

Evaluation Criteria

2023-2024 New York State Conservation Partnership Program

Applications are reviewed by a committee comprised of representatives from the Land Trust Alliance, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, individuals with expertise in New York's land trust community and the foundation/grant-making sector. All decisions of the review committee are final. The committee's decisions will be based on the following considerations, summarized as primary and secondary evaluation criteria. Please note that some criteria are general and some are specific to the grant category.

All Conservation Partnership Program Grant Categories

Primary Evaluation Criteria

- Project is aligned with the land trust's mission, goals and strategic priorities.
- Project has well defined metrics, goals and objectives.
- Project has a high likelihood of success.
- Project can be accomplished within the stated grant period.
- Project budget includes allowable expenses.
- Match is secure, well explained and verifiable.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to complete, and sustain if applicable, the proposed grant-funded activities.
- Applicant demonstrates a high level of competence, accountability and due diligence, including satisfactory completion of previously awarded NYSCPP projects and final performance reports.

Secondary Evaluation Criteria

- Applicant is accredited or shows intent to become accredited within the next 3 years.
- Project advances public policy goals and broader community needs, priorities, programs and objectives.
- Board giving is 100%
- Land trust match is greater than minimum required.

Capacity & Excellence Grants

- Applicant identifies how the proposed project will strengthen organizational capacity through the implementation of specific [Land Trust Standards & Practices](#) and/or compliance with [accreditation requirements](#).
- Applicant demonstrates how new and/or expanded programs and services will benefit the community and/or create opportunities to be more inclusive.

Professional Development Grants

- Applicant clearly demonstrates the need for the new and/or expanded position(s) and identifies why the additional capacity is a strategic investment for the organization, i.e. the position is the result of a strategic or other plan approved by the board of directors.
- Applicant makes the case for how additional capacity will strengthen the organization's ability to conserve and steward land and deliver programs and services that will benefit the community.
- Applicant demonstrates a commitment to sustain the grant-funded position(s) beyond the grant period and lays out a clear plan to achieve this goal.

Conservation Catalyst Grants

- Project engages multiple partners and advances models for collaboration that will do at least one of the following:
 - serve as a “catalyst” for local or regional open space protection or other community-centered conservation;
 - raise the profile or relevance of land conservation by engaging new constituencies and building public support for and involvement in land protection work and/or related community supported projects;
 - promote climate smart initiatives, including efforts to integrate resilience and climate change science into conservation planning on a regional level.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to manage and complete a complex multi-year project.
- Applicant must show project partner, landowner, community and/or municipal support for the project as evidenced by letters of support, municipal resolutions, etc.
- Project complements land protection strategies of the [New York State Open Space Plan](#), [New York State Wildlife Action Plan](#), [New York State Forest Action Plan](#) or other local and regional protection or comprehensive plans.

Stewardship & Resource Management Grants

- Applicant demonstrates the degree to which the project does one or more of the following:
 - connects more New Yorkers to the outdoors;
 - supports stated resource management plan(s) and priorities;
 - improves water quality and/or ecological resilience of conserved lands using science-based methods and activities;
 - enhances user experience and/or enables new users to benefit from conserved lands;
 - builds on land trust efforts to provide a high-quality outdoor experience for those who visit conserved properties around the state of New York.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to sustain stewardship and land and resource management activities beyond grant period.
- Applicant shows landowner, community and/or municipal support for the project as evidenced by letters of support, municipal resolutions, etc.
- Project complements land protection strategies of the [New York State Open Space Plan](#), [New York State Wildlife Action Plan](#), [New York State Forest Action Plan](#) or other local and regional protection plans.

Transaction Grants

- Transaction has already closed or applicant can demonstrate with a high degree of certainty that the project will close within grant period.
- Applicant demonstrates the degree to which the project does one or more of the following:
 - conserves environmentally significant land and resources;
 - protects land within an assemblage of other protected lands;
 - demonstrates the public benefits of private land conservation;
 - creates, expands or improves access for public use and enjoyment of protected lands.
- Applicant demonstrates sufficient organizational capacity and commitment to managing conserved fee lands and monitoring conservation easements.
- Applicant shows landowner, community and/or municipal support for the project as evidenced by letters of support, municipal resolutions, etc.
- Project complements land protection strategies of the [New York State Open Space Plan](#), [New York State Wildlife Action Plan](#), [New York State Forest Action Plan](#) or other local and regional protection plans.