National Coastal Resilience Fund – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

June 15, 2022

NFWF's NCRF team is receiving a large volume of requests for feedback on project proposals. We strongly encourage you to thoroughly read through this FAQ document and the NCRF RFP. Due to the high volume of inquiries and the timing in the midst of this large review cycle, staff response may take time and questions that are not already answered directly in the RFP or in this FAQ will be given priority.

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Quick Links to Resources

- General tips on EasyGrants applications: http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/faqs.aspx
- 2022 NCRF RFP: https://www.nfwf.org/programs/national-coastal-resilience-fund/nationalcoastal-resilience-fund-2022-request-proposals
- NCRF Tip Sheet: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/2022-NCRF-Tip-Sheet-PreProposal-to-Full-Proposal.pdf
- Pre-Proposal FAQ: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2022-04/2022-NCRF-FAQs.pdf
- NCRF Full Proposal Applicant Webinar Recording: https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/1681789220175187203

- Resilience Monitoring Metrics and Protocols (For Restoration-Implementation Project Proposals): https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2022-03/NCRF%20Monitoring%20Metrics%20and%20Protocols_0.pdf
- 2022 NCRF Proposal Narrative Template: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2022-06/2022%20NCRF%20Pre%2BFinal%20Proposal%20Narrative%20Templates.docx

General Application Information

Q. If we are not able to move forward with submitting the full proposal, can we resubmit the pre-proposal next year?

A. Yes. We would encourage you to reach out to your regional NCRF lead closer to the new cycle to discuss how to make your application more competitive.

Period of Performance

Q. Clarification on the latest end date that can be requested? For Restoration - Implementation projects, does that mean construction must be completed by December 2026, or the one year of post construction monitoring?

A. A project cannot have a start date prior to June 1, 2022 or an end date after **December 31, 2026**. For Restoration – Implementation projects, this means the one year of post construction monitoring must be complete by December 2026.

Q: Is there a suggested maximum project length for the preliminary design projects?

A: Typically, the period of performance for preliminary design projects are between 12 and 24 months. However, we recognize that larger scale or more complicated projects or projects that incorporate a robust community engagement component may take longer. Applicants should set their period of performance for as long as is needed to successfully complete the work, so long as the end date for the period of performance does not go past December 31, 2026.

Proposal Narrative

Q. If no changes are made to the pre-proposal, do those 3 pages still count towards the full-proposal 8-page limit?

A. Yes, your upload at the full proposal stage should not exceed 8 pages total. Your proposal narrative at the full proposal stage should include BOTH your responses to the pre-proposal questions (Part I, questions 1-6) and the full proposal questions (at Part II, Questions A-E). You are invited and encouraged to update and refine the responses that you submitted at the pre-proposal stage. You may delete the instructions in the proposal narrative template, but please maintain the headers (in bold) in your proposal narrative.

Q: The instructions that referenced that full proposal in the LOI had a set of specific questions to follow but the template that was in easygrants under the full proposal submission had no specific questions. Which template should we follow?

A: You were provided the proposal narrative template during the pre-proposal stage. If you did not maintain these questions in your pre-proposal submission, you can redownload the full template on our website: here. Your proposal narrative at the full proposal stage should include BOTH your responses to the pre-proposal questions (Part I, questions 1-6) and the full proposal questions (at Part II, Questions A-E). You are invited and encouraged to update and refine the responses that you submitted at the pre-proposal stage. However, your total proposal narrative should not exceed 8 pages.

Q: If updating the pre-proposal, how would we highlight changes?
A: There is no need to highlight changes you make to your responses to the pre-proposal questions.

Q: Can you provide any examples of innovative approaches to community capacity building and planning projects?
A: Innovation can include the types of nature-based solutions projects you are exploring in the planning process, the way you are engaging residents and other stakeholders, the types of research and analysis that is informing the planning, the ways that you are ensuring that the products produced through the planning effort are actionable and can support future stages of implementation, etc.

Q: Are there proposals from previous years that were selected that we can view?
A: Unfortunately, no – we cannot share proposals. You can reference the descriptions of projects on previous awarded grant lists available on our website to see the types of projects that have been funded in the past. You can also review case studies we published of previously funded grants, available on our website.

Q: We didn't receive any feedback in our email invitation. Should we be looking for the feedback someplace else?
A: If you didn't receive feedback that means the reviewers didn't have any specific concerns about the proposal. However, we anticipate that the full proposal review process will be competitive. You are welcomed and encouraged to update and refine your proposal in consideration of the criteria listed in the RFP.

