Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program

2026 Request for Applications (RFA)

Release Date: November 9th, 2026

Letters of Intent (LOIs) are Due: Friday, January 15th by 5pm CST/ 6pm EST
LOIs will be accepted by online submission only. Apply using the GLRCGP RFA Page: Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program. For all inquiries related to this RFA, including assistance for applicants unfamiliar with the grant process, please contact Jesús Sanchez at jsanchez@estuaries.org Restore America's Estuaries or schedule a meeting. https://calendly.com/jsanchez-estuaries/45min

Virtual Information Sessions will be held on the following dates in 2026 (all times are EST).

- **Tuesday, November 17th – 12pm CST/ 1pm EST**
- **Thursday, December 3rd – 10am CST/ 11am EST**

To participate, visit the RFA Page: Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program ~ Restore America's Estuaries

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1. **Program Information:**

About the Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program (GLRCGP)
Restore America's Estuaries is proud to lead a basin-wide Community Grant Program. Our program is one of five Great Lakes Restoration Community Projects Grant Programs funded by U.S. EPA through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI). The program's primary goal is to fund restoration projects in Great Lakes communities with environmental concerns in support of GLRI objectives and offer technical assistance and minimize administrative challenges associated with applying for and managing federal grant funds.

Our mission for the program is to promote community-centered environmental solutions throughout the Great Lakes Basin by providing support and facilitating the implementation of impactful projects. Many community-based organizations in this region may lack sufficient resources to apply, obtain, and oversee the implementation of federally funded grant projects. Through building capacity and technical assistance, RAE and the Community Grant Program's partner, The Junction Coalition, will support federal funding for these organizations and communities.

Cities, states, Tribes and nonprofit organizations representing Great Lakes communities can apply directly to this grant program. Furthering the efforts of GLRI, these grants will fund a range of environmental protection and restoration projects directly impacting communities in the Great Lakes Basin. This investment will encourage significant environmental, economic, health, and recreational benefits for Great Lakes communities.

RAE's basin-wide Community Grant Program aligns with the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) and supports the goals of GLRI Action Plan IV by addressing the following focus areas:

- Invasive Species
- Nonpoint Source Pollution
- Habitat and Species
- Foundations for Future Restoration Actions

Other funding considerations include:

- Project sustainability after completion
- Alignment with other strategic plans (e.g., Areas of Concern, Lakewide Action Management Plans, Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement). Note that certain activities, such as Areas of Concern (AOC) actions—including Management Actions or Beneficial Use Impairment (BUI) Removal Actions—are **not eligible** for funding under this grant program.
- Technical merit and project feasibility
- Eligible projects and activities will be community-driven, addressing the challenges and risks faced by Great Lakes communities affected by environmental issues.

About Restore America's Estuaries (RAE)

Restore America's Estuaries (RAE) is a national organization, dedicated to the protection and restoration of bays and estuaries as essential resources for our nation. RAE manages and administers this grant program to provide financial assistance, capacity building opportunities and training, and hosts an Annual Learning Exchange.

Geographic Focus
The geographic region is defined as the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes Basin, encompassing areas within the Great Lakes watersheds boundaries. Eligible project area can be accessed at:

- Great Lakes Facts and Figures | US EPA

2. **How to Apply:**

RAE will select grantees through a two-step application process: (1) a Letter of Intent (LOI), followed by (2) Full Proposals (by invitation only). Both steps are competitive; RAE's invitation to submit a full proposal does not guarantee funding for that proposal.

Any eligible organization may submit an LOI or multiple LOIs. In consultation with an independent advisory committee and EPA, RAE will select LOIs for further consideration as Full Proposals. In some cases, RAE may suggest changes to the scope of work or budget in the LOI, to be included in the Full Proposal.

Full Proposals will be 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 review committee and EPA. RAE may elect to partially fund proposals or may request other project modifications prior to finalizing awards.

LOI requirements are provided in **Appendix 1. Appendix 2** describes the requirements of Full Proposals. **Appendix 3** outlines the process by which RAE will evaluate and select LOIs and Full Proposals. Additional resources can be found on the **Great Lakes RFA Page.**

To be considered for funding, LOI applications must meet the requirements outlined in this RFA and appendices, including federal grant requirements referenced.

Letters of Intent must be submitted through the online portal accessed via here: https://www.gotomygrants.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/07d92009-1780-4368-8f9a-85d1f21a3408. The application can also be accessed on the webpage.

