Conservation Leadership and Innovation Program (CLIP)

For questions regarding this application, please contact:

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Visit www.accdpa.org/grants for program updates and changes to the application process!

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Conservation Leadership and Innovation Program

Purpose

The Conservation Leadership and Innovation Program exists to promote, support, and fund projects that that align Conservation District's mission and vision. Most projects funded by through the program should aim to reduce the impacts of non-point source pollution, improve the health of our water resources, and/or habitat restoration.

Mission

The Allegheny County Conservation District is an urban conservation district that engages and leads through partnerships, innovation, and implementation to conserve, promote, and improve Allegheny County's natural resources.

Vision

The Allegheny County Conservation District envisions an educated and engaged public, clean water, and a sustainable future.

Funding for the Program

The Conservation Leadership and Innovation Program is funded through the following revenue streams: the Clean Water Fund (CWF) and the District's general fund. The CWF monies are collected during the review of applications and issuance of permits, and/or fines levied against violators of the Clean Streams Law. Additionally, the District has allocated a portion of funds from our general budget to support the program.

The District will revisit and establish a yearly grant budget to determine the number of projects that can be supported. Eligible projects can request up to $10,000.

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A 20% match is **required** of each organization receiving a grant award through the program. For example, if an organization requests and is awarded a grant for $10,000, the entire project will have an investment of $12,000 with the inclusion of matching funds. The matching funds can come from in-kind services, salaries, matching funds from other grants, etc.

<u>Organizational Eligibility</u>

Grants are available only to 501(c) (3) organizations, subdivisions of state and local governments, school districts, and legally established authorities (such as redevelopment authorities). Additionally, ACCD will not consider grant applications from individuals or for-profit companies.

The District will not consider repeat applicants until a final report and budget have been submitted!

Additionally, the District is prohibited from issuing grants for fund raising campaigns, operating and/or maintenance budgets, or sectarian religious activities. Grants shall not be made to any organization that discriminates on the basis of national origin, race, color, age, sex, sexual preference, marital status, or religion.

<u>Project Eligibility</u>

The District will accept and fund applications for projects designed to reduce the impacts of non-point source pollution and/or improve water quality in Allegheny County. These activities include but are not limited to the following: streambank stabilization/restoration, development of riparian buffer zones, construction of wetlands, natural stream restoration to mitigate erosion and sedimentation, purchasing equipment for sampling or educational purposes, and other activities relating to control of erosion and sediment pollution. Funding is also available for design, construction labor, and materials for green infrastructure installations (e.g. rain gardens and vegetated filter strips) that are designed to improve stormwater quality and/or reduce sewer overflows.

Applications for projects that create and support public education and outreach programs with water quality as the core message and/or learning are strongly

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encouraged. Possibilities include programs on the role of the homeowner in protecting water quality through the use of appropriate lawn chemicals, the benefits of green infrastructure installed on residential property, etc.

The District is also willing to fund initial project design work, proof of concepts, engineering plans, surveys, etc. The District will fund these types of projects with the understanding that they lead to a more robust, fully-fledged project. Once the grant requirements are complete under the initial grant and the project advances from design to implementation, qualified organizations may submit a new grant application that seeks to fund the next phase of the project.

Furthermore, the District will accept applications for sustainable agriculture projects. Organizations pursuing or supporting agriculturally based projects that promote water quality, soil health, and educational programs are also strongly encouraged to apply.

All proposed projects must meet and maintain compliance requirements (if applicable) with respect to Chapter 102 – Erosion and Sediment Control, Chapter 105 – Watershed and Stream Encroachments, Chapter 91 – Manure Management, and Act 38 – Nutrient Management.

Eligible Use of Funds as Match

The District will allow grant funds to be used as a match for existing large-scale projects. Applicants intending to utilize CLIP funds as a match must introduce the entire project and list the specific budgetary items that correspond to the funds being requested. It is of particular interest for the District to understand how our funds are being leveraged, invested, and the return on those investments. Any documentation of how funds are being leveraged must be supplied to ACCD for the duration of the grant. Any organization successfully utilizing ACCD funds as matching funds **are exempt** from ACCD's 20% match requirement.

