

Illinois Department of Natural Resources Coastal Management Program Grants

2025 Funding Guidelines

Application Deadline:
Friday, January 10, 2025

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and other agencies is available to all individuals regardless of race, sex, national origin, disability, age, religion, or other non-merit factors. If you believe you have been discriminated against, contact the funding source's civil rights office and/or the Equal Employment Opportunity Officer, IDNR, One Natural Resources Way, Springfield, IL 62702-1271; [217/785-0067](tel:2177850067), TTY [217/782-9175](tel:2177829175)



2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Funding Opportunity: Illinois Department of Natural Resources -- Coastal Management Program		
Announcement Type: Initial Announcement		
Federal Agency Name: National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, U.S. Dept. of Commerce		
CFDA Number: 11.419	CSFA Number: 422-30-0103	
Application Deadline: January 10, 2025		
Grant Start Date: September 1, 2025 Grant End Date: 6 to 18 months after start date		
Minimum Grant: \$75,000	Maximum Grant: \$250,000	Match Requirement: 25%
Application Information: https://dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/coastalgrants/competitivegrants.html		

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2025 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Applications are now being accepted for IDNR Coastal Management Program Grants through January 10, 2025. All application information and additional resources are available at:

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/coastalgrants/competitivegrants.html>

Overview

IDNR Coastal Management Program Grants protect, conserve, and restore the natural and cultural resources along the Illinois Lake Michigan shoreline. Funding is available for projects that:

1. Improve the health of the coast and Lake Michigan
2. Enhance coastal public access, recreation, and economic development
3. Advance coastal community resilience

This funding opportunity is administered by the Coastal Management Program (CMP), part of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR). Federal funding for CMP originates through a cooperative agreement between IDNR and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

All applicants submitting an application must be pre-qualified on the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Website (<https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>) to receive funding.

This is a reimbursement grant. Full documentation of all grant and match expenses is required for reimbursement. Total funding available in past rounds has ranged from \$550,000 to \$1,075,000 per funding year.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include units of local government (e.g., municipalities, park districts, school districts, forest preserve districts), universities, and non-profit organizations. Private individuals, for-profit organizations, and organizations that cannot be pre-qualified through the State of Illinois grantee portal (<https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>) are not eligible to receive grant funds.

Public landowners and long-term lease holders are the only eligible applicants for on-the-ground projects such as low-cost construction or habitat restoration (please note - these are not being funded for FY25 grants). For planning projects, we require a letter of commitment from the landowner if the applicant does not own the land.

Funding Opportunity

I. Funding available and match requirement

Applicants may request between \$75,000 and \$250,000 with a 25% match required for most projects. Match must be directly related to work on the project and within the coastal region.

II. Timeframe

Projects can last from 6 to 18 months, depending on the needs of their project. Projects should plan to begin on or around September 1, 2025 (precise start and end dates depend upon approval by NOAA and state funding authorization). Proposed projects can take less than 18 months, but not more than that timeframe.

III. Application Materials

All applications must now be submitted through the AmpliFund Grant Management System.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) can be found at the link below:

<https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/ba181302-a2fa-40b0-946f-f1acd05e5176>

Application information and additional resources are available at:

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/coastalgrants/competitivegrants.html>

The State of Illinois adopted AmpliFund as the statewide online grant management system in 2021. This system is used to apply for grants, complete grant reporting, and request payments. It allows grantee organizations to manage their State of Illinois grants in one place. The AmpliFund Grant Management System uses a single log-in that is also used in the Grantee Portal. It pulls data from the Grantee Portal and the statewide Catalog of State Financial Assistance (CSFA) to reduce the need for duplicate data entry.

Instructions for applying to an IDNR Grant on AmpliFund:

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/grants/documents/how-to-apply.pdf>

The required application components that must be filled out in AmpliFund include:

1. Project Information
2. Uniform Grant Application
3. Application Project Narrative
4. Performance Plan/Timeline of Tasks
5. Programmatic Risk Assessment Questionnaire
6. Budget

Letter of Commitment is an optional document that should be filled out if partners are committing their resources towards the project. For planning projects, we require a letter of commitment from the landowner if the applicant does not own the land.

