



INDIAN RIVER LAGOON NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM 2024 Small Grant Application Kit

IRLNEP Small Grants Program at a Glance:

The Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program (IRLNEP) is accepting grant applications from schools, local citizen groups and non-profit organizations for projects that support community engagement/education and restoration projects focused on the Indian River Lagoon (IRL). The guiding objective of the small grants program is to mobilize as many segments of the public as possible to focus on IRL protection and restoration. Projects selected for funding are those that help foster a Lagoon-Friendly ethic and promote community stewardship of the IRL. Projects must engage local communities located within the IRL watershed and may involve engagement/education activities, restoration activities, or both.

Goal:

The IRLNEP Small Grants Program supports action plans of the *IRLNEP Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) – Looking ahead to 2030* through community-based education and small restoration projects focusing on the Indian River Lagoon. Empowering citizens through programs such as this helps foster an environmental ethic and promotes community stewardship of the IRL. The CCMP is available online [here](#).

Funding available: \$500 - \$5,000 per grant. \$25,000 budgeted for FY 2024.

Deadline for submissions: March 25, 2024, by 5 p.m.

Award Date: Funding will be made available on or after May 13, 2024.

Eligibility:

IRLNEP Small Grants are directed toward schools, businesses, community groups and organizations wishing to involve the public in IRL education and restoration programs. An organization's tax identification number is used by the IRLNEP to issue a contract for the awarded grant funds. Individuals are not eligible to receive grants funded under this program and are encouraged to partner with an appropriate organization to submit a proposal for funding consideration. Community groups and organizations from within the IRLNEP watershed planning boundary are eligible to apply for funding. All projects must be implemented within IRLNEP watershed planning boundary (see map, page 8). Eligible applicants include:

- Teachers, school districts, student clubs (as sponsored by a school);
- Community clubs and organizations (scouting groups, civic groups, churches, etc.);
- Homeowner's and neighborhood associations;
- Non-profit groups;
- Small businesses, business organizations;
- Local governments, agencies and universities **if** a strong volunteer or community involvement component is outlined in the proposal **and** no indirect costs are requested.

Proposal Limitations:

Organizations may submit no more than one (1) proposal per funding cycle. Should an organization have several proposals under consideration, it is advised that an internal competition be held to select the one to

be submitted.

Implementation period:

Project must begin within 6 months of the award date and be completed within 1 year of award date.

INTRODUCTION

The Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program: The health of estuaries is threatened by land use changes, habitat loss, pollution, resource conflicts and other issues. In 1987, Congress established the National Estuary Program (NEP) as a non-regulatory, community-based program to protect and restore the water quality of estuaries. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) administers the NEP.

The Indian River Lagoon was nominated as an Estuary of National Significance and joined the NEP in 1990. In 2015, the IRLNEP became sponsored by the IRL Council, an independent special district of Florida. The IRL Council includes representatives of five counties bordering the Lagoon (Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin counties), the St. Johns River and South Florida Water Management Districts, and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP). The U.S. EPA provides guidance to the Council.

Additional background information about the Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program is available on-line at www.onelagoon.org.

IRLNEP Small Grants Program:

The IRLNEP Small Grants Program is intended as a means of engaging and educating local citizens and involving them in the restoration and recovery of the IRL. The Program seeks applications for projects addressing IRL education or restoration projects in Volusia, Brevard, Indian River, St. Lucie and Martin Counties. Projects must address IRL issues and priorities as identified in the Proposal Categories listed below. They should promote public involvement in solutions for Lagoon protection and restoration.

Proposals focused on restoration should:

- Be focused on IRL water or habitat quality.
- Define the restoration area clearly, including size and location. Maps and GPS coordinates are encouraged. All restoration projects must take place on the IRL watershed.
- Describe how volunteers and/or partner organizations will participate.
- Describe how and how often maintenance and monitoring of the project area will be conducted, and who will do it.
- Have letter(s) of support from the landowner of the area to be restored. All IRLNEP Small Grants Program projects must take place on community-owned, public-owned or conservation easement lands. For projects planned on public lands or facilities, applicants must obtain permission for access to or use of those lands or facilities. Projects designed to be implemented on private residential property (i.e.: a single-family home) will not be funded. However, properties such as churches or HOA properties may be considered if a strong community engagement component exists in the envisioned project. Permission for use of private property not controlled by the applicant is also required.