If you cannot access the online portal, please contact Jesús Sanchez, jsanchez@estuaries.org

In addition to the guidance provided in this document and on the GLRGP 2026 Request for Applications ~ Restore America's Estuaries, webpage, virtual information sessions will be held on the dates noted below, with recordings made available on the webpage. Attending informational sessions is highly encouraged as they will cover eligibility guidelines, program priorities, and review the application process. Additionally, prospective applicants may request individualized assistance from RAE by contacting Jesús Sanchez, jsanchez@estuaries.org. Schedule one to one appointments at: https://calendly.com/jsanchez-estuaries/45min

3. **Schedule (all times listed in Central and Eastern Standard Times:**

November 9th, 2026 (Mon):	Letters of Intent (LOIs) Released & LOI Application link open
Tuesday, November 17th at 12pm CST/ 1pm EST **Thursday, December 3rd at 10am CST/ 11am EST**	**Informational Webinars** 12pm CST/1pm EST November 17th Session Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/dJ4_kmCCR1-EeLu4EU7rLA 10am CST/11am EST December 3rd Registration: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/mZZGtORARQitt-MkSLXb5A
January 15, 2027 (Fri):	LOIs due/submission deadline 5pm CST/6pm EST
February 22nd, 2027	LOI decision notification emails sent; invitations to submit full proposals; Office hours for accepted applicants
April 9th, 2027	Full proposals due 5pm CST/6pm EST
Week of May 10th, 2027	Full proposal notification emails sent
May – June 2027	Rolling virtual announcements with projects after grant agreements; Feedback provided upon request; Office hours for accepted applicants
September 2027	Subaward start dates

4. **Awards:**

Source of Funds

As part of the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), the Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program (GLRCGP) is part of the largest investment in two decades. All grants under the basin-wide GLRCGP will be awarded, overseen, and administered by RAE, which is responsible for sub-awardee selection, funding, and oversight.

Anticipated Awards

In 2027, RAE will award between $2,000,000 and $4,000,000 in federal funds through the Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program. Typical awards will range between $50,000 to $750,000. There is no matching funds requirement for this grant.

Funding Priorities

Projects are required to contribute numeric results to at least one of the following Measures of Progress:

- **2.3.1**. Acres controlled for invasive species to benefit habitats, native species, and communities

- **3.1.1**. Estimated lbs. of Phosphorus reductions from conservation practice implementation
- **3.2.1.** Estimated gallons (in million) of stormwater runoff reduced
- **3.2.2**. Miles of Great Lakes streams and shorelines restored or protected
- **3.2.3.** Acres of riparian buffers, wetlands and floodplains restored or reconnected
- **4.1.1.** Acres of coastal wetland, nearshore, and other habitats protected or enhanced
- **4.1.2.** Miles of connectivity established for aquatic species

Eligible projects may also include the following activities; however, projects focused solely on these elements **will not** be considered:

- **5.1.1:** Number of youth impacted through education and stewardship projects.
- **5.1.2:** Number of people trained through workforce development programs.

Applicants are not expected to have technical expertise in calculating these measures. RAE can provide resources and assistance to help applicants identify the GLRI Measure(s) of Progress most appropriate for their proposed activities and determine an appropriate approach for estimating project outcomes.

Please find examples of projects based on GLRI themes and implementation actions can be found here: Projects | Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

Period of Performance
The expected award date for subawards is September 1st, 2027. Work must be completed by August 31st, 2029. Projects must begin incurring costs against the grant within the first three months following award.

Eligible Applicants
Eligible Applicants include nonprofit organizations; federally recognized Tribes, state-recognized Tribes, and Tribal organizations; state, county, local governments and their subdivisions; and academic institutions.

Federal agencies are not eligible to be recipients of funding but may be included as partners in proposals submitted by eligible recipients.

Proposals must target communities experiencing or affected by environmental and human health risks or harm. As such, all subaward projects should be community-driven or community-led.

Public-private partnerships are encouraged, consistent with requirements noted in **Appendix 4**.

Multiple Applications & Projects
Organizations may submit multiple LOIs or applications, either as a lead organization or as a partner on another organization's application. Multiple applications must be submitted separately, and each will be evaluated independently. While organizations may submit multiple applications, it is unlikely that more than one award will be made to the same organization.