Q: For assessment/ design projects, should subcontractors (partners) be identified at time of proposal, or just identify qualifications of desired contractors?
A: You will need to ensure that you are following your procurement policies and that your procurement policies comply with OMB Uniform Guidance. If you have identified that a subcontractor is needed but have not gone through your procurement process, you may list them as "TBD" in the budget.

Q: Do we still need to fill out the "Monitoring Project Impact" question in the narrative if we are conducting a design for a project?
A: Monitoring plans are only required for Restoration Implementation projects. However, you will be asked to define metrics listed in the metrics section of the RFP that you will track for your specific project category. For planning and design projects, metrics include the number of products produced, the number of people or volunteers engaged, etc. You can also use this question to expand on other

milestones or measures of success that your organization has for this project and describe how stated goals for community and wildlife benefit will be advanced through the project and how those goals align with or contribute to established resilience or other plans, where applicable.

Q: Where can I find the information about community engagement examples?
A: Please see footnote 4 of the RFP here.

Metrics

Q. What is the difference between the 2 Capacity, Outreach, Incentives metrics? Both use a metric of # of individuals reached
A. The difference between these two metrics is how you are measuring your engagement and outreach efforts, described in the "Additional Guidance" column in metrics section of the RFP. The first Community Outreach and Engagement metric measures change in the individual's knowledge, attitudes and skills on subject matters that are the focus of the project and may require additional surveys or other evaluation to assess that change. The second metric measures number of people reached and can be tracked by counting the number of people that participate in a meeting or a webinar or other engagement activity.

Letters of Support

Q. Who should Letters of Support be addressed to?
A. To Whom It May Concern or 'NFWF National Coastal Resilience Review Committee'. Please upload letters of support with your full application through Easygrants.

Q. How important are letters of support?
A. We highly encourage letters of support. Letters of support are particularly important if needed to show that the products you are producing will be actionable (i.e., that decisionmakers need and will use the products produced through the project to advance nature-based solutions to future stages of implementation) or where you are proposing work on private lands. Letters of support also help show broad support for the project from decisionmakers and other stakeholders.

Q. Do letters of support have to be written for this grant specifically, or can we use letters provided in support of permit applications?
A. Letters of support do not need to be specifically written for this grant application, but should be specific to the project you are proposing.

Budget

Q. Can the budget number change from pre-proposal to full proposal?
A. Yes, your budget can change from what was requested in the pre-proposal but will be reevaluated for cost-effectiveness at the full proposal stage. Given the current financial situation, we are also

encouraging grantees to consider and budget for any additional costs that may accrue as a result of market forces, including inflation, increasing fuel costs, supply chain disruptions, and labor shortages.

Q: For the budget, does NFWF NCRF allow a line item for contingency?
A: No, we cannot include contingency budget in NCRF awards so please prepare your budgets with the most current information possible. However, NFWF understands that unexpected costs can arise in large-scale projects and encourage you to work with your program team if awarded to discuss any budget amendment needs.

Q. Will grant awards include funding appropriated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act include specific terms and conditions, including Buy American provisions?
A: Yes. We anticipate that many of the grants awarded during the 2022 NCRF cycle will include funding appropriated through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Applicants should consider and budget for any additional costs necessary to comply with IIJA requirements, including Buy America Preference provisions. More information about Buy America Preference Provisions can be found in Title IX of the IIJA (Public Law 117-58, 135 Stat. 429) and in an April 18, 2022, Office of Management and Budget Memorandum, entitled "Initial Implementation Guidance on Application of Buy America Preference in Federal Financial Assistance Programs for Infrastructure."

Q: Our budget will mostly be the amount going to the contractor. Do you require travel, mileage, etc. breakdown from the contractor?
A: Please reference the Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide for specifics on what to include in the narrative for each budget category. Generally, for contractors, a detailed breakdown is not required. You will need to describe the activities and services that will be provided and explain how that cost was estimated.

Q: Is driving to the site considered travel, is mileage considered a travel expense?
A: Any travel that is required to complete the scope of work of the project is allowable. Do not include the travel costs being paid for by subrecipients, contractors, or other third parties. If using mileage, please use the standard IRS rate to estimate cost per trip. Please reference the Detailed Budget and Narrative Guide for specifics on can be included in each budget category.

Matching Contributions

Q. Would you explain the various match categories a bit more? We have an agreement for match with an organization, but didn't "apply" - how do we categorize that?
A. The match categories in Easygrants are to show the status of the funds. If you have an agreement with an organization, you can list the contribution as "Received" or "Pledged." Any match that has not been secured at the time of submittal can be listed as "Intend to Apply" or "Application Submitted" depending on the status.

