

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Planning Activities to Improve Freshwater and Estuarine Habitat Quality and Public Access in the Narragansett Bay Region May 11, 2023

I. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Request for Proposal (RFP).

- Planning activities include studies, assessments, designs, concepts, plans, and permitting for improving freshwater and estuarine habitat and/or public access. The “Design & Planning” steps 6-8 shown in Figure 1 are eligible. Stakeholder engagement (step 1) is strongly encouraged throughout the project development process but should not be the sole focus of a proposal.
- Improve means to increase extent, quality, resilience, durability, or accessibility.
- Habitat refers to the resources and conditions (e.g., space, sustenance, shelter) present on a site that allow occupancy by a desired fish and wildlife species or population. This is inclusive of efforts such as restoring an expanse of coastal marsh habitat and creating smaller areas of urban wildlife habitat.
- Public access refers to the public’s ability to use and enjoy freshwater and estuarine waterbodies, associated habitats, and recreational amenities.

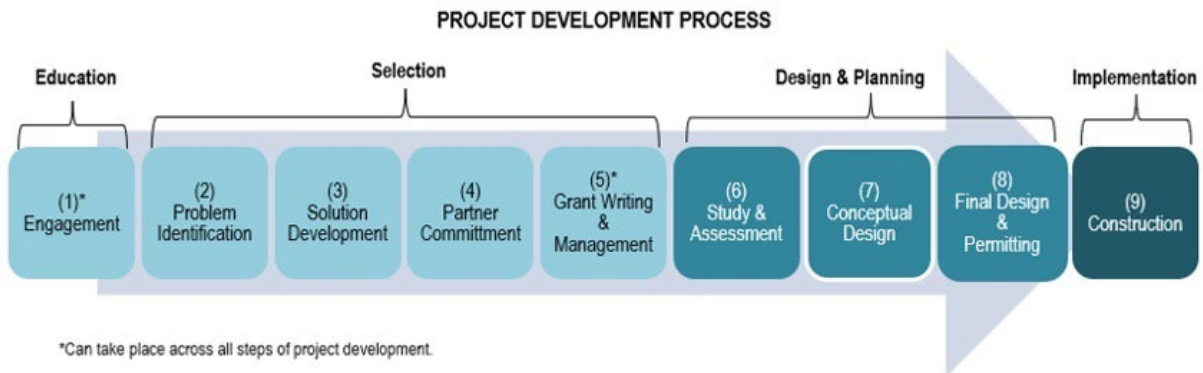


Figure 1. Project Development Process

II. OVERVIEW

The [Narragansett Bay Estuary Program \(NBEP\)](#), through its host, [Roger Williams University \(RWU\)](#), is issuing this RFP for freshwater and estuarine habitat restoration and/or public access planning projects from the Narragansett Bay, Little Narragansett Bay, and Coastal Ponds watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut (Narragansett Bay region; Figure 2). Federal funding is provided under §320 of the Clean Water Act (CWA) and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). Projects funded via this request will advance implementation of NBEP’s mission and

[Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan \(CCMP\)](#). The specific purpose of this opportunity is to fund planning activities that enable subsequent construction of projects that improve the quality of and/or public access to freshwater or estuarine habitat. **\$675,000 is available with a proposal due date of July 21, 2023 and an expected award notification date of August 18, 2023.**

III. FUNDING DETAILS

A total of \$675,000 is available; \$225,000 from Section §320 of the CWA and \$450,000 from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA). We expect individual awards to range from approximately \$50,000 to \$225,000. **All funds are provided on a reimbursement basis.** Match is not required. These funds expire on September 30, 2025, so all proposed work must be complete by that date.

IV. FUNDING TEAM

Financial Administration: RWU

RWU is NBEP's fiscal sponsor and will make formal funding awards, establish agreements, receive invoices, and provide reimbursement to awardees.