Land Control, Permissions & Private Property

Most funded projects take place on public land or waters; however, this grant program may fund work on private land or buildings where there is a clear public purpose in support of the priorities, and where the applicant can provide an assurance of lasting impact – for example, through a long-term operation and maintenance agreement, conservation easement, deed restriction, or other agreement with the landowner.

Applicants that are not the sole property owner must, prior to the award, demonstrate permission from the landowner(s) for any access, alteration and use necessary to complete the project. This may take the form of partnership commitments, letter(s) of permission, etc. Environmental permits do not need to be approved prior to award, but the applicant must disclose permitting requirements and schedules in the application.

As with projects on publicly owned property, project sites on private land must include permanent signage acknowledging GLRI/EPA/RAE funding. Costs associated with the design, production, and installation of required project signage are allowable project expenses and may be included in the proposed project budget. Projects should not occur on federally owned property.

Achievement of GLRI Project Metrics
Upon completion of a funded project, applicants will be required to summarize project results and report on relevant metrics established under the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Action Plan. Projects will only be required to report on metrics directly applicable to their funded activities. RAE will provide additional guidance on reporting requirements. As needed, RAE will assist grant recipients in assessing the results of the work, including in the final report.

5. **Use of Funds:**

Funding may be used for typical project costs, including salary, fringe, contractual support, supplies, travel, and indirect costs. Equipment purchases may be considered but are subject to review and approval (See Tools & Equipment). All grant payments will be made on a reimbursement basis except as described in Section 7. Working Capital Advance of RFA, Section 6, describes ineligible uses of funds.

Indirect Costs
For organizations without a federal negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA), indirect costs may be reimbursed at a rate up to 10% of the modified total direct costs. For organizations with a current NICRA approved by any federal agency, indirect costs may be reimbursed according to the NICRA formula. **Appendix 5** explains calculation of indirect costs.

Tools & Equipment
Under this program, RAE will consider funding tools and equipment such as hardware, software, monitoring technology, durable equipment, and heavy equipment, where such investments support the implementation of GLRCGP goals and objectives.

Equipment purchases, defined as an item with a useful life of more than one year and per-unit cost of $10,000 or more, are generally not allowed. Equipment purchases may be considered but are subject to review and approval. Applicants proposing equipment purchases may be

asked to revise their project proposal and budget to demonstrate how the project can be completed without purchasing equipment.

Conferences and Travel
Applicants are encouraged to budget for travel to share lessons and results of projects with regional and national practitioners aligned with the grant funded projects of this program. Subawardees should plan to attend the Great Lakes Learning Exchange, held within the region. Travel expenses to share knowledge at other meetings may also be allowable. All travel-related costs should be included in proposal budgets, including airfare, lodging, registration fees, ground transportation, and any other associated travel expenses.

Signage
Costs associated with the design, production, and installation of permanent project signage acknowledging GLRI, EPA, and RAE funding are allowable for project expenses. Applicants may include reasonable signage costs in their proposed project budget when signage is required as part of the project.

6. **Ineligible Uses of Funding:**

Funding may not be used for certain purposes under this solicitation. However, this program can fund eligible components of a larger project that may include ineligible components funded by other means.

The following uses of funding are ineligible:

- **Research and Monitoring:** This grant program will not fund proposals whose primary purpose is research, monitoring, or planning; however, these activities may be supported as components of a larger project when their purpose is to assess or demonstrate the outcomes and impacts of the grant-funded work. Applicants should clearly describe the role of such activities as well as how it informs the achievement of GLRI metrics and project goals.
- **Actions Legally Required:** This grant program will not fund actions required to settle a formal enforcement action or included in a court order; nor will it fund actions required as mitigation measures under a state, local, or federal permit for a specific project.
- **Routine Maintenance:** Funding will not be provided to projects involving only routine activities to maintain stormwater infrastructure, other facilities, land, or waterbodies.
- **Conventional "gray infrastructure" projects:** Funding will not be provided to projects proposing conventional infrastructure projects using well-established technologies or methods (e.g., installation of sewer lines).
- **Private Construction:** Funding will not be provided to projects proposing new construction or retrofitting of buildings or facilities serving primarily private purposes, including residential, commercial, and institutional properties.
- **Land Purchase:** Purchase of land or real estate will not be funded.
- **Lobbying:** Funding will not be provided to projects that involve any attempts to influence the outcomes of any Federal, state, or local election, referendum, initiative, or similar procedure, through in-kind or cash contributions, endorsements, publicity, or similar activity.
- **Applications Focused Solely on Improving Access and Recreational Activities**: Proposals that only seek to enhance public access or recreational opportunities without a broader environmental benefit will not be funded.