Q. If matching funds are being used in June 2022, does the grant period need to start in June 2022? Or would the grant period still start closer to when the NFWF funds would be awarded?
A. For matching funds to be counted towards the grant, they must be expended within the proposed period of performance. For match funds spent in June 2022 to be counted, the start date for your proposal must be June 2022.

Q: Could you expand on how REPI funds are included in the budget, if they are not considered match?
A: If you completed the special DOD upload, your proposal will be considered for REPI funds and, if awarded, those funds would be part of your budget for completing the work. You should not count REPI funds as match, unless they have ***already*** been awarded by DOD, will be spent during the period of performance for the grant, and will be used in support of implementing the scope of work.

Q: Can a reduced Indirect Cost rate be used as match?
A: If you have an approved NICRA and are electing to use a reduced rate on this grant, you may apply the difference as match. This only applies to applicants with approved and valid NICRAs, if you are using the de minimus this is not applicable.

Land Acquisitions

Q. If easements & access agreements are used in lieu of actual land acquisition, does anything need to be submitted?
A. If you are proposing to use NFWF funds towards any acquisition, you will need to upload all pre-transaction documents. If you are not seeking funding for an acquisition, there is not anything additional that you need to upload. However, if the easements help show landowner support and that the restoration work will be sustained, you should highlight in your proposal narrative. Additionally, if your project includes acquiring easements and these are acquired during the period of performance you can count the value of the easement as match. Also,

Required Financial Documents

Q. If our organization does not have a Single Audit or GAAP audit, what do we submit instead?
A. If you do not have a Single Audit, an entity must provide a memo on letterhead, signed with title and date stating that: "[entity name] is not required to obtain a Single Audit because we have not expended more than $750,000 of federal funds within our fiscal year." You must also provide a Balance Sheet/Statement of Position and Income Statement/Statement of Activities.

Q: Does the lead applicant only or lead applicant and project partners providing in kind/cash match have to complete the Applicant Controls Questionnaire and other forms?
A: Only the lead applicant needs to complete the required uploads, including the Applicant Controls Questionnaire.

Permitting

Q: What types of scope will require a QAPP?

A: Awards made during the 2022 NCRF will not require QAPPs. QAPPs were required in previous NCRF cycles where other federal funding sources were leveraged that required QAPPs, including funding from EPA.

Q: Do you have guidance for when NEPA compliance is required for a restoration project?

A: NCRF does not require additional NEPA review. However, grantees are expected to comply with all appropriate laws applicable to their project. You may be required to comply with NEPA, if you have other federal funds that you are leveraging in support of your project or if you need federal permits that require NEPA.

Q: Do assessment/design projects need to identify potential permits needed?

A: We encourage applicants to demonstrate their understanding of the regulatory context for the project, and how designs are being developed with permitting parameters in mind. For preliminary design projects, we encourage applicants to at least start preliminary conversations with permitting agencies as part of their scope of work.

Awards

Q: Is there a split of funding you expect between project categories (e.g. preliminary design etc.)?

A: No, we do not have a specific minimum or maximums for any specific project category in terms of dollar amounts or grants awarded. However, when making final award decisions we do consider geographic diversity and diversity of projects across the project pipeline to ensure that we are continuing to build capacity across coastal states and territories and advancing projects to future stages of design and implementation.

Q: Do you require signatures from elected officials (on application or agreement) if applicant is a local government? Or should we submit documentation of their approval in "other documents?"

A: If awarded, you will need to obtain a signature from the appropriate signatory from your organization to accept the grant. It is up to the applicant to determine if there are additional approvals needed within your organization to accept the award. If you are partnering with local governments, we strongly encourage applicants to include letters of support from local partners describing how they plan to engage and the local need for the project.

Q: Where can we find reporting requirements for these grants?

A: We require interim programmatic reports every 6 months, which ask for a short update (2-3 pages) on the project status and accomplishments. We also require periodic fiscal reporting (from quarterly to annually), depending on the organization and the size and complexity of the award. We may also periodically request check-in calls to discuss project status and address any challenges you are experiencing in implementing your project.

Q: What is the typical turnaround time from submitting a reimbursement request to payment?
A: Payments are processed twice a month. When the funds are dispersed will depend on when the payment was submitted, how accurate and complete the information on the form is, and if your reporting is all in compliance. If you have concerns over disbursement timing, you should reach out to your Grants Administrator to discuss potential solutions. Typically, the turnaround is 30 days or less, but that depends on whether there is any need to resubmit the request.