Project Oversight: NBEP

NBEP and its Grants Subcommittee will select projects, manage agreements, evaluate reports and deliverables, and provide technical assistance to awardees.

V. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Location

Projects must take place within the boundaries of NBEP's [study area](#) (Figure 2). This area includes [113 municipalities](#) in the Narragansett Bay, Little Narragansett Bay and Coastal Ponds watersheds in Rhode Island, Massachusetts, and Connecticut. Note that the links above direct you to ArcGIS layers that will allow you to confirm your project is in our study area. Further, note that projects that take place in an environmental justice priority area identified using NBEP's [Environmental Justice Reference & Planning Tool](#) will receive additional points in project evaluation. See the Scoring Sheet provided as Appendix 1.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include state or local government agencies, tribes, interstate agencies, private non-profit organizations and institutions, and academic or educational institutions. For-profit organizations or individuals are not eligible; however, they may be subcontracted by the applicant. Those eligible to respond to this RFP become a "subawardee" if selected for funding. Although multiple partners may be involved with a project, a single subawardee will be the recipient of funds, and partners receiving funds through the subawardee will be considered subcontractors. The subawardee has primary responsibility for the completion of all tasks including those undertaken by subcontracted partners.

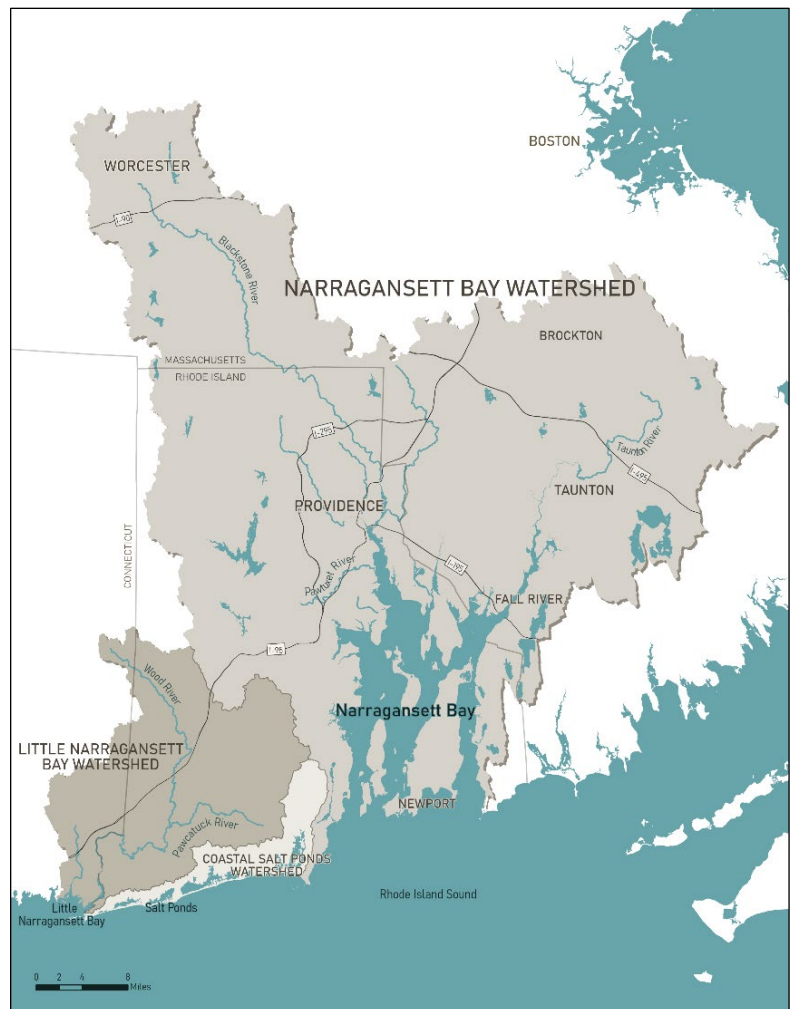


Figure 2: Narragansett Bay Estuary Program Study Area.

