

Request for Proposals (“RFP”)

OCEAN STATE CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RESILIENCE FUND



Dated: September 30, 2026

The Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management (“DEM”) and the Rhode Island Coastal Resources Management Council (“CRMC”) are announcing the availability of grant funding via the newly established Ocean State Climate Adaptation and Resilience Fund (“OSCAR”).

Consistent with Rhode Island General Laws § 46-23.3-2, DEM and CRMC are jointly soliciting proposals for adaptation and resilience projects that protect or enhance coastal or riverine ecological habitats to address impacts of flooding, erosion, sea level rise, storm surge, or other similar hazards as noted in [Resilient Rhody 2025](#). OSCAR is a competitive grant program providing funds for projects that is administered in collaboration with the Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (RIIB). The grants may be made in addition to other forms of local, state, and federal assistance. The OSCAR fund has available approximately \$1 million from the original \$4 million that was allocated by the Rhode Island General Assembly in Fiscal Year 2022. The OSCAR Program grants are administered in accordance with RIIB Rule 830-RICR-10-35-1, as well as companion DEM and CRMC rules, available in the Rhode Island Code of Regulations. <https://rules.sos.ri.gov/Organizations>

1. OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

- A. **PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR:** Projects from eligible entities that implement adaptation and resilience projects on public lands as defined by RI Gen. Laws § 46-23.3-2(8). Grants from OSCAR will advance projects on public land that protect or enhance coastal or riverine ecological habitats to address impacts of flooding, erosion, sea level rise, storm surge, or other similar hazards as named in [Resilient Rhody 2025](#).
- B. **APPLICATION DEADLINE:** No later than 4:00 pm **December 11, 2026**. See Section 2 for application submission requirements.
- C. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS:** Any entity which owns or controls public land as defined by

R.I. Gen. Laws § 46-23.3-2(8) may apply. This includes state and municipal governments, including quasi-public agencies, and other public and private lands dedicated to public use as demonstrated through publicly held easements.

- D. **ELIGIBLE PROJECTS:** Proposals eligible for funding are for projects that implement activities that protect or enhance coastal or riverine ecological habitats in order to address impacts of hazards as defined in [Resilient Rhody 2025](#) including but not limited to sea level rise, flooding, and accelerated erosion resulting from changes in the frequency and intensity of precipitation events. Projects must be located on public lands as defined in § 46-23.3-2(8) and have a nexus to adaptation and resilience. Eligible projects may include but not be limited to projects that:
- i. reduce the vulnerability of low-lying infrastructure on public land through measures that include removal and relocation of infrastructure while providing habitat benefits;
 - ii. restore river and stream floodplains, including regrading of banks;
 - iii. provide revegetation;
 - iv. involve acquisition of that area of land necessary to maintain and preserve public access;
 - v. redesign, resize, and replace culverts and bridge spans at existing wetland crossings.

The following categories of projects are **not eligible** for funding under the OSCAR Program:

- i. projects that would degrade, fill, or otherwise destroy coastal, estuarine, or riverine habitats;
- ii. projects fulfilling any liability for restoration required by any local, state, or federal agency pursuant to an environmental or public health enforcement action;
- iii. projects elevating, repairing, or replacing infrastructure, or constructing new infrastructure, in its existing location that is experiencing hazardous storm impacts and sea level rise, with the exception of work to redesign, resize and replace culverts and bridge spans at existing wetland crossings;
- iv. projects constructing new, or repairing existing shoreline protection structures; provided, however, that existing shoreline protection structures on public parks may be repaired;
- v. projects constructing roads or bridges, except as otherwise authorized above (Item 3 in this paragraph); or
- vi. projects that fulfill a state or federal compensatory mitigation permit requirement as a result of a development application.

Projects incorporating adaptation and resilience components, but inclusive of scope expanding beyond these components, will be considered, however only the adaptation and resilience components may be funded.

Projects must be designed to be resilient up to 1.77 feet of sea level rise and a 1% percent annual chance flood, and must demonstrate an increase in flood resilience capacity from current site capacity, to be eligible for funding.

