2023 National Coastal Resilience Fund – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

June 12, 2023

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 FAQ will be given priority.

An FAQ was posted at the Pre-Proposal Stage, please also refer to this document if your questions are not answered below: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2023_ncrf_faq_final_0.pdf

This FAQ covers the following topics:

Quick Links to Resources

- General information on NFWF applications: https://www.nfwf.org/apply-grant/application-information
- 2023 NCRF RFP: https://www.nfwf.org/programs/national-coastal-resilience-fund/national-coastal-resilience-fund-2023-request-proposals
- NCRF Tip Sheet: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023_ncrf_tip_sheet_pre_proposal_to_full_proposal_0.pdf
- Pre-Proposal FAQ: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-03/2023_ncrf_faq_final_0.pdf
- NCRF Full Proposal Webinar Recording: https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/8600017545306917293
- Full Proposal Easygrants Walkthrough Recording: https://register.gotowebinar.com/recording/2501052934333571075
- Resilience Monitoring Metrics and Protocols (For Restoration-Implementation Project Proposals): https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/ncrf_monitoring_metrics_and_protocols.pdf
- 2023 NCRF Proposal Narrative Template: https://www.nfwf.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023-ncrf-proposal-narrative-templates.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.

Q: Can you please explain more about how we can find/search projects funded in past years?
A: You can see past funded projects here on the NCRF webpage, under the "Program Information" tab. It provides an overview of the past grant slates, awarded organizations, funded amount, and a brief description of all projects awarded since 2018.

Q: Has the tip sheet changed at all since the pre-proposal submission deadline?
A: It may have been updated; we recommend using the version linked on the website.

Q: We do not see our pre-proposal on Easygrants. How do we access it to edit?
A: You can't. A new Full Proposal task should be available to you in Easygrants to complete. Hopefully you saved the pre-proposal in your files to help you complete your full proposal. If not, you can reach out to the program coordinator (Christine Latil) with your Easygrants ID # and she can send you a copy of your pre-proposal.

Q: Does the person/entity that submitted the pre-proposal have to be the one to submit the full proposal through Easygrants?
A: Typically, yes, but you can change the PI or organization in the full proposal submission.

Q: Can we change the organization receiving the grant on the full proposal applicant from the pre-proposal application?

A: Yes, you can change the organization in Easygrants. In the Full Proposal Task, go to the Organization Information tab to change the primary organization on the application. You can also update the PI, if needed. If you need further assistance, you can reach out to the Easygrants helpdesk or program coordinator.

Q: If multiple groups are submitting from the same region, is it best to provide shared Letters of Support or indicate in the narrative how each of the projects is coordinated to acknowledge how they collaborate or build upon each other?

A: Yes. We have regional Reviewers that review proposals from a regional perspective. So, when similar proposals are in the same geography, they are looking to see if these proposals are coordinated and aligned, and that we don't end up funding duplicative or overlapping efforts that are going to fight with each other. If separate projects happen to support work in the same watershed for example, we want to be sure that those efforts build upon or leverage each other if not combined. It's good for both projects to describe the alignment and partnership in the proposal narrative, acknowledge there are similar efforts happening in the region, and it is also helpful to include Letters of Support from the other organization that is seeking funding.

Q: If the project was not identified for potential REPI funding in the pre-proposal stage, could it be considered for REPI funding now, if the project supports a military installation? Is it too late to a submit DOD funding interest?

A: Yes, projects who did not identify themselves for potential REPI funding can still be considered at the full proposal stage. Please ensure that the special upload from the pre-proposal stage, found here, is uploaded to the full proposal as an 'Other Upload'. Note: if you're seeking DOD finding, make sure you are clear on the benefits to the military resilience goals and having Letter of Support from installation you will be working with is key.

Q: If we have submitted the project that we intend to submit to NCRF to another funding source, should we disclose this information in the "match" section as "proposed" funding?

A: If you include it in the match, make sure it is clear if it is for the same exact activities or supporting the same activities, OR if it is for different phases of the project, and make it clear if you have applied or if it's in-hand. If you are seeking funding for the exact same activities from NCRF and another funding source, we would want to know you are seeking duplicative funding. And if you are awarded funding from NCRF and the other funding source, you will need to navigate those funding to ensure you are not double dipping on two funding sources (we can work with you on this).

