

INDIANA LAKE MICHIGAN COASTAL PROGRAM

2026 FUNDING YEAR PRE-PROPOSAL GUIDANCE



Indiana Department of Natural Resources, Division of Nature Preserves, Lake Michigan Coastal Program

In cooperation with

U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Office for Coastal Management,
Coastal Programs Division

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

Deadline for Submission: Friday, December 5th, 2025

Required for Submission

SF 54757 found at <https://www.in.gov/iara/services-for-public/state-forms-online-catalog/>

1 complete electronic copy via email (if you are submitting a large file size, please contact the LMCP Program Manager prior to submission)

The electronic copy may be sent to: KBalkema@dnr.IN.gov

Paper copies will not be accepted.

For questions or more information please contact:

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Background

The U.S. Congress has made funds available to states and territories with approved Coastal Zone Management Programs, with competitive grants for community-based coastal activities. Funding and oversight are provided by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management (OCRM). Projects must be consistent with the goals and objectives of the Coastal Zone Management (CZM) Act of 1972 (CZMA, 16 U.S.C. § 1451 et seq.) and meet the requirements of the CZM Program administered by OCRM.

The State requires that projects be consistent with the CZM Act. For Indiana, this funding will be administered by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) Division of Nature Preserves (DNP), Lake Michigan Coastal Program (LMCP).

Purpose

This document is intended to establish the structure and requirements for Indiana's Coastal Grants Program. The purpose of the LMCP is to preserve, protect, restore, and, where possible, develop the resources of the Lake Michigan coast for this and future generations. The goal is to achieve wise use of the land and water resources of the coastal region, giving full consideration to ecological, cultural, historic, and aesthetic values, as well as to needs for economic development. The LMCP seeks out social, economic, and environmental solutions that balance the use and protection of the coast's valuable, yet fragile resources.

The Pre-Proposal

The purpose of the LMCP Pre-Proposal is to give the applicant an opportunity to briefly explain the merits of their proposed project so that LMCP staff and the Grants Committee, as well as Coastal Advisory Board members can determine whether the Project meets the following criteria in order to move forward to submit a Full Proposal:

Is not duplicative of current or previous projects
Shows an integrated approach or effort to complete the project through partnerships
Has broad application and significance throughout the entire Coastal Program area
Likelihood of successful completion in required timeframe

Eligible Applicants

The following applicant types are eligible for funding through Lake Michigan Coastal Program Grants:

- Units of Local Government
- Area-wide agencies, including county and regional planning agencies
- State agencies
- Educational institutes
- Conservancy districts
- Port authorities and marinas
- Basin commissions
- Non-profit organizations – 501(c)3 (some restrictions apply)

Non-profit organizations are eligible only to apply for §306 Non-Construction/Non-Acquisition projects as grantees. They may partner with a public entity to perform some or all the tasks of a §306A Low-Cost Construction or §306A Land Acquisition project, but they may not be the grantee for these projects.

Eligible Projects

Funding is available for Projects that protect, restore, and plan for the management of Coastal natural, historical, and cultural resources. Projects must be consistent with the Coastal Zone Management Act.

Ineligible Projects

The following Project types are ineligible for funding through the Lake Michigan Coastal Program Grants:

