

Community Partnerships Grant Program (CPGP)

NEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR SOUTHERN LAKE MICHIGAN COMMUNITIES



Image Source: Adam Flickinger



Image Source: CommuniTree



Image Source: Jennifer Birchfield

Overview

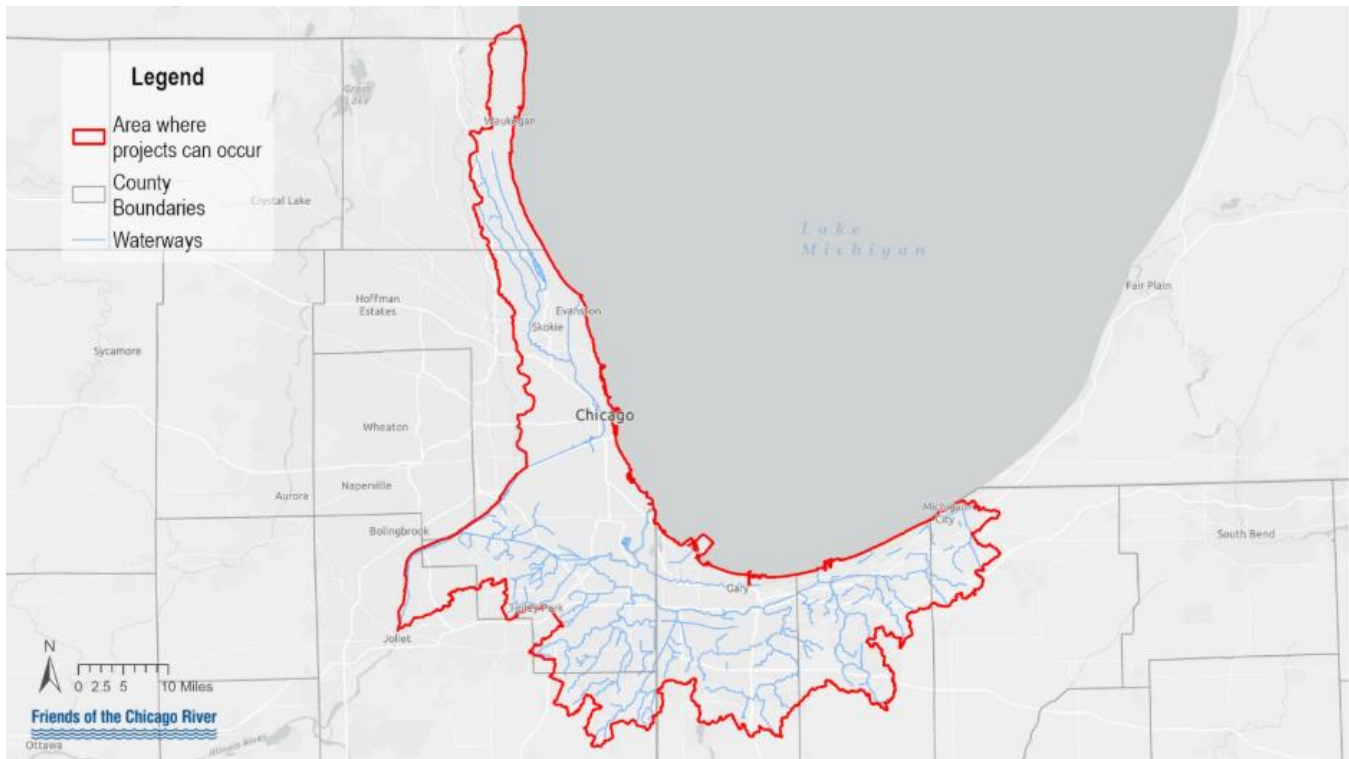
In partnership with local organizations and agencies, this grant program will focus on implementing Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) projects to reduce threats to Great Lakes communities, Lake Michigan, local rivers, and green spaces with the long-term goal of securing healthier Great Lakes communities for generations to come.

The overarching goal of this grant program is to invest in projects where they are needed the most. We aim to help advance GLRI projects that will realize the most positive impacts for waterways, communities, and ecosystems. Applicants will need to describe the importance of the proposed project for the community and the part of the watershed where it is located. Successful applications will be able to describe: a) why the community where the project is located needs this investment, b) how the project can help the community, and c) what other benefits (beyond the required GLRI outcomes) this project provides.

