

PARTNERSHIP FOR GULF COAST LAND CONSERVATION

PROJECT ASSISTANCE FUND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS



PARTNERSHIP FOR
Gulf Coast
LAND CONSERVATION

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Overview

The Partnership for Gulf Coast Land Conservation (PGCLC) is a collaboration of 24 land trusts working in the Gulf of Mexico Region to enhance land protection and conservation in priority landscapes. Our mission is to work together across the five Gulf of Mexico states to increase the pace, quality, and permanence of voluntary land and water conservation in the coastal region.

The Project Assistance Fund (PAF) Request for Proposals (RFP) is to support upfront due diligence costs our land trust partners need to fully develop land conservation projects in the coastal region with important public recreation, wildlife habitat, resilience, and water quality benefits for local communities within the Gulf States.

Program Priorities

The PAF program goal is to enhance land protection and conservation in priority landscapes of the Gulf by providing up-front due diligence support to organizations working on the front lines of land conservation along the Gulf States.

Geographic Focus

The project is located within the Coastal Management Zone or within 25 miles of the Coastal Zone boundary in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, or Texas, and preferably within the boundaries of the PGCLC Conservation Vision. See map and more details at:

<https://gulfpartnership.shinyapps.io/visionapp/>

Award Size

PGCLC partners implementing fee acquisition or conservation easement projects may receive subawards of up to \$35,000, at a 90% cost-share reimbursement rate to complete appraisals, appraisal reviews, title exams, environmental and baseline studies, surveys, closings, and other due diligence necessary for conservation activity. Salary, indirect, and administrative expenses are not reimbursable but are eligible for match. The remaining 10% may come from cash or in-kind services.

Budget

Use the budget table in the application form to submit your budget. Be sure to include:

1. Specific amount requested.
2. What the award funds/resources will be specifically used for.
3. Explain how your figures were derived.
4. List any matching, leveraged, or cost-share funds to be utilized.
5. Include the total amount of the project, including land costs.

Receiving Award Funds

Award payments are reimbursable following satisfactory completion of all activities, and submission of reporting requirements. Advanced payment or partial reimbursement prior to completion of services will not be permitted.

Procurement

If the applicant chooses to specifically identify proposed Contractor(s) for Services, an award by PGCLC to the applicant does not constitute PGCLC's express written authorization for the applicant to procure such specific services non-competitively. When procuring goods and services, PGCLC recipients must follow documented procurement procedures that reflect applicable laws and regulations.

Matching Contributions

Applicants are expected to cover a minimum of 10% of total project costs. These can come from in-kind services, such as volunteer labor cost, staff time, etc., or cash from services defined in the proposal. They can also include both federal and non-federal sources.

Project Metrics

All awardees will be required to provide acreage estimates, along with any associated backup documents to verify these figures. In addition to the total acreage protected, awardees should indicate the types of habitats, and their associated acreage when feasible.

Optional metrics include outreach/education, along with any planned habitat restoration activities on-site. If applicants anticipate any other environmental, and/or social outcomes of the proposed project, please describe and quantify those services within the proposal narrative.

Eligibility

Applicant Eligibility

To be eligible for the fund, applicants must meet the following conditions:

1. They are a 501(c)(3) member of the Gulf Partnership in good standing (annual dues current) and maintain membership through an award performance period.
2. They have provided geospatial data (i.e., maps) on all the conservation easements they hold to the National Conservation Easement Database.
3. They have adopted the Land Trust Alliance standards and practices.
4. As this program will award grants of Federal financial assistance funds, applicants must be able to comply with the OMB guidance and procurement standards of 2 CFR 200 (OMB Uniform Guidance).

Proposal Eligibility

To be eligible for the fund, projects must meet the following criteria:

1. Have applied or intend to apply for (CE or fee title) acquisition funding. The applicant must clearly explain this in the application.
2. The project is located within the Coastal Management Zone or within 25 miles of the Coastal Zone boundary in Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Mississippi, or Texas, and preferably within the boundaries of the PGCLC Conservation Vision. See map and more details at: <https://gulfpartnership.shinyapps.io/visionapp/>
3. Organizations who do not have current/active PAF agreements will be given preference, so long as the proposal meets award criteria. Organizations have no

limit on the number of proposals submitted but the Gulf Partnership may limit the number of awards per organization depending on available program funding. If an organization submits more than one project that meets award criteria, PGCLC will default to the highest-ranked proposals for the award.