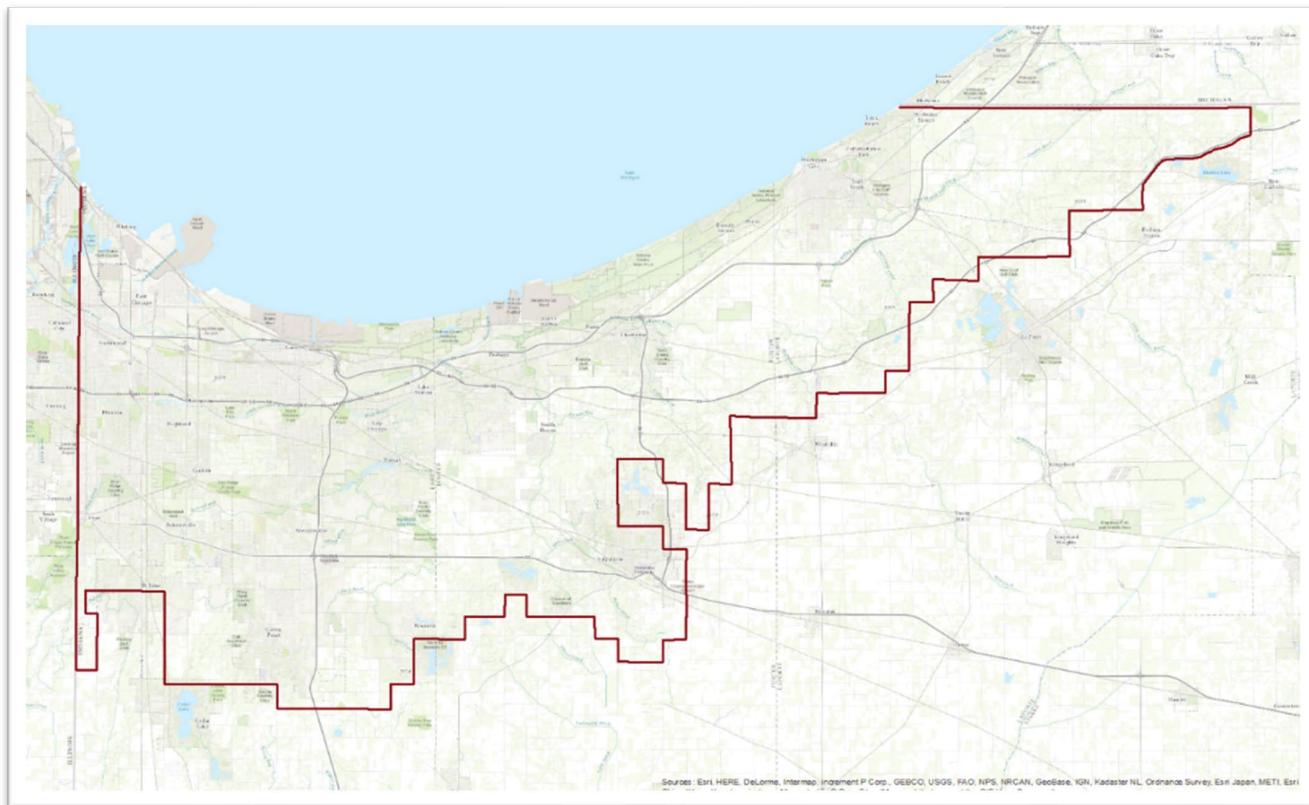
- Projects on privately owned land without public interest
- Large scale, hard-structure erosion control Projects
- Beach nourishment
- Infrastructure projects related to water and sewer line construction
- Road, sidewalk, and parking lot construction
- Dredging
- Restrooms and facilities
- Routine maintenance
- General recreational facilities such as playgrounds, ball fields, etc.
- Wetland or other habitat restoration that is required as a condition of a permit or other regulatory action
- Contaminated site cleanup that is required as a condition of a permit or other regulatory action
- Trail construction
- Log jam removal
- Projects that take place on federally owned land

Eligible Geographic Area

Projects must be located entirely within the LMCP Coastal Program Area, which comprises the northern portions of Lake, Porter, and LaPorte counties. A general map of the Program Area can be found below.

In the event that a Project is expected to take place outside of the Program Area indicated on the map, the applicant will be required to demonstrate that the Project will have direct substantial benefits within the coastal region. Lands owned by a federal entity are excluded from the LMCP program area.

All §306A Low-Cost Construction and §306A Land Acquisition Projects must be within an Area of Particular Concern (see Page 10).



