



**Open Space Institute
Delaware River Watershed Initiative
Catalyst Planning Grants for Land Protection
Program Description and Request for Proposals
Updated March, 2018**

Catalyst Planning Grants Overview

The Delaware River Watershed Initiative (DRWI) aims to ensure that watersheds can provide high quality and sufficient water quantity for healthy ecosystems and human communities. As part of the DRWI, OSI awards catalyst grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$35,000 to eligible not-for-profit conservation and educational organizations to target and accelerate water resource protection by state, county and municipal governments through planning and zoning.

Successful applicants will work with local and regional government agencies to integrate water quality science into strategic planning such as Open Space Plans, ordinances or other mechanisms for protection. While the projects may have broader purposes, OSI funds should be used for the portion of a planning project that informs permanent protection of water resources. This work complements OSI's [Delaware River Watershed Protection Fund](#).

While public agencies are not eligible to apply for funding, OSI encourages proposals that include partnerships with public sector entities. Please note that projects do not need to be confined to the DRWI watershed clusters but can be located anywhere in the Delaware River Basin. The PDF of the application is available [here for review](#). Please contact Abigail Weinberg to discuss projects prior to receiving a link to an online application.

For a recent example, view the [case study](#) featuring Land Conservancy of New Jersey's successful completion of a [water resource protection strategy](#) as part of [Sussex County's 2016 Open Space Plan](#) with funding from the Catalyst Planning Fund.

Grant Application

The grant application requires information about project goals, planned outcomes, deliverables, audiences, geographic focus, project methods and tasks, timeline and budget.

- The online application will be available through [Foundant, OSI's online grant program](#).
- Applications are accepted on a rolling basis and will be notified about funding approximately six weeks after applications are submitted.

- OSI requests that applicants discuss project ideas with OSI staff prior to submission. Please contact Abigail Weinberg (aweinberg@osiny.org; 212-290-8200) and/or Bill Rawlyk (brawlyk@osiny.org; 908-628-4299).

Project and Applicant Eligibility

All projects must:

- Be aimed at advancing permanent land protection for water resources,
- Demonstrate breadth either through geographic extent or because the project could serve as a model for work elsewhere, and,
- Complete the deliverables (report, analysis, etc.) within a year. The project should be designed so project impacts can be measured within three years.

The following are not eligible for this grant program:

- Local projects that do not have application to broader geographies within the Delaware River Basin or beyond;
- General operating support;
- Research that is not directly applied to a plan;
- Land acquisition or loans (for information on capital grants and loans, visit www.osiny.org); and
- Political lobbying

Not-for-profit conservation, land planning or educational organizations with a demonstrated track record of completing planning, applied research and/or outreach projects are eligible to apply. While public agencies are not eligible to apply for funding, OSI welcomes proposals that include partnerships with public sector entities.

Catalyst Grant Criteria

OSI will evaluate projects against each of the following criteria:

1. **Project Outcomes.** The project has the potential to advance permanent land protection of water resources at scale either because of the scope of the project or its potential to serve as a model. Preference is for projects that impact one or more of the eight watershed clusters, but it is not a requirement.
2. **Audience.** The project will directly inform an established audience that has the resources to implement the final plan (e.g. state agencies, counties, water utilities, and municipal planning boards).

3. **Methods and use of Science.** The proposal identifies information and data sources that will be used in the project to identify priorities, such as the [Stream Reach Assessment Tool](#) or other data, and articulates clear steps or methods to achieve the outcome.
4. **Project Feasibility.** The applicant has the necessary technical skills, relationships, mapping and financial resources needed to complete the project. Where partners are involved, roles and responsibilities are clearly delineated.
5. **Organizational commitment to water quality/quantity.** The organization has demonstrated an ongoing commitment to advancing water resource protection and/or will build on the expertise gathered in the proposed project to advance water resource protection.

Examples of Eligible Catalyst Projects

Eligible projects can include, but are not limited to the following examples:

- Partner with a county on development of an Open Space Plan that informs spending for permanent protection of ground and/or surface water resources. *See the [case study](#) featuring Land Conservancy of New Jersey's successful completion of a [water resource protection strategy](#) as part of [Sussex County's 2016 Open Space Plan](#) with funding from OSI's DRWI Catalyst Planning Fund.
- Integrate water resource consideration into build-out scenarios, ordinances, and/or land use regulations.
- Work with a water utility to identify source water supply lands where protection could reduce risks of future filtration costs for end-users for a regional plan.
- Quantify the cost savings of avoided degradation to justify regulatory support of permanent conservation or expenditure of public funds for land protection in the floodplain. See [FEMA Community Rating System](#) for related financial incentives.
- Develop a plan for forested stream buffer protection projects in partnership with State farm preservation programs.
- Map and evaluate regulatory protection based on locations of town ordinances, funding levels and other proactive water quality planning.
- Review town ordinances for water supply protection in karst areas and develop criteria for needed improvements in partnership with towns.