Natural Resources Assistance Council
DISTRICT 12 - LUCAS COUNTY, OHIO

Application Information Sheet

Program Eligibility

Any local political subdivision or any non-profit organization within District 12 (Lucas County) may apply for grant monies to be used for open space preservation. Said non-profit organizations are defined as those exempt from federal income taxation and have one of their designated activities directly related to the purposes for which grants may be issued under O.R.C. Sections 164.20 to 164.27.

Projects could include acquisition of land or land rights for parks, forests, wetlands, natural areas that protect rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal populations, and corridors connecting these areas. Related development projects could include construction, management, maintenance, and/or enhancement of facilities for public accessibility to open spaces, pedestrian or bicycle linkages, riparian corridors, watersheds, and related educational opportunities.

Projects must include acquisition of land by purchase or permanent conservation easement for parks, forests, wetlands, natural areas that protect rare, threatened, or endangered plant or animal populations, and corridors connecting these areas.

Related development projects may include construction, management, maintenance, and/or enhancement of facilities for public accessibility to open spaces, pedestrian or bicycle linkages, riparian corridors, watersheds, and related educational opportunities on properties being acquired by the same proposal. A property that was acquired under a past Clean Ohio Conservation Fund grant is eligible for the additional development funds.

Grant Funding Limitations

District 12 has been allocated $1,213,662 (less administrative costs) in Round 14 funding. Projects and funding requests may not be phased over multiple funding rounds. A 25% minimum local match is required from the applicant.

Application Procurement and Submittals

All applications for this round should be submitted to the District 12 Natural Resources Assistance Council in care of:

Sara Guiher, District 12 NRAC Liaison
PO Box 9508
Toledo, OH 43697
guiher@tmacog.org (electronic submissions accepted, see below)
Application Documents

Are available online at: [http://www.tmacog.org/Environment/NRAC/nrac_body.htm](http://www.tmacog.org/Environment/NRAC/nrac_body.htm)

Application Deadline

All applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm (local time) on March 13, 2020.

Award Notification

All applicants will be notified of NRAC’s recommendation to the Ohio Public Works Commission by April 30, 2020.

Administrative Expenses

All successful applicants will be requested to voluntarily provide 1% of the grant amount awarded (not to be paid from grant funds) to cover administrative expenses of the District Council.

Submission Requirements (in application form)

An entity seeking a grant for a project that is eligible for funding under section 164.22 of the Ohio Revised Code in District 12 shall submit with the application the following:

(1) A copy of a resolution supporting the project from the County, Municipal Corporation, or Township in which the proposed project is to be located, or an affidavit as required in O.R.C. Section 164.23 (C) (2);
(2) Documentation that demonstrates that the applicant has the capacity, financial or otherwise, to complete the project for which the grant is sought and to provide any necessary ongoing maintenance of the project;
(3) Documentation that indicates compliance with division (A) of section 164.26 of the Ohio Revised Code related to the long term ownership or control of the property that is the subject of the grant application;

Submission Requirements (per District Council)

(1) Upon receipt of the application and the required additional information, the NRAC may request additional information concerning the proposed project to which the application and information apply. Upon receiving such a request, the entity proposing the project shall provide the additional information requested as soon as possible.
(2) All applications should include the Project location identified on a USGS 7.5= Topographic Quadrangle map.
(3) One (1) copy of each individual form, or application submitted electronically via e-mail. Electronic submissions may be in MS Word or PDF format and sent to Sara Guiher at guiher@tmacog.org.
Application Instructions

Please read carefully the application package and all attached information prior to starting completion of the application form. NOTE: The package provided by the Clean Ohio Conservation Fund contains three (3) separate sections. The first section is detailed instructions on answering each application question along with the question itself. The second section contains the actual application form, which should be copied several times before starting the answering process. The third section contains the glossary established by the Ohio Public Works Commission, which defines the terms contained in the application materials. NRAC reserves the right to individually score parcels that are a part of non-contiguous multiple parcel applications.

This information sheet highlights items that may be overlooked or that are of significance to the Council. Please review Scoring Methodology which will be applied by the Council to determine those projects which will be recommended for funding. Each question from the methodology should be addressed individually, in order, with the necessary supporting information.

If you have questions regarding the program or application process, please contact the District NRAC Liaison, Sara Guiher at (419) 241-9155 x 1147.

Appraisals

Applications will be required to have a certified appraisal performed by an Ohio Department of Transportation Prequalified Appraiser who is credentialed in value analysis. Projects with Purchase Contracts exceeding the appraised value will be returned to the Natural Resources Assistance Councils for validation. These projects will not be issued a Notice to Proceed until this validation has occurred. A Notice to Proceed will be issued if the Purchase Contract and qualifying appraisal were available at the time the Natural Resources Assistance Council approved the project.

Projects that will be leveraging the difference between the appraised value and purchase contract will also be required to have an appraisal review performed by an Ohio Department of Transportation Prequalified Appraisal Reviewer. This is to ensure that the purchase price history, comparables, adjustments, and disclaimers are accurate. Applicants that have an appraisal review rejected will not be issued a Notice to Proceed until these discrepancies are resolved.

All appraisals shall be at the request of the applicant. Appraisals shall be deemed valid for twelve months from the time they are performed.

