

Request for Proposals (“RFP”)

OCEAN STATE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE FUND



Dated: March 28, 2024

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (“DEM”) and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (“CRMC”) are announcing the availability of grant funding via the newly established Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Fund (“OSCAR”). Consistent with Rhode Island General Laws § 46-23.3-2, DEM and CRMC are jointly soliciting proposals for projects that protect or enhance coastal or riverine habitats to address impacts of climate change. OSCAR is a competitive grant program providing funds for projects that is administered in collaboration with the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). The grants may be made in addition to other forms of local, state, and federal assistance. The OSCAR fund has available approximately \$4 million as allocated by the Rhode Island General Assembly in Fiscal Year 2022. The OSCAR Program grants are administered in accordance with RIIB Rule 830-RICR-10-35-1, as well as companion DEM and CRMC rules, available in the Rhode Island Code of Regulations.

<https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Organizations>

1. OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

- A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR:** Projects from eligible entities that implement adaptation and resilience projects on public lands as defined by RI Gen. Laws § 46-23.3-2(8). Grants from OSCAR will advance projects on public land that protect or enhance coastal or riverine habitats to address climate change impacts. A joint agency information session on the OSCAR RFP will be hosted on **April 15, 2024**. See Section 4.
- B. APPLICATION DEADLINE:** No later than 4:00 pm **May 17, 2024**. See Section 2 for application submission requirements.
- C. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Any entity which owns or controls public land as defined by R.I. Gen. Laws § 46-23.3-2(8) may apply. This includes state and municipal governments, including quasi-public agencies, and other public and private lands dedicated to public use as demonstrated through publicly held easements.
- D. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:** Proposals eligible for funding are for projects that implement activities that protect or enhance coastal or riverine habitats in order to address impacts from climate change. Climate change impacts relevant to this RFP include, but are not limited to, impacts of sea level rise and flooding and accelerated erosion resulting from changes in the

frequency and intensity of precipitation events. Projects must be located on public lands as defined in § 46-23.3-2(8) and have a nexus to climate change adaptation and resilience. Eligible projects may include but not be limited to projects that:

- i. reduce the vulnerability of low-lying infrastructure on public land through measures that include removal and relocation of infrastructure while providing habitat benefits;
- ii. restore river and stream floodplains, including regrading of banks;
- iii. provide revegetation;
- iv. involve acquisition of that area of land necessary to maintain and preserve public access;
- v. redesign, resize, and replace culverts and bridge spans at existing wetland crossings.

The following categories of projects are **not eligible** for funding under the OSCAR Program:

- i. projects that would degrade, fill, or otherwise destroy coastal, estuarine, or riverine habitats;
- ii. projects fulfilling any liability for restoration required by any local, state, or federal agency pursuant to an environmental or public health enforcement action;
- iii. projects elevating, repairing, or replacing infrastructure, or constructing new infrastructure, in its existing location that is experiencing climate change impacts, with the exception of work to redesign, resize and replace culverts and bridge spans at existing wetland crossings;
- iv. projects constructing new, or repairing existing shoreline protection structures; provided, however, that existing shoreline protection structures on public parks may be repaired; or
- v. projects constructing roads or bridges, except as otherwise authorized above (Item 3 in this paragraph).

E. FUNDING AVAILABILITY: The FY 2022 State Budget allocated \$4 million to the OSCAR program projects eligible to be funded by this RFP along with certain administrative costs. DEM and CRMC reserve the right not to allocate all available funds and may issue an additional request for proposals at a later date. Funding distributions for the OSCAR Fund will be made upon execution of a grant agreement between Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (“RIIB”) and each successful applicant.

F. GENERAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY:

All grants will be managed on a reimbursement basis. The grantees must incur the cost and submit documentation to RIIB for reimbursement. Applicants must demonstrate administrative capacity to manage their project and the grant funds and comply with applicable state and federal fiscal requirements, including accounting, record-keeping, procurement, and reporting procedures. Applicants should design their projects to include appropriate community outreach and engagement activities. For construction projects and other types of long-lived physical practices, applicants must describe how the site will be monitored and overseen, provide examples of previous construction/practice management, and provide for appropriate operation and maintenance over the life of the practice.

Appropriate metrics of success are expected to be determined by the applicant and the applicant will be expected to measure success by these metrics in reporting processes.

