Chi–Cal Rivers Fund

2023 REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Applicant Webinar [Register Here]: **Wednesday, June 21, 2023 1:00 to 2:00 PM Central Time**
Full Proposal Due Date: **Friday, August 4 2023, by 10:59 PM Central Time**

OVERVIEW

The Chi–Cal Rivers Fund (Fund) is inviting applications for competitive grant funding. With a focus on the major waterways of the Chicago and Calumet region, the program will award grants to reduce stormwater runoff with green infrastructure, enhance fish and wildlife habitat and improve public access to and use of natural areas. Up to **$1.5 million** is expected to be available for grant awards. Individual grants typically range from $150,000 to $400,000. Proposals must be submitted online (easygrants.nfwf.org) **by Friday, August 4 2023, 10:59 PM Central Time.**

BACKGROUND

The Chicago and Calumet Rivers are part of a highly engineered system of waterways that nonetheless provide many benefits and services to the region. They offer capacity for managing flood waters, serve as economically important conduits for commercial shipping, tourism and recreation, and provide vital habitats for many resident and migratory wildlife species. However, the waterways have also been degraded by many stressors. Today, dangerous flooding and other threats associated with more frequent and intensifying storm events, impaired water quality, habitat degradation, and limited safe public access significantly reduce many of the ecological, economic and community values of the region.

A team of private and public organizations established the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund (the Fund) to help improve the ability of the region's natural systems and communities to withstand and absorb the impacts of environmental stressors and enhance the region's unique habitats and waterways through strategically coordinated investments. Administered by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF), the Fund is a partnership among BNSF Railway, Cleveland-Cliffs, Crown Family Philanthropies, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Hunter Family Foundation, Salesforce, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U.S. Forest Service and the Walder Foundation. The Fund achieves its impact by supporting projects focused on three goals: 1) enhancing fish and wildlife habitat; 2) reducing stormwater runoff with green infrastructure; and 3) improving public-use opportunities and access to natural areas.

The Fund supports voluntary projects that advance the goals of regional land use, conservation and/or restoration plans and other ongoing strategies designed to restore the health, vitality, climate resilience and accessibility of the waterways in Chicago and the Calumet region.

Applicants are encouraged to align their proposed projects with those regional efforts and demonstrate how they would complement and connect to other previous and ongoing work in the region.

GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS

To be eligible for funding, projects must occur in close proximity or otherwise demonstrate direct benefits to the major waterways of the system and their tributaries (depicted in the map below). Additionally, priority will be given to projects that directly benefit and engage low-income communities and communities of color. The most competitive projects will be located in a low-income community or a community of color and provide meaningful benefits to that community.

* Cities included for geographic orientation, but do not indicate funding preference

PROGRAM FUNDING CATEGORIES

With an emphasis along the major waterways of the system, the Fund will award grants in the following three categories.

1. *Habitat Quality*
2. *Green Stormwater Infrastructure*
3. *Public Access*

Each applicant will need to identify one category that best describes the proposed project. If a project is expected to yield benefits in multiple categories, an applicant may also identify relevant secondary categories. Competitive proposals will deliver environmental and social impact, improving habitat, green infrastructure and public access while benefiting low-income communities and communities of color. The following sections provide more information on the three funding categories.

Funding Category 1: Habitat Quality
Funding in this category will support riparian, in-stream, upland and wetland habitat improvements along or near the major waterways of the system listed under the Geographic Focus section. Competitive projects will achieve a range of ecological benefits, such as improving water quality, reducing erosion, and increasing the complexity, connectivity and quality of habitat. Priority will be given to projects that improve native/natural habitat, benefit species of concern, and increase biodiversity and maintain healthy native populations. Invasive species control activities, including initial treatments, subsequent retreatments and early detection and rapid response (EDRR) are eligible for funding in this category as a component of a comprehensive habitat restoration project. Applicants demonstrating the capacity, experience, and resources needed to effectively manage invasive species and preserve habitat values following initial treatments will be most competitive.

