



# Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund

## 2026 Grants - (LISCIF26)

### Guidance for Full Proposals

**Full Proposals are Due: Friday, March 13, 2026, 4:00 pm EST.**

**Full Proposals are by invitation, following the review of LISCIF26 Letters of Intent. Full Proposals will be accepted by on-line submission only. You will receive an invitation link to apply. For resources and documents to support the application process, please visit the LISCIF26 RFA Page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/>**

**For all inquiries, contact: Shahela Begum, Restore America's Estuaries, [sbegum@estuaries.org](mailto:sbegum@estuaries.org)**

**The Full Proposal Grant Writing webinar is scheduled on:**

- **January 28, 2026 at 11 am – 12:30 pm. Register here: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/8M-CAXNqSOWuHCEA7flxMA#/registration>**

**Contents of Guidance for Full Proposals:**

1. **How to Apply**
2. **Schedule**
3. **Awards**
4. **Additional Resources**

**Appendices:**

1. **Full Proposals**
2. **Decisions**

1. **How to Apply:**

Full Proposals are accepted by invitation only, following RAE evaluation of LoIs. Similar to the process for LoI proposals, RAE will select Full Proposals for funding in consultation with an independent advisory committee and EPA. RAE may elect to partially fund proposals or may request other project modifications prior to finalizing awards. RAE's request for a Full Proposal does not guarantee funding of that proposal.



Full Proposal requirements are provided in **Appendix 1**, while **Appendix 2** outlines the process by which RAE will evaluate and select Full Proposals. Additional resources can be found on the **LISCIF26 RFA Page**: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/>

To be considered for funding, Full Proposal applications must meet the requirements outlined in this Guidance for Full Proposals and appendices, including federal grant requirements incorporated by reference.

Full Proposals must be submitted through the online portal accessed by invitation only from RAE. If you did not receive the invitation link or cannot access the online portal, please contact Shahela Begum, [sbegum@estuaries.org](mailto:sbegum@estuaries.org).

In addition to the guidance provided in this document, applicants may request individualized assistance from RAE by contacting Shahela Begum, [sbegum@estuaries.org](mailto:sbegum@estuaries.org).

## 2. **Schedule (all times Eastern Standard Time):**

- **Week of January 12, 2026:** Notification of LoI applicants; Full Proposal requested if selected for further consideration.
- **March 13, 2026, 4:00 pm EST:** Full Proposals Due
- **Week of April 27, 2026:** Notification of Awards
- **May– June 2026:** Development and Executions of Grant Agreements / Grant Announcement Events in Connecticut & New York
- **July 1, 2026:** Expected Award Date / Project Start Date
- **July 31, 2028:** Latest date for completion of work.
- **August 31, 2028:** Final Reporting due.

## 3. **Awards:**

### **Source of Funds**

This project has been funded by the United States Environmental Protection Agency to Restore America's Estuaries. However, all grants under **LISCIF** will be awarded, overseen, and administered by RAE, which is responsible for sub-awardee selection, funding, and oversight.

### **Anticipated Awards**



In 2026, RAE will award up to **\$1,200,000** in federal funds through **LISCIF26**. Typical awards will range from about \$5,000 to \$100,000.

## Funding Priorities

LISCIF's funding priorities are aligned with the [CCMP](#) themes and [Actions](#):

For 2026, LISCIF's main funding themes are:

- Clean Waters and Healthy Watersheds
- Thriving Habitats and Abundant Wildlife
- Sustainable and Resilient Communities
- Informed and Engaged Public

The Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund aims to build capacity for organizations located in communities affected by environmental and human health risks. The Fund seeks to provide technical assistance for communities and support proposals which ultimately improve access to the Long Island Sound, while reducing overall environmental health risks. Eligible projects and activities will be community-driven and address one of the funding priorities below:

Funding is available for:

- Projects that result in quantifiable pollutant prevention or reduction.
- Restoring habitat within the [Important Coastal Habitat Types](#) targeted by LISS.
- Projects that foster a diverse balance and abundant populations of fish, birds, and wildlife.
- Public engagement, knowledge, and stewardship.
- Projects that enhance community resilience and sustainability.
- Planning and design that set-the-stage for implementation of water quality projects, eligible habitat restoration projects and resilience projects.
- Community-based science projects.
- Data management and integration projects.
- Other similar activities that the applicant proposes, and EPA approves, that are consistent with section 119 of the Clean Water Act.

