

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. **Question:** Is there a matching requirement?

Answer: Yes, there is a matching requirement of 15% of the requested grant funds. You can find more information about the match on pages 4 and 26 of the RFA.

2. **Question:** Does the match have to be cash, or can it be in-kind (or a combination of both)?

Answer: Either cash or in-kind (or a combination of both) can be identified as match contribution.

3. **Question:** What is the project period of the grant?

Answer: The project period is **two (2)** years, anticipated February 1, 2024 through January 31, 2026.

4. **Question:** Do projects have to last the full two years? Is a project with a shorter term eligible?

Answer: Projects must be completed within two years, and shorter project timeline is eligible (e.g., one year).

5. **Question:** We have a current grant with the Hudson River Estuary Program. Are we able to apply?

Answer: Grantees with open estuary grants are not excluded from eligible for this grant opportunity. However, points are available in the scoring for applicants who do not have a current/open grant with the Hudson River Estuary Program.

6. **Question:** Is a detailed map of the Hudson River Estuary Program boundary available?

Answer: A searchable map is available at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/pubs/103459.html#hudson>. (Data Set titled "Hudson River Estuary Grant Program boundaries" listed under the "Misc. Environmental Maps" Section).

7. **Question:** Where can I find information about prior applications submitted to the Hudson River Estuary Program and subsequently awarded grants?

Answer: Data on awarded applications for the history of the program is available, and can be found at Open Data (<https://data.ny.gov/>; key words "Hudson River Estuary"). We also post records of awarded grants at the bottom of the Estuary Grants web page at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/5091.html>.

8. **Question:** Where do we identify how the proposed project helps achieve Measures of Success from the 2021-2025 Hudson River Estuary Action Agenda?

Answer: Program Question 6. See Appendix IV in the RFA for more information about the Measures of Success that apply to the grant opportunity.

9. **Question:** What is the format for stakeholder letters and letters of support? Who may write these letters? Is there a specific salutation that should be used?

Answer: There isn't a specific required salutation for letters. They can be addressed to the "Hudson River Estuary Program Coordinator" or to the "Application Review Team" or to Susan Pepe, Grants Coordinator. We cannot advise on how letters of support will be interpreted, but internal support letters from a State Agency will not be considered. There are no other limitations on letters.

10. Question: In terms of calculating the 50% cap on water quality monitoring expenses, is the cap limited to expenses directly related to monitoring (such as monitoring equipment, supplies, and staff time to do monitoring), or does it also include expenses that would be considered more indirect, such as time to write the QAPP, time to coordinate and plan for the monitoring, or time to analyze and write up results?

Answer: Any expenses related to monitoring, whether direct or indirect, will be considered toward the 50% cap on monitoring expenses. It is recommended to identify which costs are associated with monitoring as separate line items in the budget, so that the allocation is clear.

11. Question: Our community is interested in completing a Natural Resource Inventory (NRI). Can you direct me to other communities that have completed NRIs?

Answer: The following resource provides links to example NRIs completed in other communities in the Hudson River Estuary watershed: <https://hudson.dnr.cals.cornell.edu/conservation-planning/inventory-and-planning/natural-resources-inventory#toc-links-to-nris-in-the-estuary-watershed>. Note not all of these projects were completed with Estuary grant funds.

12. Question: What rates should be used for volunteer hours, and where are they entered in the budget form in the Grants Gateway?

Answer: If there is an established rate for the task which a volunteer is undertaking, particularly if it is a specialized task, you would use the established rate for the budget. You can refer to rates at https://www.bls.gov/oes/current/oes_ny.htm. Otherwise, you can use the hourly rate published by Independent Sector <https://independentsector.org/>. Independent Sector publishes an average hourly rate for the US, and also for individual states, including New York State (NYS). The Independent Sector has published the NYS hourly volunteer rate as \$35.71 per hour. The value of volunteer hours should be entered under the "Other" line in the Grants Gateway budget form.

13. Question: I am not sure how to complete the boxes in the personal services budget, such as % funded and # of months funded. Is there some guidance for completing this information?

Answer: Yes, there is a very thorough video that explains the personal services budget form and how to calculate these fields: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0b1btPFdHMu>.

14. Question: The Grants Gateway budget line for contractual services includes a narrative box to describe the services. Is any other documentation necessary to support contractual services costs?

Answer: The contractual services budget line and narrative are required for any professional services contract you anticipate under the project. Any additional documentation can be provided, but it is not required.

15. Question: Are there specific requirements for the amount of the budget by year?

Answer: There isn't a specific "per year" number you need to use for the budget.