Funding Category 2: Green Stormwater Infrastructure
Funding in this category will support green stormwater infrastructure (GSI) projects that improve stormwater capture and storage to mitigate the impacts of climate change, including reducing runoff, combined sewer overflows, basement backups and flooding through nature-based design. Competitive GSI proposals will focus primarily on the installation and/or maintenance of GSI practices that are predominantly vegetative or green, with an emphasis on nature-based design. If projects incorporate grey or constructed elements, such as pervious surfaces, these elements will need to complement a suite of proposed GSI practices that focus on natural/vegetative solutions. Priority will be given to projects that are designed with a dual purpose, to increase stormwater storage capacity while also enhancing the quality of, access to, and/or use of community green space or natural areas. Eligible work includes:

1) Install new GSI practices including but not limited to nature-based solutions such as constructing stormwater wetlands, restoring urban forests, installing rain gardens, bioswales, etc. Grey/green or built infrastructure focused on retaining and infiltrating stormwater, such as green roofs and pervious surfaces, are eligible activities, however

these practices must accompany nature based GSI solutions requested for funding within the proposal to be competitive.

2) Maintain and/or improve the function of existing GSI installations. Funding will be prioritized for projects that implement GSI maintenance via new approaches or management systems that achieve dual benefits: maintain ecological function of GSI and engage/support communities to secure long-term and sustainable maintenance solutions that increase community-level capacity. All applicants proposing maintenance projects are encouraged to discuss the project with NFWF prior to submitting an application.

Competitive projects will occur in close proximity to or otherwise demonstrate direct benefits to priority waterways, as indicated in the Geographic Focus section. Projects must add a minimum of 100,000 gallons of stormwater storage capacity annually to be competitive. Preference will be given to projects of sufficient size and scope to significantly reduce runoff and contaminant discharge (i.e. reduction of nutrients, pollution, and sediment) and increase GSI function at a regional or significant scale (gallons/year) either through a large single installation of a GSI practice or via a strategic, connected suite or group of GSI practices that collectively achieve significant GSI benefits and impact. Small, isolated projects (e.g., rain barrels, cisterns, a single green alley, etc.) without a connection to a larger green infrastructure plan or suite of proposed installations will not be competitive. Proposals seeking funds for maintenance of GSI at multiple sites should outline the applicant's authority to maintain those sites as well as a long-term plan to maintain sites, including resources secured for these activities.

Priority will be given to projects that are: 1) developed through community input, 2) equitably engage community-level partners throughout the life of the project and beyond, 3) incorporate planning for increasingly severe and more frequent storm events into their design, location, and/or function, 4) utilize native or non-invasive, urban-adapted plant and tree species designed to improve habitat for pollinators or diversify and sustain the urban canopy.

All applications must report anticipated outcomes in terms of gallons of stormwater storage capacity added (design retention capacity) and estimate the volume of stormwater runoff captured and infiltrated per year (gallons/year). Applications proposing GSI maintenance or enhancement must report anticipated outcomes in terms of gallons of stormwater storage capacity preserved/maintained (design retention capacity) and report the volume of stormwater runoff captured and infiltrated per year (gallons/year) when GSI functions optimally as a result of maintenance activities. Applicants are encouraged to use the EPA storm water calculator tool, found by clicking here, to estimate design retention capacity. For tree planting projects, applicants are encouraged to use i-Tree, found by clicking here, to calculate gallons of storm water taken up annually by tree planting projects (use a 10-year tree age for measuring stormwater benefits in i-Tree).

Funding Category 3: Public Access
Funding in this category will support the creation of new or enhancements of existing infrastructure that improves public access to and use of natural areas in close proximity to the major waterways of the system. Public access improvements may include but are not limited to construction of trails, green space, public access points, and infrastructure enabling use of

waterways and habitats, such as paddle craft launches, wildlife viewing areas, etc. Competitive projects will propose public-access focused projects that also implement strategies from Funding Category 1 or Funding Category 2, delivering on the ground restoration or GSI benefits coupled with enhancements to public use of natural areas or greenspace.

Priority will be given to projects that directly benefit low-income communities and communities of color and incorporate habitat restoration and/or green stormwater infrastructure elements into their design. All proposals should describe the rationale for selecting the project location, public access or greenspace elements proposed, identify the communities and/or target audiences that will be served by the project and how they will be meaningfully and actively engaged in the project to encourage public use of the asset. Be clearer about multi-benefit approach as a priority (GSI and/or Habitat with public access).