Please note that applicants must meet these minimum requirements before funds are subawarded, but not necessarily before submitting a response to this RFP:

1. Organization is legally registered in its country of operations;
2. Has or will adopt a financial conflict of interest policy prior to subaward, or agrees to use [RWU's policy](#);
3. Has identified no reasons (local conditions, laws, or institutional circumstances) that would prevent an independent accountant from performing an audit of the organization;
4. Accounting records can:
 - a. separate the receipts and payments of an RWU award from the receipts and payments of the organization's other activities, and
 - b. record expenditures on the RWU award according to budget categories such as salaries, supplies, travel and equipment;
5. Can provide proof of Comprehensive General Liability and Workers' Compensation insurance;
6. If the project involves purchasing, the organization has or will adopt a purchasing/procurement policy creating standards in the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property and other services and;
7. If the project involves staff time, the organization can provide signed timesheets with invoices. Note that none of the funds appropriated in this RFP shall be used to pay the salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II (\$212,100 per year for 2023).

The Subrecipient Financial Questionnaire provides more information on subawardee requirements.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects are limited to planning activities that advance future construction to improve freshwater or estuarine habitat restoration and/or public access in the Narragansett Bay Region (Figure 2, [link to online map](#)). See definitions in Section 1.

Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects will **not** be considered:

- On-the-ground construction of habitat restoration or public access projects;
- Purchase of land or real estate;
- Planning for projects where the primary purpose is not to improve freshwater or estuarine habitat and/or public access;
- Projects without an environmental enhancement component;
- Study or research that does not advance future construction on a site or sites to improve freshwater or estuarine habitat restoration and/or public access;
- Actions required to settle a formal enforcement action or included in a court order, and
- Lobbying activities attempting to influence specific 'legislation' as defined by the Internal Revenue Service.

Match

Match is not required for this RFP and will not factor into project scoring. If match is included in a proposal, it must be tracked and included in financial reports and invoices. Match can be provided with cash, in-kind services, or a combination of both.

Deliverables

1. *Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)* if required. See below for additional information about this deliverable.
2. *Quarterly reports* delivered to the designated NBEP Project Manager no later than the 10th day of April, July, October, and January for the duration of the project. At a minimum, reports should include a summary of activities, problems and opportunities encountered, and activities planned for the next quarter.
3. *Final planning documents*, including but not limited to workshop notes, studies, assessments, plans, permits, and any data that underlie the document (e.g., modeling outputs, ArcGIS layers).
4. *Final report in Word format* including a description of all project activities, planned next steps after project completion as appropriate, projected amount (acres) of habitat acres to be improved by the planned project (if available), and funding obtained or being pursued as a result of planning activities funded with this NBEP subaward.

5. *Photographs* as appropriate, included as separate attachments (not embedded in a document).
6. *Approved final report in Adobe PDF format* following the incorporation of feedback from RWU and NBEP.

Deliverable Ownership

All deliverables funded under this RFP in whole or in part shall be made available to RWU, NBEP, and EPA. These parties shall have unrestricted right to use these materials. Subawardees are encouraged to use deliverables to advance projects toward construction.

Insurance Requirements

RWU and NBEP require subawardees to maintain insurance, including Comprehensive General Liability and Workers' Compensation insurance, at all times for the term of the subaward. More details on such insurance requirements will be provided to applicants selected for funding.

Quality Assurance Project Plan

Projects that involve environmental data operations will be responsible for developing and submitting a QAPP to NBEP for review once an agreement between RWU and the awardee are in place. The QAPP must be approved by EPA and the NBEP Staff Scientist prior to any data collection or analysis. Development of the QAPP can be completed as a task under this project and included in the proposal narrative, timeline, and budget. Allow a minimum of 90 days for the review and approval of your QAPP. It is appropriate for an applicant to utilize or build upon an existing, relevant, approved QAPP if one exists. For more information about QAPPs, visit the [EPA Quality Program website](#) and [NBEP's Grants Forms and Guidance webpage](#). Questions regarding QAPPs should be directed to Courtney Schmidt, NBEP Staff Scientist at courtney.schmidt@nbep.org.

