

Illinois Department of Natural Resources

Coastal Management Program Grants

2026
Funding Guidelines

Application Deadline:
Wednesday, May 20, 2026

Equal opportunity to participate in programs of the Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) and those funded by National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration 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)



2026 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: May 20, 2026		
Grant Start Date: January 1, 2027		Grant End Date: 12 to 24 months after start date
Minimum Grant: \$50,000	Maximum Grant: \$250,000	Match Requirement: 50%
Application Information: https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/d908f110-018e-47a3-91a6-a7f5f3e00f43		

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2026 Notice of Funding Opportunity

Applications are now being accepted for Illinois Department of Natural Resources (IDNR) Coastal Management Program (CMP) Grants through May 20, 2026. The application is available at: <https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/d908f110-018e-47a3-91a6-a7f5f3e00f43>

Overview

IDNR Coastal Management Program grant funding is dedicated to 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 IDNR Coastal Management Program (CMP) and supported by federal funding from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), in the U.S. Department of Commerce.). Federal funding for IDNR CMP originates through a cooperative agreement between IDNR and NOAA's Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management.

All applicants 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.

The ability and extent to which IDNR CMP is able to make awards is contingent upon receipt of funds from NOAA. Final funding decisions will be made based on the applications received and the level and timing of funding received by CMP.

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. For planning projects, a letter of commitment is required from the landowner if the applicant does not own the land.

Funding Opportunity

I. Funding available and match requirement

Applicants may request between \$50,000 and \$250,000 with a 50% 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 12 to 24 months, depending on the needs of their project. Projects should plan to begin on or around January 1, 2027 (precise start and end dates depend upon approval by NOAA and state funding authorization). Proposed projects can take less than 24 months, but not more than that timeframe.

III. Application Materials

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

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

<https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/ee8a2474-68ad-41dc-b750-7cfa8fa3973b>

Application information and additional resources are available at:

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

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

The State of Illinois adopted Euna 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 Euna 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 Euna:

<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 Euna include:

1. Project Information
2. Application Project Narrative
3. Performance Plan/Timeline of Tasks
4. Budget

These items can be downloaded as a PDF so applicants can prepare the proposal outside of the Euna platform. Click the blue “Download” button at the top of the page. After preparing outside of Euna, everything will need to be entered and submitted through the platform. Applications will not be accepted in any other way.

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

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, Wednesday May 20, 2026**. Applications must be submitted through Euna by this deadline to be considered for funding.

Application can be accessed on Euna at:

<https://il.amplifund.com/Public/Opportunities/Details/d908f110-018e-47a3-91a6-a7f5f3e00f43>

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 and recreation; coastal-dependent community development; and supporting coastal community resilience. We encourage applicants to review existing plans and to think through how proposed projects align with previous and ongoing work in the region.

Geography

IDNR 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 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.

- Zoomable map:
<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/6199265b6b2445b9a000e5b46e8a0018/>
- PDF maps:
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/program/programdocument/appendix-b.pdf>
- Google Earth layer (downloads kmz file):
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/grants/general-grant-docs/googleearthlayercoastalzone.kmz>
- ArcGIS layer (downloads zip file):
<https://dnr.illinois.gov/content/dam/soi/en/web/dnr/cmp/documents/grants/general-grant-docs/coastalzoneboundary.zip>