Examples of projects based on CCMP themes and implementation actions can be found here: [LISCIF26 Project Case Studies, Examples of Impact Models & CCMP Actions](#)

Projects funded in previous rounds of funding, in 2024 and 2025, based on CCMP theme and program priorities can be found here:



- [2024 LISCIF Grant Recipients ~ Restore America's Estuaries](#)
- [2025 LISCIF Grant Recipients ~ Restore America's Estuaries](#)

#### 4. **Additional Resources:**

The LISCIF26 RFA Page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/> is the primary on-line resource and portal for prospective LISCIF26 applicants.

Other resources that may be helpful in developing the Full Proposal applications can be found here: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>

For questions about the LISCIF26 Full Proposal, contact Shahela Begum, Restore America's Estuaries, [sbegum@estuaries.org](mailto:sbegum@estuaries.org)

For additional assistance, schedule one to one appointments at: <https://calendly.com/liscif/shahela>

*Thanks for your interest in the Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund.*

*We look forward to receiving your Full Proposal!*

### **Begin Appendices** ###

#### **Appendix 1: Full Proposal**

As described in the RFA, Restore America's Estuaries reviewed all applicants' LoIs and selected those which will be further considered for funding. These applicants are invited to submit a Full Proposal. Full Proposals will be accepted by invitation only and must be submitted via an online portal provided to selected applicants.

The format of the Full Proposal is similar to that of the Letter of Intent, but provides the opportunity to describe the project and answer questions in more detail, and to provide a final budget.

The Full Proposal application requires applicants to complete a brief project impact model, and to identify expected project results based on established LISCIF performance metrics as indicated in the [CCMP Actions](#). More information on each of these can be found on the LISCIF26 RFA Page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>.



RAE may request that the applicant make changes to the proposal as described in the LoI, in order to submit a Full Proposal. In other cases, the proposal may evolve as more information becomes available. The scope and budget of a Full Proposal need not be identical to that described in the LoI, but should be substantially similar.

**Full Proposals must be submitted by 4:00 p.m. EDT on Friday, March 13, 2026.**

The following provides a guide to the content of the Full Proposal that must be submitted via the online portal.

### **Section 1: Applicant Information**

- Name of Applicant Organization (organization requesting LISCIF funding)
- Role of Applicant Organization (may be project leader or fiscal agent)
- Project Leader: Name, organization, email, phone
- Application Point of Contact

### **Section 2: Organizational Fiscal Information**

- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Federal System Award Management (SAM) registration status and current expiration date. A SAM account can be created at no cost at [sam.gov](http://sam.gov)
- Applicant organization Unique Entity ID (UEI). The UEI will be automatically generated by your SAM account.

### **Section 3: Cost Information**

- Amount of Request
- Will your project require assistance with upfront costs (Working Capital Advance) to get started?
- What is your organization's annual budget?

### **Section 4: Project Overview**

- Name of Project
- Description of Project (limit 250-word count) - Be very clear about exactly what you intend to do with the requested funding.
- Project Phase (select all that apply)
  - Pre-Implementation: Includes planning, design, data-gathering, permitting, modeling, etc.
  - Implementation: Activities that alter the physical or social environment: construction, installation, capacity-building, etc. May include execution of a conference or trainings where the primary purpose of the project is informational.
  - Post-Implementation: Includes post-construction monitoring and evaluation, tech transfer of successful approaches, etc.
  - Peer-to-Peer Learning Project as described in RFA.
  - Other: If other, describe. (limit 30-word count)



- List of Partner Organizations with descriptions of roles. (limit 500-word count)

## Section 5: Project Description

The online form provides space to clearly address the following questions.