Full Proposal Invitation

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 or that the reviewer comments were general feedback that would be covered during the full proposal webinar. If you did not receive comments with your full proposal invitation that does not mean there is not room to improve and refine your proposal at the full proposal stage. 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 and the guidance provided during the full proposal webinar, linked above.

Q: Was pre-proposal feedback provided via email or is it available on Easygrants?
A: Not all pre-proposals received feedback. Proposals where reviewers had project specific feedback received comments in an email from the NCRF program team. Pre-proposals where the reviewer comments were more general and would be covered during the full proposal webinar did not receive individualized feedback but see response to the question above.

Q: Would pre-proposal comments have been in the email from Easygrants@nfwf.org or would there have been a separate email?
A: The comments would have come as a separate email from our program coordinator Christine Latil. Not all proposals received comments. Comments were provided for project specific feedback and were not provided to proposals where the reviewer comments were more general items covered in today's webinar.

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, 2023 or an end date after **December 31, 2027**. For Restoration – Implementation projects, this means that restoration AND one-year of post construction monitoring must be completed by December 2027, unless you are planning to use matching funds to cover monitoring costs.

Q: Is there a suggested maximum project length for the preliminary design projects?
A: Typically, the period of performance for preliminary design projects is 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, 2027.

Q: Can we change our start date/end date?
A: Yes, you may change your start and end date when submitting your full proposal application, but your project cannot have a start date prior to June 1, 2023 or an end date after December 31, 2027.

Proposal Narrative

Q. If no changes are made to the pre-proposal, does the preproposal narrative 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 1-8) and the full proposal questions (at Part II, Questions A-F). You are invited and encouraged to update and refine the responses that you submitted at the pre-proposal stage. You may delete the instructions and the bulleted questions in the proposal narrative template, but please maintain the headers (in bold) in your proposal narrative.

Q: Do maps and photos count toward the 8 pages?

A: No, maps and photos are allowed as separate uploads that do not count toward the 8-page limit for your proposal narrative (unless you insert them as images in your proposal narrative). Additionally, you can upload letters of support and relevant design documents, and these also do not count against your 8-page limit for the 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 with 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 1-8) and the full proposal questions (at Part II, Questions A-F). You are invited and encouraged to update and refine the responses that you submitted at the pre-proposal stage. However, your total proposal narrative cannot 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: 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: 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. If you have selected a contractor already, it may be helpful to note how the contractor was selected.

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 outcomes 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.

Community Engagement and Demographics

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

Q: Where can I find the community metrics requested in the table? For example, I can find poverty rates but don't know what 'low income' means. I also haven't seen an annualized unemployment rate in the links you shared as sources.
A: The full proposal narrative provides resources to find community demographic data. The 2023 Full Proposal Webinar recording also provides an example on how to find the information.

Q: Where is the new proposal table on demographics? Do we add that into the pre-proposal template or put it in the full proposal narrative?
A: You can find the demographics table in the updated 2023 NCRF Proposal Narrative Template in either Easygrants as a downloadable template in the Uploads section of your Full Proposal Task or on the RFP here. Your full proposal narrative will need to include **BOTH** your responses at the pre-proposal stage (Part I of the template) - you should update this section to include the demographic table in response to Q4. You will also need to add responses to the full proposal questions (Part II of the template). Your full narrative, responses to Part I and Part II, cannot exceed 8 pages in total.

Q: For a watershed-wide, small watershed project, we cross a lot of different demographics and the frontline lower watershed data is much different that the upper watershed data. What do you recommend we do to explain this?
A: You could either describe both areas that will be the focus of the work and provide demographic data for both in two separate lines on the table. OR You could focus on demographic data for the communities that will be the primary focus of engagement efforts described in your proposal.

Q: If a pre-proposal had a statewide/regional focus, do we really need to narrow it down to a single community? (Part of our focus was capacity building for the entire region.)
A: You do not need to change the scope of work of your project – we are not asking you to rescope down to the community level if your project is regionally focused. We are just trying to see what communities are being engaged and benefitted from the work. In the community engagement and demographic information part of the narrative, you can talk about the different areas in the region and provide data for those regions OR you can focus on specific communit(ies) you are directly engaging in the work and provide data for those specific communit(ies).