All applicants submitting an application must be pre-qualified on the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) website (<https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>) to receive funding.

IV. Reporting

Successful applicants will need to report progress on their work after the grant is awarded. Periodic Performance Reports and Periodic Financial Reports are required on quarterly or semi-annual basis for all projects. Final narrative reports are required after project completion.

Submitting an Application

The deadline for applications is **5:00 pm CST, Friday January 10, 2025**. Applications must be submitted through AmpliFund by this deadline to be considered for funding.

Application can be accessed on AmpliFund at:

<https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/78a62009-1b72-4fcd-a472-4881733b9bab>

Applications received after the application deadline will not be considered. Submission of an incomplete application does not extend the application deadline and will disqualify the applicant. Please plan on submitting your application prior to the deadline to address any technology issues that may come up. Paper applications, emailed applications, or any other submissions will not be accepted.

Multiple applications may be submitted by the same organization, but each application must be for a stand-alone project and shall not be dependent upon funding the other application(s).

Summaries of previously-funded projects are available on our website at:

<https://dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/coastalgrants/pastgrants.html>

Background

The Illinois Lake Michigan Coastal Area stretches 63 miles from the Wisconsin border to the Indiana border and includes portions of 24 communities with over 117,000 households, 52 beaches, more than 50 forest preserves and local parks, and two state parks. The region is economically diverse and includes portions of some of the poorest and richest communities in the state. It is also ecologically diverse; it occupies a transitional zone between the forests of the upper Midwest and the downstate prairies and contains valuable remnant wetlands.

Effective coastal resource management reflects the reality on the ground and prioritizes coastal problem solving at a local to regional scale. In Illinois, coastal management tackles local coastal issues ranging from invasive species to coastal erosion to inequities in coastal recreational access.

The goals of this funding opportunity include enhancing and protecting coastal habitats and species; improving coastal public access, recreation, and coastal-dependent economic development; and supporting coastal community resilience. We encourage applicants to review existing plans and to think through how your proposed project aligns with previous and ongoing work in the region.

Geography

CMP works within a designated Illinois Coastal Area boundary while simultaneously advancing coastal priorities across the broader Illinois coastal region. To receive funding, a project must support CMP's priorities in the region. Education and broader planning projects may be located outside of the coastal boundary but must advance coastal priorities.

On-the-ground habitat and low-cost construction projects (including signage) **MUST** be located entirely within the official Illinois Coastal Area. To determine if your project qualifies, please review the Illinois Coastal Area boundary maps. **Please note: For FY25 will NOT be able to fund projects of this type.**

- Zoomable Google Map: <https://www.google.com/maps/d/viewer?mid=zjYdrXWqrOnI.kiY3ESxnNVrc>
- PDF Maps: <https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/appendix-b.pdf>
- Google Earth layer (downloads kmz file): <https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/googleearthlayercoastalzone.kmz>
- ArcGIS layer (downloads zip file): <https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/coastalzoneboundary.zip>

