



**NEW JERSEY  
AUDUBON**  
www.njaudubon.org

New Jersey Audubon  
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## Request for Proposal

### NJ Audubon Watershed Restoration and Community Empowerment Program

#### Overview

New Jersey Audubon is pleased to issue this request for proposals to nonprofit partners and Tribal organizations doing conservation work in the Delaware River Watershed. The Watershed Restoration and Community Empowerment Program is designed to support smaller organizations or those needing less than \$75,000 to work on community-based conservation projects throughout the Delaware River watershed. Additionally, New Jersey Audubon will provide mentorship and capacity building of basin stakeholders to strengthen future applicants for the program to support larger-scale restoration initiatives either individually or with partners.

#### Eligibility

We actively seek to fund proposals from a wide range of organizations, particularly organizations that are new to the grantmaking process, have never received federal funding, and those with fewer financial resources.

- Applicants must be within or *directly serve* communities in the Delaware River watershed. Projects must be implemented *entirely* within the Delaware River watershed, which includes portions of New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Delaware. Organizations outside the watershed may apply if the project will be conducted *solely* within the watershed.
- Applicants must be nonprofit organizations, registered with the IRS as a 501(c)3 organization, a Community Development Corporation or State Designated Tribal Statistical Area or Indigenous Group.
- Applicants must be able to complete the proposed project in its entirety between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

Groups or individuals that do not meet the eligibility requirements are encouraged to contact [Kelly Wenzel](#), Program Manager to discuss their project and consider partnering or contracting with an eligible organization.

#### Eligible Costs

Eligible costs related directly to program include staff salaries, fringe, travel, equipment, materials and supplies, contracts and subawards, and indirect costs (overhead).

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

#### Ineligible Costs and Applicants

The following costs cannot be supported by this program: lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities, fundraising, advocacy, or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations. Other ineligible costs include ongoing litigation, promotional or logo items, or capital expenses.

Ineligible applicants include unincorporated individuals, for-profit entities, and international organizations.





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## Commitment to JEDIA

Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Accessibility should be at the forefront of all our work. At New Jersey Audubon we believe that connecting all people to nature and stewarding the nature of today for all people of tomorrow is essential. We have partnered with the [Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed](#) who has created a comprehensive toolkit to help all of us better understand what authentic community collaboration includes. We encourage you to use these tools found at <https://www.delriverwatershed.org/deij-resource-hub> when writing your proposal.

You are required to submit a form indicating the communities and/or target audiences you plan to engage. Our goal is that at least 40% of the communities you engage with throughout the entirety of your project rank in the 80<sup>th</sup> national percentile or above of the Supplemental Demographic Index according to the EPA's EJSCREEN Tool (<https://ejscreen.epa.gov/mapper/>). This will help us align with the Justice40 Initiative at the United States Environmental Protection Agency which seeks to "confront and address decades of underinvestment in disadvantaged communities. The initiative will bring resources to communities most impacted by climate change, pollution, and environmental hazards." Learn more about the initiative at <https://www.epa.gov/environmentaljustice/justice40-epa>.

Some examples of direct and meaningful community engagement include:

- Projects that are community led or co-created with community members
- Project team includes members representing and/or a part of the target community
- Direct engagement in specific cultural activities with the community
- Empowering community members with knowledge or decision-making authority
- Active community engagement such as workshops, classroom activities, field trips and volunteer opportunities
- Creating jobs in the target community, performing job training, technical assistance, and certifications

## Available Funding

We anticipate having \$220,000 available for this funding cycle. Each grant category is funded from \$10,000 to \$75,000 with most of the grants ranging from \$25,000 to \$30,000. The number and size of grants awarded in each category will depend on the number of applicants and projects proposed. Grantees are not guaranteed funding to the full amount. Match is *not* required.

The Regrant Program will be used to support work that falls into the following grant categories:

### *Planning*

Applicants may propose a range of project types including 1) engagement, planning, and prioritization; 2) feasibility, suitability, or alternatives analyses; 3) site assessment and conceptual design; and 4) final design and permits. These funds may be used to set the stage for projects that can compete for larger, nationally competitive funding sources and/or have watershed-wide impacts.

### *Capacity Building*

These grants are intended to build the capacity of grantees and partners working to improve fish and wildlife habitat and connect people with nature in the Delaware River Watershed. Projects for both individual organizations and local collaboratives to establish and enhance networks to accomplish





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shared goals; support strategic planning and project development; improve direct community engagement; advance Tribal co-stewardship initiatives; implement justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility (JEDIA) in conservation; and undertake programmatic evaluations, assessments, and monitoring.

### Optional Technology Funding

Applicants are eligible to include up to \$1500 for technology above their proposal amount. Eligible items include software, hardware, and webpage development. Technology funding should support needs directly related to planning, research, or capacity building. Technology funding is not guaranteed.

### NFWF Program Priorities

All proposals must clearly address how projects will directly contribute to the accomplishment of program priorities listed below. Priority will be given to projects that collaboratively address one or more of the following Strategic Program Areas.

