



## **HURRICANE RESPONSE MARINE DEBRIS REMOVAL FUND**

### **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**Full Proposal Webinar ([Here](#)):** Thursday, May 9th, 2024 3:00pm ET

**Full Proposal Due Date:** Friday, July 26<sup>th</sup>, 2024 by 11:59pm ET

### **OVERVIEW**

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) established the Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund to support projects to assess, remove, and dispose of marine debris in and around coastal communities impacted hurricanes and other episodic storm events.

The Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund will award up to \$6 million in grants to remove damaging marine debris from coastal areas of communities impacted by hurricanes or other natural disasters to reduce impacts to communities, industry and prevent further harm to habitats and fish and wildlife populations. Funding has been made available by the FY 2023 Consolidated Appropriations Act, P.L. 117-328.

### **GEOGRAPHIC FOCUS**

Eligible projects will reduce marine debris from coastal habitats and nearshore waters of coastal counties in Alaska, Florida, Georgia, Puerto Rico, and South Carolina impacted by the 2022 hurricanes Fiona, Ian, Nicole, and Typhoon Merbok..

### **PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

This program will prioritize projects that provide dual benefits – both benefit for human communities and benefits for fish and wildlife. The program will use assessment and prioritization efforts conducted by local, state, and federal response agencies or their designees to prioritize projects that will address marine debris in areas of greatest impact and most critical to prevent communities and ecosystems from further harm. The majority of funds are anticipated to support direct removal and proper disposal efforts although limited funding may also be available for assessment and capacity building for future response.

All proposals must clearly describe how projects will support achieving the overall goals of the *Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund*, including:

- Relative benefit to coastal communities from reducing the impact of marine debris to properties and community infrastructure, assets of economic and cultural importance, and navigational safety; and

- Anticipated enhancement of the ecological integrity and functionality of ecosystems and/or prevention of further harm to fish and wildlife and their habitats.

Due to the relief nature of these funds, the *Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund* will primarily fund projects that are ready for direct clean-up efforts to remove and dispose of marine debris that resulted from the storms to provide the most accelerated and comprehensive outcomes for impacted coastal resources and communities. Eligible projects will include marine debris assessment and/or removal activities within the coastal uplands, shorelines and coastal waterways of the affected areas, with the goal of preventing further harm to economic, cultural and ecological resources of importance to impacted coastal resources and communities.

Projects will be prioritized based on the targeted debris’ existing or potential impact to coastal resources and communities and to prevent further harm to sensitive habitats and species. Priority will be given to projects that have already completed a marine debris assessment to prioritize debris from the storm(s) and where hazardous materials have already been addressed. Projects that have secured all necessary permits and have mapped out all disposal and recycling logistics will also receive higher priority for funding.

Assessment work may be included to locate submerged debris and help prioritize removal efforts.

**Community Impact and Engagement:** Projects that incorporate outreach to communities, foster community engagement, and pursue collaborative management leading to measurable conservation benefits are encouraged. When possible, projects should be developed through community input and co-design processes ensuring traditional knowledge elevation. Additionally, projects should engage community-level partners (e.g., municipalities, NGOs, community organizations, community leaders) to help design, implement, and maintain projects to secure maximum benefits for communities, maintenance, and sustainability post-grant award.

## PROJECT METRICS

To better gauge progress on individual grants and to ensure greater consistency of project data provided by multiple grants, the Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund has a list of metrics in Easygrants for full proposal applicants to choose from for future reporting. We ask that applicants select only the most relevant metrics from this list for their project (all possible program metrics are shown in the table below). If you think an applicable metric has not been provided, please contact Michelle Pico at [pico@nfwf.org](mailto:pico@nfwf.org) to discuss acceptable alternatives.

Project Activity	Recommended Metrics	Additional Guidance
Marine Debris Removal & Disposal	# lbs of marine debris removed	Enter the number of pounds of marine debris that has been removed from the environment and properly disposed of. In reporting you will be asked to express in pounds how removed debris was disposed (recycling vs. landfill, etc.)