Application Process

Inquiry

The District requires every applicant organization to submit a *one-page letter of inquiry* that briefly describes the nature of the project, funding requirements, and any potential partners that will be involved on project. This letter of inquiry should be emailed to grants@accdpa.org according to the timeline established on the

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website. District staff will review the inquiries, provide feedback, and **invite selected organizations to apply for full funding based on their letter or inquiry.** Organizations submitting a final application without submitting a letter of inquiry and/or receiving an invitation to move forward in the application process will be disqualified.

Final Applications

All *final* applications are due to the District according to the established timeline on the website. We have integrated a simple online application form and file upload process that makes applying to the program easier, saving on paper generation, and allowing for large file uploads. All completed applications will be evaluated by the District Staff and the Board Grants Committee for final approval. All applicants submitting a final application will be notified of their status and any the next steps in the process.

Apply!

Grant Application

A complete application consists of:

A. A completed online application:
   a. http://www.accdpa.org/grants/online-grant-application/
B. The following uploaded project files:
   a. A cover letter on letterhead of the applying organization describing the organization's mission & purpose, goals, prior accomplishments, and current projects (see Grant Application Checklist)
   b. A project narrative complete with an executive summary, project description/goals/objectives, complete budget, timetable, and verified/potential project partnerships that will help your organization complete the project (see Grant Application Checklist)
   c. A copy if the IRS determination letter indicating tax-exempt status under section 501(c) (3) (if applicable)
   d. A list including the names and affiliations of the organization's Board of Directors, Trustees, or Officers (if applicable)
   e. Signed commitment letters from partnering organizations
   f. Any other documents, images, videos, maps, drawings, etc. that illustrate your project and the proposed impact it will have on the community

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Post-Grant Approval
Distribution of Funds

Once the District has approved your grant for funding, the distribution of funds will follow the following schedule:

- 50% at time of award (typically one to three weeks after award notification)
- 25% upon mid-term reporting
- 25% upon fulfillment of all ACCD requirements

Requirements

Once your organization receives funding, we ask that you:

- Recognize the District's sponsorship of the project in your newsletters or similar publications
    o Notify the District at grants@accdpa.org when recognitions are made
- Recognize the District in media and publicity materials regarding the project as distributed by your organization during promotion
    o Examples include:
        ▪ Social Media
        ▪ Newsletters
        ▪ Printed media
        ▪ Email blasts
- Display the District's name or logo on any developed reports, handouts, signage, and website that apply to the project
- **Required** participation in a portion of the District's annual event as a distinguished project/organization (in-person, digitally, or via a poster board).

Project Timeline and Reporting

Each approved project will establish a completion timeline and achievement milestones. The District requires a mid-term and final report upon the completion of the grant requirements. This report must detail the following:

- A short description of the project
- Project accomplishments
- Project difficulties
- Project discoveries
- Media generation
    o Photos

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- - Videos
  - Social media
- Return on Investment

All reports, notifications, requests, etc. are to be emailed to grants@accdpa.org. ACCD will not accept paper documentation unless requested.

> *The Allegheny County Conservation District reserves the right to increase, decrease, suspend, and/or cancel the Grant Program prior to any awards being announced. All applicants will be notified if any of the above occurs during the RFP process.*

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ACCD Grant Application Check List

	Item	Item	Description
	1	Cover Letter	Mission, goals, background, and organization objectives.
	2	Executive Summary / Project Goal (1-2 paragraphs)	Provides a background of the project, the needs, goals, objectives, and impact the project will have on the community.
	3	Project Activities & Description (1-2 Pages)	Provide a detailed narrative about the project. The project narrative **must outline** the specific tasks to be completed during the project. Also note how the project supports the mission and vision of ACCD and the [Allegheny County Comprehensive Plan](#).
	4	Project Timetable	Provide information on the project's timeline. Include a start date and completion date. A chart or timeline is recommended.
	5	Project Budget & Narrative	Provide **specific information** regarding budget expenditures for the project. *Include a categorical breakdown showing items for which ACCD funding will be applied.*
	6	Project Partners & Roles	Provide information on any project partners and identify their role in the project.
	7	IRS 501(c)(3) Determination	Provide a copy of the IRS 501(c)(3) determination letter.
	8	List of Officers	A list of the organizations Officer, Board members, or Trustees and their addresses.
	9	Letters of Support	Provide copies of all letters of support for your project.
	10	Other Information	Any literature or narrative describing the organization or project (optional).

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