Compliance with Subawardee Requirements

Subawardees must comply with the terms and conditions in their agreement with RWU, to include timelines for deliverables and reporting, as well as all [EPA General Terms and Conditions](#).

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL AND EVALUATION

1. *Proposals*. A single-step proposal process (no letter of intent or pre-proposal) will be used for this RFP. Note that proposals will be eliminated from consideration that do not contain all information requested or that exceed the stated page limit. Hyperlinks may be included in proposals, but the Grants Subcommittee is not obligated to review them. The following information is required:
 - a. Cover letter. One (1) page cover letter, printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the project applicant. The cover letter must state that you are applying for funds under this RFP and acknowledge that funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.
 - b. Cover page. One (1) page cover page using the format provided. For the Project Abstract, include text that fits within provided area on the cover page (~200-word limit). Appendix 2 offers this cover page as a fillable .pdf, which is also available as a separate file on the [NBEP website](#).
 - c. Project Narrative. Up to eight (8)-page narrative that describes
 - i. Project purpose, benefits, and potential impacts, including a projection of the number of acres of habitat that will be improved when the project is constructed;
 - ii. Project consistency with this RFP;
 - iii. Expected tasks, outputs/deliverables, and outcomes;
 - iv. Potential unintended adverse impacts on water quality, wildlife, and quality of life in surrounding communities and how they will be addressed;
 - v. Expertise of key project participants in relevant subject areas and a description of the applicant/participants' successful completion of past projects similar to the proposed project;
 - vi. Plans for future project implementation (e.g., next steps, availability of funding); and
 - vii. Project timeline.
 - d. Project Budget. One (1) page budget using the format provided as Appendix 3. The Project Budget provided as Appendix 3 is an example only; an editable MS Word version of this sheet is provided separately on the [NBEP website](#). The filled form should be saved and added to the final PDF file submission.

- e. Budget Narrative. One (1) page summary narrative that provides a brief justification for the proposed costs in terms of completing project deliverables, an explanation of how indirect costs are calculated, description and justification for any subcontracts, and information on current and pending financial resources for non-federal cost share or matching funds that are intended to support the project. Note that entities intending to use a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate must provide documentation of their rate. If match is offered, include a description of the committed cash and/or in-kind match. If letters, forms, or other formal documentation of match are available, please provide (these do not count toward the one-page limit).
 - f. RWU Subrecipient Financial Questionnaire provided as a fillable PDF form in Appendix 4 and available as a separate form on the [NBEP website](#). Responses to this questionnaire determine the magnitude of financial oversight required in the event of a subaward. Any “must have” requirements are noted in the questionnaire are included under “Eligible Applicants” above.
2. *Pre-Submittal Consultation*. Applicants may reach out to the RWU and NBEP contacts listed in Section X of this RFP to clarify project eligibility and seek answers to other questions in advance of submittal.
 3. *Submittal*. Submit your proposal and all supporting information as a single PDF document to Darcy Young at dyoung@nbep.org. If received successfully, you will receive an email from NBEP with the subject line “RFP Submission Confirmation” confirming your submission. **Applications must be received by 11:59pm EST on Friday, July 21, 2023.**
 4. *Evaluation*. All proposals deemed complete and received by the deadline will be provided to the NBEP Grants Subcommittee for review, scoring, and pursuit of consensus funding decisions. This is an independent subcommittee consisting of [NBEP Steering Committee](#) members and other regional experts. The Project Scoring Sheet provided as Appendix 1 will be used to guide consideration of proposals by the subcommittee. Note that RWU and NBEP staff are not members of the subcommittee and will not participate in review or scoring or proposals. Note that the Project Scoring Sheet is included for information purpose only and is not to be filled out by the applicant.