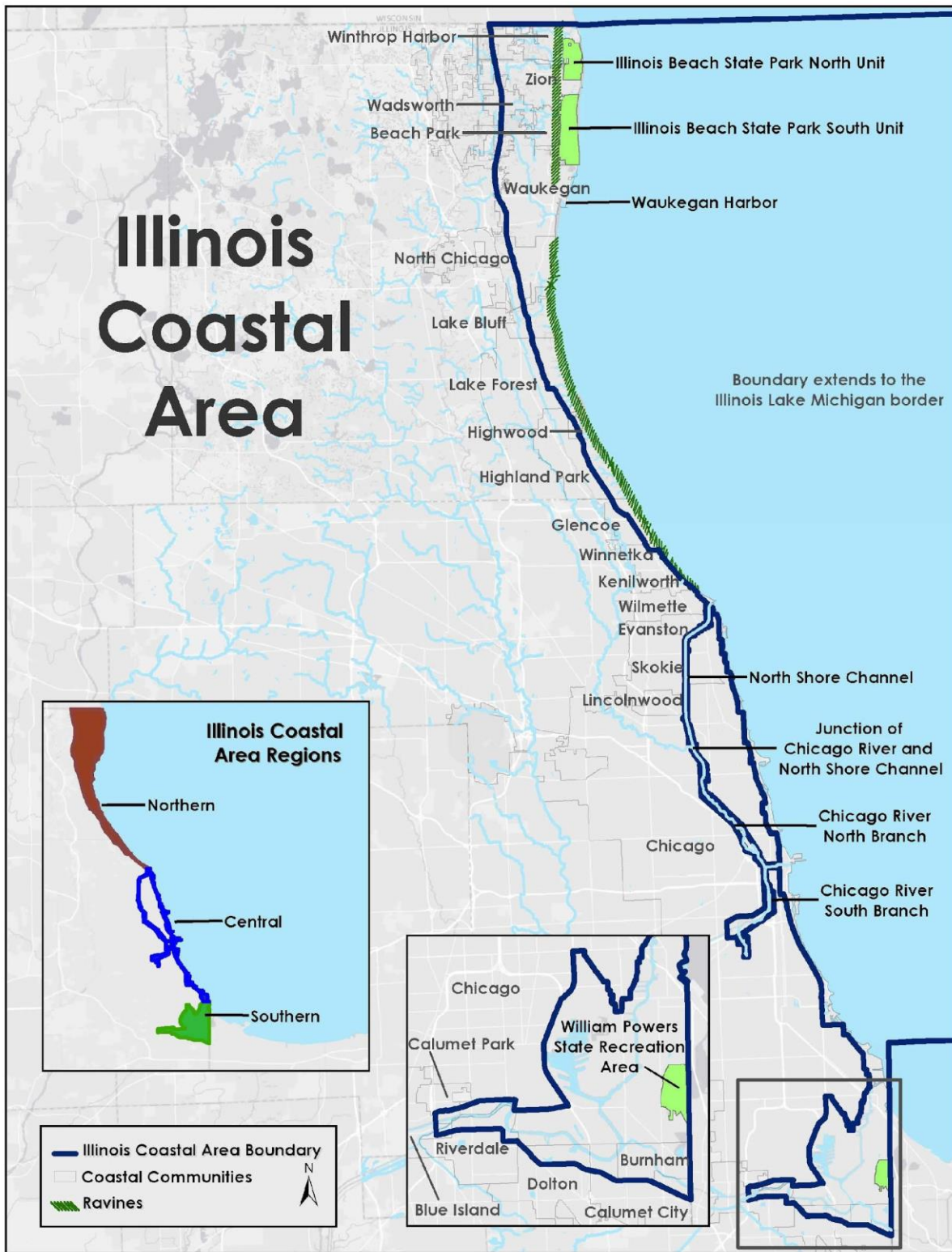


Figure 1: Map of the Illinois Coastal Area

Funding Category 1: Coastal Habitats and Species

Background

The Illinois Coastal Area, while highly urbanized, contains a variety of remnant habitats including oak savannah, woodlands, coastal bluffs and ravines, prairies, wetlands, urbanized waterways, beaches, and dune/swale habitats, as well as nearshore habitat, ancient cobble reefs, and open-water benthic and pelagic habitats. Habitat loss and degradation have caused a wide range of issues ranging from impaired water quality to invasive species to reduced ecosystem services.

Overview of the goals of this category

Projects in this category work towards protecting and improving coastal habitats for the species that depend upon them, plan to mitigate threats to habitats or species, or lay the groundwork for future conservation. Projects must show clear connection and make progress toward these goals.