- G. MATCHING FUNDS:** Matching funds of at least 25% of total project costs award are requested and encouraged. “Match” refers to funds or services used to conduct a project that are not borne by grant funds. All project match must: (1) relate directly to the project for which the match is being applied; (2) be reasonably valued; and (3) be supported by documentation. Match is an indicator of local commitment to a project and is considered in proposal eligibility and ranking. Contribution of match will be taken into consideration during the evaluation of proposals. Match may include: (1) cash; (2) the value of noncash, in-kind contributions (e.g., value of equipment donated for use the project, municipal staff time overseeing or organizing the project, etc.); or (3) the value of goods and services directly contributed to the project. Third-party in-kind contributions are allowed with the exception that Section 319 grants cannot be matched with other federal contributions. Volunteer services provided to the grantee for project activities and travel costs may be valued as match at rates consistent with rates ordinarily paid by employers for similar work. General volunteer time may be valued in accordance with rates found at: <https://independentsector.org/resource/the-value-of-volunteer-time-state-and-historical-data/> The most recent rate of general volunteer time in RI is \$31.96 per hour. Matching funds may either be contributed to the direct costs of the public infrastructure work or may be in-kind from the applicant(s).
- H. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF AGREEMENT(S):** The grant agreement period will begin on the date the parties execute the agreement or such other date set forth in the agreement. Unless otherwise agreed to by DEM, CRMC, and the Bank, funds awarded pursuant to grant agreements issued pursuant to this RFP must be fully spent for costs associated with the approved project on or before 24 months from executed agreement. Applicants must establish a realistic project timeline that meets this end date and are encouraged to consider phasing complex projects to ensure on- time delivery. A project that is limited to a design and permitting phase must be associated with a commitment that will reasonably lead to final project construction or implementation.
- I. REPORTING:** If selected for an award, the Applicant will be required to submit quarterly progress updates and a final project report which includes a brief project summary communicating lessons learned. The Applicant will be required to be in communication with a point of contact from either DEM, CRMC or both as applicable and RIIB throughout the course of the project. Other deliverables are project specific and will be identified at the time of grant agreement and project scoping.

2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

A completed application package consists of an application form (Attachment A of this RFP), a narrative project proposal, a completed budget form (Attachment C), a map depicting the project location and any other supplemental supporting materials. The proposal narrative and budget should follow the outline and guidance in Attachment B.

Applications for funding should be submitted electronically via email to:

DEM.WaterResources@dem.ri.gov

with **OSCAR Proposal** listed in the subject line

Deadline for Submittals: May 17, 2024 5:00 pm

Awards to be announced in June 2024

The DEM, CRMC, and RIIB are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (“APRA”) (RI General Laws Chapter 38-2). Any documents, materials, maps, statements, or other information submitted in response to this RFP may be released in accordance with APRA. Please do not submit any information that the Applicant may not wish to disclose publicly, such as home addresses or personal telephone numbers, social security numbers, or other similar information.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

As specified in state law, a review committee consisting of members from DEM, CRMC, Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, and Rhode Island Emergency Management Authority, will evaluate all proposals on a competitive basis, evaluate the applications relative to the criteria set forth in this RFP and make recommendations regarding eligible projects. The recommendations of the review committee will then be presented to DEM and CRMC who will ultimately make the final decision on which applications to approve for potential OSCAR funding. Once approved, DEM and CRMC will notify the Bank of the successful applicants and the Bank will award funding to the successful applicants subject to the execution of a grant agreement. Grants will be managed on a reimbursement basis as specified in the terms of said grant agreement. The review committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that do not meet the goals and terms of this RFP. Each application will be evaluated on its own merits to identify the strongest proposals to recommend for funding.

The evaluation criteria used to assess each proposal are focused as follows:

- Project Approach: 30 points
- Climate Impact: 20 points
- Project Public Benefits: 30 points
- Environmental Justice: 10 points
- Applicant Capabilities: 20 points

No.	Ranking Criteria	Score		
		High	Medium	Low/Zero*
PROJECT APPROACH				
1	Consistent with Sea Level Rise Projections and/or accounts for changes in rainfall patterns	5	3	1
2	Consistent with applicable plans referenced in the proposal: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coastal Habitat Restoration Strategy • CCMP • Fisheries management plans • Nonpoint Source Pollution Mgt Plan • Watershed-based Management Plans • Special Area Management Plans • Municipal Resiliency Plans/Hazard Mitigation Plans • Other habitat restoration plans 	10	5	1
3	Technically sound and cost-effective approach with likelihood of success that protects or enhances coastal or riverine habitats while addressing climate change impacts.	10	5	1
4	Project team includes the necessary partners and collaboration.	5	3	1
Subtotal		30		
CLIMATE CHANGE IMPACT BEING ADDRESSED				
5	Severity of risk to infrastructure on public lands from flooding/SLR/storm surge	10	5	1
6a	Evidence of existing habitat degradation OR	5	3	1
6b	Threat of habitat degradation exists	5	3	1
7	Existing/threatened loss of public access	5	3	1
Subtotal		20		
PROJECT PUBLIC BENEFITS				
8a	Improves fish and wildlife habitat for rare/endangered species OR	5	3	1
8b	Creates or replaces habitat losses that benefit fish and wildlife OR	5	3	1
8c	Improves fish and wildlife habitat	4	2	1
9	Improves water quality	5	3	1
10	Extent of use of public lands involved in project	5	3	1
11	Beneficial uses of waters being improved	5	3	1
12	Provides enhanced new public access or protects/restores existing public access	5	3	1
13	Other public co-benefits associated with project including but limited to flood mitigation, enhanced quality of life, etc.	5	3	1
Subtotal		30		
ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE CONSIDERATIONS				
14	Project is located in designated environmental justice area or disadvantaged community	10	5	
Subtotal		10		