4. Completed application submitted in accordance with these *Guidelines*. Eligible costs for **grant and matching funds** may include, but are not limited to, appraisals, appraisal reviews, surveys and legal descriptions, title reviews, legal review, baseline documentation reports, recording fees, and environmental assessments. General overhead, land costs, and staff time are not eligible for grant funds but can be documented as match.
5. Project expenses to be reimbursed must be incurred after the period of performance as defined in the proposal.

Evaluation Criteria

Proposals are evaluated by a review committee composed of PGCLC staff, board members, and other conservation organizations for eligibility and compliance with criteria. Projects will be ranked in accordance with alignment for program goals and priorities. A general scoring rubric is provided below for reference.

Scoring Rubric

1. Project Description/Conservation Vision: The proposal clearly defines the project, activities, and resources for proposed acquisition. It demonstrates a clear understanding of science and/or best practices related to conservation while aligning with this RFP and other relevant conservation plans. Proposal aligns with PGCLC Strategic Conservation Vision, and/or clearly demonstrates regional/resource needs through regional conservation plans. – *Maximum Points: 10*
2. Resource/Community Benefits: Proposal should define regional and environmental outcomes, aligning local species, habitat, and/or social needs to broader land-use and/or climate resiliency goals. Proposals should also demonstrate long-term stewardship plans for acquisition/easement. – *Maximum Points: 10*
3. Feasibility: The proposal must demonstrate landowner approval and have a clear description of the potential for capital funding for acquisition/easement. When feasible, proposals should provide notification of award, commitment, etc. – *Maximum Points: 5*
4. Metrics: Objectives/Metrics are quantitative and clearly defined. They are also supportive of RFP requirements and aligned with regional conservation plans. – *Maximum Points: 5*
5. Project Timeline: The timeline of proposed activities is clearly defined, including a long-term timeline/description for acquisition and/or conservation easement. – *Maximum Points: 5*
6. Budget: Cost estimates are appropriate, justified, and reasonable for meeting the desired project objectives and required timelines. – *Maximum Points: 10*

7. **Completeness and Accuracy:** All attachments/forms completed. Project objectives are clear, concise, and outline specific goals which are linked to milestones/timelines for project completion. – *Maximum Points: 5*

Total Point Score: 50

Timeline

Request for Proposals can be submitted anytime throughout the year and will be reviewed quarterly based on the timeline described below.

Request for Proposal Due Dates

Quarter 1: March 31st

Quarter 2: June 30th

Quarter 3: September 30th

Quarter 4: December 31st

Anticipated Awards Announcement

Quarter 1: May 15th

Quarter 2: August 15th

Quarter 3: November 15th

Quarter 4: February 15th

All work is expected to be completed within 12 months of the award. An extension can be requested and will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. However, the PGCLC is under no obligation to offer an extension, and subaward recipients would be expected to demonstrate significant and unforeseen challenges that prevented project execution.

Publicity and Acknowledgement of Support

Award recipients will be required to grant PGCLC the right and authority to publicize the project and PGCLC's financial support for the grant in press releases, publications, and other public communications. Recipients may also be asked by PGCLC to provide high-resolution (minimum 300 dpi) photographs depicting the project.

Compliance Requirements

As may be applicable, successful applicants may be required to comply with federal, state, or local requirements and obtain all necessary permits and clearances. Documentation of compliance with these regulations must be approved before initiating activities that disturb or alter habitat or other features of the project site(s). Applicants should budget time and resources to obtain the needed approvals.

Reporting Requirements

A standardized reporting form will be included with all award agreements. The report narrative should describe the project's status and any delays relative to the timeline. Included in the report must be a list of any products from the project (e.g., appraisals, surveys, etc.) and an updated budget showing all actual expenditures.

A semi-annual report will be due approximately 6-months after the award, and the completed form will be due 30 days after the completion of the project.

How to Apply

Please submit all proposals, including supporting materials, electronically. Compile all application materials into a single .pdf for electronic submission to vance@gulfpartnership.org using the form provided. Applications will not be accepted after the submission deadline.

Questions

Direct all inquiries to:

Vance Crain
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