Please note: In this grant cycle, we are not able to fund on-the-ground restoration work. We can fund planning, education, outreach, engagement, and other activities that meet the habitat goals and priorities of the Coastal Program.

2025 Funding Priorities

All eligible projects that meet the overall goal of this category will be considered for funding; however, projects achieving the following objectives will be given preference in 2025:

- 1. Develop plans for acquisition, enhancements, and restoration of publicly owned and accessible coastal habitats, especially ravines and wetlands that are hydrologically connected to Lake Michigan. (Priority category for 2025)**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Engineering and design for restoration projects*
- *Restoration planning or prioritization*
- *Acquisition planning and due diligence*
- *Shoreline management planning*
- *Building partnership coalitions centered around habitat management*

Installation of interpretive signage may be funded but will require additional environmental review. For any projects that include signage, we recommend installation on existing structures to facilitate quick review. We also recommend including installation costs as match for the same reason.

2. Provide educational programming, outreach, and/or resources that highlight coastal-specific natural habitats, species, and the value of our coastal natural resources.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Educational programming for schools, faith-based groups, and other organizations and groups*
- *Community outreach and awareness materials, programs, or events*
- *Creation of interpretive signs*
- *Creation of curricula or other education or outreach materials; events, workshops, or symposia*

Installation of interpretive signage may be funded but will require additional environmental review. For any projects that include signage, we recommend installation on existing structures to facilitate quick review. We also recommend including installation costs as match for the same reason.

3. Improve nearshore habitats by addressing sources of water quality degradation.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Planning to identify, prioritize, and address significant stormwater management issues*
- *Engineering and design to implement nature-based solutions that improve water quality*
- *Assessments to identify and reduce barriers to best management practice implementation*
- *Building partnership coalitions centered around water resource management*

No on-the-ground restoration work will be funded in this grant cycle.

Funding Category 2: Coastal Public Access, Recreation, and Economic Development

Background

The Illinois Coastal Area provides many recreation and public access amenities including parks, forest preserves, swimming beaches, canoe and kayak launches, hiking and biking trails, boat launches, fishing piers, and so much more. Additionally, ports, harbors, and marinas contribute to local and regional economic vitality. Enhancement of these opportunities improves quality of life, draws in tourists, creates jobs, and enhances the coastal economy.

Overview of the goals of this category

Projects in this category support and facilitate coastal access, recreation, and economic development.

Please note: In this grant cycle, we are not able to fund implementation of on-the-ground projects, such as installation of recreation amenities. We can fund planning, education, outreach, engagement, and other activities that meet the goals and priorities of the Coastal Program.

2025 Funding Priorities

All eligible projects that meet the overall goal of this category will be considered for funding; however, projects achieving the following objectives will be given preference in 2025.

- 1. Improve economic viability, capacity, and development of Illinois' Lake Michigan coastal ports, harbors, marinas, and other public coastal-dependent uses. (Priority category for 2025)**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Sustainability planning*
- *Needs assessments and feasibility studies*
- *Planning, engineering and/or design of clean marina best management practices*

- 2. Promote economic development within the climate resiliency sector and develop a workforce skilled in addressing coastal issues (e.g. nature-based solutions implementation, green infrastructure maintenance, etc.)**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Skills training program development*
- *Partnership building and coordination with employers*
- *Outreach and engagement for worker recruitment*
- *Capacity building for workforce development and community-based organizations*

3. Enhance and promote Lake Michigan coastal recreation opportunities in Illinois and regionally.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Recreation and tourism programming that connects under-served, diverse, and economically disadvantaged populations to coastal resources*
- *Community outreach, events, and awareness materials or programs*
- *Creation of interpretive signage or recreational wayfinding signage*
- *Regional tourism planning*
- *Creation of curricula or other education or outreach materials; events, workshops, or symposia*

Installation of interpretive signage may be funded but will require additional environmental review. For any projects that include signage, we recommend installation on existing structures to facilitate quick review. Preference is to include installation costs as match as that facilitates review.