16. Question: Are salary and fringe benefits eligible?

Answer: Salary and fringe benefits eligible for grant and match. However, administrative costs outlined in the RFA are not eligible for grant reimbursement.

17. Question: Does a specific contractor need to be identified in the budget at the time of application? Do we need to complete the RFP process by time of application submission?

Answer: It isn't required to have specific contractors identified at the time of application submission. The RFP process can be included as a Task in the Work Plan. If a consultant is unknown at this time you would indicate "TBD" for the name of the contractor, and the budgeted amount.

18. Question: Are federal pass-through funds eligible to meet the match requirement?

Answer: Federal and state funds are not eligible to meet the match requirement. Federal pass-through funds are treated as federal funds, and are also not eligible.

19. Question: Can you confirm the reporting dates for contracts will be July 30, October 30, January 30, and April 30?

Answer: Yes, those dates are the deadlines for grant reporting.

20. Question: Please confirm that for the application, on the Match Worksheet we just have to identify the source for (cash) match. We do not have to have the cash in hand.

Answer: You are able to propose match in the match worksheet without having it in hand at time of application. By submitting the application your organization is certifying the proposed match will be contributed should the project be awarded.

21. Question: The Match Worksheet in the Grants Gateway shows documentation of match should be provided. I could not find anywhere in the RFA where it describes what kind of matching funds documentation is necessary. Can you tell me what is needed?

Answer: The instructions for the Match Worksheet Detail Form in the Grants Gateway are boilerplate, meaning they are general for any grant opportunity and cannot be edited for individual grant opportunities. Documentation supporting match is not required for this grant opportunity, but if available you can provide it. There is no specific format since it is not required.

22. Question: How do we show office rent/utilities in the budget?

Answer: Office rent/utilities are considered overhead and are not eligible for grant reimbursement or match.

23. Question: Is the applicant's Sexual Harassment policy to be uploaded somewhere?

Answer: The certification should be uploaded in the “Pre-Submission Uploads” folder under “Attachment S.” You will also find the certification template there. The full policy should not be uploaded.

24. Question: Is recommendation of the REDC in advance needed, and in what form (email, letter, verbal) should it be obtained (and where upload)?

Answer: The RFA does not suggest recommendations should be obtained from the applicable REDC. The question asks how the project aligns with the REDC plan for the applicable region. You can find links to the REDC plans at <https://regionalcouncils.ny.gov/>.

25. Question: For implementation commitment, can we get points if we don’t know for sure where the funding will come from to implement?

Answer: Points are awarded for demonstrating commitment to implement. You don’t need to know the source of funding.

26. Question: Is there any general advice about application submission?

Answer: Yes, we strongly recommend submitting your application before the day of deadline. There is no grace period for missing the deadline for any reason.

27. Question: Do you have a sample letter of support or sample municipal resolution that can be used as a guide for this grant opportunity?

Answer: Yes, see the following sample, which can be modified as needed.

Example Letter:

To Whom It May Concern:

The [Name] Town Board enthusiastically supports the [Name] Conservation Advisory Council’s (CAC) application for technical assistance from the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program to help [create/update] a Natural Resources Inventory (NRI).

Information about the Town’s natural resources – groundwater, streams, mineral resources, wetlands, farmland, habitats, plants, and wildlife – can inform land use planning and decision-making and serve as an education tool.

The NRI will be prepared by members of the CAC under the guidance of the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program, which will help facilitate data acquisition and management and supervise a GIS intern to create a series of resource maps at no cost to the Town. [Some information about the CAC’s qualifications to oversee the project].

Thank you for considering the Town of [Name]’s application to support this worthy project.

Sincerely,

Signature

Example Resolution:

WHEREAS, the [Name] Conservation Advisory Council (“CAC”) has requested that the Town Board authorize the CAC to apply for a Natural Resources Inventory (“NRI”) technical assistance opportunity from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (“NYSDEC”) Hudson River Estuary Program, and

WHEREAS, an NRI contains information about a town’s natural resources – groundwater, streams, mineral resources, wetlands, farmland, habitats, plants, and wildlife – that can inform land use planning and decision-making and serve as an education tool, and

WHEREAS, the NYSDEC Hudson River Estuary Program will provide guidance and facilitation on the steps to create a basic NRI, facilitate data acquisition and management, and supervise a GIS intern to create a series of resource maps at no cost to the Town, and

WHEREAS, members of the CAC have committed to volunteer for the project and will be responsible for public outreach, local research, map review, and writing the NRI report,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED as follows:

1. That the Town Board of [Name] does hereby agree to participate in the application for the NRI technical assistance opportunity and authorizes the CAC on behalf of the Town to work with NYSDEC to help [create/update] a Natural Resources Inventory.