Call for proposals: **Urban Waters Capacity-Building Grants**

 <http://www.rivernetwork.org/news/urban-waters-capacity-building-grants/>
DEADLINE:  **March 14, 2011** - **5:00 p.m. Pacific Standard Time**
 **Purpose:** The goal of the **Urban Waters Capacity-Building Grants** is to improve our nation’s impaired urban water resources – rivers, lakes, wetlands and more – and the socioeconomically challenged communities around them by providing local organizations, tribal and local governments with the skills and techniques to effectively restore these resources over time. The Grants provide two equally important sources of support to recipient organizations working in disadvantaged communities or communities facing environmental injustices: 1) funding for activities that build organizations’ capacity and result in tangible community, stream and environmental outcomes, and 2) 400+ hours of technical and organizational assistance tailored to build the capacity of each recipient organization.

By the end of the project, we expect recipient organizations to show demonstrable change in one or more of the following areas:
• **Watershed Skills** - Increased watershed protection and restoration skills and awareness within the organization and in the broader community in order to meet the unique challenges of communities adversely affected by urban environmental impairments;
• **Organizational Sustainability** - Increased organizational sustainability through diversified funding, growth in community outreach activities, larger membership and a more effective Board;
• **Volunteer Diversity and Participation** - Increase in the diversity and number of volunteers and community members engaged in the organization;
• **Project Effectiveness**- Increased ability to plan and implement successful projects that help meet community-based goals.
The Urban Waters Capacity-Building Grants are administered by River Network in partnership with Groundwork USA and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.
 **Background:**  from <http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/twg/initiative_index.cfm>

EPA's Targeted Watershed Grant Program awarded River Network $600,000 to engage communities and increase citizen connection, understanding, and stewardship of urban waterways through a partnership with GroundworkUSA, [http://groundworkusa.org](http://groundworkusa.org/), to establish and manage a competitive urban watershed sub-award program, now seeking proposals.

River Network will competitively select five to seven sub-projects for funding (ranging from $30,000 to $70,000) and up to 400 hours of technical assistance for projects designed to strengthen their organizations. As part of the grant, River Network will also provide a wider peer-learning network for other organizations working on urban water issues.  The goal is to support a new urban waters movement by building highly capable organizations that are self-sustaining and can carry out programs to protect human health and the environment. The urban waterways in many communities are compromised landscapes, impacted by various sources of pollution and often neglected and ignored. These capacity-building sub-grants will provide local organizations, tribal and local governments with skills and techniques to protect their urban waterways and promote more vibrant, economically sustainable communities.  All sub-awardees will attend the National River Rally in North Charleston, South Carolina on June 3-6, 2011:  <http://www.rivernetwork.org/events/national-river-rally-2010>.

For additional information on applying to River Network for funding, please contact Diana Toledo at dtoledo@rivernetwork.org or visit River Network's website for the Urban Waters Capacity Building Grants Request for Proposals:  <http://www.rivernetwork.org/news/urban-waters-capacity-building-grants>.

Details from the RFP: **Eligibility:** Nationwide (including Tribal Lands, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Territories). Public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations (501c3 or sponsored), local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments and interstate agencies that have a developing or existing urban waters or watershed initiative are eligible to apply. Urban Waters Initiatives are those designed to help distressed urban communities with environmental justice challenges protect, restore, have access to, and derive benefit from their urban waters and surrounding lands. “Urban areas” are defined as those in which the majority of land use is marked by a high density of created structures and developments. They are also marked by a high population density.

Targeted water resources may include any natural body of water, all or an important part of which flows through or is located in an urban area. These may include groundwater, wetlands, rivers, lakes, bays, and estuaries. **Please note: Organizations with urban water initiatives that have built experience over several years but are not well-established or well-funded are particularly encouraged to apply.**

**Amount and Duration of Funding:** A total of $300,000 is available under this RFP. Individual awards may range from $30,000 to $70,000. The project period is 24 months. We expect to award 5-7 projects. This is a reimbursable grant, although “advance payment” arrangements may be authorized on a limited basis.

**Match and Related Requirements:** An organization must match 33% of its grant award. Matches may be satisfied through any combination of the following: local or state funds; foundation or corporate support; individual donations; program fees; membership dues; and in-kind contributions (including volunteer efforts in project activities). Federal funds may not be used as matching funds except where authorized specifically by federal statute (e.g. HUD’s Community Development Block Grants are allowed as match, while EPA 319 funds are not). Applicants are encouraged to discuss match issues with Grant Contacts prior to submission to help identify and secure matching resources that abide by governing regulations (40 CFR 30.23 or 40 CFR 31.24). As needed, technical assistance will be provided to final awardees to detail and secure the final matching resources.

The recipient agrees to conduct all procurement actions under this grant in accordance with the procurement standards set forth in 40 CFR 30.40 to 30.48. No grant funds shall be used to reimburse the grant-funded share of any procurement action found to be in noncompliance with the procurement standards.

**Anticipated Activities:** While a broad range of activities is eligible for funding, successful applicants will demonstrate an integrated approach that combines on-the-ground, urban waters work with activities designed to strengthen their organization’s performance and impact.

**Allowable Expenses:** This is a capacity building grant. Anticipated expenses include salaries and benefits, support for training, consultants, standard office supplies, design and printing of promotional materials, and modest travel and equipment costs, among others. Capital costs and the purchase of land are NOT allowable.

**Review Criteria:**

(55 pts.) **Project Impact.** The project demonstrably increases the capacity of the recipient organization to protect and restore watersheds by:
• Increasing both the organization’s and the broader community’s watershed skills and awareness in order to meet the community’s urban environmental impairments (15 pts.)
• Creating a more sustainable organization (15 pts.)
• Increasing and diversifying the individuals, communities and volunteers that support the organization (15 pts.)
• Increasing the organization’s ability to plan and implement successful projects (10 pts.)

(10 pts.) **Watershed Context.** The applicant demonstrates the importance of the natural body of water, its impairments, its impact on public health, its historical significance and/or its potential as a community or educational resource.

(10 pts.) **Partnerships.** The applicant demonstrates a commitment to engaging a diversity of project partners such as government, business, community organizations (including environmental and environmental justice groups), and non-traditional partners.

(10 pts.) **Community Needs.** The applicant demonstrates a clear need in an urban and disadvantaged community or a community with environmental justice challenges and how the project is likely to address the community’s priority needs.

(15 pts.) **Project Feasibility.** The project has strong potential for long-term success based on project feasibility, project leadership, extent of partner/community support and realistic budgeting.

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