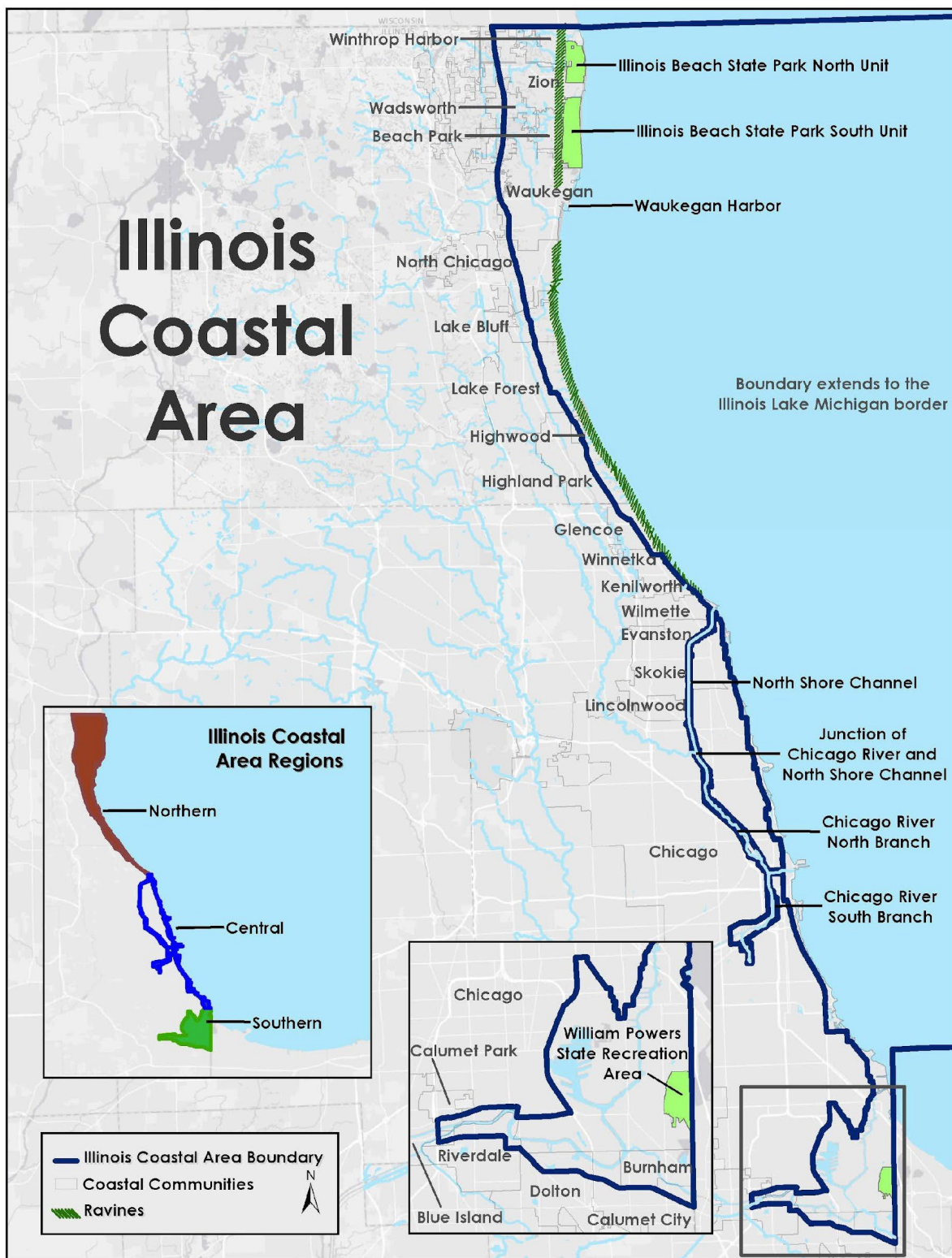


Figure 1: Map of the Illinois Coastal Area

Funding Categories

Funding Category 1: Coastal Habitats and Species

Background

The Illinois Coastal Area, while highly urbanized, contains a variety of remnant and essential 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.

Eligible project types

1. Conduct on the ground habitat restoration on public land in the Coastal Zone.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Invasive species removal*
- *Native plantings*
- *Re-wilding of areas*
- *Installation of fish habitat*
- *Restoration focused on specific species*

2. 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.

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*

3. 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*

4. 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*

Funding Category 2: Coastal Public Access and Recreation

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.

Overview of the goals of this category

Projects in this category support and facilitate coastal access and recreation.

Eligible project types

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

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Small construction projects to make existing recreational facilities more accessible*
- *Recreation and tourism programming that connects local 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*

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.

Eligible project types

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

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*

3. Installation of green infrastructure and other nature-based solutions.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- *Rain garden installation*
- *Nature-based water quality solutions*
- *Bluff and shoreline stabilization*
- *Naturalize shorelines*

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.

Funding Category 4: Coastal Community Development

Background

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. Additionally, workforce development programs can help fill positions in fields addressing coastal issues.

Overview of the goals of this category

Projects in this category invest in coastal communities and support and facilitate economic development.

Eligible project types

1. Improve economic viability, capacity, and development of Illinois' Lake Michigan coastal ports, harbors, marinas, and other public coastal-dependent uses.

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 coastal 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*

Grant Program Rules and Guidelines

Ineligible Costs

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://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-2/subtitle-A/chapter-II/part-200/subpart-E>)*

Additional Environmental Information

Depending on the scope of the project, IDNR CMP may request additional information pertaining to environmental impacts and environmental data collection for review and approval by IDNR and NOAA. Applicants may be asked for detailed information such as maps, project footprints, techniques, timelines, or photos of historic structures or other resources. Including detailed information about planned mitigation activities at the time of application, especially if your project may cause adverse impacts to natural or cultural resources, can save time in the approval process.