VII. FUNDING ADMINISTRATION

RWU’s Office of Research and Special Programs will administer awards under this RFP. Once selected by the NBEP Grants Subcommittee, awardees will be notified in writing, and development of an agreement between RWU and the subawardee will begin. The funding team aims to have agreements in place for all awards by September 30, 2023, so expenditures can begin by October 1, 2023. RWU will handle billing, reimbursement, any amendments, and other financial administration.

VIII. SCHEDULE

The schedule for this RFP is as follows:

RFP released	May 11, 2023
Proposals due	July 21, 2023, 11:59PM EST
Proposal review by Grants Subcommittee	July 24-August 18, 2023
Subaward selections announced	~August 18, 2023
Agreements for subawards in place	~September 30, 2023
Earliest project start date	October 1, 2023
Complete project work	~July 31, 2025
Funds expire	September 30, 2025

IX. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Since this RFP and subsequent awards are supported by federal funds, all materials submitted to NBEP can be made available for public review. RWU, NBEP, and EPA expect to use the abstract noted in Appendix 2 and quarterly reports to inform online updates and to post final deliverables and reports on the NBEP website in the [Resources Library](#) and the [Funded Projects Map](#).

X. CONTACT INFORMATION

RFP Questions

Darcy Young, Watershed Outreach Manager
NBEP

dyoung@nbep.org

(401) 633-0551

QAPP Questions

Courtney Schmidt, Staff Scientist
NBEP

courtney.schmidt@nbep.org

(401) 477-3933

Financial Questions

Bob McCarthy, Research and Sponsored Programs
RWU

rmccarthy@rwu.edu

(401) 254-3552

XI. APPENDICES

1. Project Scoring Sheet—provided for information purposes only; not to be filled out by the applicant.
2. Application Cover Page Format – included as a fillable .pdf file, or download from the [NBEP website](#).
3. Budget Format – example included; download an editable MS Word form from the [NBEP website](#).
4. RWU Subrecipient Questionnaire – included as a fillable .pdf file, or download from the [NBEP website](#).

Appendix 1: Project Scoring Sheet. DO NOT COMPLETE, FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Project Title: _____

Project Applicant: _____

Funding Request: _____ **Match (not required):** _____

Reviewer Name and Organization: _____

Final Total: _____

Under Evaluation Criteria, unless otherwise noted, score each criterion from 0-3, where "0" does not meet the criterion or the criterion is not applicable to the action, "1" partially meets the evaluation criterion, "2" meets the criterion, and "3" exceeds the criterion. For each criterion, unless otherwise noted, multiply the Weight Column by the Score Column to create the Total Column, and then add the Totals to create the Final Total on the second page of the sheet. The Final Total should also be added above.

Screening Criteria*		Yes	No
1. The project meets the "Project Requirements" in Section V of the RFP.			

*If you answer 'No' to this criterion, do not further score.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Score	Total
1. <u>Quality</u> . Proposal cover, narrative, qualifications, and budget information are sufficiently detailed, realistic, and clear.	1		
Reviewer Comments:			
2. <u>Probability of Success</u> . Project is well-conceived, consistent with laws and technical standards, considers long-term sustainability, and otherwise has high probability of success.	2		
Reviewer Comments:			
3. <u>Importance</u> . The proposal delineates a significant problem or need that the project and/or future construction of the restoration/access plans will address.	3		
Reviewer Comments:			
4. <u>Benefits</u> . The planned project, when constructed, will result in tangible, measurable, and lasting benefits to wildlife and/or people.	3		
Reviewer Comments:			
5. <u>Adverse Impacts</u> . Consequences of future implementation work that could have negative impact on natural resources and people (e.g., long-term maintenance, trash, pests, safety, resident displacement) are acknowledged and adequately managed.	1		
Reviewer Comments:			