- **Problem:** Describe the problem or threat to the Long Island Sound's coastal and watershed ecosystems that the proposal seeks to solve. (limit 250-word count)
- **LISCIF Program Priority:** Which program priority (or priorities) does your proposal target? Check at least one or more that apply.
  - Projects that result in quantifiable pollutant prevention or reduction.
  - Restoring habitat within the [Important Coastal Habitat Types](#) targeted by LISS.
  - Projects that foster a diverse balance and abundant populations of fish, birds, and wildlife.
  - Public engagement, knowledge, and stewardship.
  - Projects that enhance community resilience and sustainability.
  - Planning and design that set-the-stage for implementation of water quality projects, eligible habitat restoration projects and resilience projects.
  - Community-based science projects.
  - Data management and integration projects.
  - Other similar activities that the applicant proposes, and EPA approves, that are consistent with section 119 of the Clean Water Act.
    - Other: If other, describe. (limit 30-word count)
- **Impact:** Clearly explain how the proposed work will address the problem identified. What is the ultimate impact of the work, and how will it be sustained? Use both quantitative and qualitative measures as appropriate. (limit 500-word count)
- **Alignment with the CCMP:** How does the proposal align within the themes and goals of the [Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#)? Which theme(s) and [Action\(s\)](#) does the project align with? Refer to additional resources and examples in the [LISCIF26 RFA Page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>](#). (limit 250-word count)
- **Stakeholders:** Who will benefit from this project? Describe the communities, individuals or organizations that will benefit directly or indirectly. Will the project serve historically overburdened and underserved communities or groups? Demonstrate how this project will be community-led. (limit 500-word count)
- **Work Plan:** Clearly describe the scope of work of your proposal. Provide a schedule that includes the principal tasks. Describe each task and describe the specific deliverables for each task. Describe the expected overall outcome of the project to be funded by the requested LISCIF grant. (limit 500-word count)
- **Outreach Approach:** Describe your approach to outreach for the project, including principal tasks, products, and schedule. Describe your intended audiences, and how you



will communicate with each. Audiences may be community, professional, regional, elected officials, etc.; most projects will benefit by targeting multiple audiences. (limit 250-word count)

- **Area of Work:** Describe the specific place in which the work will occur. (limit 250-word count)
- **Area of Direct Impact:** Describe the watershed of the project and any other geographic areas that will be directly affected by the work when completed. (limit 250-word count)
- **Project Team:** Describe the core project team and the role of each individual. Identify organizational affiliation of individuals mentioned. (limit 500-word count)
- **Real Estate Control and Permissions:** Will completion of the proposed project require permission of any landowners other than the applicant? This question pertains to all phases of the project, including those that may be beyond the scope of the LISCIF26 grant. If the answer to this question is “yes”, letter(s) of permission must be uploaded and attached in the application portal.
- **Quality Assurance Performance Plan:** Some LISCIF projects may require a Quality Assurance Performance Plan as described in the RFA. Do you expect the proposed project to require a QAPP? If so, the cost and/or time to develop the QAPP should be included in your budget and/or workplan.

## Section 6: Proposal Budget + Certification

- **Proposal Budget:** A budget table is also required of all proposals. The application portal will have a section where you will input line items and costs for your budget. The total will be calculated automatically and must reflect your requested amount for funding.
  - Download and use the Excel budget template as a workspace. The Excel budget template can be found on the LISCIF26 Resources page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>.
  - For resources on past budget training webinar recordings and slides, visit: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/events-and-trainings/>.
- **Budget Narrative:** A budget narrative is required for all proposals. Describe in detail how you will use the funds listed in your proposal budget for your LISCIF26 grant request. The budget narrative is added within the application portal. There are sections for every line item in the portal to elaborate on details.
  - For additional resources on the budget narrative, visit LISCIF26 Resources: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>.

## Budget Note: Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs)

Funded projects that collect or utilize environmental data, water-quality models, or similar tools and information for decision-making, including most construction projects, are required to develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). If your project requires a QAPP, be sure to include costs for developing the QAPP in your budget. More information on QAPPs is provided in **Appendix 3** or contact RAE for assistance.



## Section 7: Required Uploads

- **Map & Images:** A map or maps of the proposed project area (New York, Connecticut, Long Island Sound watershed) is required for all proposals except those which are region-wide in scope. List the coordinates of the exact location(s).
  - Attach a single PDF file, standard letter size. You may include site photos or other images within the size & page limits.
  - Indicate with a dot, star, box, or other marker of the exact project area.
  - Make sure the proximity of the project area to the Long Island Sound is visible.
- **Letter(s) of Commitment:** Upload letter(s) of commitment from partners listed on the proposal.
  - Combine the letters into a single PDF document, 8.5 x 11 inches.
  - Letters of commitment are provided by partners that have a role or indicate clear commitment to the project. (This is different from a letter of support, which indicates support, but involvement is not necessarily required.)
- **Project Impact Model:** The Full Proposal application requires applicants to complete a brief project impact model to identify expected project results based on established LISCIF performance metrics as indicated in the [CCMP Action\(s\)](#).
  - This document will assist RAE, EPA, and the LISCIF Review Committee in understanding how your project aligns with the CCMP. Refer to the examples on pages 17-22 of the *LISCIF26 Project Case Studies, Examples of Impact Models & Implementation Actions* under the LISCIF Resources page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>
  - Attach a simple Project Impact Model to show alignment with your proposal, highlighting: the project name, LISCIF26 program funding priority, CCMP funding theme, project impact, at least one correlated, relevant [CCMP Action\(s\)](#). Attach a single PDF file, 8.5 x 11 inches.
- **Real Estate Control and Permissions:** If permission is required, attach letter(s) into a single PDF document, 8.5 x 11 inches.
- **Optional Attachment(s):** If you would like to attach photos or additional documentation, feel free to do so here. Note: This is optional and not a requirement.