- **Applications Focused Solely on Workforce Development Activities**: Standalone workforce development initiatives without a direct connection to GLRI measures mentioned in Section 4. Funding Priorities will not be eligible for funding.
- **Applications Focused Solely on Environmental Education**. Standalone education programs will not be eligible for funding.
- **Activities Occurring Outside the Historic Great Lakes Basin**: Eligible activities must take place within the U.S. portion of the Great Lakes Basin, which includes areas that currently drain into the Great Lakes system as well as historically connected watersheds. Activities occurring outside this defined geographic region will not be funded.
- **Activities to Evaluate or Achieve Management Actions in Great Lakes Areas of Concern**: Proposals that are solely focused on evaluating or achieving management actions within designated Great Lakes Areas of Concern will not be funded.

7. Working Capital Advance:

An obstacle to participation in many federal programs is the inability of the applicant to finance the first phase of activities. To reduce this obstacle, Restore America's Estuaries has worked with EPA to provide Working Capital Advances. In the LOI and Full Proposal, applicants have the option to request a Working Capital Advance. Working Capital Advance can cover initial expenses, enabling the applicant to complete the initial project activities and objectives effectively without an undue strain on the applicant's cash. The Working Capital Advance will also enable the applicant to be in an improved financial position to handle a cost-reimbursement payment method for the remainder of disbursements. The Working Capital Advance will only cover the first two months upon starting the project.

Applicants for a working capital advance must provide detailed documentation of expenditure at the end of the two months. If funds from the two-month budget are not spent, the subrecipient will inform RAE why the funds were not spent, and RAE will determine if the funds need to be returned or spent on another part of the project.

Reimbursable costs are costs in the approved subgrant agreement budget and follow the cost principles of the 2 CFR Part 200, Uniform Grants Guidance. Disbursements are subject to funding availability and obligations under the agreement between the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and RAE.

Note: The request for Working Capital Advance will have no impact on the scoring of the application.

8. Additional Resources:

The Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program ~ Restore America's Estuaries webpage is the primary on-line resource and portal for prospective applicants.

Other resources that may be helpful in developing applications are:

- Great Lakes Restoration Initiative
- Projects | Great Lakes Restoration Initiative

- Best Practice Guide for Procuring Services, Supplies, and Equipment Under EPA Assistance Agreements
- General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance

For questions about this RFA, contact Jesús Sanchez, Restore America's Estuaries, jsanchez@estuaries.org.

For additional assistance, schedule one to one appointment at: https://calendly.com/jsanchez-estuaries/45min

Thanks for your interest in the Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program.

We look forward to receiving your Letter of Intent!

End RFA; Begin Appendices

Appendix 1: Letters of Intent

Letters of Intent (LOIs) allow RAE to provide preliminary review of project ideas, in order to determine whether a full proposal will be requested and to provide comments to applicants.

The LOI must be submitted via the Euna Grants online portal found here: GLRGP 2025 Request for Applications ~ Restore America's Estuaries. LOIs will be accepted beginning with a deadline for submittal by 6:00 p.m. EST on January 15th, 2027.

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

Section 1: Applicant Information
- Name of Applicant Organization (organization requesting funding)
- Role of Applicant Organization (may be project leader or fiscal agent)
- Project Leader: Name, organization, email, phone
- Application Point of Contact: Name, organization, email, phone

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 Home | SAM.gov. For information about how to create a SAM, see our video on Great Lakes Grant Program: - SAM.gov and UEI: How to Register and Meet GLRCGP RFA Requirements
- Applicant organization Unique Entity ID (UEI). The UEI will be automatically generated by your SAM account
- Organizational Budget – The total dollar amount of the organization's annual budget for the most recently completed fiscal year.

Note: EIN/SAM registration information and a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) are not required when submitting the LOI but will be required for the Full Proposal. Applicants

may indicate that these items are "pending" when submitting the LOI. Because completing these registrations may take several weeks, applicants should allow sufficient time to obtain them before the Full Proposal deadline.