- **Sustain and Enhance Fish and Wildlife Habitat Restoration and Conservation Activities.**
- **Improve and Maintain Water Quality to Support Fish and Wildlife, as well as Habitats for Fish and Wildlife and Drinking Water for People.**
- **Sustain and Enhance Water Resource Management for Volume and Flood Damage Mitigation Improvements to Benefit Fish and Wildlife Habitat.**
- **Improve Opportunities for Public Access and Recreation in the Basin Consistent with the Ecological Needs of Fish and Wildlife Habitat.**

### Compliance Statement

With support of New Jersey Audubon, grant recipients are required to adhere to all federally mandated compliance and finance-related policies, legislation and regulations including Uniform Guidance, National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act, and National Historic Preservation Act.

Applicants granted funds must furnish documentation of essential permits and clearances to ensure compliance with Federal, state, or local regulations. Projects with complex permitting are advised to explore funding eligibility through the [Delaware Watershed Conservation Fund](#).





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## Application Process and Materials

All application and support materials can be found on our Resource Hub  
[www.njaudubon.org/watershed-grants](http://www.njaudubon.org/watershed-grants).

## Timeline for Written or Video Submissions

Application materials will be available: November 1, 2023

Request for proposals open: January 15, 2024

Proposal deadline: March 15, 2024, at 11:59 PM EDT

Full Proposal review period: April 1 to May 15, 2024

Awards announced: by June 1, 2024

Grant period: July 1, 2024, to June 30, 2025

Reporting deadline: August 30, 2025

## Review Process

A representative group of New Jersey Audubon staff, Coalition for the Delaware River Watershed partners, community leaders, and other advisors will be reviewing applications. Using the evaluation rubric, each proposal will be reviewed and scored based on evaluation criteria and rubric scoring to ensure that the funds are distributed equitably and effectively across the watershed.

Any reviewer with a determined conflict with an applicant will be recused from scoring that proposal and any discussion of that proposal to avoid conflicts of interest.

## Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, and completeness. Each proposal will be scored on a rubric based on the following criteria:

- General Proposal Preparedness
- Technical Merit
- Budget Cost-effectiveness
- Program Goals and Strategies
- Conservation Context and Connectivity
- Partnership and Community Impact
- Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, and Accessibility – *This score will only be used as a reference and will not be determined in the overall score of the project.*





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## Learning Together and Reporting

To encourage learning that increases the capacity of organizations throughout the watershed, and to encourage storytelling that grows the network, recipients of the Regrant Program will be required to do the following:

1. Participate in learning and networking calls and workshops with other grant recipients. The purpose of these calls and workshops is to support each other in our efforts to create a network of conservation and stewardship professionals who have added capacity to effectively write and manage proposals and to secure additional funding for future projects.

Webinar topics may include:

- What does DEIJA Look Like in Practice?
- Community Partnerships
- Building Capacity through Cash Flow Management
- Grant Management Basics
- An Overview of Federal Compliance
- Meeting Match and other Federal Grantmaking Tips
- Navigating Grants.gov and Easygrants

Grantees will be offered at least 6 webinars.

- July 1, 2024 – Kick Off and Welcome
- September 9, 2024 – Topic TBD
- November 4, 2024 – Topic TBD
- January 6, 2025 – Topic TBD
- March 3, 2025 – Topic TBD
- May 5, 2025 – Reporting and Storytelling Overview

In person opportunities for collaboration:

- CDRW Conference Presentations – September 25-27, 2024 in Bethlehem, PA
- January-March 2025 – Grantee Networking
- March-May 2025 – Project Site Visits

2. Share a brief report at the end of the project. This is a brief reporting of results you were able to achieve and one (or more) learning and/or storytelling artifacts from your experiences. Storytelling artifacts might look like a blog post, short case study, short video, or testimonials. Learning materials might look like sample documents or a document template, simple how-to notes or tips, or lessons learned.
3. Share photos, videos, and other content. The purpose of sharing visual and other content is to obtain a full perspective of the impact of your project. If you are not conducting an on-the-ground project or “before and after” photos are not relevant, photograph working meetings, take screenshots of social posts, record poignant learning processes. We want to understand your project from as many points of view as possible.





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## Assistance

Introduction webinars will be held on the following dates.

Registration links can be found on the [Resource Hub](#).

- Thursday, November 16 at Noon
  - <https://watershed-grants1116.eventbrite.com>
- Tuesday, November 28 at 10:00 AM
  - <https://watershed-grants1128.eventbrite.com>
- Monday, December 11 at 3:00 PM
  - <https://watershed-grant1211.eventbrite.com>
- Wednesday, January 10 at 10:00 AM
  - <https://watershed-grants0110.eventbrite.com>

If you need more information about the RFP or have additional questions, please contact Kelly Wenzel, Program Manager to schedule a 30-minute [Strategy Session](#).

## About New Jersey Audubon

New Jersey Audubon is committed to connecting all people with nature and stewarding the nature of today for all people of tomorrow. We will build and integrate our commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and justice into our vision and mission, as well as our conservation priorities and organizational structure.

New Jersey Audubon is a privately supported, nonprofit, statewide membership organization. Founded in 1897 New Jersey Audubon is one of the oldest *independent* Audubon societies in the United States. To achieve its purpose, New Jersey Audubon develops, encourages, and supports sound conservation practices, programs, and legislation; disseminates information on the natural environment through education programs, information services, and publications; advances knowledge of New Jersey's flora and fauna, and their relationships to the habitats on which they depend, through field research; and acquires, establishes, and maintains wildlife sanctuaries and educational centers.