- E. **FUNDING AVAILABILITY:** The FY 2022 State Budget allocated \$4 million to the OSCAR program projects eligible to be funded by this RFP along with certain administrative costs. DEM and CRMC reserve the right not to allocate all available funds and may issue an additional request for proposals at a later date. Funding distributions for the OSCAR Fund will be made upon execution of a grant agreement between Rhode Island Infrastructure Bank (“RIIB”) and each successful applicant.
- F. **GENERAL FINANCIAL INFORMATION AND ADMINISTRATIVE CAPACITY:** All grants will be managed on a reimbursement basis. The grantees must incur the cost and submit documentation to RIIB for reimbursement. Applicants must demonstrate administrative capacity to manage their project and the grant funds and comply with applicable state and federal fiscal requirements, including accounting, record-keeping, procurement, and reporting procedures. Applicants should design their projects to include appropriate community outreach and engagement activities. For construction projects and other types of long-lived physical practices, applicants must describe how the site will be monitored and overseen, provide examples of previous construction/practice management, and provide for appropriate operation and maintenance over the life of the practice. All projects will be required to follow state competitive procurement requirements, MBE, WBE, and VBE/SDVBE compliance requirements (RIGL § 37-14.1-1 et seq., 37-14.3-1 et seq., 37-2.2-1 et seq., and RICR 220-RICR-80-10-2), prevailing wage requirements (RIGL § 37-13-1 et seq.), and other contractual requirements as defined in any resulting grant agreements. Appropriate metrics of success are expected to be determined by the applicant and the applicant will be expected to measure success by these metrics in reporting processes.
- G. **MATCHING FUNDS:** There is no specific match requirement for proposed projects. “Match” refers to funds or services used to conduct a project that are not borne by grant funds. All project match must: (1) relate directly to the project for which the match is being applied; (2) be reasonably valued; and (3) be supported by documentation. Match is an indicator of local commitment to a project and will be taken into consideration during the evaluation of proposals. Applicants are therefore encouraged to detail all federal and non-federal and non-federal resources contributing toward completion of the project, as applicable. Match may include: (1) cash; (2) the value of noncash, in-kind contributions (e.g., value of equipment donated for use the project, municipal staff time overseeing or organizing the project, etc.); or (3) the value of goods and services directly contributed to the project. Volunteer services provided to the grantee for project activities and travel costs may be valued as match at rates consistent with rates ordinarily paid by employers for similar work. General volunteer time may be valued in accordance with rates found at: <https://independentsector.org/research/value-of-volunteer-time/>. The most recent rate of general

volunteer time in RI is \$37.02 per hour. Matching funds may either be contributed to the direct costs of the public infrastructure work or may be in-kind from the applicant(s).

- H. **TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF AGREEMENT(S):** The grant agreement period will begin on the date the parties execute the agreement or such other date set forth in the agreement. Unless otherwise agreed to by DEM, CRMC, and the Bank, funds awarded pursuant to grant agreements issued pursuant to this RFP must be fully spent for costs associated with the approved project on or before 24 months from executed agreement. Applicants must establish a realistic project timeline that meets this end date and are encouraged to consider phasing complex projects to ensure on- time delivery. A project that is limited to a design and permitting phase must be associated with a commitment that will reasonably lead to final project construction or implementation.
- I. **REPORTING:** If selected for an award, the Applicant will be required to submit semiannual progress updates and a final project report which includes a brief project summary communicating lessons learned. The Applicant will be required to be in communication with a point of contact from either DEM, CRMC or both as applicable and RIIB throughout the course of the project. Other deliverables are project specific and will be identified at the time of grant agreement and project scoping.

2. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:

A completed application package consists of an application form (Attachment A of this RFP), a narrative project proposal, a completed budget form (Attachment C), a map depicting the project location and any other supplemental supporting materials. The proposal narrative and budget should follow the outline and guidance in Attachment B.

Applications for funding should be submitted electronically via email to:

Kimberly.korioth@dem.ri.gov

With **OSCAR Proposal** listed in the subject line

Deadline for Submittals: December 11, 2026 4:00pm

Awards to be Announced February 2027

The DEM, CRMC, and RIIB are subject to the Access to Public Records Act (“APRA”) (RI General Laws Chapter 38-2). Any documents, materials, maps, statements, or other information submitted in response to this RFP may be released in accordance with APRA. Please do not submit any information that the Applicant may not wish to disclose publicly, such as home addresses or personal telephone numbers, social security numbers, or other similar information.

