



**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS**  
**2018-2019 NEW YORK STATE CONSERVATION PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM**

---

The Land Trust Alliance (Alliance), with support from Governor Andrew Cuomo, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC), and the New York State Legislature is pleased to announce a 16<sup>th</sup> round of competitive land trust grants through the New York State Conservation Partnership Program (NYSCPP). This innovative public-private partnership is funded through the state Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and administered by the Alliance, in coordination with the DEC.

In total, \$2.25 million in funding will be awarded through the [New York State Conservation Partnership Program](#) in the spring of 2019. Grant awards are contingent upon the receipt of state funds.

**The deadline for all final applications is Friday, December 14, 2018 by 5 p.m. EST.**

Prospective applicants and land trust partners are strongly encouraged to consult with Alliance staff, refer to the [Evaluation Criteria](#), attend a regional land trust roundtable, and participate in one or more informational calls prior to submitting an application. [Click here for a complete schedule of roundtables and informational calls.](#)

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

- Applicant is a tax-exempt organization under [Section 501 \(c\)\(3\) of the Internal Revenue Code](#).
- Applicant's mission is dedicated to land conservation and/or stewardship of conserved lands, and has formally adopted the Alliance's [Land Trust Standards and Practices \(revised 2017\)](#).
- Applicant's service area and/or project site is located within the State of New York. These funds are intended for projects, programs and activities within the State of New York.

**Note:** Applicants do not need to be members of the Land Trust Alliance to apply for or receive grant funding. However, non-member land trusts are encouraged to learn more about the benefits of [land trust membership](#). While accreditation is also not a prerequisite, accreditation status (including applicant's demonstrated intention to prepare for accreditation) is an important factor in the grant evaluation process.

**MATCHING FUNDS**

A minimum 25% match is required for all Conservation Partnership Program Grants. Match is based on the total project budget, with the grant funds covering up to 75% and the applicant match covering at least 25%. Depending on the grant category, the required match may be cash or a combination of cash and in-kind. Cash match must be from non-state funds. Source and status of the match must be explained at the time of application. If awarded, verifiable documentation of the match is required before grant funds will be disbursed. Please refer to grant category descriptions below for specific matching requirements.

## **DISTRIBUTION OF FUNDS AND REPORTING**

**Capacity & Excellence and Stewardship & Resource Management Grants** – grant funds are disbursed in full with the receipt of a signed grant agreement and verification that matching funds are in-hand. Final reports are due 30 days after the end of the grant period or no later than July 31, 2020.

**Catalyst Grants and “2-Year” Professional Development Grants** – grant funds are disbursed in two installments (of equal value). The first with receipt of the signed grant agreement and verification that matching funds for at least the first year of the grant are in-hand. The second installment will be released upon receipt of a satisfactory interim report and verification that remaining matching funds are in-hand. Interim reports are due by April 30, 2020. Final reports are due 30 days after the end of the grant period or no later than April 30, 2021.

**“3-Year” Professional Development Grants** – grant funds are disbursed in three installments (of equal value). The first with receipt of the signed grant agreement and verification that matching funds for at least the first year of the grant are in-hand. The second and third installments will be released upon receipt of a satisfactory interim report (due April 30, 2020 and April 30, 2021) and verification that match is in-hand for years two and three respectively. Final reports are due 30 days after the end of the grant period or no later than April 30, 2022.

**Transaction Grants** – grant funds are disbursed in full with the receipt of a signed grant agreement, verification that matching funds are in-hand, and proof that the transaction has closed. Final reports are due 30 days after the end of the grant period or no later than January 31, 2020.

## **GRANT CATEGORIES**

Conservation Partnership Program Grants are available in five categories as described below. Land trusts may apply for more than one Conservation Partnership Program Grant (including more than one grant in the same category). Land trusts can receive no more than \$100,000 in total grant funding per grant cycle.

Grant funding may only be used for eligible project expenses. Eligible use of grant funds includes project-related consultants and contractors, project-related staff, and other direct project-related expenses. Grant funding may not be used for general operating support, fees for Alliance trainings and events, accreditation fees, insurance premiums, land or easement acquisition costs, property taxes or other state/local/federal taxes, endowments or reserve funds, or major capital expenditures such as buildings and heavy equipment.

### **CAPACITY & EXCELLENCE GRANTS**

Capacity & Excellence Grants of up to \$50,000 are available to develop land trust programs and build organizational capacity to increase impact and sustainability as nonprofit conservation organizations. Funding in this category is also intended to support land trust efforts to implement best business practices, develop and enhance community programs and services, and prepare for national accreditation or accreditation renewal. All applications in this category should refer specifically to [Land Trust Standards and Practices](#).

A 25% match is required; up to 50% of which may be in-kind. The grant period for Capacity & Excellence Grants is 18 months, from January 1, 2019 to July 1, 2020.

## **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (STAFFING) GRANTS**

Professional Development Grants of up to \$100,000 are available for land trusts looking to professionalize and strengthen programs and services by adding permanent staff. These highly competitive grants are intended to support the creation and/or expansion of position(s) deemed necessary for the organization to significantly enhance its land conservation, stewardship, community outreach, education, research, fundraising and/or administrative capabilities. Professional Development Grants may be used for permanent full-time, part-time or seasonal employment. Contractors and term (non-permanent) positions are not eligible for this funding. Grant-funded positions are expected to be sustained by the land trust beyond the grant period.