Priority will also be given to projects that were developed through long-term community engagement efforts and co-designed by the communities that will benefit from or utilize the project's public access deliverables. The most competitive projects will incorporate planning for increasingly severe and more frequent storm events into their design, location, and/or function.

PROGRAM FUNDING PRIORITIES FOR ALL FUNDING CATEGORIES

Equity and Inclusion
The Fund desires to support projects that meaningfully engage and benefit low-income and communities of color in the greater Chicago region and northwest Indiana. The Fund recognizes that these communities are often disproportionately impacted by climate change and associated environmental issues of special concern for the Fund, including stormwater runoff, combined sewer overflows and associated flooding and access to safe public greenspace and natural areas. The Fund will prioritize investments that seek to address these impacts while also meaningfully engaging communities to achieve benefits for the environment and people.

Priority will be given to projects that were developed through community input and co-design processes. Additionally, projects should directly engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects. These design and development processes will help secure maximum benefits for local residents and ensure public use of project sites, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award. Projects should also include plans and methods to engage and inform the public about the project's benefits and use opportunities (see Evaluation Criteria – Community Engagement and Education for more details). LOS are appreciated -

Additionally, applicants should plan to report on their approach to tracking and measuring qualitative, diversity, equity and inclusion benefits of the project in the full proposal narrative. These outcomes can include but are not limited to measuring the benefits of proposed work on increasing land value, improved access to greenspace and public recreation opportunities, reduction in basement backups and neighborhood flooding, reduction of heat island effect, jobs added or sustained etc. Applicants are encouraged to incorporate tools, such as the Social Vulnerability Index and others, to provide context. Projects receiving awards from the Fund will

be asked to report on these outcomes and project-related benefits to low-income communities and communities of color in their annual programmatic reports to NFWF.

Monitoring and Long-Term Maintenance
To help ensure project benefits will be sustained through time, grantees will be required to present or develop plans that address project site operation and management needs for at least five (5) years after project completion. The plans should describe anticipated actions needed (maintenance schedules and tasks to be completed at scheduled intervals), access to or ownership of equipment needed to maintain project sites cost estimates, sources of funding to support long-term maintenance plan, long-term partners, parties responsible for implementation and oversight training needs and the applicant's and partners' capacity for long-term stewardship of the project. If applicable, the plan should also describe long term invasive species management and early detection rapid response (EDRR) protocol. A portion of individual grant awards may be used to support plan development, and plans must be completed prior to the end dates specified in individual grant agreements.

Proposals should describe a monitoring plan to measure the outcomes and assess the success of the proposed project in the full proposal narrative portion of the application or provide a monitoring plan as an upload. At a minimum, the description should: 1) indicate the metrics that will be used to track progress and quantify outcomes; 2) outline the approach for establishing baseline conditions against which post-implementation conditions will be compared; and 3) demonstrate plans and resources for post-implementation monitoring and maintenance. Habitat proposals should focus monitoring on measuring benefits to water quality, habitat quality and priority species. GSI proposals should focus monitoring on measuring efficacy of GSI installed and, if relevant, public-use or other community benefits resulting from the GSI installations. Public-access projects should, at minimum, monitor public use of the assets installed and are encouraged to consider monitoring relevant GSI or habitat outcomes as appropriate for the project.

Applicants may use grant funding to support monitoring and maintenance/establishment activities associated with the proposed project within the proposed grant period. Applicants may direct up to 15 percent of the project budget toward this need. Some projects, particularly those proposing experimental techniques, may warrant using a larger amount of the project budget for monitoring.

METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for grantees to choose from for reporting (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). Only metrics relevant to the project being proposed should be selected in the application. Applicants will be required to report project accomplishments in terms of the metrics they select. If you do not believe an applicable metric has been provided, please contact Aislinn Gauchay (aislinn.gauchay@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Funding Category	Recommended Metrics *Required metric*	Additional Guidance
Habitat Quality	Riparian restoration – miles restored	Enter the number of riparian miles restored, including riparian buffers. In the NOTES section, specify the landcover type prior to planting (barren, cropland, grassland), the dominant vegetation being planted (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp), and the average width of the riparian buffer. Indicate the miles of riparian habitat restored along priority waterways. Include miles of invasive species control, bank stabilization, and native vegetation restoration.
	Floodplain restoration – acres restored	Enter # of floodplain acres restored. In the NOTES, indicate % of vegetation on the pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%) and the dominant vegetation being restored (Broadleaf, Conifer, Redwood, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp).
	Instream restoration – miles restored	Enter the number of miles of stream/channel restored or naturalized, include installation of in-stream habitat structures and stream geomorphology restoration activities (impoundment removal, naturalize stream channel, etc.)
	Instream restoration - # habitat structures installed	Enter the number of habitat structures installed, replaced, upgraded, or repaired for improvement of instream habitat.
	# passage barriers rectified	Enter the # of in-stream barriers removed or rectified as part of THIS grant to improve aquatic organism passage and/or flooding. If multiple barriers exist at one specific location, please list "1" and list each individual barrier in the notes.
	Miles of stream opened	Enter total # of miles opened to improve aquatic organism passage. Only include the miles of main stem & smaller tributaries connected until the next barrier upstream (or headwaters), but NOT lakes, ponds, or distance downstream from the barrier removed.

	Wetland restoration – acres restored	Enter the # of acres of WETLAND (not riparian or instream) habitat restored. In the NOTES, specify landcover prior to restoration (Marsh, Tidal marsh, Wet meadow, Swamp) and indicate % of vegetation on pre-project site (0-20%, 21-40%, 41-60%, 61-80%, 81-100%). Include acres of invasive species control, native vegetation restoration, and habitat structure/quality improvement activities.
	Removal of invasives - Acres restored	Enter # acres of invasives removed. In the NOTES, specify: vegetation removed (Forest understory, Junipers, Shrubs, Grasses/forbs, Marsh vegetation--excluding Phragmites, Phragmites australis), desired dominant vegetation (Broadleaf, Conifer, Shrub, Grass, Marsh, Swamp), average frequency (in years) of future treatment, and whether removed vegetation will be left on site to decompose (Yes/No). This can include new treatment or re-treatment.
	Erosion control - lbs sediment avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of sediment prevented from entering system annually
	BMP implementation for nutrient or sediment reduction - lbs phosphorus avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of phosphorous prevented from entering system annually. In the notes, please indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
	BMP implementation for nutrient reduction - lbs nitrogen avoided (annually)	Enter the amount of nitrogen prevented from entering system annually. In the notes, indicate the model or method used to calculate this metric.
Green Stormwater Infrastructure	Volume stormwater storage added annually	Enter the volume (in gallons) of stormwater storage added through green infrastructure improvements (measured as design retention capacity for a 100-year 24-hour storm). For GSI maintenance projects, enter volume (gallons) of stormwater storage maintained via this metric. In comments, include projection of gallons of stormwater captured or infiltrated annually.
	Square feet of green infrastructure installed	Enter square feet of GSI installed. For GSI maintenance projects, enter square feet of GSI maintained via this metric
	Number of trees planted	Enter the number of trees planted.

Public Access	Green Infrastructure - acres of greenspace	Enter the acres of green space created or improved.
	Green Infrastructure - miles trails developed/improved	Enter the number of miles of trails or riverwalks developed or improved.
	Green Infrastructure - access pts developed/improved	Enter the number of public access points developed or improved.
	Volunteer participation - # of volunteer hours	Enter the # of volunteer hours in this project
Additional Metrics for All Funding Categories	Outreach/ Education/ Technical Assistance - # people reached	Provide total # of people reached by grant activities throughout the period of performance. People reached should reflect the number of community members (volunteers, local groups, residents) meaningfully engaged in the project design, implementation, or who utilize the project's on-the-ground assets post-implementation. If the applicant will be measuring public use of grant investments post-implementation, please indicate the method of measurement to validate the use estimate (e.g. trail counters, volunteer observations, etc.)
	# jobs created	Enter the # of individuals hired to directly work on the project (non-volunteers). Jobs should be directly engaged in grant activities, funded by the grant, and shouldn't have existed prior to the grant. In the notes, provide the FTE for the jobs created.
	# jobs sustained	Enter the # of paid jobs that are partially or fully sustained through this grant. Jobs should have existed prior to the grant, be funded by the grant, and be directly engaged in project activities. The starting value for this metric should be zero.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible and Ineligible Entities
- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, tribal governments and organizations, and educational institutions. To be competitive, applicant organizations must demonstrate capacity and experience commensurate with the scale of the project being proposed and the funding being requested.