No on-the-ground work will be funded this grant round.

Funding Category 3: Coastal Community Resilience

Background

The Lake Michigan shoreline is a dynamic system, with coastal hazards such as erosion, sand accretion, fluctuating lake levels, stormwater volume, and flooding posing major challenges. The health of coastal communities requires sustainable solutions to challenges that balance the needs of residents, recreational users, nature, and commerce.

Overview of the goals of this category

Projects in this category move communities towards solutions that mitigate coastal hazards and ensure the long-term health of community assets. Goals include identification and improved understanding of hazards, planning for long-term solutions, increased capacity and coordination among communities to collaboratively solve regional problems, and inclusion/evaluation of nature-based solutions.

Please note: In this grant cycle, we are not able to fund on-the-ground construction work. We can fund planning, education, outreach, engagement, and other activities that meet the goals and priorities of the Coastal Program.

2025 Funding Priorities

All eligible projects that meet the goals above will be considered for funding; however, projects achieving the following objectives will be given preference in 2025.

- 1. Advance planning, design, and engineering of resilience projects. Inclusion of green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions is encouraged where possible. (Priority category for 2025)**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Capacity support for coastal communities*
- *Hazard vulnerability assessments*
- *Land-use planning and master plan development*
- *Development of tools or resources to improve decision-making*
- *Development of engineering and design plans*

- 2. Enhance regional collaboration for improved coastal community resiliency.**

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Outreach, education, and training*
- *Partnership and coalition building*
- *Capacity support for regional initiatives*

Projects that focus solely on development of hardened shoreline structures and gray infrastructure will not be as competitive as those that consider natural or nature-based solutions or that have a habitat component. ***No on-the-ground work will be funded this grant round.***

Grant Program Rules and Guidelines

Restrictions

Grant and match funds cannot be used for:

- Food and beverage
- On-the-ground or site-specific planning projects outside of the Coastal Area (see Figure 1)
- Any costs that are not allowed under section 306A of the Coastal Zone Management Act (<https://coast.noaa.gov/data/czm/media/guide306a.pdf>). This includes large-scale construction, improvements that result in private or commercial gain, hardened shoreline structures, beach re-nourishment, dredging, gray infrastructure, transportation projects, and general recreational facilities such as playground equipment.
- Any costs that are not allowed under Federal Grant Cost Principles (2 CFR 200, Subpart E, <https://coast.noaa.gov/czm/act/sections/#306A>)

See our FAQ or contact CMP for more details.

Additional Environmental Information

Depending on the scope of the project, Coastal Management Program may need to request additional information pertaining to environmental impacts and environmental data collection for review and approval by IDNR and NOAA. Prompt attention to requests for additional information is appreciated.

Reduced Match Requirement

Applicants are required to provide a 25% match (1:3 match) with the awarded grant funding 75% of the total project cost.

Applicants requesting over \$100,000 in funds are encouraged to provide additional match over the required 25%.

Integrating DEAI into Grant-funded Projects

One of the priorities of the Illinois Coastal Management Program is to ensure that all communities in the Illinois coastal region have equitable access to our shared coastal resources. Through our competitive grants, we hope to expand the reach of federal funds to prioritize communities that have been historically underinvested in. We thus encourage applicants to advance the principles of diversity, equity, accessibility, and inclusion in their work and the projects they submit for funding.

We will be prioritizing projects that can demonstrate a direct benefit to communities and groups that have historically been underserved or disproportionately affected by environmental harms.