Project Timeline

Proposed projects should require less than 1 year for completion. Applicants should plan on starting their project by Oct. 1st, 2026, and have it completed by Sept. 30, 2027. Projects should be able to stand alone without being dependent upon the completion of other work that may or may not be completed.

Match Requirements

All LMCP Grant funded Projects require a 1:1 match, or 50% of the Project cost. Match may be composed of cash, in-kind services, and indirect rates.

Scope of Projects

All Projects must be designed using sound environmental and engineering principles, and be consistent with current federal, state, and local laws.

Low-Cost Construction Projects are required to obtain all necessary federal, state, and local permits before construction may commence. These projects will also undergo rigorous NEPA review at the Federal level. The Full Application phase will prepare your project for that review.

For **Low-Cost Construction** Projects, all funds shall be used only for Projects on publicly owned or leased land, or land for which a long-term easement has been obtained for the life of the Project (a minimum of 20 years).

For **Land Acquisition** Projects, a Conservation Easement held by the Indiana DNR must be placed on the property at the time of closing. Funds cannot be used to improve private property or for any other private enterprises. In general, all projects must demonstrate a compelling public benefit and commitment to maintenance to receive LMCP Coastal Grant funding.

Project Priorities

The Coastal Advisory Board is made up of appointed members each representing various stakeholder groups in the Lake Michigan Coastal Program Area. The priorities are determined on an annual basis, through a public process. The priorities for the 2025 funding cycle are listed and apply to every project category. Projects that address one of these priorities will receive bonus points at the time of Full Proposal scoring. If a Project does not address one of these priorities, it is still eligible for funding, if it fits the basic criteria for Coastal Program grants.

2025 Funding Priorities

Unlike previous application cycles, the Lake Michigan Coastal Program has opted not to identify a series of funding priorities for the 2025 cycle. No specific type of project will be awarded any preferential scoring during the final scoring process.

Payment Methods

LMCP will review project expenditures on a quarterly reimbursement basis. The Grantee is expected to make the initial outlays and then request reimbursement at the time of the Quarterly Reporting schedule. LMCP will reimburse grantees using electronic fund transfer as per state law. No funds related to the grant may be spent until after the Grant Agreement is fully signed.

PROJECT CATEGORIES:

§306a Low-Cost Construction

Maximum Request: \$200,000 for a maximum Total Project Cost: \$400,000

Low-Cost Construction Projects are Projects that result in the physical change of a property. These projects may involve the use of machinery or hand tools and involve soil disturbance. Natural habitat restoration projects are included in the Low-Cost Construction project category as well. This category includes the construction of man-made structures for the purpose of public access. All Low-Cost Construction Projects must be within an Area of Particular Concern. Low-Cost Construction projects may include design or engineering. Projects must occur on land in which a public interest is held. These funds may not be used to improve private property or for other private enterprises.

In general, user fees are discouraged and should not be charged to access Low-Cost Construction Projects. If user fees are necessary, the fee must be described and justified at the Full Proposal stage. Any user fees must be used to operate or maintain the Low-Cost Construction Project. This does not apply to Low-Cost Construction projects that are implemented on properties already subject to user fees, such as state parks and other public spaces already subject to daily or annual passes or access fees.

All Low-Cost Construction Project funds must be maintained for a minimum of 20 years, Grant recipients should budget appropriately for operations and maintenance costs after construction.

All Low-Cost Construction Projects that provide access must comply with applicable accessibility standards whenever possible as required by the guidelines contained here:

<https://www.access-board.gov/guidelines-and-standards>

See also Department of Justice information and technical assistance at:

https://www.ada.gov/2010ADAsstandards_index.htm

Signage

Temporary and permanent signage is required of all Low-Cost Construction projects. The LMCP will provide a permanent sign at the end of your Project.