Proposals focused on community engagement/education should:

- Be focused on the IRL (issues, stressors, solutions).
- Clearly define target audience(s) and include a plan for how success of the project will be measured.
- Describe what activities will be performed to engage the community and what the expected

educational outcomes are.

Proposal Categories:

Any of the CCMP Vital Signs may be addressed. Please refer to the IRLNEP CCMP at onelagoon.org. Some Examples are as follows:

- **Lagoon Awareness and Education:** Examples: Providing programs for schools, YMCA groups, boy scouts, girl scouts or other youth organizations; programs involving youth in finding solutions to Lagoon problems; programs for underrepresented youth, etc.
- **Improving Water Quality/Reducing Nutrient Loading from Urban Landscapes:** Examples: Fertilizer reduction campaign, native plant gardening, rain gardens, rain barrels, citizen science to monitor ponds and outfalls, etc.
- **Habitat Restoration and Protection:** Examples: Restoration of natural shorelines, oyster restoration, enhancement of seawalls, projects addressing seagrasses, mangroves, coastal and freshwater wetlands, and marine debris and microplastics reduction/recycling initiatives.
- **Trash Free Waters and Wildlife Conservation:** Examples: Improving awareness of threats to wildlife from monofilament line; coastal cleanups, protection of seagrass beds; education about fish and wildlife habitats, etc.
- **Invasive Species:** Examples: Eradication of invasive plants or animals; education about harmful aquatic invasive species and how to prevent their spread; discouraging release of unwanted exotic pets, etc.

Procurement:

The IRLNEP will issue a contract to grant recipients that reimburses expenses awarded under the Small Grants Program. **Funding is reimbursable only.** Recipients may purchase only items listed in the approved budget for the project. The IRLNEP will reimburse only the organization listed on the contract. At the conclusion of the project, recipients will submit a single invoice and receipts for all expenses to be reimbursed. The invoice must be submitted on their organization’s stationary (letterhead) and include receipts as documentation for the full amount of the invoice. Only direct expenses are eligible for reimbursement. NO indirect costs are eligible. Any reimbursement of expenses will be in accordance with Florida Statutes. Grant recipients may not begin purchasing items for their projects, print materials to publicize the project, or begin spending money in any way (such as postage, supplies, etc.) until the IRLNEP’s contract is fully executed.

Expenses:

Items the IRLNEP may pay for include (but are not limited to):

- tool rentals
- postage
- native landscaping plants
- project-related printing
- meeting room rentals
- portable toilet rentals
- film and photo processing
- project-related signage
- materials (i.e. water quality sampling kits, supplies to produce educational materials)
- volunteer food within reason (i.e. light lunches, refreshments, bottled water)

If the Small Grant project includes printing of materials (brochures, flyers, signage, etc.), an IRLNEP representative must review all printed materials, including signage **prior** to printing. The IRLNEP logo must appear on all print or web materials distributed in association with the funded project.

Unbudgeted expenses:

Purchases for items, other than those specified in the line-item budget, will require the IRLNEP grants administrator's approval **before** they are incurred.

Changes And Interpretations:

Changes to this Application, if applicable, will be made by written addenda. A written addendum is the only official method whereby interpretation, clarification or additional information can be given. Addenda will be posted on the "Request For Proposals" section of the Council website: www.onelagoon.org.

OTHER INFORMATION:

Public Entity Crimes:

As provided in the IRL Council Operating Procedures Manual, a person or affiliate who has been placed on the Convicted Proposers list following a conviction for a public entity crime may not submit a proposal on a contract to provide any goods or services to a public entity; may not submit a proposal on a contract with a public entity for the construction or repair of a public building or public work; may not submit proposals on leases of real property to a public entity; may not be successful or perform work as a contractor, supplier, subcontractor, or consultant under a contract with any public entity.

Non-Lobbying:

Pursuant to section 216.347, Fla. Stat., as amended, funds received from the IRL Council under this Agreement shall not be used for the purpose of lobbying the Legislature or any other state agency.