- Ineligible applicants include federal government agencies, unincorporated individuals, and for-profit businesses.

Ineligible Uses of Grant Funds
- **Equipment:** Applicants are encouraged to rent equipment where possible and cost-effective or use matching funds to make those purchases. NFWF acknowledges, however, that some projects may only be completed using NFWF funds to procure equipment. If this applies to your project, please contact the program staff listed in this RFP to discuss options.

- Federal funds and matching contributions may not be used to procure or obtain equipment, services, or systems (including entering into or renewing a contract) that uses telecommunications equipment or services produced by Huawei Technologies Company or ZTE Corporation (or any subsidiary or affiliate of such entities) as a substantial or essential component, or as critical technology of any system. Refer to Public Law 115-232, section 889 for additional information.

- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.

- NFWF funds may not be used to support ongoing efforts to comply with legal requirements, including permit conditions, mitigation and settlement agreements. However, grant funds may be used to support projects that enhance or improve upon existing baseline compliance efforts.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

Approximately **$1.5 million** is expected to be available for grant awards in 2023. Individual grant awards will range from **$150,000 to $400,000**.

PROJECT DURATION

Anticipated completion time for funded projects will typically be two (2) years or two field seasons following finalization of a grant agreement. Projects may be a discrete part of a longer-term project, provided there are definable outcomes for the proposed phase of the overall effort. The project narrative should include a clear timetable or schedule for project completion. Project start and end dates should define the period during which all proposed work is accomplished, all requested funds are spent, and all matching contributions are spent or applied. The start date indicated in an application should not precede November 11, 2023.

MATCHING CONTRIBUTIONS

Match is not required. The ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process. Providing some match (non-federal and

federal) is encouraged to demonstrate broad support for the project and overall impact of the work. Match can be any combination of in cash and/or in-kind goods and services (for example external/partner services, volunteers or grantee in-kind, materials and services donated, etc.) or other tangible contributions to the project objectives and outcomes. No priority will be given to higher cash percentages versus other sources of match. In addition, eligible indirect costs (that would not be paid with requested grant funding) may be applied as match. More information about using indirect costs as match can be found by clicking here. Full information on how to document match, including a description of acceptable sources of match, is available at http://www.nfwf.org/whatwedo/grants/applicants/Pages/faqs.aspx.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with organizational and funding source policies. Then, the Chi-Cal Rivers Fund advisory team and a panel of state and federal agency reviewers will use the following criteria for project selections. Project selections may also be based on other considerations, such as availability of funding, geographic diversity and balance among project types and grant size.

Strategic Value
Fund partners will consider the following criteria, listed in order of relative importance, when reviewing proposals and determining which will receive grant funding. Note that this list is not necessarily comprehensive of all factors that considered when reviewing proposals and some criteria might be weighted more heavily than others on a case-by-case project basis.

- **Program goals:** Project aligns with program goals and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success. Project directly advances the priorities of one or more of the funding categories.

- **Technical merit and budget**: Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical and achievable work plan, timeline for implementation and budget. Budget is clear, detailed, cost-effective (see Implementation section below) and appropriate for work proposed. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, design implementation and maintenance.

- **Project location and context:** Project occurs in close proximity to or otherwise demonstrates benefits to the major waterways of the system, as listed under the Geographic Eligibility section. Green infrastructure installation is located in flood-prone areas identified as priorities by government units or approved land-use or watershed plans. Priority will be given to projects that directly benefit and engage low-income communities and communities of color. Projects that are not located in or meaningfully benefit these communities will be less competitive.

- **Community engagement and partnerships:** Project engages relevant communities and local stakeholders (e.g. municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) project planning, co-design and post-implementation education and engagement to optimize the public use of and benefits to communities generated by the project. Project substantiates community partnerships and engagement through letters of support

or shared investment in the project, demonstrated by including community partner entities as a match source in the proposal or sub-awarding grant funds requested in the proposal budget to community partners.

Priority will be given to projects that benefit and engage low-income communities and communities of color. Education or engagement activities may be supported by grant funds and may include, but are not limited to, programming, engagement events, establishing or supporting existing stewardship groups to maintain or enhance the impact of project elements, signage, etc.

