



## **Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance**

### **Erie County**

## **Water Quality Implementation Project**

### **Request for Proposals 2026**

The Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance (LEWPA) is made up of Cattaraugus, Chautauqua, and Erie counties. LEWPA is soliciting proposals from municipalities, non-profit environmental organizations, or other entities/agencies to utilize funding through the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection Fund to support priority water quality improvement or protection projects and water-related climate resiliency projects in the Niagara River/Lake Erie Watershed. This solicitation is primarily for projects within Erie County, but projects that have benefits in more than one of the three counties may be partially funded by more than one county. Approximately \$70,000 is available for each of the counties in LEWPA.

This funding is designed to be utilized by projects that are unable to obtain funding through other sources or that need some initial seed money in order to become a competitive project for other funding sources. This money is considered New York State funds for match purposes.

Projects will be ranked based on their ability to leverage additional funding sources including local, state, federal, or private donations, as well as the development of partnerships between organizations. If funding is being provided as seed money, the project's likelihood of being funded by other competitive funding sources, such as the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative or NYS Water Quality Improvement Program, will be considered. In addition, projects must be able to demonstrate measurable water quality benefits and will be required to meet NYS Department of Environmental Conservation funding requirements and approval. Typical project funding will be around \$15,000. Smaller projects are encouraged to apply. Admin costs should be below 20% of the total project cost. Project applicants (or representatives from applicant organizations) who attend at least two Erie County Water Quality Committee meetings per year will be given preference for funding.

**Project proposals are due by Friday, March 6, 2025.**

Projects must work to improve or protect water quality in at least one of the following categories:

- Installation and Implementation of Best Management Practices

Examples include:

- Stormwater management/treatment projects and green infrastructure
- Stream bank stabilization and erosion control including living shorelines
- Riparian buffer planting and restoration

- Public Education and Outreach

Examples include:

- Boat stewards aquatic invasive species prevention program
- Workshops/training/educational tours
- Innovative engagement techniques

- Eradication of Invasive Species

Examples include:

- Control of aquatic or terrestrial invasive species
- Habitat restoration

- Geographic Information Services (GIS) or Other Technical Assistance

Examples include:

- Feasibility/Engineering Studies
- Initial project design/scoping for larger grant applications
- Development of tools for water quality improvement or protection
- GIS Mapping assistance

- Specialized water-related programs to address local concerns and support state-wide priorities

- Projects that advance the NYSDEC Great Lakes Action Agenda  
(<https://www.dec.ny.gov/lands/91881.html>)
- Projects that advance the development of the Regional Niagara River/ Lake Erie Watershed Management Plan – Phase 3 or are mentioned in the Phase 2 Plan  
([www.erie.gov/wmp](http://www.erie.gov/wmp))

Requirements:

- Applicants must agree that any identifying signs will note that portions of the project were funded by New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, Environmental Protection Fund through the Lake Erie Watershed Protection Alliance.
- Projects will likely be funded in summer/fall 2026.
- Generally, projects will be expected to be completed within one fiscal year, ending in early summer 2026. 75% of project funds may be made available upfront with 25% reimbursement after successful completion of the project.
- Three-page maximum for application, plus attachments
- Applicants may be asked to present to/discuss their project proposals with the Erie County Water Quality Committee (ECWQC) in March 2026.

**Please address any project questions and completed proposals to Cole Beale at [cole.beale@erie.gov](mailto:cole.beale@erie.gov) by March 6, 2025.**

**Please Note:** ECWQC will vote on which Erie County proposals to recommend to LEWPA for funding at the March 2026 meeting. LEWPA will make the final selection for inclusion in the annual work plan during spring 2026. Annual LEWPA work plans require approval by the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation before funding is released. Projects would be able start around late summer 2026.

## Project Proposal Template

**Project Title:**

**Project Address and GPS Coordinates:** Be as specific as possible. You may attach a map.

**Lead Organization:**

**Contact Person Name:**

**Phone Number:**

**Email Address:**

**Total Amount of LEWPA Funding Requested:**

**Project Timeframe:** Include approximate start and end dates.

**Brief Project Summary:** Up to two paragraphs including brief description of work and project goals/deliverables.

**Detailed Project Description:** Describe the water quality problem and how LEWPA funds will be used to solve it. Include any water quality or sustainability plans in which this project is listed or in which similar action is recommended.

**Requested LEWPA Funds Budget Breakdown:**

Personnel: Include salary and fringe rates for total number of hours. Break out administrative costs for contracting, reporting, managing contractor, etc.

Travel: Mileage reimbursement rate and number of estimated miles

Supplies: Brief description and estimated cost of categories such as \$100 for printing outreach materials or \$1,000 for purchasing plant material.

Contractual services: Cost and description breakdown of subcontract work.

**Leveraged Funds Description:**

What additional funds or in-kind will be leveraged or matched on this project and what will those funds be used for?

**Project Partners:**

List project partners and briefly describe their roles.

**Anticipated Water Quality Benefits:**

Include project goals, desired outcomes, and performance metrics for tracking. Include acres of land treated for invasive species, acres of stormwater runoff treated, pounds of nitrogen and phosphorus prevented from entering waterways, tons of sediment prevented from eroding, number of trees planted, number of people educated, linear feet of shoreline stabilization, or other specific metrics.