

Lake Erie Protection Fund Application Materials

The Ohio Lake Erie Commission administers the Lake Erie Protection Fund grant program, which was established to fund research and on-the-ground projects aimed at protecting, preserving and restoring Lake Erie and its watershed. The Fund is supported through tax-deductible donation online via PayPal, by check, or through purchase of a Lake Erie license plate featuring the Marblehead Lighthouse, Toledo Harbor Lighthouse, Lake Erie life preserver, or Life on Lake Erie plate.

Protect the Lake, Buy the Plate!



See your local BMV or visit <https://www.oplates.com/>

Ohio Lake Erie Commission

Phone: 419.601.5894
web: lakeerie.ohio.gov
email: lakeeriecommission@lakeerie.ohio.gov

General Proposal Guidelines

The Lake Erie Protection Fund Grants Program

Grants are available to fund a wide variety of projects which will provide a direct benefit to Lake Erie or its tributary watersheds in Ohio. Projects must assist with the implementation of the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan 2023 (LEPR 23). The Lake Erie Protection Fund (LEPF) focuses on projects that lead to better management decisions, both for environmental protection and economic development. Ideally, LEPF projects would serve to answer a management question, provide a demonstration of an implementation project, or complete final evaluations of a process or concept. All projects should address at least one of the LEPR 23 Goals. If you have a project that you are considering submitting to the LEPF, it is recommended that you contact the Ohio Lake Erie Commission office to discuss your project. Grants are typically funded for one year, although additional time may be requested. The LEPR 23 is available at the Ohio Lake Erie Commission website lakeerie.ohio.gov.

Eligibility

Government and non-profit entities are eligible to apply for funding through the LEPF. Applicants must have a federal tax identification number to apply. Funding may not be used to fund staff salaries for state employees. Applicants must be based in Ohio, although work may be contracted with outside entities. Questions about your eligibility should be sent to the grants manager prior to completing an application.

Submissions

The attached form should not be altered in any way. The current FY 2025 application must be used; applications submitted on FY 2024 or earlier forms will not be eligible for funding. The addition of pages or recreating the form in any way will disqualify your application. A one-page map/diagram, concept plan, and a one-page resume or CV may be attached. If a project partner other than the applicant is providing match funds or in-kind services, a letter of commitment should be provided. No other attachments may be included. Application submissions as a PDF file of the application, including signatures, must be received at lakeeriecommission@lakeerie.ohio.gov by 11:59pm on **May 5, 2025** to be considered for funding.

Use of Funds

Purchase of equipment must be essential to the project for funding to be approved. Any request for permanent equipment must include an explanation of custody usage for the life of the equipment beyond the scope of the project. Permanent equipment purchased through a grant will normally revert back to the Ohio Lake Erie Commission upon completion of the grant project unless grantee can demonstrate the need for the permanent equipment and ensure its continued safe custody and maintenance over its useful life. A maximum of 10% of the total grant award may be used for administrative overhead aka indirects (\$5,000 for a \$50,000 project). Grant recipients who are serving solely in an administrative capacity and are transferring project funds to third parties, may be allowed overhead cost up to 5%. **Funds cannot be used for the purchase of food, out of state travel, or attending conferences.**

Grant awards are paid out 70% up front and 30% upon approval of the final report. If progress of work exceeds 70% by the time the interim report is due, an accompanying interim payment request can be submitted based upon progress of work as described in the interim report, with a supporting budget worksheet. Funds will be held back until completion of the final report.

The Commission will not fund purely educational projects. Contact the Ohio Environmental Education Fund about such projects.

General Proposal Guidelines (cont.)

Recognition

Grantee shall credit the Ohio Lake Erie Commission and the Lake Erie Protection Fund in all products produced under the agreement including: reports; publications; releases; presentations; and signage. Recommended Language: This project was funded through the Lake Erie Protection Fund, which is administered by the Ohio Lake Erie Commission. The LEPF is supported through tax-deductible donation and the voluntary contribution of Ohioans who purchase one of four of the Lake Erie license plates.

Match

The FY2025 LEPF will not require a minimum match. However, applications that include match will receive bonus scoring during the grant review. The match may be cash or in-kind contributions. In-kind rates must be customary and reasonable for the work performed or services provided and should be detailed in the budget justification.

Review Process

All applications are reviewed by the Grants Committee, which consists of designated employees from the Commission Agencies and Ohio Sea Grant. The recommendations are presented to the Commission for final award decision. Applications are reviewed based on:

Technical Merits of the Proposal:

- Qualifications of the applicant to accomplish their stated objectives;
- Degree to which the project addresses a specific Goal of the LEPR 2023 and/or specific priority as established by the Commission;
- Degree to which the project can leverage funding support (match) from other sources;
- Degree to which the project may stimulate environmental and economic benefits to Ohio's portion of Lake Erie and its watershed;
- Degree of coordination and collaboration between State of Ohio agencies and/or other partners;
- Cost effectiveness of the proposed budget;
- Degree to which the project will engage the community and the results will be shared to multiple audiences;
- Degree to which the proposed activity reflects an innovative or creative approach to addressing Lake Erie issues; and
- Timeliness of the project.