Section 3: Project Overview

- **Name of Project (1000-character limit)**
- **Brief Description of Project (1200-character limit)**
- **Project Phase:** Select all phases that apply to your proposed project. The implementation phase is required for all projects funded through this grant program and must include on-the-ground restoration activities. Projects may also include pre-implementation activities, such as planning, design, permitting, or modeling, that are tied to GLRI metrics and have a clear path to implementation. If selecting "Other," please provide a brief description of the additional activities (200-character limit).
- **Attach a Map of the General Location** (New York, Pennsylvania, Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Great Lakes Watersheds)
    - A map or maps of the proposed project area is required for all proposals except those which are region-wide in scope. Attach a single PDF file, standard letter size, 3 pages max., 10 MB max.
    - You may supplement the map with a brief written description of project location, such as by a table of cities or counties and zip codes.

Section 4: Working Capital Advance

Working Capital advances are a process in which RAE pre-funds early-stage activities that organizations don't have the working capital to finance.

- Indicate the need for a Working Capital Advance.

Section 5: Project Narrative

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

- **Project Description (1800-character limit):** Briefly describe the proposed project, why it is needed, what it will accomplish, and its anticipated environmental improvements and broader impacts.
- **Community Impact (1800-character limit):** Briefly describe who the project will serve, how community members and partners will be engaged or lead the work, and the anticipated benefits for your respective communities.
- **Project Team:** Describe the core project team and the role of each individual or organization. All project teams members should be accounted for in the project budget even if their contributions to the project are in-kind.
- **Description of Work and Timeline:** List the specific tasks you will complete during the two-year project timeline and for each quarter. For each task, briefly describe the main activities or steps, including approvals, permits, or seasonal conditions that could affect when the work can happen. Be specific: for example, describe the work to be done, rather than simply stating a goal such as "restore habitat."
- **Alignment with the GLRI:** Which GLRI Measures of progress (listed on RFA, page 5, section 4. Awards; Funding Priorities) does the project align with? Please select the Measure of Progress number (ex: 2.3.1: Acres controlled for invasive species to benefit habitats, native species, and communities.)
- **Property Owner Permissions:** Applicants must state whether any kind of property permissions or authorization will be needed to complete any stage of the project for which

funding is requested. If so, documentation of permission will be required with the Full Proposal.

Section 6: Budget

- Applicants must provide a project budget organized by federal cost category (see Table 1 on RFA page 18 for an example). The budget must include a breakdown of all anticipated project costs, including costs associated with project partners. All amounts should be rounded to the nearest dollar, and the sum of all budget categories must equal the total funding amount requested.
- 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 4 or contact RAE for assistance.
- There is no matching funds requirement

Section 7: Certification

- Signature of responsible individual (name, job title, organization).

How to Submit a Letter of Intent

Go to the RFA Webpage: GLRGP 2026 Request for Applications ~ Restore America's Estuaries and follow the links to the online application. Applications must be submitted via this portal.

When you submit your application, you will receive a reply acknowledging receipt of the submittal. Save or print the reply 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 Jesús Sanchez, jsanchez@estuaries.org, **as soon as possible to ensure acceptance of your application.**

All applications must meet the deadlines listed above and must be completed at the time of submittal. In the event of documented transmittal problems, corrupted files, or other technology problems, RAE, at its discretion, 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.

LOIs 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 inviting Full Proposals.

End Appendix 1

Appendix 2: Full Proposals

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

The Full Proposal follows a format similar to the Letter of Intent (LOI) but allows for a more comprehensive presentation of the project. It provides an opportunity to expand the sections within the LOI and further develop a budget and budget narrative.

Additionally, the Full Proposal should include a more detailed description of the Work and Timeline, outlining key phases of the project, deliverables, and expected completion dates. This timeline should clearly define major tasks, deadlines, and progress checkpoints to ensure accountability and successful project execution.

The Full Proposal should also include a more detailed Budget Narrative that clearly explains and justifies the costs associated with the proposed work. The narrative should align with the project scope, timeline, and budget and provide sufficient detail for each major cost category, including personnel, fringe benefits, travel, equipment, supplies, contractual services, and other direct costs, as applicable. Costs should be clearly connected to specific project activities and deliverables and provide enough information to understand how the requested funds will support successful project implementation.

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.

RAE will provide complete information for submitting a Full Proposal to selected applicants.