Right to Protest:

Any actual proposer aggrieved in connection with the solicitation or award of a contract may file a written protest in accordance with the procedures outlined in the IRL Council Operating Procedures Manual.

Right to Accept or Reject:

The IRL Council reserves the right to accept or reject any or all proposals, in whole or in part, with or without cause, to waive any irregularities and/or technicalities, and to award the contracts on such coverage and terms it deems will best serve the interests of the Board.

Funding Contingencies and Restrictions:

Project funding from the IRL Council is subject to annual funding received from IRL Council local stakeholder contributions, Congressional appropriation to the U.S. EPA under Section 320 of the Clean Water Act for the National Estuary Program, and projected revenues from the sales of Indian River Lagoon license plates.

Strategic decisions related to IRLNEP work plan funding are determined annually by the IRLNEP Management Conference with final decision for project priorities and budget allocations by the IRL Council Board of Directors (Board).

Funding of proposals selected under this Request for Proposals (RFP) is contingent upon availability of funds. There is no guarantee that sufficient funds will be available to make awards for all qualified projects. The exact amount of funds awarded for each project will be determined in pre-award negotiations between the applicant and IRL Council staff with final award decisions by the IRL Council Board of Directors.

Proposals accepted for funding may have their requested amounts reduced based on Management Conference recommendations or availability of funding. In the event that a proposal is selected for funding but becomes subject to funding reduction, IRLNEP staff will notify applicants in advance of any reductions and will meet

with proposers to provide an opportunity to consider the effect(s) funding reduction will have on the project scope and deliverables.

Projects will only be considered IF the project has secured any and all additional funding in addition to this request to the IRL Council that is needed to complete the project.

The IRL Council is under no obligation to expend all funds allocated within a proposal category.

Proposal Submission Instructions:

Complete an Application Form using the form provided beginning on page 9 of this document. Include a line-item budget form, provided on page 12, that includes:

- a. All estimated expenditures.
- b. All sources and amounts of funding (include if you are applying to other funding agencies for the same project, and if so, who you are applying to and the status of that grant).

Attachment A- Budget Examples provide sample budgets having, and lacking, adequate detail. Please craft the budget for your proposal with enough detail that it can be properly evaluated by the reviewing team.

Save these documents in PDF format and email your complete proposal to:

Erin Bergman, Administrative Coordinator, Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program, bergman@irlcouncil.org with a copy to Daniel Kolodny, kolodny@irlcouncil.org. Questions may be directed to Erin Bergman at bergman@irlcouncil.org until the proposal deadline.

Submission Checklist:

- Proposals are due in IRLNEP offices by **March 25, 2024**.
- Proposals will be accepted only as PDFs submitted via email.
- Proposals must be completed in their entirety.
- Late proposals and materials received after the deadline will not be accepted.

Reporting Requirements:

IRLNEP Small Grants Program award recipients will be required to submit a written final report upon completion of the project. Final reports must include: (1) digital copy and (1) hard copy of all final products of print and/or web publications (i.e., brochures, videos, manuals, signage, etc.).

If your project is restoration-oriented and does not have a final product, “before and after photos” and/or a video must be submitted with the final report.

If your project is educational in nature and does not have a final product, a copy of all training materials, manuals, information, etc. must be submitted with your report.

Deliverables, including the final report, must be submitted before final payment is made unless authorized by the IRLNEP Small Grants Program administrator.

All projects, concepts, artwork, photos, videos and other products of these grants may be reproduced at the discretion of the IRLNEP for possible use with future educational programs, at no cost to the IRLNEP, and must carry an approved IRLNEP logo and/or credit line acknowledging Program funding of the project.

Selection Criteria:

Proposals submitted to the IRLNEP Small Grants Program will be evaluated according to the following criteria.