§306A Land Acquisition

Maximum Request: \$500,000 (dependent on available funds) for a maximum Total Project Cost: \$1M Under Federal Guidelines, only units of government or public entities are eligible to apply for and receive Land Acquisition Coastal Funds. Land Acquisition Projects involve the acquisition of land from willing sellers of fee-simple or other public interest in land. Land purchases are limited to:

- Areas that provide or improve public access
- Areas that provide preservation of a significant natural resource

All parcels purchased using LMCP Coastal Grant funds must be within an Area of Particular Concern. Acquisitions may also include the purchase of easements, entering into leases, and purchase of development rights.

Land Acquisition projects must have an appraisal for the **Full Proposal** to be accepted. The appraisal must be prepared to and be consistent with Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.

The budget table should only include the purchase price of land. Personnel, supplies, fringe, etc., may not be included as part of the federal funding request or as part of matching funds. Such costs as appraisals, surveys, legal fees, and court costs must also be excluded.

Use the “Contractual” line item in the budget for the purchase price of the land.

In addition, the following information must be included with Pre-Proposal submission for any parcel of land to be acquired:

- Parcel number
- Acreage
- Estimated value of land
- Estimated value of improvements
- Total estimated purchase price
- Clearly discernible location map showing property lines of proposed acquisition and existing structures
- Any other information pertinent to the acquisition

At the time of **Full Proposal** submission, Land Acquisition Projects must include the following documents. All documentation must be less than one year old as of April 1st:

- Complete, self-contained appraisal prepared to Uniform Appraisal Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice.
- Evidence of title for each proposed parcel to be acquired
- A legal survey of the property
- A contract for purchase, sales, or option agreement
- A willing seller letter
- Copies of any easements or other use agreements to be placed on the property (if other than DNR Conservation Easement)

NOAA may require more rigorous review of appraisals for complex or larger acquisitions. Should you receive a Coastal grant for Land Acquisition, please note that a Conservation Easement held by the Indiana Department of Natural Resources must be placed on acquired lands at the time of the closing, identifying the use of federal funds in the purchase of said parcel. Funding for Land Acquisition Projects may not be used to reimburse for properties acquired before having a fully signed Grant Agreement in place with the Indiana DNR.

If you intend to submit a Pre-Proposal for a Land Acquisition Project, please make sure you coordinate early with LMCP in advance of submission.

Signage

Temporary and permanent signage is required of all Land Acquisition projects. The LMCP will provide a permanent sign at the end of your project.

§306 Planning/Coordination/Management

Maximum request: \$100,000 for a maximum Total Project Cost: \$200,000

Projects that fit within the Planning/Coordination/Management category assist communities and organizations in the coordination and planning for the management or restoration of natural, cultural, and historical resources in the coastal area. Projects may include improvements in coordination and planning as well as sustainable land-use planning, resource management planning, and diagnostic studies. This category may also include projects that fund design and engineering.

§306 Education/Outreach

Maximum request: \$50,000 for a maximum Total Project Cost: \$100,000

Education/Outreach Projects seek to improve the connection between the public and the natural, cultural, and/or historical resources of Indiana's Lake Michigan watershed. Education/Outreach Projects may also include the creation of topic-specific training, outreach materials, experiential education opportunities, workshops, and conferences that will increase opportunities for citizens to participate in decisions and maintenance of projects affecting Lake Michigan and the Coastal Program Area. All Education/Outreach work products that target school-age children must meet Indiana Academic Standards.

§306 Applied Research

Maximum request: \$100,000 for a maximum Total Project Cost: \$200,000

Applied Research Projects are studies that produce new knowledge required for an identified coastal resource need of a community, land manager, or organization. Proposals must show a demonstrated need for this knowledge through a specific, identified Project partner and how it will be applied to address the need. It is recommended that a letter from the identified Project partner(s) who will be using the knowledge be included as an attachment to your Pre-Proposal. The Letter of Support should specify that there is a need by the partner for the research, as well as for what purpose they intend to use it.