End Appendix 2

Appendix 3: Decisions

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

Following the review of LOIs, RAE will invite Full Proposals from applicants whose proposals have been selected for further consideration and will notify applicants whose LOIs have not been selected. Feedback on LOIs will be provided to both applicants, those accepted and not accepted.

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.

Review Framework
LOIs and Full Proposals will be reviewed utilizing four major criteria: (Refer to scoring and evaluation documents in the additional resources section of the **GLRCGP RFA Page.**

1. **Community Impact:** The project's potential to generate significant positive impacts on watershed ecosystems and community well-being. Emphasis should be placed on addressing community-identified needs, particularly within Great Lakes communities impacted by environmental harm and degradation, prioritizing those facing the greatest risks and challenges. Projects should demonstrate potential for long-term benefits through direct improvements or indirect contributions like planning and capacity building, enhancing ecosystem health, water quality, and resilience to environmental and other stressors.

2. **Alignment with Program Goals and Priorities:** Proposals are evaluated based on their alignment with GLRI Action Plan, contributing to priorities such as wildlife conservation, pollution reduction, and habitat restoration. Projects should clearly demonstrate how they address one or more GLRI measures of progress, strengthening community and advance environmental solutions. Capacity-building initiatives that support comprehensive watershed plans or collaborative approaches to ecosystem restoration are strongly encouraged to enhance long-term impact.

3. **Feasibility:** Feasibility assesses the applicant's capacity to successfully implement the project, with a focus on readiness and sound planning. Proposals must present a detailed implementation plan with clear timelines reflecting realistic expectations and minimizing potential delays. Preference is given to projects that are "ready to go," demonstrating a well-defined pathway to execution with strategies to overcome potential challenges and ensure sustainable outcomes.

4. **Budget:** Proposals will be evaluated on whether the budget is reasonable, well justified, and aligned with project goals and anticipated outcomes. Applicants must provide a detailed budget that reflects realistic costs, demonstrates sound financial planning, and allocates resources to maximize impact. The applicant's capacity to manage grant funds will also be considered in assessing the feasibility and sustainability of the proposed work.

   All applicants will receive feedback on their LOI or Full Proposal application upon request. 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 3

Appendix 4: Requirements of Funded Projects I

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 the grant program is federal funding. Therefore, funded projects must adhere to federal requirements regarding contracting, sub-awards, and purchases. These include multiple bids for procurements above $10,000 (2 C.F.R. 200), 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 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

Compliance with Federal Requirements and Executive Orders
RAE's Great Lakes Restoration Community Grant Program (GLRCGP) is funded through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI), a federal funding source. Applicants should be aware that projects selected for funding through the GLRCGP are subject to applicable federal laws and regulations, including compliance with presidential Executive Orders and other requirements established by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Award Announcements
Grants will be announced (in-person or virtual) Spring 2027. Grantees are expected to participate in at least one of these events.

Collaboration
Grantees will be required to participate in an Annual Learning Exchange meeting during the period of the award, to be held within the region or online. Travel funds for these meetings may be included in proposal budgets. Grantees may be asked to participate in other regional events aimed at sharing progress and results with organizations throughout the region, including 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 shareable within one year of project completion. Should this present a problem with proprietary or personal information, contact RAE to discuss it 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)
Many projects funded by will require a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) approved by EPA 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:

https://www.epa.gov/great-lakes-funding/glnpos-quality-assurance-resources-site-grantees-supporting-great-lakes

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

National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) – Section 106
Projects funded through the GLRCGP may be subject to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA), which requires federal agencies to consider the effects of federally funded activities on historic properties, including archaeological and cultural resources. Projects involving ground disturbance, construction, restoration, or modifications to existing structures may require a Section 106 review before relevant project activities can begin. Grant recipients are responsible for providing the project information and documentation necessary to support the Section 106 review process. RAE will assist grant recipients in coordinating with EPA to determine applicable requirements and facilitate the review process. Any required Section 106 review must be completed before activities subject to the review can begin**.**

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 Appendix 4

Appendix 5: Application Budget Example

The next page is an example of a budget. Refer to the instructions in this RFA to complete the budget application table provided in the application system. Contact RAE if needed for additional assistance.

EXAMPLE Budget Table 1 (for drafting purposes only)

Category	Award Request	Total Cost
Personnel		
Fringe		
Travel		
Supplies		
Equipment		
Contractual		
Other		
Indirect (NICRA or 10%)		
Total Expense Budget Cost		

End Appendices
Thanks for your interest