



# **Supporting Environmentally Sustainable, Resilient, and Just Communities Across Downstate New York**

## **Request for Proposals**

### **Background**

From the densely populated streets of New York City to the agricultural lands and waterways of Long Island and the Lower Hudson Valley, downstate counties share food, water, energy, and transportation infrastructure that crosses political boundaries. Regional collaboration has the potential to address many of the region’s shared environmental challenges—intensifying climate change, opposition to clean energy, and damaging agricultural practices. Regional collaboration also can help communities benefit from opportunities such as growing interest in community solar or the development of offshore wind resources in the Atlantic. In addition, it can address common barriers to success, identify gaps and inconsistencies in local policies, and promote partnerships among nonprofits focused on solving these challenges and pursuing new opportunities.

Founded in 1924, The New York Community Trust (The Trust) is the community foundation for the State’s eight downstate counties. Our mission is to foster and engage in enduring and innovative philanthropy with a vision of equitable and thriving communities throughout New York City, Long Island, Westchester, and beyond. While our grantmaking typically focuses on the needs of one of the three downstate regions we serve, The Trust has supported statewide advocacy on environmental issues through our national and international environment program for more than 25 years. We also address issues of common concern for our eight-county area, including mass transit.

### **The Opportunity**

This year, we request regional proposals for projects focused on one of three environmental and climate-related issues:

1. sustainable food systems: producing, distributing, procuring, and disposing of food in ways that create jobs, meet nutritional needs, and provide food security for all without compromising the well-being of people or the planet now or in the future;
2. climate-resilient housing and land use planning: the planning, building, or rehabilitation of single and multifamily housing to protect against climate-related threats (including sea level rise, extreme weather events, and power interruption) while prioritizing safety, energy efficiency, a highly skilled workforce, and environmental sustainability; or

3. community development driven by renewable energy: green jobs, promoting local economic vitality by deploying solar, wind, and/or geothermal power, electric vehicles, and similar technologies to benefit communities.

The Trust expects to award up to four two-year grants of up to \$300,000 for collaborative efforts that directly benefit Long Island, New York City, and the Lower Hudson Valley (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, and Ulster counties). These efforts may include any combination of:

- advocacy and lobbying in support of needed systemic change, including policy/legislation, financing practices, or market-based campaigns;
- practical research to inform policy and budget decisions; and
- planning and program development (proposals for planning alone are unlikely to be competitive).

Grants will range from \$150,000 to \$300,000 over two years (\$75,000 to \$150,000 per year). Organizations may submit individually or as part of a partnership or coalition. To be competitive, organizations and coalitions should have demonstrated experience working in all three regions (New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley). Submissions should explain how the proposed project would substantially benefit all three geographies.

### **Applicant Eligibility**

#### ***To be eligible, applicants must:***

- ✓ be a nonprofit incorporated or with offices in New York State and be recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) entity or a fiscally sponsored program of such a nonprofit.
- ✓ have a track record of working in the environmental area on which the project focuses.
- ✓ have a project, campaign, or initiative that will address needs or benefit communities across New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley (Westchester, Putnam, Dutchess, Rockland, Orange, and Ulster counties).

#### ***Priority will be given to projects that:***

- ✓ clearly demonstrate a regional approach to address a challenge or opportunity.
- ✓ include partners that have a demonstrated history of serving and/or advocating on behalf of communities across New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley.
- ✓ have clear activities that are well-designed to achieve the project's goals during the grant period.
- ✓ promote systemic change and/or provide tangible benefits for downstate residents.
- ✓ are informed by and inclusive of residents who typically do not have access to policy and/or decision makers.

#### ***Grants will not be awarded for:***

- A project, campaign, or advocacy effort that already has Trust support.

- Efforts that solely expand an existing initiative from its current geographic area to the remaining ones in the Downstate New York region, i.e. from New York City to Long Island.
- Capital projects (brick and mortar).
- Litigation or administrative appeals of government decisions.
- Land acquisition.

## **Proposal Materials**

A complete proposal includes a narrative, project budget, organization operating budget, and a board list. Details are below.

### □ ***Proposal narrative***

Please prepare a narrative of three to five pages responding to the following questions:

1. What is your organization's background (history, mission, main activities) and credentials for carrying out the project for which you are requesting funding?
2. What specific policy or systemic issue do you plan to address? How does the issue affect the residents of New York City, Long Island, and the Lower Hudson Valley?
3. How does your project address the issue across all three geographic areas?
4. What is the proposed project? Please include:
  - a. Goals—what do you aim to accomplish with grant funds?
  - b. Planned activities—what activities will you undertake to accomplish the project goals? Be specific and describe concrete actions and timeline.
  - c. Collaborating organizations, if any, and the role they will play in the project.
  - d. Expected results—what specific outcomes and benefits do you expect to see because of the project? (Bullet points are fine.)

### □ ***Project budget***

Include an itemized project budget that reflects the full expenses to carry out the project (as opposed to just the amount requested), and revenue. Include other received and/or anticipated funding sources for the project.

### □ ***Annual operating budget***

Provide your organization's current operating budget—including revenue and expenses.

### □ ***List of board of directors, including professional/non-board affiliations***

Provide a list of your board of directors with their professional/non-board affiliations. The Trust requires that a board have at least 4 independent members. All board members should be unrelated and no more than one board member should be a paid staff member. Submissions using a fiscal sponsor should provide a board list for only the funds administrator/fiscal sponsor.

***NOTE: The project budget, the organization’s operating budget, and the list of the board of directors do not count toward the five-page maximum for the proposal narrative.***

### **How to Submit**

1. Assemble and merge all proposal materials **into a single PDF file** (not more than 25 MB). Save the file using the naming format “Organization Name.pdf”
2. Complete a cover sheet for the [Supporting Environmentally Sustainable, Resilient, and Just Communities Across Downstate New York RFP](#) (you will upload your proposal materials at the bottom of the cover sheet).
3. Once the proposal is uploaded, check the certification box at the end of the cover sheet and click submit. You will get an email confirming the proposal has been received. This email will include—as a PDF attachment—the cover sheet you just completed.

### **Application Deadline**

Proposals must be submitted electronically no later than **5 pm on Friday, June 20, 2025** using The New York Community Trust’s [Grantseeker Portal](#). The portal can also be reached through [The Trust’s website](#). Applicants are not guaranteed an award and may not receive the full amount requested in their proposal. The Trust will request additional information to learn more about the proposed project ahead of any grant award.

### **Information Session (virtual)**

The Trust will hold a virtual **information session on Thursday, May 8, from 3:30 pm to 4:30 pm**. Applicants are not required to attend the session to submit a proposal. The session is intended to answer questions applicants may have about the RFP.

**Please register to receive the Zoom link.** The information session will be recorded and distributed to event registrants following the meeting.

### **Award Notification**

Notification of award status will be made by email by the end of 2025. Grant recipients will be required to provide ACH (electronic banking) information via a secure DocuSign process. Please add [noreply@nycommunitytrust.org](mailto:noreply@nycommunitytrust.org) and [docusign@nyct-cfi.org](mailto:docusign@nyct-cfi.org) to your address book so that our communications do not get caught in your spam filters.

### **Questions**

Arturo Garcia-Costas, Program Director for Local, National, and International Environment, is the primary contact for questions. You may contact Arturo at [agarciacostas@thenytrust.org](mailto:agarciacostas@thenytrust.org).