## How to Submit a Full Proposal

Full Proposals are by invitation, following the review of LISCIF26 Letters of Interest. Full Proposals will be accepted by on-line submission only. You will receive an invitation link to apply. Full Proposals are Due: **Friday, March 13, 2026, by 4:00 pm EST.**



For resources and documents to support the application process, please visit the LISCIF26 RFA Page: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/>

When you submit your application, you will see confirmation of your submission on the portal page. Please take a screenshot or save this page for your records.

If you do not receive confirmation of receipt by the end of the first business day following the deadline, you must contact Shahela Begum as soon as possible at [sbegum@estuaries.org](mailto:sbegum@estuaries.org) to ensure acceptance of your application.

**All applications must meet the deadlines listed above and must be complete at the time of submittal.** In the event of documented transmittal problems, corrupted files, or other technology problems, RAE will make every effort to accept applications that were submitted correctly, but not received due to problems outside the control of the applicant. However, to minimize the chance that a proposal cannot be accepted, we encourage applicants to submit proposals with sufficient time to rectify these kinds of problems prior to deadlines.

Full Proposals that omit required elements or which do not adhere to specified page limits will not be accepted or evaluated. RAE reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal on the basis of its sole determination that the proposal meets, or does not meet, program goals, objectives, and requirements. RAE may request additional information from applicants prior to selection.

### End Appendix 1 ###

## **Appendix 2: Decisions**

Full Proposals will be reviewed by the LISCIF Application Review Committee, an independent advisory committee of individuals with expertise in environmental management, ecological restoration, and community development. RAE will consult with the advisory committee and EPA prior to selecting applicants for funding. RAE may request additional information from applicants, or changes to project scope and budget, prior to selection.

Following the review of Full Proposals, RAE will notify applicants whether they have been selected for a full award, partial award, or not selected. Awards are not final until grant agreements have been executed.

## **2026 Review Framework**



Full Proposals will be reviewed utilizing six major criteria: (Refer to scoring and evaluation documents in the additional resources section of the **LISCIF26 RFA Page**: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>).

**1. Potential Impact:** Alignment with LISCIF priorities and the potential of the proposal to have a significant positive impact on the Long Island Sound's coastal and watershed ecosystems, including water quality, either directly (for example, through on-the-ground improvements) or indirectly (for example, through plans or studies that enable subsequent action).

**2. Applicant & Team Capability:** The potential of the applicant to successfully complete the project, as indicated by technical and administrative capacity, experience and past performance. The quality and diversity of the project partnership, with priority given to projects that establish or strengthen crosscutting or regional partnerships among multiple organizations. Projects that are "ready to go" are preferred for funding.

**3. Capacity-Building:** The potential of the proposal to significantly advance regional knowledge and practice to restore, protect and understand Long Island Sound's coastal ecosystems, by building either technical or institutional capacity. Projects that develop or build upon watershed plans or other comprehensive approaches are encouraged.

**4. Innovation:** Proposals that pioneer, improve or operationalize emerging technologies or methods, and those that test or demonstrate the effectiveness of new or underutilized approaches.

**5. Budget:** Cost-effectiveness of the proposal relative to expected results; fiscal performance and capacity of the applicant; quality of budget proposal, with sufficient detail, solid cost justification, and realistic cost expectations.

**6. Mix of Awards:**

RAE will select among qualified applicants to achieve the desired outcomes of the LISCIF program. For example, RAE will target geographic distribution of current LISCIF investments to ensure representation of communities across the Long Island Sound region and that LISCIF builds capacity across the region. As part of achieving region-wide impact, RAE will continue to develop a broad portfolio of LISCIF projects by funding various kinds of organizations and types of projects, including organizations, areas and project types that have not been funded in previous rounds. RAE intends to allocate 2026 grant funding approximately equally between Connecticut and New York, and will balance considerations of geographic diversity, diversity of technical approaches, and the quality of proposals received in selecting proposals for funding.