Deliverables

Q: For a Site Assessment & Preliminary Design project, is it preferred to specify what % design will be reached as the grant outcome (e.g. 50% design), or is the category "30-60% design" specific enough as an outcome for the work?

A: You should be as specific as possible in describing the deliverables that will be produced through the project. Site Assessment and Preliminary Design projects should result in a deliverable that will help the applicant make go/no-go decisions about how or whether to advance the project to future stages of implementation.

Q: Is volunteer work required to submit a Community Capacity Building and Planning grant?

A: No.

Metrics

Q. What is the difference between the two 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.

Q: Can you provide some guidance on the resilience metrics, and how they should be answered, for example "# tools used by decision-makers" - how are you defining tools?

A: "Tools" is defined as any product that will be developed through the work that will help advance projects to the next stages of development. The term "tools" includes the specific plan or design that is advanced through the work, but also any supporting tools or work products that are developed through the project (e.g., vulnerability assessment, site prioritization tool, GIS application, etc.)

Evaluation Criteria

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.

Letters of Support

Q. Who should Letters of Support be addressed to?

A. “To Whom It May Concern” or “National Coastal Resilience Fund 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 decision makers 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.

Q: *Any guidance on how many letters of support might be too many or too few? Is there a limit to the number of Letters of Support a proposal can include?*
A: Consider which letters of support are absolutely necessary. There is no minimum or maximum number of letters required but be mindful that most Reviewers probably don’t want to read over 10 Letters of Support. If you happen to have a lot of Letters of Support, try to package the letters together as one upload. Please note, Reviewers are looking for quality not quantity, they want to see letters from key decision makers that are important to ensure the effort of work and/or key partners that are influential to the success of the project. Also, letters should be tailored to the project and not a boilerplate, generic letter.

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 and to account for any increased costs that may arise to comply with Build America Buy America (BABA) provisions in the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (see next question for more information).

Q: Our overall budget is far above 10 million. Should we detail a discrete portion of the project or apply for the overall project with the understanding that this award would fund a percentage of the described project? Should/Can we apply for more than 10 million if our project is significantly above that amount?
A: The NCRF does not have budget caps. The estimates provided for each pipeline category are guidance on what we expect to be feasible for awards for any single project in each category based upon available funds and previous awards. If your overall budget needs exceed our guidance, you can request the full amount needed to successfully complete the scope of work for the project. ***However***, the program may not be able to support an award for the full amount and you may be asked to adjust your budget at a

later date if an award is being considered. Additionally, match and leveraged support for larger scale higher budget projects is strongly encouraged. If the larger effort is being supported with other sources of funds you should describe the full project in your proposal narrative, describe what project components are being supported with other sources of funding and what components will be supported with the requested NCRF funds, and you should account for all match and leveraged contributions in the match section of your application in Easygrants. Applicants should note that the total budget request will be used by reviewers to assess the cost effectiveness of the proposal.

Q: Can a Preliminary Design (30-60% design) be up to $1M or should it stick to that cap you mentioned for planning projects at $500K.
A: The NCRF does not have budget caps. The estimates provided for each pipeline category are guidance on what we expect to be feasible for awards for any single project in each project category based upon available funds and previous awards. If your overall budget needs exceed our guidance, you can request the full amount needed to successfully complete the scope of work for the project. ***However***, the program may not be able to support an award for the full amount and you may be asked to adjust your budget at a later date if an award is being considered. Match is also strongly encouraged to show broader support for the project. Applicants should note that the total budget request will be used by reviewers to assess the cost effectiveness of the proposal.

Q: How do we estimate a budget when final designs will not be completed until after the full proposal is due. For the budget, should we give our best understanding of the budget at the time of the proposal submission with the caveat that the numbers will be refined in the coming months?
A: Estimate to the best of your ability the budget you will need to successfully complete the scope of work. If your project is selected for an award the budget that you include with your full proposal will be used to bring the project to our Board for approval and the Board-approved budget will be what is used to process your grant agreement. If you have a firmer estimate of the budget costs before September 1, 2023, please reach out to the NCRF program team (Arielle Mion) to see if it is possible to revise your budget after submission. If increased costs to implement the project arise after September 2023, you would need to work with the NCRF program team to determine whether a budget amendment could be considered. However, it should be noted that any significant increase in costs will affect how your project is reviewed for cost effectiveness. Additionally, proposals seeking funding for restoration implementation projects should note review criteria related to “implementation-readiness,” below.