Examples of direct benefits to incorporate into your project, with an emphasis on underserved groups:

- Increased community resilience
- Improved health outcomes through cleaner air and water
- Increased access to green spaces
- Increased recreational opportunities
- Reduced safety hazards
- Reduced maintenance costs for local municipalities
- Community revitalization
- Direct employment of members of the community
- Providing a pathway for workforce development
- Increased business opportunities within the community

Ways to make planning, outreach, and engagement efforts more accessible and inclusive:

- Develop a project which is community-driven and includes meaningful engagement to ensure community needs and priorities are amplified
- Build relationships with the community – work with local community groups, leaders, and artists to drive the project
- Ensure a diverse advisory group is involved early on in outreach strategy planning
- Identify which communities and groups the project will most impact. Identify and engage stakeholders traditionally left out of the engagement process (e.g. renters)
- Identify and reduce potential barriers for community members to engage – language, technology, time, childcare, transportation, internet service, safety, etc.
- Translate outreach materials to languages spoken in the community
- Use a mix of digital and analog methods for communication – consider technology access
- Compensate community members for their time (this can be built into your grant budget)
- Meet the community where it's at – farmer's markets, community centers, libraries, restaurants, etc.
- Listen to feedback and follow up after engagement – show that community input is actually informing the decision-making process

Move from community engagement to community *ownership*: <https://movementstrategy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/08/The-Spectrum-of-Community-Engagement-to-Ownership.pdf>

Examples of Metrics

Quantifiable metrics provide a way to measure the impact of the project. CMP asks applicants to provide metrics as part of their application to demonstrate how they will measure progress and impact. Example of metrics include:

Environmental

- Acres of land restored
- Number of trees planted
- Gallons of stormwater diverted from runoff
- Number of green infrastructure installations added

Outreach and engagement

- Number of students taught through the program
- Number of people who received outreach materials
- Number of engagement events held
- Number of educational or safety signs installed
- Number of management plans developed

Socioeconomic

- Number of people employed by the project
- Number of people who received technical training
- \$ saved through the project

These are just examples and applicants may discuss other impacts and metrics in their application.

Grant Management Experience

Coastal grants require quarterly progress and financial reports. If you are a new applicant please reach out to CMP to discuss the requirements. We are happy to provide resources and guidance. If your organization is new to managing a grant of this scale, we would also encourage building funds into your project budget to hire a contractor to help with grant management and accounting.

CMP will hold a mandatory grant management webinar for all successful applicants once grant agreements are executed.

Selection Process

All applicants submitting applications must be pre-qualified on the Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Website (<https://grants.illinois.gov/portal/>) in order to receive funding.

Applications will be reviewed by IDNR Coastal Management Program Staff and a Technical Advisory Committee. Projects with the highest point totals will be recommended for funding. To ensure regional disbursement of funding the highest ranked project may be funded from each region (North, Central, South).

Full Application Scoring Criteria

- Need **(14 points)**
- Anticipated Impact **(14 points)**
- Feasibility and Timeline **(10 points)**
- Under-Served Communities and Populations **(8 points)**
- Partnerships and Local Support **(6 points)**
- Capacity and Qualifications **(4 points)**
- Cost Effectiveness **(4 points)**
- Past Performance **(3 Points)**

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 63

Projects selected for funding are subject to the State of Illinois Comprehensive Environmental Review Process (CERP) and National Environment Policy Act Review (NEPA) as well as approval by the NOAA Director and the IDNR Director.

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a grant agreement with the IDNR that includes standard terms and conditions that are not subject to modification. Failure of a successful applicant to complete all required steps will result in cancellation of the grant award.

Release of Information

- Application information cannot be kept confidential. Grant applications are considered public information under the Illinois Freedom of Information Act, 5 ILCS 140/2.5.
- The NOAA Environmental Data Sharing Policy requires all grant recipients to make environmental data and information collected through this grant program visible, accessible, and independently understandable to general users at no cost no later than two years after the data are collected or created. [Federal Geographic Data Committee](#) (FGDC) compliant metadata are also required.

Contact Information

For more information on IDNR Coastal Management Program Grants, please contact:

Illinois Department of Natural Resources
Coastal Management Program
160 N. LaSalle St., Suite S-703
Chicago, IL 60601

Telephone: 312-814-1405

Website: <https://dnr.illinois.gov/cmp/coastalgrants/competitivegrants.html>

