear and reasonable for us to read.

23:57
Same with your budget.

23:58
Make it clear and reasonable so that we understand exactly how you're going to spend the money.

24:05
Make sure your work plan is feasible and that your goals are what we call SMART.

24:11
I said that before.

24:12
So SMART goals are specific, they are measurable, they are attainable and they are time bound.

24:20
So you, you know, saying I'm going to improve Monarch habitat in Camden doesn't really say what you're going to do.

24:31
We are going to improve Monarch habitat in Camden by planting 500 milkweed plants and monitoring how many butterflies visit them in the month of May would be a better goal.

24:55
Make sure to submit community information to build context again so that we can see where it lies in the greater scheme of things.

25:03
Submit your proposal on or before March 15th.

25:08
I'm going to make that a hard deadline unless there's something happening where you call me and your computer just exploded.

25:16
We really need things to be on time and also reach out.

25:20
If you need help, you can book a strategy session with me.

25:24
You can e-mail me, although again, it might get caught up in 100 other emails.

25:32
So booking a strategy session is is probably the best way right now.

25:37
Goes right on my calendar.

25:38
When you book that again, I'm here to answer questions.

25:43
This is not a secret process.

25:46
This should not be hard.

25:48
I want to help you.

25:49
I want you all to be successful, so if you need help again there's the resource hub, so you should be able to find all the information there.

26:01
We are also holding live versions of this webinar that is recorded now.

26:10
So these four dates and then more to come once the portal opens.

26:16
But these are the first four dates for now that you can come on and I will be live, of course, and you can ask questions as we go along.

26:33
And so this is one of my favorite pictures on the planet.

26:36
This is Petty's Island, which is in the Delaware River between Camden and Philadelphia.

26:44
Looking towards Philadelphia, soon to be a State Park.

26:49
Really excited about this place and really excited to see all of your projects and get to know all of you.

26:58
So again, if you have any questions or concerns, please book some time with me or e-mail me if it's a simple question.

27:05
I look forward to working with all of you.

27:07
Thank you.