Letter of Intent (LOIs) are due: September 11, 2026. If you have questions about your project, please:

- Visit our website: <https://greatlakes.org/cpgp>
- Review the Request for Applications (RFA): https://greatlakes.org/wp-content/uploads/2026/07/AGL_CommPartner2026_RFA.pdf
- Attend an in-person workshop held in:
 - Chicago on July 22, 2026, from 4-6:30pm, register by clicking [HERE](#);
 - Gary on July 23, 2026, from 4-6:30pm, register by clicking [HERE](#).
- Listen to the recorded webinar linked here: <https://youtu.be/eunqYttrSs4>
- Set up a time to chat with us during virtual office hours held July 27-August 28 using this [calendly](#) link

Projects supported through this grant program must be located in this project eligibility area:
Southern Lake Michigan sub-watersheds.



LOIs will be accepted through the online Good Grants portal. Submit your application here: [Log in | Alliance for the Great Lakes.](#)

If you have any additional questions, contact Ashley Brummel at CommunityPartnershipsGrant@greatlakes.org

CREATIVE COMMUNITY SOLUTIONS BEGIN WITH YOU

We invite applicants to think creatively about the green spaces in their community. How can these spaces be improved to capture rainwater to reduce flooding, clean and filter water before it enters rivers and lakes, and create habitats for birds, pollinators (like butterflies, bees, and bats), and other wildlife?

Projects can happen on many types of sites, including:

- Community gardens or agriculture plots
- Neighborhood gateways or vacant land in commercial areas
- Playgrounds, school yards, and neighborhood parks
- Grounds of public buildings, like the village hall, senior center, or library
- Trail corridors / streets
- Existing nature preserves

Functional Landscapes at Public Buildings

This funding could be used to re- think open spaces surrounding public buildings like village halls, libraries, community centers, schools, or even enhance existing parks. These spaces can be redesigned to capture and filter stormwater, function as pollinator habitat, and also make public facilities more attractive.



Ford Calumet Environmental Center at Big Marsh
Image Source: Friends of the Chicago River

Vacant to Thriving Landscapes

This funding could be used to transform vacant lots into green spaces providing habitat and stormwater absorption. These could use rainwater catchment irrigation systems and the installation of green stormwater gardens.



Image source: Gary Food Council

Community Orchard

This funding could be used to enhance and improve community land, capture and filter rainwater and support complimentary activities like increasing food security and supporting workforce development.



Image source: Communitree

Project Characteristics & Eligibility

REQUIRED PROJECT ELEMENTS

Use this checklist to determine whether your organization and project are ready to apply. *This list does not replace the full Request for Applications (RFA); for additional details, see [RFA 2026](#). Applicants are responsible for reviewing and complying with all requirements in the full RFA.*

- Project costs less than \$300,000

- Project is located within the Southern Lake Michigan Watershed
- Project is located in an area where projects are needed most
- Project will complete 90% design and engineering and advance permitting needed prior to construction
- Project is a GLRI project, such as green infrastructure, riparian buffer, and wetland restoration, that helps achieve at least one or more Great Lakes Restoration Initiative (GLRI) Action Plan IV Focus Areas, specifically:
 - > control of invasive species;
 - > capture and treatment of stormwater runoff;
 - > restoration of Great Lakes shoreline and riparian corridors; or
 - > restoration, enhancement, and/or protection coastal wetlands, nearshore, and other habitats.
- Eligible entities include but may not be limited to non-profit organizations, educational institutions, and houses of worship with 501c3 status; municipalities; county agencies; school districts; land trusts; and soil and water conservation districts.
- Defined roles for project partners - examples of partners include community-based organizations who are based in and represent the community where the proposed project is located; local jurisdiction or landowners where the proposed project is located; as well as any needed fiscal sponsors that could allow smaller grantees to successfully partner on or lead a project.

OPTIONAL PROJECT ELEMENTS

Applicants are encouraged to identify optional community capacity building outcomes that they would complete as a complement to their proposed final design and permitting project.

- The number of municipalities, local, state, federal government entities, and community-based organizations participating in the project
- The number of people engaged in a workforce development activity
- Number of representatives engaged from the community where the proposed project is located
- Number of families and high school age youth engaged in implementation and/or stewardship of the GLRI project
- Submission of financial management strategy and/or project management workplan for the proposed GLRI project
- Documentation that demonstrates project implementation readiness (e.g. long-term monitoring, workplan, and site maintenance plan) is completed.
- Number of implementation funding opportunities identified, including a descriptive list of identified opportunities to apply for when designs are complete.