Preference for 2025 will be given to projects that prepare a project for its implementation of protection and restoration in the Ohio Lake Erie Watershed such as:

- Implementation of on-the-ground and/or in-the-water restoration projects benefiting one of the priorities in the LEPF 23 and/or other plans listed below.
- Development of concept plans, community engagement, site assessments, and/or design & engineering documents to prepare a project for future implementation of priorities set forth by the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan.
- Projects that implement restoration activities that address community needs for resilience to flooding or storm water pollution.
- Planning and scoping activities that result in the identification of new, specific, spatially, and nutrient reduction quantified projects in previously identified Critical Areas that are suitable for listing in NPS-IS (9-Element), especially with Soil and Water Conservation Districts and/or community groups.

General Proposal Guidelines (cont.)

Existing projects looking for funding for further development must meet goals set forth by the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan and be identified in a plan such as but not limited to:

- Local and/or regional plan
- NPS-IS (9-Element) Watershed Plan
- Ohio Areas of Concern Management Action Project (contact LEPF Grants Manager for list)
- Built projects from the “top ten” list of H2Ohio BMPs
- Ohio Domestic Action Plan
- Lake Erie Lakewide Action and Management Plan
- Tourism and Economic Development plan (as it relates to environmental, coastal, or stormwater)
- Other State Plan identified in the Lake Erie Protection & Restoration Plan (2023)

Project proposals for LEPF funding should clearly describe how the proposed work will advance projects to the next stage of implementation, such as being grant proposal ready, permit ready, or implemented and/or constructed in the community.

Outreach

Each project is required to contain an outreach and sharing component. The priority for outreach within LEPF projects is to ensure that the local community and the appropriate state agency staff are aware of the project and its outcomes, especially as they may benefit from management or implementation activities within the watershed. Please identify a list of all stakeholders with whom you intend to share your final report or deliverable, including a state agency staff member to receive the final report.

Project Evaluation

Each project must include a brief quantitative or qualitative evaluation component. This activity is meant to demonstrate the impact the project has on Lake Erie and/or the implementation of the LEPR 2023. The Ohio Lake Erie Commission continues to strive to demonstrate the value of the fund to benefit Lake Erie. Lake Erie Protection Fund revenue is primarily generated by sales of Lake Erie license plates. Please describe the value/benefits of your project to a potential purchaser of a Lake Erie license plate, such as a member of the community and community leadership.

This form must be used to apply for a Lake Erie Protection Fund Small Grant. No recreations of this form or any alternative forms will be accepted. You may remove the instructional pages before submittal. Cover letters will be removed and discarded. Submit a signed PDF to: lakeeriecommission@lakeerie.ohio.gov.

PLEASE NOTE: PRINT CLEARLY OR TYPE

☐ **This project is a resubmission of a previous application.**

Project Title: _____
50 character limit

Amount Requested: \$_____ Match Provided: \$_____

Project Director: _____ **Title:** _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Authorizing Officer: _____ **Title:** _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Fiscal Agent: _____ **Title:** _____

Organization: _____

Payment Address: _____

Email: _____ Phone: (____) _____

Federal Tax ID (required): _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Project Priorities: List at least 1 Goal from the LEPR 2023 that this proposal most closely addresses (provide page number).

Project Summary: Briefly describe what you are proposing to do. List any regional, state, and/or federal plans the project will assist with meeting its goals and how the project will address the LEPR SFY 2025 preference on implementing in-the-water and/or on-the-ground projects.

Community Need: Please describe the communities' demonstrated need for this project and the grant funding.

Activities and Timeline: Outline the specific activities involved in the completion of your project. Your timeline should be organized on a quarterly basis. This will serve as your project's scope of services, so please be specific.

Deliverables: Please list and describe the specific products and outcomes that will result from your project. These will be used to determine the successful completion of your project.

Other Agency Involvement: Please list any state or federal agencies that will be involved in your project. These individuals should have a role in the actual implementation of the project beyond reviewing the initial application. Also include any other local partners actively involved in the project.

Outreach:

1) How will your project engage the community and ensure results are shared with relevant state agencies and other stakeholders? List all stakeholders with whom you intend to engage and share results with during and after your project.

2) The Ohio Lake Erie Commission continues to strive to demonstrate the value of the fund to benefit Lake Erie. Lake Erie Protection Fund revenue is primarily generated by sales of Lake Erie license plates. Please describe the value/benefits of your project to a potential purchaser of a Lake Erie license plate, such as a community member and/or community leader.