A 25% cash match commitment is required. Applicants may choose either a two-year (27 months) grant period or a three-year (39 months) grant period.

The grant period for the two-year (27 month) option is January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021.

The grant period for the three-year (39 month) option is from January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2022.

Land trusts interested in a Professional Development Grant must first submit a Letter of Interest (pre-proposal) due by Friday, October 19, 2018 by 5 p.m. EST.

Final applications are by invitation only. Applicants invited to submit a final proposal will be notified by mid-November.

## **CONSERVATION CATALYST GRANTS**

Conservation Catalyst Grants of up to \$75,000 are available to support collaborative projects that “catalyze” new partnerships and community-supported conservation, stewardship, and outreach initiatives. Projects should advance publically supported open space priorities such as those identified in the [New York State Open Space Conservation Plan](#) and/or other local, regional, or statewide land protection plans.

The Alliance encourages proposals that will expand and support land trust engagement in regional conservation partnerships, community conservation, serving new constituencies by creating partnerships with other nonprofits, climate smart initiatives, and planning efforts targeting the most important and resilient resources and landscapes.

Conservation Catalyst projects must have clearly defined outcomes and deliverables and should involve a measure of innovation for the land trust, engage multiple partners and stakeholders, and directly advance the land trust's mission, strategic goals, and programs. Demonstrated partner support and readiness to participate (if applicable) are essential for successful applications.

A 25% match is required; up to 50% of which may be in-kind. The grant period for Conservation Catalyst Grants is 27 months, from January 1, 2019 to March 31, 2021.

## **STEWARDSHIP & RESOURCE MANAGEMENT GRANTS**

Stewardship & Resource Management Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for land trusts looking to make substantial capital investments in public access improvements and on the ground stewardship of conserved properties. Funding cannot be used for stewardship endowments; however, project-related contributions to stewardship funds or endowments may be counted as match.

Applicants are encouraged to utilize Stewardship & Resource Management Grants for investments that result in durable, on the ground impacts. For example, proposals to develop universal public access trails and facilities, add amenities such as parking and outdoor gathering areas, or otherwise improve the visitor experience are encouraged.

Habitat improvement and restoration, water quality projects, projects to enhance forest health and soil quality, and other non-recurring stewardship and resource management implementation projects are also encouraged. We are especially interested in actions that can enable conserved lands to sequester and store more carbon, attract new audiences, protect drinking water, and/or provide resilient habitat for wildlife and species of special concern and greatest conservation need.

A 25% match is required; up to 50% of which may be in-kind. The grant period for Stewardship & Resource Management Grants is 18 months, from January 1, 2019 to July 1, 2020.

### **TRANSACTION GRANTS**

Transaction Grants of up to \$50,000 are available for new conservation easement and fee-acquisition projects that result in strategic, permanent protection of environmentally significant lands in New York. Projects that create, enhance and promote access for outdoor recreation for all New Yorkers and appropriate use by the general public are encouraged. Projects should advance publically supported open space priorities such as those identified in the [New York State Open Space Conservation Plan](#) and/or other local, regional, or statewide land protection plans. The Alliance encourages projects identified in strategic conservation plans targeting climate-resilient resources and landscapes.

Transaction grant funds may not be used for land or easement acquisition costs. Such project related investments should be highlighted in the narrative.

Grant funds are intended to cover indirect transaction costs including, but not limited to: project-related staff and/or contractor expenses, legal fees, surveys, baseline documentation, land trust appraisals, stewardship/management plans, and design and installation of public access improvements associated with the purchase, bargain-sale or donation of a conservation easement or fee property.

A 25% cash match commitment is required. In accordance with best practices, at least 50% of the cash match commitment must be allocated to a designated stewardship fund, legal defense fund, or other board-designated reserve or endowment. The grant period for Transaction Grants is 24 months, from January 1, 2018 and December 31, 2019.

**Important:** Preference will be given to transactions that have closed in 2018 or are under contract to close in early 2019. If awarded, Transaction Grant funds will not be released until the conservation transaction is closed, recorded and documented (e.g. executed purchase agreement, conservation easement, or fee conveyance) to the satisfaction of the Alliance. Transactions not expected to close in 2018 or early 2019 are best suited for a future grant cycle.

## **APPLICANT RESOURCES**

Looking for tips, project ideas, or resources to help you build a stronger application?

Please visit our [Conservation Partnership Program webpage](#) where you will find a wealth of information including:

- Answers to Frequently Asked Questions.
- Summaries and highlights of all previously awarded projects.
- Links to important resources including the New York State Open Space Conservation Plan, State Wildlife Action Plan, State Forest Resource Assessment & Strategy, New York State Energy Plan and other documents to help you craft a compelling proposal.

**Please contact us with any additional questions, project ideas or suggestions to improve our program. We're here to help!**

New York State Conservation Partnership Program  
Land Trust Alliance - Northeast Program  
112 Spring Street (Suite 204)  
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866  
[www.landtrustalliance.org](http://www.landtrustalliance.org)

Meme Hanley, New York Program Manager, (518) 587-6436, [mhanley@lta.org](mailto:mhanley@lta.org)  
Katrina Howey, Grants Management Specialist, (518) 587-0932, [khowey@lta.org](mailto:khowey@lta.org)  
Joanne Hamilton, Northeast Program Associate, (518) 587-0774, [jhamilton@lta.org](mailto:jhamilton@lta.org)