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 encourages 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. Grants awarded during the 2023 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 Build America Buy America (BABA) provisions. More information about BABA Provisions can be found in Title IX of the IIJA (Section 70914 of the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, Pub. L. 117-58), 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." As required by the BABA on or after May 14, 2022, none of the funds under a federal award may be obligated for an infrastructure project unless all the iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project are produced in the United States, unless subject to an approved waiver. This domestic procurement preference applies to all projects meeting the definition of infrastructure, regardless of whether that project is the primary purpose of the award. This domestic procurement preference also applies to all subrecipients and contractors under such awards. This requirement applies to all financial assistance awards that fund infrastructure projects regardless of funding source. For more information, see: OMB Interim Guidance (M-22-11); OMB's Made in America web page; Department of Commerce's Build America Buy America webpage and; Made in America Office website

Q: Can a full proposal include tasks that seek funding from the DOD supplemental funding AND tasks that only seek funding from the 'regular' NCRF pot of funding?
A: If you are seeking DOD REPI fund, you should have completed the special upload at the pre-proposal stage, so we know you're requesting funding from the DOD. However, you do not need to distinguish that request in your project budget or proposal. The NCRF team will work with the DOD to determine which projects will be supported by their funding. If awarded, you will see that in your grant agreement which funding sources are supporting the project. There is nothing you need to do separately in full proposal submission to differentiate what you're seeking DOD funding for vs NCRF. Note: if you're seeking DOD finding, make sure you are clear on the benefits to the military resilience goals and having Letter of Support from installation you will be working with is key.

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.

Q: Can you provide guidance on how to value volunteer hours?

A: You can use online resources – you can look up “how to valuate volunteer cost” and use the federal rate, state rate, etc. NFWF doesn’t have a standard practice, just be sure to cite in the budget narrative how you determined the cost and that it is reasonable.

Q: What is considered "high" cost for a Planning Design?
A: Typically, if a planning project exceeds a budget of about $500,000 reviewers will be looking at it for cost effectiveness. However, we recognize that there are many reasons why a planning project may have higher costs, including a large-scale planning effort across a large geography, detailed technical analyses or data collection, robust community engagement etc. You will want to describe these factors that are contributing to higher costs and why the expenses are needed to enable you to successfully complete the scope of work.

Q: If a planning design project exceeded $500,000 during the pre-proposal phase, do you recommend applicants to reassess and potentially lower their budget ask in order to be more competitive?
A: It depends. Was cost-effectiveness flagged by Reviewers? If your proposed scope of work doesn’t seem cost-effective, then it maybe beneficial to reassess your budget and cost-effectiveness. The amounts provided in webinar are guidelines (i.e., average award amounts seen in NCRF), and we understand projects can have different budgets depending on the scope of work. For example, your project may involve a sophisticated technical analyst in planning or a robust community engagement that can drive your costs higher. If so, then you need to describe in the narrative what are the factors about the project that are driving the cost higher, why those components of work are needed, and why they are needed to ensure the successful completion of the scope of work and being able to move to next stage of implementation.

Q: How specific does the budget need to be? Right now, our project is finishing its design phase, and one of the tasks is to get an engineer's budget for the construction phase of the project.
A: The budget should be as specific and detailed as possible at the time of submission. If you have quotes, please provide them and be sure to include an explanation of activities provided by the contractor. See the Full Proposal Easygrants Walkthrough or the Budget Instructions on the NFWF website for more information.

Q: Can funding go towards any form of "hardened" structure if it’s essential for other proposed nature-based activities? For example, restoration of a jetty that supports an adjacent dune system.
A: It depends. The primary focus of NCRF is nature-based solutions, however we recognize some hybrid solutions are necessary to achieve resilience and ecological outcomes. Footnote 3 on the RFP page defines nature-based solutions and how we look at hybrid (green-grey) projects. In the proposal narrative, be sure to describe what the hardened structures are and how essential they are to achieving the risk reduction and ecological outcomes you’re seeking to accomplish in the work. Proposals that have a significant portion of the budget focused on grey structures will be more competitive if they have matching funds that can support grey investments and utilize NCRF funds to focus on the nature-based activities.