Final scoring and evaluation notes will be provided to applicants on request. Scoring and evaluation criteria for Full Proposals can be found on the **LISCIF26 RFA Page**: <https://estuaries.org/liscif/grant-resources/>



While RAE works closely with the advisory committee and EPA in evaluating applications, final selection and funding decisions will be made at the sole discretion of RAE.

### End Appendix 2 ###

### **Appendix 3: Requirements of Funded Projects**

**This information is relevant to applicants once their final application has been accepted.**

#### **Reporting Requirements**

Grantees must submit quarterly progress reports as well as a final report. Report requirements include cost tracking, programmatic reporting, and tracking of performance metrics. RAE will provide grantees with the format of interim and final reports upon award. Information in grantee reports will be used by RAE and EPA in public communication materials and performance reports.

#### **Procurement Requirements**

The source of Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund (LISCIF) is federal funding. Therefore, funded projects must adhere to federal requirements regarding contracting, sub-awards, and purchases. These include multiple bids for procurements as described in (2 C.F.R. 200.320), good-faith efforts to employ Disadvantaged Business Enterprises (40 C.F.R. 33.301), and Davis-Bacon prevailing wage requirements for construction activities (2 C.F.R. 200).

For more information on budget categories and procurement requirements associated with this funding, applicants should refer to:

**Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements** online at:

<https://www.epa.gov/grants/best-practice-guide-procuring-services-supplies-and-equipment-under-epa-assistance-agreements>

#### **Award Announcements**

Grants will be announced at one or two public events (in-person or virtual) in Spring, 2026. Grantees are invited to participate, as able, in at least one of these events.

#### **Collaboration & Technology Transfer**

Grantees will be required to participate in an Annual Learning Exchange meeting during the period of the award, to be held within the LIS region or online. Travel funds for these meetings may be included in proposal budgets. Grantees may be asked to participate in



other regional LISCIF events aimed at sharing progress and results with organizations throughout the LIS, including LISCIF conferences and workshops.

### **Sharing of Data & Results**

Grantees are required to make project data (including monitoring and modeling data), results, and other project information publicly available and readily transferable within one year of project completion. Should this present a problem with proprietary or personal information, contact RAE to discuss in advance of application. Additionally, applicants are expected to share project information and results at the collaboration and technology transfer meetings described above.

### **Audits**

Applicants with independent audits or audited financial statements must make them available to RAE within one month of receipt. RAE conducts periodic on-site audits of financial records and programmatic progress of all grantees.

### **Reimbursement**

Reimbursement requests shall be submitted at least quarterly and at most monthly. As noted elsewhere, applicants must begin incurring costs against the grant within the first reporting period following the award.

### **Quality Assurance Project Plans (QAPPs)**

Projects funded by the Long Island Sound Community Impact Fund (LISCIF) may require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) approved by EPA Regions 1 and 2 prior to starting activities in relation to the QAPP. This includes all projects that collect or utilize environmental data (including use of secondary data), water-quality models, or similar tools and information for decision-making. This also includes most construction projects.

RAE will recommend a preferred provider of QAPPs to grantees that don't have a provider. Draft QAPPs must be submitted 60 days prior to beginning work that triggers a need for a QAPP such as data collection, data use or to provide sufficient time for review. Grant recipients are responsible for development of an approved QAPP and must identify within the proposal the means by which they plan to complete the QAPP (for example, through contractual support or in-house). QAPPs, if required, must be approved within one year of grant award, and again, must be approved before any relevant work begins. RAE will assist grantees in coordinating QAPP submittals to EPA.

Requirements for QAPPs can be found at:

[www.epa.gov/quality/region-1-quality-systems-documents](http://www.epa.gov/quality/region-1-quality-systems-documents)

Applicants unfamiliar with the QAPP development and approval process may contact RAE for assistance in QAPP planning prior to proposal submittal.



**Utilization of Disadvantaged Business Enterprises.**

Funded projects will be required to comply with the requirements of EPA's Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Program for procurement activities, contained in 40 CFR, Part 33. Annual reporting requirements will be provided upon award.

**Other Federal Cost Requirements**

Costs under this grant must be reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary to the supported project in accordance with 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart E and must adhere to the general procurement standards set forth in 2 CFR 200.318 and "Consultant Fee Cap" set forth in 2 CFR 1500.9.

**### End Appendices ###**

*Thanks for your Full Proposal Application for LISCIF26!*