APPLICANT CAPABILITY				
15	Demonstrated experience relevant to project implementation	8	4	1
16	Fiscal capacity to proceed & consideration of match	5	3	1
17	Clear project milestones and roles for partners	4	2	1
18	Readiness to proceed & overall quality of proposal	3	2	1
Subtotal		20		
TOTAL		110		

(*) Zero points will be awarded when the criteria is not applicable to the project.

4 AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

A joint agency informational session on the OSCAR RFP will be hosted by DEM on via ZOOM on April 15, 2024. CRMC and RIIB will also be participants.

WHEN: Monday, April 15, 2024 Time: 3:00 – 4:00 p.m.

ONLINE: [Click here to register via Zoom.](#)

In advance of the proposal, DEM is available to answer questions concerning the RFP including but not limited to the eligibility of a potential project, eligibility of an applicant, and allowable project costs. If you have questions, please contact the following:

Susan Kiernan, Administrator
 DEM Office of Water Resources
 401-537-4246
Sue.kiernan@dem.ri.gov

Or

Kimberly Koriath, Chief Resilience Officer
 State of Rhode Island/DEM
 401-633-4578 (c)
Kimberly.Koriath@dem.ri.gov

Information regarding the OSCAR Program and RFP is available on the [DEM Office of Water Resources Financial Assistance webpage.](#)

List of Attachments

- A. Fillable Application Form
- B. Narrative and Budget Guidance
- C. Fillable Budget Form

OSCAR Grant Program Application Form



Applicant Name: _____

Project Title: _____

Grant Administrator Contact

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Project Manager Contact (if different from the Grant Administrator above)

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (_____) _____

Email Address: _____

Proposed Funding:

Total Project Cost: \$ _____

Grant Request: \$ _____

Matching Contribution: \$ _____

Applicant Certification and Signature

By submitting this application, I acknowledge that I am authorized to submit this request on behalf of the organization, and that, to the best of my knowledge, the materials submitted under this application, including the project narrative and budget, and complete and accurate.

Authorized Signature: _____

Date: _____

Printed Name: _____

Title: _____

Project Narrative Guidance



Please provide your full project narrative using the following outline. Responses should be concise and directly align with the outline prompts. Attachments such as images, drawings, letters, excel spreadsheets, etc. can be included for clarity.

- **Project Purpose:** Provide a concise, clear statement of project purpose. Describe the project in relation to known or anticipated climate change impacts that will be addressed including but not limited to sea level rise or changes in rainfall patterns. Describe the project location and site characteristics (type of habitat, public ownership, public access) as well as any evidence of existing habitat degradation or threat that exists including its association with climate change as applicable. Include information on the existing site-specific climate change problem or threats being addressed and characterize the current severity of risk to infrastructure on the public lands of the project from flooding and/or storm surge. As applicable, describe any existing or threatened loss of public access to the public lands of the project.
- **Project Approach:** Provide a concise overview of the project approach and explain how it will meet project purpose. Describe the project's impact on enhancing coastal or riverine habitats and how the project will address climate change impacts. Describe the technical basis for the project approach, including data and projections that will be considered (SLR projections, design storms to be utilized, etc.), and how success will be assessed or measured. Describe the anticipated duration of the proposed project. Describe the current project status, including any prior planning, design, and/or permitting work related to the project.

Describe the consistency of your project with relevant planning documents. These may include one more of the following:

1. Resilient Rhody
2. Rhode Island Coastal Wetland Restoration Strategy;
3. Rhode Island Coastal and Estuarine Habitat Strategy (CRMC)
4. Narragansett Bay Estuary Program - Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan;
5. Regional or DEM Fisheries Management Plan(s);
6. DEM Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Plan;
7. DEM Watershed- Based Plans (Nonpoint Source Pollution, TMDLs)
8. CRMC Special Area Management Plans;
9. Local Hazard Mitigation Plan
10. Municipal Resilience Plans
11. Watershed Flood Studies/Plans
12. Municipal Comprehensive Plans
13. Any other watershed or habitat restoration plans.

