



NEW JERSEY HIGHLANDS COALITION

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For Immediate Release

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Local Citizens Groups Can Apply for Grants to Protect Environmental and Cultural Treasures in NJ Highlands

BOONTON, N.J. – Local citizen groups fighting to protect water, other environmental resources, and cultural and historic treasures in northern New Jersey's Highlands Region are invited to apply for grants up to \$5000 through the New Jersey Highlands Coalition's 2022 Small Grants Program.

Applications must be received by June 21, 2022. Grants will be presented on October 12 at the N.J. Highlands Coalition's 2022 Annual Meeting.

"Our Small Grants Program is one of the unique strengths of the Highlands Coalition," said Julia Somers, Executive Director. "We work at the state and regional levels, but most members of our coalition are from local grassroots groups who are in touch with breaking issues in their communities. They're our early warning system for threats such as giant warehouses proposed on prime farmland. In addition to giving these groups financial assistance that primes the pump for their own fund-raising, we also offer counseling based on our hard-won experience."

Historic projects include "brick-and-mortar" projects for specific historic sites or districts. This is the sixteenth year of the Coalition's Small Grants Program for environmental projects and the eighth year for projects that protect cultural, historic, and archaeological resources in the Highlands, an important part of the Highlands Regional Master Plan.

Grassroots organizations are defined as non-governmental organizations with a total annual operating budget of less than \$200,000. It is not necessary that the organization be incorporated. To be eligible to apply for a grant, an organization must become a member of the Coalition, but dues are as low as \$20 a year. Grants from the Highlands Coalition cannot be used for political purposes.

A grassroots group may apply for one or more grants, either environmental, cultural or components of both. But the total amount requested by any one organization cannot exceed \$5000.

Grant applications should meet at least one of the following five criteria, with the items at the top getting more weight than those below:

1. Projects that focus on developing a stronger Highlands Regional Master Plan (RMP), and/or implementation of the RMP. For example, projects that identify, map, or verify mapped Highlands natural or cultural resources or monitor the implementation of RMP standards at the local level; projects that advocate for and result in municipal conformance with the RMP;
2. Projects that would establish a precedent advancing strong environmental or cultural protection in the Highlands. For example, hiring a consultant to help achieve the most environmentally protective decision by NJDEP, the Highlands Council, or other regulatory bodies on a Highlands matter, or for meeting local affordable housing needs;
3. Projects that may not help set a precedent, but would assist an organization to fight against a development in the Highlands Region – such as residential, commercial, agribusiness projects, etc. – that seriously threatens or damages natural or cultural resources in the Region;
4. Projects that support capacity building of Highlands Region grassroots organizations, for example, a membership mailing, a strategic planning exercise, a workshop, conference or public educational event, etc.;
5. Projects that educate about Highlands water and resources, and/or increase public awareness of the use and conservation of Highlands water.

Applicants are advised to view the full guidelines for the program on the Coalition's website, particularly for cultural and historic grant components which have very detailed requirements. Go to www.njhighlandscoalition.org. On the menu bar at the top, place your cursor on "Programs," then click "Small Grants" in the dropdown menu. To join the Coalition, place cursor on "Join Us," then click on "Organization Membership."

Applicants seeking more information are encouraged to contact Julia Somers at 973-588-7190 or julia@njhighlandscoalition.org. She welcomes your call.

The New Jersey Highlands Coalition represents a diverse network of organizations working to protect the Highlands, ranging from small citizens groups working in one community to large state-wide organizations. The Coalition works to protect, enhance and restore the New Jersey Highlands and to preserve the quality and quantity of the region's drinking water upon which 6.2 million people depend. More information is available at www.njhighlandscoalition.org

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