		<b>Do not include full vessels in this weight metric.</b>
	# of vessels removed and disposed	Enter the number of vessels that have been removed from the environment and properly disposed of.
	# of acres restored	Enter the number of acres cleared of marine debris. In the notes, indicate the type(s) of habitat cleared of debris.
Marine Debris Assessment	# of acres assessed	Enter the total area to be assessed for storm debris.
Community Engagement	# of volunteer hours	Please complete the number of hours if any volunteers will be engaged as a result of these grants. In the notes provide more detail how volunteers will be engaged.

## ELIGIBILITY

### Eligible and Ineligible Entities

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, state and territorial government agencies, local governments, municipal governments, commercial (for-profit) organizations, Tribal Governments and Organizations, or educational institutions.
  - Tribal governments include all Native American tribal governments (both federally recognized tribes and those tribes that are not federally recognized).
  - For-profit applicants: please note that this is a request for grant proposals, not a procurement of goods and services; see the Budget section below for specific cost considerations.
- As this program will award grants of Federal financial assistance funds, applicants must be able to comply with the OMB guidance in subparts A through F of 2 CFR 200 ([OMB Uniform Guidance](#)).
- Ineligible applicants include federal agencies or employees of federal agencies, foreign organizations, foreign public entities, and unincorporated individuals.

### 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.
- NFWF funds and matching contributions may not be used to support political advocacy, fundraising, lobbying, litigation, terrorist activities or Foreign Corrupt Practices Act violations.
- All projects must take place within the United States or territories jurisdiction or their respective waterways within the geographic focus areas.

## FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

The Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund will award up to \$6 million in grants in 2024. While there is no minimum or maximum expected award amount, funding request amounts should be appropriate relative to the overall scale and impact of the project. Please contact Michelle Pico [pico@nfwf.org](mailto:pico@nfwf.org) with any questions about funding request amounts.

**Project Period:** All project dollars, including NFWF award request and matching funds, must be secured and expended within the period of performance. The period of performance is the period of time in which all activities in the proposed scope of work occur and is defined by the start and end dates selected in the application. Projects should be able to be completed within 3 years of the start of the grant. Grants under this program cannot start prior to September 1, 2024 and should end no later than December 30, 2028.

**Matching Funds:** Due to the relief nature of the funding and immediate need for project implementation, matching funds will not be required for this program. However, NFWF encourages matching contributions where possible to foster partnerships and collaborative implementation. Matching contributions consist of non-federal cash, contributed goods and services, volunteer hours, and/or property raised and spent for the Project during the Period of Performance.

**Federal Leverage:** Applicants are encouraged to describe federal partner contributions in the proposal narrative. These contributions will help in understanding the amount of resources and partners contributing to the overall project.

## EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be screened for relevance, accuracy, completeness and compliance with NFWF and funding source policies. Proposals will then be evaluated based on the extent to which they meet the following criteria.

**Program Goals and Priorities** – Project contributes to the Program’s overall habitat and species conservation goals, has a direct nexus to an eligible storm event, has overall community benefit and has specific, quantifiable performance metrics to evaluate project success.

**Coordinated with State/Territorial Marine Debris Agency** – Project areas have been assessed for storm debris through an assessment/prioritization process at the state, regional, or local level for addressing marine debris and demonstrates activities that support community, habitat and fish and wildlife goals of NFWF and NOAA. Project complements and builds off other federal, state, and local conservation priorities that are consistent with the goals of this program and can clearly connect conservation and coastal community benefit. Applications that are not submitted by the relevant state/territorial lead agency for marine debris removal should include a letter from said agency indicating that they are aware of and supportive of the proposed effort.

**Technical Merit** – Project is technically sound and feasible using proven methodologies, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline. Project engages appropriate technical experts throughout project planning, removal, and disposal to ensure activities are technically sound and feasible and will reduce interaction/harm to the environment.