Appendix 1: Project Scoring Sheet. DO NOT COMPLETE, FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Score	Total
6. <u>Community Engagement</u> . The applicant has already meaningfully collaborated with appropriate stakeholders (e.g., municipal officials, site users, neighboring landowners and communities) when developing the project, or obligates to do so as part of the project.	2		
Reviewer Comments:			
7. <u>Environmental Justice</u> . The project takes place in an environmental justice priority area identified using NBEP's Environmental Justice Reference & Planning Tool (If yes, enter 2 points under Score & Total).			
Reviewer Comments:			
8. <u>Capacity and Function</u> . Applicant has or will access the necessary expertise and capacity to carry out the project based on completion of projects of similar scope, duration, and complexity.	3		
Reviewer Comments:			
9. <u>Cost</u> . The cost of the project is line with similar activities undertaken in the region, generally accepted costs, and current market conditions.	2		
Reviewer Comments:			
FINAL TOTAL:			
Final Comments			

Appendix 2: Application Cover Page Format

Project Title:

Project Location:

Project Applicant:

Applicant Point of Contact:

Applicant Contact Information:

Funding Request: \$

Match Funds: \$

Project Start Date:

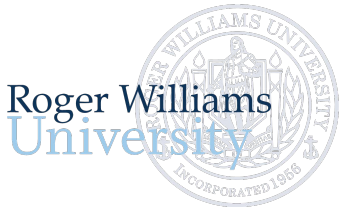
Project End Date:

Number of acres of habitat the project will improve, when constructed (estimate):

PROJECT ABSTRACT

Appendix 3: Budget Format. EXAMPLE ONLY, COMPLETE AND SUBMIT SEPARATE WORD VERSION

BUDGET CATEGORY <i>(add/remove itemizing lines below as necessary but do not delete major categories)</i>	PROPOSAL REQUEST	MATCH
i. Personnel Total <i>(list individual names and titles below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
	\$	\$
ii. Fringe Benefits _____% <i>(e.g., 10% of total personnel costs) Total:</i>	\$	\$
iii. Travel Total <i>(estimate number/purpose of trips below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
iv. Equipment Total <i>(itemize below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
v. Supplies Total <i>(itemize below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
vi. Contracts Total <i>(itemize below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
vii. Other Total <i>(itemize below):</i>	\$	\$
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
	\$	
iii. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS <i>(sum of rows A-G):</i>	\$	\$
ix. INDIRECT COSTS _____% <i>of _____:</i>	\$	
x. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS <i>(sum of H-I):</i>	\$	\$



**Planning Activities to Improve Freshwater and Estuarine Habitat Quality
and Public Access in the Narragansett Bay Region**

Subrecipient Questionnaire

Accepting an award from Roger Williams University (RWU) creates a legal duty for the subrecipient to use the funds according to the award agreement and applicable United States federal regulations. The purpose of this questionnaire is to provide RWU with information needed to assess the adequacy of the financial and accounting systems of your organization and to assess the need for assistance to ensure accountability of the subaward issued.

Instructions:

Please answer all questions below as completely as possible, using extra pages if necessary.

Section A – General Organizational Information

- 1) Name of subrecipient:
- 2) Address (including country):
- 3) EIN or Tax ID:
- 4) DUNS number:
- 5) Please check the box that best describes your organization.

- Domestic, nonprofit organization
- Domestic, for profit organization (INELIGIBLE)
- Domestic governmental organization
- Foreign, nonprofit organization
- If any box above is checked, is your organization tax exempt? Yes No
- Foreign, for profit organization (INELIGIBLE)
- Foreign governmental organization
- Other (please explain):

- 6) Organizational web site:
- 7) Please provide the name, title and email address of contact if there are questions about the information on this questionnaire.
 - Name:
 - Title:
 - Email address:

8) Does your organization have a financial conflict of interest policy?

Yes

No

If no, is your organization planning on utilizing [RWU's policy](#) on financial conflict of interest?