Projects that collect environmental data, such as GPS locations, soil cores, wildlife population surveys, etc., must complete a NOAA Office for Coastal Management (OCM) Data Management and Sharing Plan Review Form before a grant agreement can be executed. Projects involving ground disturbance will be required to fill out a NOAA OCM Section 306A Habitat Restoration and Small Construction Checklist before a grant agreement can be executed. These forms will be provided by IDNR CMP if your project is selected.

Match Requirement

Most applicants are required to provide a 50% match (1:1 match) with the awarded grant funding 50% of the total project cost.

The only exception is local governmental applicants from Economically Challenged Communities, which qualify for a 1:3 match requirement (the grant funds 75% of the total project cost).

- Economically Challenged Communities for this program are defined as communities partially or completely within the Illinois coastal area having more than 15% of the population below the national poverty level according to the U.S. Census Bureau.
- For the 2026 grant program, local government entities in the following municipalities qualify: Blue Island, Burnham, Calumet City, Dolton, North Chicago, Riverdale, Waukegan, and Zion. The criteria for Economically Challenged Communities are specific to this funding opportunity. It may be modified in subsequent grant rounds for this program to better assist such communities within the coastal area in accessing this funding program.

Match expenditures must be integral to the accomplishment of project or program objectives and cannot come from a federal source. For example, a grantee may use the salary and fringe expenses of a staff member who is being paid by a non-federal source as match. However, they can only count the hours that staff member spends on activities related to the project as match. Counting time spent on other activities outside of the project scope is not allowed. This rule applies for both cash and in-kind match.

If the project includes expenses in the Fringe cost category, the Fringe costs must be included on the same side of the budget (Grant Budget or Match Budget) as the respective Personnel costs. For example, if staff member A's salary is being funded by the grant in the Personnel category, related Fringe expenses cannot be used as match.

Indirect Costs

Indirect Costs are a proportional allocation of general operating costs (commonly referred to as "overhead"), such as rent, utilities, and other costs that can't be easily allocated to a specific project. If the applicant organization has a negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA) in place with the federal government, refer to the rate and base in the NICRA to correctly calculate indirect costs for your project. Applicants must submit their NICRA with their grant application.

If the applicant organization does not have a negotiated indirect cost agreement, they may elect to use the de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC). Modified direct total costs include all direct salaries and wages, applicable fringe benefits, materials and supplies, services, travel, and up to the first \$50,000 of each subaward (regardless of the period of performance of the subawards under the award). MTDC excludes equipment, capital expenditures, charges for patient care, rental costs, tuition remission, scholarships and fellowships, participant supports costs, and the portion of each subaward in excess of \$50,000.

See 2 CFR 200.414 for more information:

http://www.ecfr.gov/cgi-bin/text-idx?node=2:1.1.2.2.1.5&rgn=div6#se2.1.200_1414

Meaningful Engagement of Coastal Communities in 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 coastal competitive grants, IDNR CMP hopes to expand the reach of federal funds to prioritize communities that have been historically underinvested in.

IDNR CMP will be prioritizing projects that can demonstrate a direct benefit to the coastal communities in greatest need.

Examples of direct benefits to coastal communities:

- 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 meaningfully engage coastal communities in planning, outreach, and engagement efforts:

- Co-creating or co-developing projects that are 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 impact most. 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 they are – 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. IDNR 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 captured
- Square feet of stormwater best management practices (BMPs) installed
- Linear feet of shoreline or stream restored
- Number of sites enhanced through restoration

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
- Number of developed or updated ordinances, policies, or plans (sustainable development, waterfront redevelopment, or runoff management)
- Number of sites enhanced by improving public access

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

Grant Management Experience

Coastal grants require quarterly or semiannual progress and financial reports. If your organization is new to managing a grant of this scale or a federal award, IDNR CMP also encourages building funds into your project budget to hire a contractor to help with grant management and accounting.

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

Selection Process

All applicants 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)**
Project need is currently un-met, clearly articulated, and aligns with the funding category and Coastal Program objectives.
- **Anticipated Impact (14 points)**
Project is expected to have a positive impact on Coastal resources or populations; application includes quantifiable performance metrics.
- **Feasibility and Timeline (10 points)**
Goals are clear and the activities included will lead to desired outcomes. Project timeline, budget, narrative, and stakeholder buy-in all point to a project that can be expected to be completed on time and on budget.
- **Coastal Communities and Populations (6 points)**
Proposal considers the communities or populations in greatest need.
- **Partnerships and Local Support (8 points)**
Partner or stakeholder participation adds value to the project.
- **Capacity and Qualifications (4 points)**
Demonstrated capacity and qualifications show that the organization is likely to successfully meet grant requirements.
- **Cost Effectiveness (4 points)**
Project is cost effective for the anticipated impact.

TOTAL POSSIBLE POINTS: 60

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 U.S. Department of Commerce 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>