Data Management Plans Guidance for Grant Projects

A data management plan (DMP) is a document that describes how you will gather, maintain, secure, and use project or program data. A DMP is an investment; by planning and documenting your data management strategy now, you will ensure that you do not waste time and resources with poorly managed or misused data later. The DMP may evolve over time; however, your proposed plan will be included in the grant agreement with the State of Indiana.

Environmental Data Requirements

You must commit to make environmental data collected or created publicly visible and accessible in a timely manner (within two years), free of charge or at no more than the cost of reproduction, except where limited by law, regulation, policy, or security requirements. The data should be available in at least one machine-readable format, preferably a widely used or open-standard format, and should also be accompanied by machine-readable documentation (metadata), preferably based on widely used or international standards. You must include funding acknowledgement in the metadata.

Definition of Environmental Data

NOAA defines environmental data as recorded and derived observations and measurements of the physical, chemical, biological, geological, and geophysical properties and conditions of the oceans, atmosphere, space environment, sun, and solid earth, as well as correlative data such as socio-economic data, related documentation, and metadata. Digital audio or video recordings of environmental phenomena are included in this definition. Numerical model outputs are included in this definition, particularly if used to support the conclusion of a peer-reviewed publication. Data collected in a laboratory or other controlled environment, such as measurements of animals and chemical processes, are included. Geospatial Data

If your results/products include new geospatial data, you must include compliant metadata, for example Minnesota Geographic Metadata Guidelines, Federal Geographic Data Committee (FGDC), or International Organization for Standardization (ISO).

Areas of Particular Concern for §306A Projects Lake

Michigan Coastal Program Document Chapter 8,

Page 335-349

- Areas of unique, scarce, fragile, or vulnerable habitats
- Areas of historical significance, cultural value, or substantial recreational value or opportunity
- Areas of high natural productivity or essential habitat for living resources, including fish, wildlife, endangered species, and the various trophic levels in the food web critical to their well being
- Areas needed to protect, maintain, or replenish coastal lands or resources, including coastal floodplains, aquifers and their recharge areas, sand dunes, and offshore sand deposits
- Areas where development and facilities are dependent upon the use of, or access to, coastal waters or areas of unique features for industrial or commercial uses or dredge soil disposal
- Areas where, if development were permitted, might be subject to significant hazard due to storms, slides, flood, erosion, and settlement

2026 GRANT TIMELINE

NOVEMBER 2025 Pre-Proposal Guidance made available

NOVEMBER 2025 Drafts submitted to LMCP for review/comment

DECEMBER 2025 Completed Pre-Proposal submitted in electronic format via email

CAB reviews all Pre-Proposals for favorable recommendation and invitation to submit a Full Proposal.

JANUARY 2026 – MARCH 2026 Applicants work with LMCP on Full Application submission.

MARCH 2026 Full Proposal deadline for submission

Indiana DNR staff (Technical Advisory Committee) reviews and scores projects, forwards projects to DNR Director

APRIL - MAY 2026 LMCP submits approved projects to NOAA, NOAA reviews and provides comments or requests for additional information.

JUNE – SEPTEMBER 2026 Projects approved by NOAA and grantee is notified; LMCP prepares Grant Agreement.

OCTOBER 2026 Grantee signs Grant Agreement. Project may begin upon receipt of fully executed Grant Agreement, all necessary signatures received.

PRE-PROPOSAL INSTRUCTIONS

Title of Project Organization

Organization Applying

Type of Organization

Choose from the list below:

- Local Government
- State Government
- Conservancy District or Port Authority
- Basin Commission
- Non-Profit Organization
- State College or University

County

Choose each of the counties that the Project would be located in or affecting. (Lake, Porter, LaPorte)

Choose Project Category

Choose one

- Land Acquisition
- Low-Cost Construction
- Planning/Coordination/Management
- Applied Research
- Education & Outreach

Project Priorities

Select all that apply.