While the Ohio Revised Code allows the Clean Ohio Conservation Program to acquire properties above appraised value, it is important for the Natural Resources Councils to be cognitive of this variance. It is equally important to validate the value of properties that are using the difference
between the Purchase Contract and appraised value as they are receiving points in the rating and ranking process for this match.

All appraisal expenses will be considered an eligible expense under planning and implementation. These expenses will be reimbursed in accordance with the Ohio Public Works Commission participation ratio. The list of approved Ohio Department of Transportation appraisers as well as our most current appraisal standards can be found on the OPWC website at www.pwc.state.oh.us/gscapplication.html.

Post Acquisition/In-Kind Activity

All post acquisition activities must be concluded within a two-year period from the date of acquisition unless a formal extension has been approved by OPWC. The Ohio Public Works Commission will disburse on the project’s activities at the Project Agreement’s participation ratio as the project proceeds. Requests to adjust this ratio will require Ohio Public Works Commission approval.

Oil and Gas Leasing

The Ohio Public Works Commission has received numerous requests with regard to oil and gas leasing on properties purchased with Clean Ohio Conservation Funds. While no two requests are the same, the Commission has adopted the following policies. Existing oil and gas leases, at the time the Natural Resources Assistance Council approves the project, will be treated as pre-existing easements which the applicant has no or little control over. Thus, these applications will be approved as submitted. Requests to engage in oil and gas leasing on Clean Ohio Properties that have been acquired along with the mineral rights will be denied as this is not an activity defined in Ohio Revised Code 164.22 (A) or (B). Requests to engage in these activities on Clean Ohio Properties acquired with a third party holding the mineral rights will be dealt with on a case by case basis in conjunction with the Ohio Public Works Commission’s legal counsel.

Farmland Preservation – Agricultural Easements

Under Ohio Revised Code 164.25 the Ohio Public Works Commission is authorized to approve applications for Clean Ohio Conservation Funds (COCF) for open space acquisition and related development projects and to protect riparian corridors or watersheds, according to the criteria for such projects described in Ohio Revised Code 164.22. The term “agricultural” does not appear in that section pertaining to the criteria for COCF projects. The Ohio Department of Agriculture has statutory authority under Ohio Revised Code 901.22 to administer the Clean Ohio Agricultural Easement Program, for the acquisition and preservation of farmland devoted to agricultural purposes through the creation of agricultural easements. Under the express terms of their respective statutes, the authority of the Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Public Works Commission over the programs within their purview is mutually exclusive and they do not overlap. The Ohio Public Works Commission is without authority to approve grant projects for the primary and express purpose of protecting land for continuing agricultural uses.
From a practical standpoint a COCF project may contain agricultural land that would 1) contain agricultural land that would be allowed to revert to its natural state; or 2) contain acreage intended as a buffer for a riparian corridor; or 3) contain acreage that could be used for the demonstration of historical farming. The second and third of these examples raise the possibility that land intended to remain in active agricultural use may directly serve the purposes expressed in Ohio Revised Code 164.22 (A) and (B).

Program Year 10 projects that are primarily agricultural and fail to satisfy Ohio Revised Code 164.22 (A) or (B) will be returned to their respective Natural Resources Assistance Council as ineligible.

Readiness to Proceed

Projects with delayed schedules for acquisition will be questioned and possibly returned for re-submission in a future program year if they will not proceed during the current program year.

Generally, projects not scheduled for acquisition within 12 months from the date of the Project Agreement will be rejected by the Commission.

Projects delayed for reasons which are beyond the control of the applicant may, at the discretion of the Commission, receive a schedule extension. Projects with delayed schedules that lend themselves to a future funding year will be terminated.

Round 14 Resource Guide

Methodology: Part 1 – Preliminary Screening

- NRAC Application Documents
  - NRAC District 12 Applicant Information
  - NRAC District 12 Fact Sheet
  - Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Application
  - Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Instructions for Financial Assistance
  - District 12 Natural Resources Assistance Council Scoring Methodology
  - Glossary of Terms for Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Application and Methodology

Methodology: Part 2 – Question 1

- Midwest Plant Communities
- Ohio Plant Communities
- Michigan’s Natural Communities (MNFI)
- Ohio Oak Openings Landowners Guide
- Lucas County Ohio Listed Species
Methodology: Part 2 – Question 2

- Ohio Invasive Plants Council
- Invasive Plant Fact Sheet (ODNR Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves)
- National Invasive Species Information Center

Methodology: Part 2 – Question 3

- Glossary of Terms for Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Application and Methodology

Methodology: Part 2 – Question 5

- Glossary of Terms for Clean Ohio Conservation Fund Application and Methodology

Methodology: Part 2 – Question 10

- ORAM: Ohio Rapid Assessment Method for Wetlands

Resources for additional guidance

- Ohio Department of Natural Resources
  - Division of Natural Areas and Preserves
  - Division of Wildlife
  - Division of Forestry
- Lucas County Soil and Water Conservation District
- Environmental Consulting Firms
- Park District, Conservation Organizations
- State Historic Preservation Office
- NRAC Committee – will review applications prior to final submission (must submit to liaison by February 28, 2020 for review)