- **Climate resilience in design**: Project incorporates planning for increasingly severe and more frequent storm events and other climate-driven threats into their design, location, and/or function. Additionally, projects must identify existing and anticipated impacts of climate change on target communities and/or ecosystems and wildlife identified as the intended beneficiary of the grant funded work. Applicants should further describe how NFWF-funded interventions will help mitigate these impacts and threats to low-income communities and communities of color.

- **Matching contributions:** Availability of match should not be the primary factor when an applicant decides whether or not to submit an application to the Fund. Match is not required. However, providing some match (in-kind, volunteer/staff time, equipment, cash, etc.) is encouraged to demonstrate project impact and partner investment where possible. The ratio of matching contributions offered to grant funding requested is one criterion considered during the review process. If you are concerned about match or wish to discuss potential matching contributions, please contact Traci Giefer at traci.giefer@nfwf.org.

- **Plan or strategy alignment**: Project advances an existing local, regional, tribal, state or federal plan or strategy. Project advances an existing local, regional, watershed, tribal, state or federal plan or strategy. Applicants are encouraged to align their proposed projects with regional and local efforts and demonstrate how they would complement and connect to other previous and ongoing work in the region in the proposal narrative. Types of relevant plans or strategies may include, but are not limited to, watershed plans, municipal or regional domestic action plans, climate action plans, sustainability plans, green stormwater infrastructure strategies.

Qualifications
- **Organizational capacity:** Applicant organization demonstrates capacity and experience commensurate with the scale of the project being proposed and the funding requested.

- **Funding need**: Project establishes a clear need for the funds being requested and demonstrates that activities would not move forward absent funding.

- **Partnerships**: An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and will sustain

it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated subawards to third party subrecipients of the applicant), the roles they will play in implementing the project, and how this project will build new or enhance existing partnerships. (Note: a project partner is any local community, non-profit organization, tribe, and/or local, state, and federal government agency that contributes to the project in a substantial way and is closely involved in the completion of the project.)

- **Past success:** Project team has a proven track record of success in implementing practices with specific, measurable results.

Implementation

- **On-the-ground implementation:** Project will apply the bulk (>70%) of grant funding to on-the-ground work, with the option of using the remaining funds for planning, permitting, final design, engineering, outreach, education, maintenance or monitoring.

- **Cost-Effectiveness:** Cost-effectiveness analysis identifies the economically most efficient way to meet project objectives. Project includes a cost-effective budget that balances performance risk and efficient use of funds. Cost-effectiveness evaluation includes, but is not limited to, an assessment of effective direct/indirect costs across all categories in the proposed budget according to the type, size and duration of project and project objectives. Project budgets will be compared to similar projects to ensure proposed costs across all budget categories are reasonable for the activities being performed and the outcomes proposed.

- **Timeliness:** Project has completed or nearly completed planning, design and engineering to the extent that on-the-ground implementation can begin shortly after the grant is awarded.

Evaluation and Maintenance

- **Monitoring**: Project includes plans to monitor progress during and after implementation to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities.

- **Long-term sustainability:** Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. Plans described in the proposal include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

Amplification

- **Communication:** Project includes a communication strategy for notifying relevant communities and audiences about the project after completion.

- **Scalability:** Project has the potential to catalyze additional efforts in communities or settings where it has not been broadly deployed, including in low-income communities and communities of color.

- **Transferability**: Project has potential and plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

OTHER

Applicant Demographic Information: In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic demographic information on applicants and their organizations via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers and will <u>not</u> be considered when making grant decisions. For more details, please see the tip sheet and the Uploads section of Easygrants.

Budget: Costs are allowable, reasonable and budgeted in accordance with NFWF's Budget Instructions cost categories. Federally funded projects must be in compliance with OMB Uniform Guidance as applicable.

Matching contributions: Matching Contributions consist of cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance. Larger match ratios and matching fund contributions from a diversity of partners are encouraged and will be more competitive during application review.

Procurement: If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by NFWF to the applicant does not constitute NFWF's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services noncompetitively. When procuring goods and services, NFWF recipients must follow documented procurement procedures which reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Publicity and acknowledgment of support: Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF the right and authority to publicize the project and NFWF's financial support for the grant in press releases, publications and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by NFWF to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Receiving award funds: Award payments are primarily reimbursable. Projects may request funds for reimbursement at any time after completing a signed agreement with NFWF. A request of an advance of funds must be due to an imminent need of expenditure and must detail how the funds will be used and provide justification and a timeline for expected disbursement of these funds.