- Protection and restoration of high-quality natural habitat – including wetlands and dunes
- Addressing Water Quality Concerns
- Implementing Coastal Resiliency Measures
- Acquisition of high-quality parcels of land
- Environmentally Responsible/Sustainable Communities

Organization Address

Mailing address and email address for contract documents.

Project Administrator

The Grant Administrator is the person responsible for administering the grant. This person will be submitting Quarterly Progress and Financial Reporting or reviewing the Grant Agreement.

Project Cost Total

Enter the Project cost, which includes match and LMCP request amounts.

LMCP Share

Enter the amount of federal funding you are requesting.

Applicant Share

Enter the amount that you and your organization will be providing as match. This match amount must be at least equal to the LMCP share.

Watershed Location: Hydrologic Unit Code (HUC)

Enter the appropriate HUC Code Watershed Address or AUID.

Pre-Proposal Questions:

1. Provide a brief project summary. Please list the proposed work products.

Provide a brief but clear summary of your proposed Project. Include in your summary a description of the need(s) or problem(s) being addressed, the goals and objectives of your Project, and measurable outcomes of your Project. *** Please note that applicants who plan to incorporate any level of outdoor activity and/or ground disturbance in their project should be prepared to provide visual references of the proposed project site(s) as well as extra documentation if/when they are invited to submit a full proposal. If you are able to begin compiling additional details regarding the outdoor work now, we encourage you to do so. ***

2. Provide details that explain how the proposed project fits within the selected project category and each selected priority.

3. Provide a website link to the local, regional, or state planning documents that your project supports. Identify the page number within the plan that includes specific goals being addressed by the project. Plan documents should be created through public processes.

4. Describe how the project addresses the goals of the identified plan(s).

5. Identify the Project partners who will be involved with the Project you are proposing. Please describe each partner's roles in this Project in detail.

Projects that will be accomplished through strong partnerships will receive more favorable consideration for funding. Include all the names of partner organizations and your contacts, explain which specific tasks these partners will be responsible for. If you are relying on a partner organization to manage the reporting requirements for your Project, please also include the contact information for them.

6. Describe the outreach actions you will use to inform the target population of your proposed Project. Please keep in mind that you must acknowledge NOAA and the LMCP in all outreach efforts.

All LMCP-funded Projects must have an outreach component. In your outreach strategy, seek to inform the public, partners and stakeholders about the Project.

7. Explain how the Project work will be maintained, who will be responsible for the maintenance, and the expected life of the Project after completion.

Are there funds budgeted for future maintenance? If so, who will be responsible? If there is a curriculum component to your Project, who will be responsible for updates, and how often? Etc.

8. Preliminary Project Budget – Provide an estimated breakdown of the proposed Project budget using the table.

This is a preliminary budget and may be edited or broken down in greater detail should your Project be selected for Full Proposal submission; however, try to be as accurate as possible in the totals.

9. Describe Project activities that will be funded with LMCP Federal funds. Give a line item by line item description of the work that will be performed, and/or items that will be purchased for each budget line item.

Explain how you will use LMCP federal funds to complete your Project. Detail what these funds will be used to pay for. Remember that LMCP requires adherence to your proposed budget unless written approval of a re-budget has been provided.

10. Describe the source of NONFEDERAL matching funds. What Project activities will be funded with matching funds? Give a line-item description of the work that will be performed, or items that will be purchased for each budget line item.

Explain the source of matching funds and how you will use the Matching funds to complete your Project. Remember that LMCP requires adherence to your proposed budget unless written approval of a re-budget has been provided.

11. Attachments

A maximum of three pages may be attached to provide additional information about your proposed Project.

12. Has your organization received an LMCP grant in the past? Yes or No

13. Acceptance of the terms of the Grant Guidance

Pre-Proposal submissions must be signed and dated for consideration.