3. EVALUATION CRITERIA AND PROPOSAL REVIEW PROCESS

As specified in state law, a review committee consisting of members from DEM, CRMC, Rhode Island Division of Statewide Planning, and Rhode Island Emergency Management Authority, will evaluate all proposals on a competitive basis, evaluate the applications relative to the criteria set forth in this RFP and make recommendations regarding eligible projects. The recommendations of the review committee will then be presented to DEM and CRMC who will ultimately make the final decision on which applications to approve for potential OSCAR funding. Once approved, DEM and CRMC will notify the Bank of the successful applicants and the Bank will award funding to the successful applicants subject to the execution of a grant agreement. Grants will be managed on a reimbursement basis as specified in the terms of said grant agreement. The review committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals that do not meet the goals and terms of this RFP. Each application will be evaluated on its own merits to identify the strongest proposals to recommend for funding.

The evaluation criteria used to assess each proposal are focused as follows:

- Project Approach: 30 points
- Hazardous Impact Being Addressed: 20 points
- Project Habitat & Public Benefits: 30 points
- Benefits to Disadvantaged/Distressed Communities: 10 points
- Applicant Capabilities: 20 points

No.	Ranking Criteria	Score		
		High	Medium	Low/Zero*
	PROJECT APPROACH			
1	Consistent with Sea Level Rise Projections and/or accounts for changes in rainfall patterns. (At minimum, projects must be designed to be resilient up to 1.77 feet of sea level rise and a 1% percent annual chance flood, and must demonstrate an increase in flood resilience capacity from current site capacity, to be eligible for funding.)	5	3	1

2	Consistent with applicable plans referenced in the proposal: • Resilient Rhody 2025 • Coastal Habitat Restoration Strategy • CCMP • Fisheries management plans • Nonpoint Source Pollution Mgt Plan • Watershed-based Management Plans • Special Area Management Plans • Municipal Resiliency Plans/Hazard Mitigation Plans • Other habitat restoration or resilience plans	10	5	1
3	Technically sound and cost-effective approach with likelihood of success that protects or enhances coastal or riverine ecological habitats while addressing impacts of hazards noted in Resilient Rhody 2025, including but not limited to hazardous storm impacts and sea level rise. Longevity of impact & lifespan of the project.	10	5	1
4	Project team includes the necessary partners and collaboration. Project has public buy in and incorporates public outreach and engagement.	5	3	1
Subtotal		30		
	HAZARDOUS IMPACT BEING ADDRESSED			
5	Severity of risk to infrastructure on public lands from flooding/SLR/storm surge	10	5	1
6a	Evidence of existing habitat degradation OR	5	3	1
6b	Threat of habitat degradation exists	5	3	1
7	Existing/threatened loss of public access	5	3	1
Subtotal		20		
	PROJECT HABITAT & PUBLIC BENEFITS			
8a	Improves fish and wildlife habitat for rare/endangered species OR	5	3	1
8b	Creates or replaces habitat losses that benefit fish and wildlife OR	5	3	1
8c	Improves fish and wildlife habitat	4	2	1
9	Improves water quality	5	3	1
10	Extent of use of public lands involved in project	5	3	1
11	Beneficial uses of waters being improved	5	3	1

12	Provides enhanced new public access or protects/restores existing public access	5	3	1
13	Other public co-benefits associated with project including but not limited to flood mitigation, enhanced quality of life, etc.	5	3	1
Subtotal		30		
	BENEFIT TO DISADVANTAGED/DISTRESSED COMMUNITIES			
14	Project is located in a disadvantaged or distressed community. Project benefits a disadvantaged or distressed community.	10	5	
Subtotal		10		
	APPLICANT CAPABILITY			
15	Demonstrated experience relevant to project implementation	8	4	1
16	Fiscal capacity to proceed, consideration of match, and applicant track record with utilizing previous state funding	5	3	1
17	Clear project milestones and roles for partners	4	2	1
18	Readiness to proceed & overall quality of proposal	3	2	1
Subtotal		20		
TOTAL		110		

(*) Zero points will be awarded when the criteria is not applicable to the project.

4. AGENCY CONTACT INFORMATION:

In advance of the proposal, DEM is available to answer questions concerning the RFP including but not limited to the eligibility of a potential project, eligibility of an applicant, and allowable project costs. If you have questions, please contact the following:

Kimberly Koriath, Chief Resilience

Officer State of Rhode Island/DEM

401-633-4578

Kimberly.Koriath@dem.ri.gov

OR

Sean McCormick, Environmental Scientist III, DEM

Office of Water Resources

401-537-4254

Sean.McCormick@dem.ri.gov

Information regarding the OSCAR Program and RFP is available on the [DEM Office of Water Resources Financial Assistance webpage](#).

List of Attachments

- A. Fillable Application Form
- B. Narrative and Budget Guidance
- C. Fillable Budget Form