Yes

No

9) Does your organization have an approved Indirect Cost/Facilities & Administrative rate /NICRA?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a copy of approval letter. If no, please provide basis/calculations for rate being used for this subagreement.

10) Does your organization have an approved Fringe Benefit rate?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a copy of approval letter or any supporting documentation. If no, please provide basis/calculations for rate being used for this subagreement.

Section B – Financial Information

1) Fiscal year start and end date (Month/Day):

-

MM/DD MM/DD

2) Does your organization have annual Audited Financial Statements?

Yes

No

If yes, please submit with your proposal a copy of your organization's report for its most recent fiscal year. If no, please provide with your proposal an internal balance sheet and revenue/expense statement.

3) Please provide the amount (in USD\$) and source of U.S. government funds your organization expended in its most recent fiscal year.

Most recent fiscal year:

4) Did your organization have an audit of its U.S. government funded projects in your most recent fiscal year?

Yes

No

4 a) If yes to 4 above, do you file your annual single audit with the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse \(FAC\)](#) in accordance with the Uniform Guidance (2 CFR 200, Subpart F)?

Yes
No

If you answered **Yes** to Question 4 a) above and are a **domestic nonprofit** organization, please provide the FAC link to or copies of your organization's last two years' Single Audit reports and all relevant attachments. Link:

5) Are there any reasons (local conditions, laws, or institutional circumstances) that would prevent an independent accountant from performing an audit of your organization?

Yes
No

If yes, please explain.

6) Are your financial reports prepared on a cash basis or accrual basis?

Cash
Accrual
Other (please explain):

7) Can your accounting records separate the receipts and payments of a RWU award from the receipts and payments of your organization's other activities?

Yes
No

8) Can your accounting system record expenditures on the RWU award according to budget categories such as salaries, supplies, travel and equipment?

Yes
No

9) Do you keep invoices, vouchers and timesheets for all payments made from U.S. government funds for a minimum of 3 years after the date of the receipt of the final invoice payment?

Yes
No

10) Will any cash from RWU grant funds be kept outside the bank account (in petty cash funds, etc.)?

Yes
No

If yes, please provide the amount of funds to be kept and the name and position/title of the person responsible for safeguarding cash.

Amount (in USD\$):
Name:
Title:

11) Please provide banking information below:

Name of bank:
U.S. or international bank?
U.S.
International
Are bank deposits insured?
Yes
No

Section C – Internal Control Information

- 1) Does your organization have written accounting policies and procedures?
Yes
No

If yes, please provide a copy. If no, please provide a description below of how transactions are recorded, cash disbursements are made, and account system is managed.

- 2) Are timesheets kept for each paid employee or is there another system to document employees' effort spent on U.S. government funded projects? All records must reflect 100% of employees' time or effort spent by project or activity.
Yes
No

If no, please explain.

- 3) Is each employee's salary stated in a formal document maintained by your organization?
Yes
No

- 4) Does your organization have a purchasing/procurement policy creating standards in the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property and other services?
Yes
No

- 5) Does your organization have a written travel policy outlining the expectation and standards for expending project funds for travel and documenting travel expenditures?
Yes
No

Section D – Additional Information

1) Is your organization legally registered in its country of operations?

Yes

No

If yes, please provide a copy of your organization’s registration certificate. If no, please explain.

2) In what year was your organization established?

3) Please list the names of the following executive officers of your organizations.

President/Director:

Chief Financial Officer:

4) Please provide the number of employees in your organization.

Full-time Employees:

Part-time Employees:

5) Is your organization able to provide proof of general liability and workers’ compensation insurance?

Yes

No

Section E- Certification

By signing this form:

I certify under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

I certify that neither this organization nor any of its employees or agents performing any service for this project are presently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible from receiving funds from the United States government.

Name:

Title:

Email Address:

Signature:

Date:

Note: If you are unable to sign this PDF electronically, please print and sign this certification page and include a scanned copy in your submission.