**Partnership and Community Impact** – The applicant organization partners and engages collaboratively with diverse local community members, leaders, community-based organizations, and other relevant stakeholders to develop and implement the proposed project. This ensures long-term sustainability and success of the project, integration into local programs and policies, and community acceptance of proposed restoration actions. Non-traditional partners or communities are enlisted to broaden the sustained impact from the project. Describe the community characteristics of the project area, identify any communities impacted, describe outreach and community engagement activities and how those will be monitored and measured. Use demographic data to support descriptions and submit letters of support from community partners and/or collaborators demonstrating their commitment to the project and engagement in project activities as proposed

**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.

**Transferability** – Project includes a meaningful plan to transfer lessons learned to other communities and/or to be integrated into government programs and policies.

**Communication** – Project includes a detailed plan to communicate information about the project to appropriate audiences. Key stakeholders and partners are meaningfully engaged throughout the project.

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

**Conservation Plan and Context** – The project advances an existing conservation plan or strategy.

**Monitoring** – Project includes a plan for monitoring progress during and after the proposed project period to track project success and adaptively address new challenges and opportunities as they arise.

**Long-term Sustainability** – Project will be maintained to ensure benefits are achieved and sustained over time. This should include how future funding will be secured to implement necessary long-term monitoring and maintenance activities.

**Past Success** – Applicant has a proven track record of success in implementing conservation practices with specific, measurable results.

**Partnership** – An appropriate partnership exists to implement the project and the project is supported by a strong local partnership that leverages additional funds and/or in-kind support to sustain it after the life of the grant. Identify proposed partners, if known (including potential or contemplated sub-awards 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.)

## **OTHER**

**Applicant Demographic Information** – In an effort to better understand diversity in our grantmaking, NFWF is collecting basic information on applicants and their communities via a voluntary survey form (available in Easygrants). This information will not be shared externally or with reviewers. 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. While for-profit entities are eligible applicants, charges to a potential award may include actual costs only; recipients may not apply loaded rates or realize profit from an award of federal financial assistance funds.

**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.

**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 Acknowledgement of Support** – Award recipients will be required to grant NFWF and the NOAA Marine Debris Program the right and authority to publicize the project and NOAA and NFWF’s financial support for the grant in press releases, publications, and other public communications. Recipients are also required 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.

**Programmatic Reporting Requirements** – Award recipients will be required to submit semi-annual reports on progress towards key implementation milestones and program metrics in addition to a comprehensive final programmatic report.

**Quality Assurance** – If a project involves significant monitoring, data collection, or data use, grantees will be asked to prepare and submit quality assurance documentation ([www.epa.gov/quality](http://www.epa.gov/quality)) and must comply with [NOAA’s Data Sharing Policy](#) for all environmental data. Applicants should budget time and resources to complete these tasks.

**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 and apportionment process. Funding decisions will be made based on level of funding and timing of when the Federal funding is received by NFWF.

## TIMELINE

Dates of activities are subject to change. Please check the program page of the NFWF website for the most current dates and information [[Hurricane Response Marine Debris Removal Fund](#)].

Applicant Webinar (Register <a href="#">Here</a> )	May 9, 2024 at 3:00 pm ET
Full Proposal Due Date	July 26, 2024 by 11:59pm ET
Review Period	July 2024 – August 2024
Awards Announced	September 2024

## HOW TO APPLY

All application materials must be submitted online through National Fish and Wildlife Foundation’s Easygrants system.

1. Go to [easygrants.nfwf.org](http://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. Please disable the pop-up blocker on your internet browser prior to beginning the application process.
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:

Michelle Pico  
Program Director, Marine Conservation  
[Pico@NFWF.org](mailto:Pico@NFWF.org)

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

Easygrants Helpdesk  
Email: [Easygrants@nfwf.org](mailto: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.