Q: For post-construction monitoring of a living shoreline/salt marsh, we are partnering with a contractor to deliver that part of the project. Can you suggest a reasonable dollar amount for that scope of work so we can take that into account when we put together our project budget?
A: No. In the budget narrative be sure to include how you determined the cost and that it is reasonable.

Q: If your grant would be budgeted entirely into contracts (i.e., for construction) and no costs spent by your agency, do you still need to provide a NICRA?
A: Only if claiming indirect costs. If there are no indirect costs in the budget, then you don't need to provide a NICRA.

Q: Is there an Indirect Cost cap?
A: There is no cap if you have NICRA, but you must not exceed the rate that is listed in your NICRA. If you don't have a NICRA, then yes, the cap is the 10% de minimis rate. Resources are available on our website: the Indirect Cost Policy and the Indirect Cost Calculator.

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 2023, does the grant period need to start in June 2023? 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 2023 to be counted, the start date for your proposal must be June 2023.

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 and should ***not*** be counted as match. If you have been awarded previous funding under the REPI program (not through the NCRF), applicants can count that ***existing*** REPI grant funding as non-federal match to other funds requested through the NCRF if it will be expended during the proposed period of performance.

Q: Can a reduced Indirect Cost rate be used as match?
A: Please reach out to the NCRF program team (Arielle Mion) to discuss project specifics.

Q: For a project on a DOT asset can state turnpike toll credits be used as non-fed match?
A: Yes, if the funds are being used towards the project within the proposed period of performance. If these funds are just general revenue for the state, no they cannot be used as match.

Q: Is there any priority given to cash vs non-cash match?
A: No.

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 that 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.

Permitting

Q: What types of scope will require a QAPP?
A: Awards made during the 2023 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.

Other Uploads

Q: Is there a limit to the number of photos we can submit and are you asking for direct community engagement photos?
A: You are required to upload 3 high quality photos and provide photo captions at the end of your proposal narrative. You may include additional photos as part of your other uploads package and there is no limit on the number of photos, but we encourage applicants to be selective in terms of the materials submitted with their full proposal and only provide those documents and photos that will help reviewers understand the proposed scope of work and evaluate the project based upon the evaluation criteria and other guidance provided in the RFP and other NCRF materials.

Q: Are CVs and Current & Pending Support forms required for members of the project team?
A: No, you do not need to include CVs for the project team. However, you do want to include a summary of who/what groups are included in the project team in your proposal narrative and ensure that this discussion demonstrates that you have the necessary technical expertise to successfully implement the proposed scope of work and to ensure that the work products are actionable. Letters of Support are encouraged from key partners and from key decision makers and agencies that will be engaged through the work.

Q: The Applicant Controls Questionnaire is required even if your organization is a government agency and is submitting a Single Audit?
A: Yes, ALL applicants are required to fill out the full Applicant Controls Questionnaire, even organizations that have a valid Single Audit.

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. If your organization will spend over $750,000 in federal funds within a fiscal year because of the NCRF project you are applying for, you can include the costs, proportional to the amount of NCRF funding contributing to the need for an audit, to acquire the audit in your budget.

Q: For the required Financial Documents (Statement of Litigation, Board of Trustees, IRS Form 990, etc.), are these documents required for only the prime applicant, or do we need to provide them for all subawards as well?
A: The required Financial Documents are only required for the prime applicant.

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.

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: NCRF specific reporting guidance can be found under the Application Information tab on the NCRF website. 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. Final programmatic reports are due 3 months after your grants end date. You can find general information about NFWF's reporting requirements here.

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. Advance payments are allowable and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

Q: How many grants will be awarded and what is the total award budget?
A: We have approximately $140 million in available funding and funding recommendations will be brought to our Board in November 2023, with funding decisions going out shortly thereafter. We do not have an anticipated number of grants as it depends on the size of the requested amounts, but last year with the same amount of funding we made 96 grants.

Q: What is the award notification date? And if awarded, when might we expect access to funds?
A: Award recommendations will go to our Board for approval in November 2023 and funding announcements will be made shortly after Board approval. Once announcements are made, awarded grants go into contracting, and contracting time can vary between grants. Some grants may require resubmits for programmatic and/or compliance edits, in which case contracting time can be dependent on grantee responsiveness. Once the grant is activated, you can access your funds. We estimate activation to occur around March-June 2024.