- a) **Strength of Proposal (30%)** -- Specifically, the strength of the project will be evaluated on how well the project contributes towards restoring or improving the IRL, or advancing education, and the extent to which it addresses a need based on health concern level as identified in the CCMP. Applicant's proposal must meet one or more of the CCMP Vital Signs.
- b) **Ability of the Applicant (20%)** -- The project team must demonstrate a reasonable ability to successfully complete the proposed project.
- c) **Cost Justification (10%)** -- Cost justification means that the proposal and the budget must give enough detail to show that costs are appropriate to the scope of work.
- d) **Demonstration of How Project Will Help the IRL (20%)** -- The project's goals and objectives must explicitly state how the project will target lagoon issues that result in the education of community members, restoration outcomes, or protection of the IRL. Achievable measures of success must clearly be identified.
- e) **Demonstration of Community Support (15%)** -- All proposals, regardless of scope, should reflect some measure of community support through either implementation, maintenance and/or monitoring of the project (Example: if a rain garden is funded, how will it be maintained, by whom, and for how long?).
- f) **Demonstration of Benefits to Priority Populations (5%)** -- If the project will benefit underserved or overburdened communities, the proposal should outline any benefits and potential outcomes expected in the community.

Selection Process:

The IRLNEP Citizens' Advisory Committee will review each proposal. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Program's Management and Policy Boards for final approval. IRLNEP staff will be assigned to serve as grant administrators. IRLNEP's grant administrator or its representative, may request to visit the recipient or the project location during or after the grant is completed.

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FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

Q. What is the implementation period?

A. Funding for awarded projects will be made available on or after May 12, 2023 via a contract that authorizes reimbursement of approved expenses for the project. The project must begin within six months of the execution date of the contract and must be completed within one year of the execution date. Upon awarding of the grant, recipients will submit a "Scope of Work." Upon receipt and approval of the scope, applicants will then be issued a contract. After the contract has been fully executed, work may begin on the project.

R. Who can apply? Can a government agency apply?

A. Groups and organizations from within the IRLNEP watershed planning boundary may apply. Both non-profit and for-profit organizations are eligible. Individuals are not eligible but are encouraged to partner with an appropriate organization to develop and implement projects for funding. Projects must take place within the IRL watershed. Local governments and government agencies may apply if there is strong volunteer or community involvement that supports the spirit of the program. The IRLNEP Small Grants Program is not designed as a funding source for government projects.

S. What kind of projects will be funded?

A. Projects must address lagoon issues and problems as identified in the *IRLNEP Comprehensive C Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) – Looking ahead to 2030*. Priority areas include: water quality, habitat restoration, fish and wildlife conservation, lagoon awareness/education, reducing nitrogen loading from urban landscapes, or removing invasive species. The CCMP is available on the IRLNEP [website](#).

Projects involving installation of plants must use plants that are native to Florida or considered "Florida-Friendly" by the University of Florida IFAS Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ Program. Plants should be installed according to the Nine Principles of Florida-Friendly Landscaping™ found at: http://fyn.ifas.ufl.edu/homeowners/nine_principles.htm

Information about native and Florida-Friendly plants can be found at:

- Florida Yards: <http://floridayards.org/>
- Florida Native Plant Society: <http://fnps.org/plants> and www.floridata.com
- Waterwise Landscaping: <https://www.sjrwmd.com/water-conservation/waterwise-landscaping/>

Plants listed on the noxious weed list: <http://plants.usda.gov/java/noxious?rptType=Federal> or the Florida Exotic Pest Plant Council's list <https://www.fleppc.org/> may **not** be installed using funds from IRLNEP Small Grants:

Q. What project types won't be funded?

A. Proposals seeking funds for ongoing administrative support of established programs will not receive consideration. Costs not allowed include but are not limited to: reimbursement for costs outside the grant's scope of work, purchase of commercial software and hardware, indirect costs, contingency funds, depreciation, entertainment, purchase or printing of T-shirts or other clothing, fines and penalties, bad debts, interest and financial costs of borrowing, attendance at conferences and meetings, lobbying expenses. Grant funds will not fund projects on private residential property. Faith-based organizations are eligible to apply for small grants. However, funding may not be used to support religious worship, instruction, or proselytization activities.

Q. Are matching funds required?

A. No; matching funds are not required, but proposals showing matching fund commitment through in-kind services will receive special consideration. An example of in-kind services are volunteer hours.

Q. What if I'm not sure how much it will cost to do the project?

A. Talk to potential suppliers of the items or services you think you will need for the project. Get the best estimates possible to include in the proposal. If the project is approved, the grant award you receive will be based on the budget as outlined in the proposal.