Climate Data & Hazard Mapping Resources:

STORMTOOLS: <https://stormtools-mainpage-crc-uri.hub.arcgis.com/>

FLOODPLAIN MAPPING: <https://riema.ri.gov/planning-mitigation/floodplain-management/mapping>

- **Project Tasks:** Describe the major project tasks that will be undertaken in the project such as procurement of services, design/engineering, permitting, preparation of access agreements, construction or implementation, community engagement, monitoring and report writing. Identify deliverables for each task. Identify who is responsible for each task. Provide a proposed timeline and milestones for the project.
- **Public Benefits:** Describe the project's beneficial impact by addressing the following as applicable:
 - How the project would: 1) create or replace habitat losses that benefit fish and wildlife, (2) improves fish and wildlife habitat; or (3) improve fish and wildlife habitat for rare or endangered species,
 - How the project would improve water quality and enhance any beneficial uses of waters being improved;
 - Any enhancement, restoration, or creation of new public access;
 - Utilization of nature-based solutions;
 - Any other public benefits including enhanced quality of life (i.e., Public recreational, educational, etc.)
- **Environmental Justice:** Identify whether the project is located in a designated environmental justice area and/or disadvantaged community?

Yes/No

As applicable, add description of benefits to EJ communities outside of project location.

Resources available to determine designated environmental justice or disadvantaged communities in RI include:

- a. **DEM EJ Map:** <https://dem.ri.gov/environmental-protection-bureau/initiatives/environmental-justice>
- b. **RIIB Disadvantaged Communities Designations:** Intended Use Plan Page 14-16 : https://dem.ri.gov/sites/g/files/xkgbur861/files/2022-11/srf-clean-water-intended-use-plan-23_0.pdf
- c. **EPA EJ Screening Tool** <https://www.epa.gov/ejscreen>
- d. **CEJST:** <https://screeningtool.geoplatform.gov/en/#3/33.47/-27.5>

- **Project Management and Team:** Identify who will manage the project, the roles of partners and the approach to coordination and collaboration. (form a project team, meet regularly, etc.). Describe the organization's prior experience managing projects of similar scope and complexity. Characterize the organization's capacity with respect to fiscal administration.
- **Location Map:** Include a map that identifies the project location. This may be included in the narrative document or added as a separate file attachment with the application package submittal.

Budget Form Guidance

- **Personnel Costs:** Includes salaries and fringe benefits paid directly by the grantee for project work. "Salary" should be reflected as a per hour rate. Fringe benefits should be reflected as a percentage of salary.
- **Indirect costs:** May only be charged by those entities that have an approved negotiated rate with the State if RI.
- **Supplies:** Include various goods and materials to be purchased directly by the grantee that are necessary to complete the project, cost less than \$5,000 for any individual item and not included elsewhere in the budget as contractual or construction category.
- **Equipment:** Includes durable items purchased directly by the grantee to carry out the project, excluding construction materials, that individually cost \$5,000 or more.
- **Travel:** Includes travel costs directly associated with the project. Vehicle costs = miles x mileage rate).
- **Contractual:** Includes services not provided directly by the grantee including consultants, engineering and design services, etc. Applicant should provide estimated costs.
- **Construction:** Includes costs associated with contracted services for installation and construction of a project. This category includes any materials procured and provided by construction contractors. May also include permit fees. Applicant should provide estimated costs.
- **Other** – Use this category for any costs not described in the categories listed above.

OSCAR Grant Program Budget Table



Budget Category						Requested Grant Amount	Match Amount	Total Cost of Category
1. Salary and Fringe ¹								
Name	Title	Salary	Percent Time Charged to Project	Fringe (as percent of salary)	Total Salary Cost			
2. Indirect Costs ²								
3. Supplies ³								
4. Equipment ⁴								
5. Travel and Training ⁵								
6. Contractual ⁶								
7. Construction ⁷								
8. Other ⁸								
Totals								

Table B notes:

1. Include salaries and fringe benefits paid for work performed on the project. "Salary" should include the rate per hour by position. "Fringe benefits" are employment benefits given in addition to wages or salary, such as health, retirement, etc. Grant funds are typically not used to pay municipal employee's salaries; these expenses should be used as match.
2. Indirect costs can only be charged by those entities that have negotiated an indirect rate with the State of RI in advance.
3. Supplies include expendable items, such as office, field and lab supplies, film, postage, books or equipment etc. costing less than \$5,000.
4. Equipment includes any items of equipment costing more than \$5,000. Equipment under \$5,000 should be captured under the supplies row.
5. Travel and Training includes transportation costs incurred during work, such as tolls, costs of using vehicle (vehicle costs = number of miles x mileage rate).
6. Includes procured services not provided by grantee, such as consultants, engineering, and design services, etc. Projects must identify tasks and outputs for each contractor. If contractual work has not yet been bid, provide estimated costs.
7. Construction costs include costs associated with construction of BMPs, including permit fees.
8. Other costs includes costs not described by previous categories.