Compliance requirements: Projects selected may be subject to requirements under the National Environmental Policy Act, Endangered Species Act (state and federal), and National Historic Preservation Act. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved prior to initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals. As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with additional Federal, state or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances.

Permits: Successful applicants will be required to provide sufficient documentation that the project expects to receive or has received all necessary permits and clearances to comply with any Federal, state or local requirements. Where projects involve work in the waters of the

United States, NFWF strongly encourages applicants to conduct a permit pre-application meeting with the Army Corps of Engineers prior to submitting their proposal. In some cases, if a permit pre-application meeting has not been completed, NFWF may require successful applicants to complete such a meeting prior to grant award.

Federal funding: The availability of federal funds estimated in this solicitation is contingent upon the federal appropriations process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when it is received by NFWF.

Environmental Services: NFWF funds projects in pursuit of its mission to sustain, restore and enhance the nation's fish, wildlife, plants and habitats for current and future generations. NFWF recognizes that some benefits from projects may be of value with regards to credits on an environmental services market (such as a carbon credit market). NFWF does not participate in, facilitate, or manage an environmental services market nor does NFWF assert any claim on such credits.

Intellectual Property: Intellectual property created using NFWF awards may be copyrighted or otherwise legally protected by award recipients. NFWF may reserve the right to use, publish, and copy materials created under awards, including posting such material on NFWF's website and featuring it in publications. NFWF may use project metrics and spatial data from awards to estimate societal benefits that result and to report these results to funding partners. These may include but are not limited to: habitat and species response, species connectivity, water quality, water quantity, risk of detrimental events (e.g., wildfire, floods), carbon accounting (e.g., sequestration, avoided emissions), environmental justice, and diversity, equity, and inclusion.

TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information (www.nfwf.org/chi-cal).

Applicant Webinar	Wednesday, June 21, 2023 1:00 to 2:00 PM Central Time
Full Proposal Due Date	Friday, August 4 202310:59 PM Central Time
Proposal Review Period	August – September
Awards Announced	November

After project selection, National Fish and Wildlife Foundation staff will work with applicants to prepare grant agreements and other necessary paperwork, all of which will be completed electronically using the Easygrants system. Additional information about the grantee's organization and its finances may be solicited during this time. Please note the preparation of grant agreements will require approximately 4 to 6 weeks from the time the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation receives the additional required information from the grantee. Once grant agreements are finalized, funds will typically be paid to grantees on a reimbursable basis. Funds may be advanced to qualified grantees on an as-needed basis.

WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS

Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to view **both** webinars prior to submitting an application.

2023 Funding Opportunity Webinar
Wednesday, June 21
1:00-2:00pm CT
Register Here: https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/7844196758457742933
The funding opportunity webinar provides important information about 2023 funding priorities, in-depth review of the proposal narrative and highlighting priority project elements, tips for submitting competitive proposals, and FAQs. A recording of this webinar will be uploaded at www.nfwf.org/chi-cal.

Easygrants Instructional Webinar
The pre-recorded Easygrants webinar found here covers in-depth instructions for navigating Easygrants.

HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through NFWF's Easygrants system.

1. Go to easygrants.nfwf.org to register in our Easygrants online system. New users to the system will be prompted to register before starting the application (if you already are a registered user, use your existing login). Enter your applicant information.

2. Once on your homepage, click the "Apply for Funding" button and select this RFP's "Funding Opportunity" from the list of options.

3. Follow the instructions in Easygrants to complete your application. Once an application has been started, it may be saved and returned to at a later time for completion and submission.

APPLICATION ASSISTANCE

A *Tip Sheet* is available for quick reference while you are working through your application. This document can be downloaded here.

Additional information to support the application process can be accessed on the NFWF website's Applicant Information page.

For more information or questions about this RFP, please contact:

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For issues or assistance with our online Easygrants system, please contact:

Easygrants Helpdesk
Email: Easygrants@nfwf.org
Voicemail: 202-595-2497
Hours: 9:00 am to 5:00 pm ET, Monday-Friday.
Include: your name, proposal ID #, e-mail address, phone number, program you are applying to, and a description of the issue.