Q. What is the maximum amount an applicant can request?

A. Grant requests may not exceed \$5,000. The IRLNEP may choose to fund a project at less than 100 percent of the requested budget.



Map of IRLNEP watershed. Only projects located in the watershed and northern planning boundary (orange outline) will be considered for funding.

If you have questions about your project location, you may contact Erin Bergman at bergman@irlcouncil.org.



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Project Name:	
Organization Name:	
Street Address:	
City/County/Zip:	
Organization Executive Director Name:	
Phone:	E-mail:
Project Lead/Manager:	
Phone:	E-mail:
Organization Type (School, Business, HOA, etc.):	
Other participating organizations:	
Total Amount Requested (not to exceed \$5,000):	
The IRLNEP receives more grant requests than we have available money to fund. Briefly explain how partial funding might impact or affect this project:	
Planned Project Beginning and Completion Dates:	
Have you applied to any other organizations to receive grant funds for this project? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	
If yes, please provide organization(s) name, amount requested, and status (awarded/declined).	
What city and county will the project take place in?	
Where is the physical location of your project (address or GPS coordinates)?	

Return completed applications as PDFs via email by 5pm on March 25, 2024 to Erin Bergman Bergman@irlcouncil.org with a copy to Daniel Kolodny, Kolodny@irlcouncil.org
Indian River Lagoon National Estuary Program

IRLNEP recommends letters of support from all partners/cooperators in the project.

Answer the following questions clearly and completely.

1. How did you hear about the Small Grants Program?

2. Does this proposal address:

EDUCATION

RESTORATION

BOTH

3. Summarize the proposed project in **300 words or less**. Please include in the summary how your project will contribute towards restoring or improving the IRL.

4. List organizations, groups, volunteers and/or partners that will participate in the activities and how you will recruit them.

5. Describe (**300 words or less**) why you and/or your organization will be successful at implementing your proposal. What are your organization's qualifications?

6. How many people do you estimate your project will reach?

7. How will you measure the success of your project? Please be specific (e.g., follow-up monitoring of a habitat restoration site).

8. What will participants learn from participating in this project? How will they use that knowledge to benefit the Lagoon?

9. What materials or supplies (if applicable) will you provide to the people participating in your project?

10. If your project will benefit an underrepresented community, outline the benefits and potential outcomes expected in the community.

11. Is your project part of an ongoing project?
 - If yes, how does this grant project fit into the overall effort?

 - If no, do you plan to continue this project in the future?

Attachment A – Budget Examples

Sample Budget With Adequate Detail:

ITEM	IRLNEP Funds	*MATCH	TOTAL
Bus Transportation (2 buses @ \$150 per trip x 10 trips)	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Instructor Costs (\$50 per day x 10 days)	\$ 250.00	\$250.00	500.00
Teaching Materials and Supplies (Native plant handbook, pocket folders 30 students/day x 10 days @ \$5 ea.)	\$ 1,500.00	\$0.00	\$ 1,500.00
65 - 1 gal. beautyberry @ \$2.00 ea.	\$ 65.00	\$65.00	\$ 130.00
600 - gopher apple @ \$1.25 ea.	\$ 750.00	\$0.00	\$ 750.00
230 - Florida paintbrush @ \$1.25 ea.	\$ 187.50	\$100.00	\$ 287.50
TOTAL Project Costs	\$ 4,252.50	\$ 1,915.00	\$ 6,167.50

* Please indicate if matching funds listed above are federal, local, state or private.

Matching funds of \$1,915.00 provided in cash by the Local Neighborhood Association.

Sample Budget Lacking Adequate Detail:

ITEM	IRLNEP Funds	*MATCH	TOTAL
Transportation	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 1,500.00	\$ 3,000.00
Administration	\$ 250.00	\$250.00	500.00
Supplies	\$ 1,500.00	\$0.00	\$ 1,500.00
Plants	1002.50	\$165.00	\$ 1167.50
TOTAL Project Costs	\$ 4,252.50	\$ 1,915.00	\$ 6,167.50

* Please indicate if matching funds listed above are federal, local, state or private.