Evaluation: Outline methods that you will use for evaluating the success of your project. Either qualitative or quantitative measures of your success should be used. This information should be discussed in your final report.

LEPF Prior Grants Review: To avoid duplicative efforts, please review the final reports on our website <https://lakeerie.ohio.gov/funding-opportunities/protection-fund/available-grant> for projects that may be similar to your proposal. Please state how your project builds upon or relates to other projects listed, if applicable.

Budget Justification: Please explain the details of your proposed budget. For example, in-kind match, if any, should be calculated here, including hourly rates for work completed by volunteers. There is a cap of 10% or \$5000 for indirects.

Background of your Organization: What are the goals, objectives, and accomplishments of your organization?

Attachments: Applicants may attach a **1 page** location map, chart and one project concept plan, and a 1 page resume or CV.

	Requested Funds	Match Provided	Description
A. Salaries & Wages			
B. Fringe Benefits			
C. Total Salaries & Benefits (A+B)			
D. Non-expendable Equipment			
E. Expendable Materials & Supplies			
F. Travel			
G. Services or Consultants			
H. Technology Costs			
I. Publications/Presentations			
J. All other direct costs			
K. Non- Salary Direct Costs (D thru J)			
L. Indirect Costs (not to exceed 10%)			
M. Total Salaries & Benefits (from C)			
N. Non-Salary Direct Costs (from K)			
O. Indirect Costs (from L)			
Total Cost			

Budget Form Instructions

All items should be rounded to the nearest \$10.

A. SALARIES AND WAGES – List the project director as such. List professional non-faculty or non-staff associated with the project as professionals. List professional persons participating in the project who are part-time employees or persons retained solely for the project, or staff members of participating organizations as project associates. Consultants should be listed under “Services or Consultants.”

B. FRINGE BENEFITS – Propose amounts in conformance with normal accounting procedures. Indicate whether the rates are used for application purposes or whether they are fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes. Fringe benefits may not exceed 45 percent (45%) of salaries.

C. TOTAL SALARIES AND BENEFITS (A + B)

D. NON-EXPENDABLE EQUIPMENT – This is defined as an item of property which has an acquisition cost of \$500 or more per unit, an expected life of two years or more and does not lose its identity when joined or made a part of another piece of equipment. Organizations performing research with the support of a LEPP grant are expected to have appropriate facilities, suitably furnished and equipped.

E. EXPENDABLE MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES – Those required should be indicated in general terms such as office, laboratory, computing, and field supplies with estimated costs. **Provide detail on specific items when the amount is over \$500.** If fabrication of equipment is proposed, list parts and materials required for each, and show costs separately from the other items.

F. TRAVEL – All travel is to be in accordance with the established travel policy of the applicant and its relationship to the project should be briefly described if not apparent. All estimated costs should be itemized showing the number of trips required, type of trip (field, meeting, etc.), the destinations, per diem and local reimbursement rates allowed by the applicant, and any miscellaneous expenses for each trip. **NOTE: Grant funds may not be used for out of state travel or for travel to conferences.**

G. SERVICES OR CONSULTANTS – Proposed sub-awards or subcontracts must be disclosed in the proposal, **including a detailed budget and work statement**, so that the grant instrument may contain LEPP authorization, if appropriate. If the need for consultant services is anticipated, the proposal narrative should provide appropriate rationale and the proposal budget should estimate the amount of funds that may be required for this purpose. List the names of consultant(s) and provide a breakdown of consultant estimates in the Budget Justification section. This should include hour and rate calculations, travel, supplies, etc. to the extent possible. Applications that have a simple total of anticipated costs are not likely to be funded.

H. TECHNOLOGY COSTS – The costs of technology services, including AI, drone company services, video editing services, website development, etc should be described, if not apparent. A justification based on the established computer service rates at the proposing organization should be provided. Reasonable costs of leasing, renting, or subscriptions may be requested, if justified. Professional services and purchasing supplies should not be included here.

I. PUBLICATION AND PRESENTATION – This includes the cost to publish in scientific journals and prepare independent publications. This could also include professional printing. These costs should be explained in the Budget Justification.

J. ALL OTHER DIRECT COSTS – Other anticipated direct costs, examples: shipping; equipment-use charges; and other services not included above should be itemized here. Provide a breakdown showing the cost and how it was estimated in the Budget Justification.

K. TOTAL NON SALARY DIRECT COSTS (C thru J)

L. INDIRECT COSTS – The maximum indirect cost rate allowable on all LEPP grants is ten percent (10%) of the total grant award.

M., N., O. TOTAL COSTS - Total cost for the project, calculated from above lines. The amount requested should not be less than \$15,000 or exceed \$50,000.