BUDGET

The Lake Michigan Coastal Program's Federal Sponsor, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, requires that all funds be subject to Federal Accounting Standards. These standards include proof of match and adequate information regarding expenditure of grant funds. The standards are in place to ensure that both the grantee and the Indiana Department of Natural Resources meet federal audit requirements as stipulated in the Coastal Zone Management Act of 1972.

The grantee will be required to make the initial outlay of Project funds. At the time of submission of Quarterly Financial Reports with Quarterly Progress Reports, the grantee may request reimbursement. It is expected that the grantee maintains records of all expenses incurred and funds received for a period of three years.

It is imperative that Projects accrue match while seeking reimbursement for work performed. Reimbursement will not be provided until an amount equal to the reimbursement request of match has been spent and documented in the Quarterly Financial Report.

Match cannot be accrued prior to the date of approval to begin Project work. All expenses must be incurred prior to the expiration date of the Grant Agreement.

Budget Line Items – Federal Request and Match

Personnel

The Personnel line refers to wage expenses of paid staff. Companies employed on a contractual basis for the sole purpose of working on the grant-assisted Project are accounted for in the “Contractual” line-item.

Fringe

Fringe benefits for paid personnel, such as FICA, insurance premiums, etc.; Calculated as a percentage of salary costs.

Travel

Allowable expenditures made toward travel include hotel bills, mileage charges, per diem. If the Project involves travel out of the State of Indiana, please note this separately in the budget description and provide justification and travel details. The current mileage rate for the State of Indiana is 36 cents per mile.

Supplies

Supplies are considered items necessary to complete the Project, as are construction materials that may be used on construction Projects and are not included in contractual expenses. Any single item costing more than \$5,000 is considered to be equipment, not a supply item, and is an expense that is not allowable.

Contractual

The cost of professionals engaged to work on the Project on a contractual basis goes under the Contractual line. If hiring additional staff or contracting with consultants or professionals, an open competitive selection process must be used to ensure that qualified workers are engaged at a reasonable price. Utilize this category for land acquisition projects.

Indirect

The approved Federally Negotiated Indirect Rate must be used. If one does not exist for applying organization, a 10 % *de minimus* rate may be applied if the organization has never had a Federally Negotiated Indirect Rate in the past.

Volunteer

Hours donated to the Coastal Grant Project by a volunteer. These costs must be included under Personnel line item as Match. The use of volunteer services must be approved in advance by the Lake Michigan Coastal Program and must be explained in the budget description of the Pre-Proposal.

Volunteer time used as an in-kind match must be charged at the rate paid for the type of work being done or at the rate paid for minimum wage. Ex: the time an attorney spends doing data entry work for a project is charged at the rate paid to data-entry operators. If the attorney volunteers legal work for the project, the attorney's volunteer time is charged at the rate paid to an attorney. Indiana Department of Workforce Development publishes average wages for most Indiana jobs and industries.

Match

Matching funds must be directly related to the Project being funded and are subject to the same rules and restrictions as federal funds. The source of matching funds must be indicated on the Pre-Proposal form. Please include the dollar amount, source of match, and total for each category. Matching funds can be

composed of cash and/or in-kind. Matching funds may not derive from a federal source. In-kind match may not be applied to time spent or services provided by any federally funded person.

Cash Match

When grantees use their own funds to purchase goods or services specifically for the grant Project, or when a third party donates cash to the grant recipient for the same purpose. This includes situations where grantees use their own funds to hire staff or a contractor specifically to work on the grant Project, or when a grantee uses their own funds to purchase supplies for use on the Project. It also includes the situation when a grantee receives cash from a third party to help them purchase supplies or hire a temporary employee.

In-kind Services and Goods

When grant recipients arrange to perform some or all of the grant work using existing staff and by drawing supplies from their own supply room, or when a third party draws on its own existing staff and supplies to assist the Project, it is considered to be an in-kind donation to the grant Project.