

2026 GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

FRESHWATER FUTURE'S GRANT PROGRAMS

PROJECT GRANTS

**FALL CYCLE DEADLINE:
SEPTEMBER 30, 2026**

The Project Grant Program provides awards ranging from \$500 to \$5,000 (USD) for grassroots project expenses and activities that promote water protection.

This can be done by influencing community or individual behavior, addressing corporate conduct, or encouraging good public policies. Projects should strengthen the role of individuals and community groups working locally to protect drinking water, shorelines, inland lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater in the Great Lakes Basin.



For more details about our Grants Programs, to view past grantees' work, or see our Frequently Asked Questions, visit freshwaterfuture.org/grant-programs.



Freshwater Future's grant programs provide financial support to community groups working locally to protect drinking water, shorelines, inland lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater in the Great Lakes Basin through grassroots advocacy efforts.



SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY GRANTS

Special Opportunity Grants are "emergency grants" for projects working to protect drinking water, shorelines, inland lakes, rivers, groundwater, and wetlands that may not coincide with the application timeline or funding period of the Project Grant Program. Grant awards are up to \$750 (USD).

ABOUT PROGRAM

Freshwater Future grant programs have provided more than \$6.1 million over the past 30 years that support community-based efforts to protect the waters in our Great Lakes region. Visit our website for a map of projects.

ASSISTANCE FOR APPLICANTS

We are here to help!

Please call us to discuss potential projects and ask questions! Contact Lindsey to discuss your ideas prior to beginning your application.

LEARN MORE

Contact: Lindsey Taylor
lindsey@freshwaterfuture.org
231-348-8200, ext 110

Sign up for our
Q&A Webinar:
September 2
at 12pm ET



YOU SHOULD APPLY IF:

- You are part of a grassroots initiative working to protect drinking water, rivers, lakes, wetlands, shorelines, or ground-water within the Great Lakes Basin. This includes projects completed outside the basin in the Great Lakes states that will positively impact policy or water within the Great Lakes basin.
- Your organization is a Freshwater Future member. You may already be one! Check your status and learn about membership benefits at 231-348-8200.
- Your organization is a registered 501(c)(3) [US] or charity [Canada], or you have a sponsor. A letter from sponsors is part of the application process. We can help!

If you aren't sure if you have an advocacy component, or would like help brainstorming, please call or email Lindsey Taylor (*contact information can be found on page one*).

SCAN ME



To access grant applications, scan the QR code above or go to our online grants portal.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY ADVOCACY?

This is the part of your project that encourages permanent and broad-reaching change at the corporate, community, or regulatory level. This goes beyond education or stewardship by providing people or institutions with the tools, resources, and information they need to implement lasting change.

However, the program does not support lobbying. Please call if you have questions about what counts as lobbying.

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY GRASSROOTS?

Grassroots groups are those with limited funds that rely on volunteers for all or a majority of their work. While Freshwater Future has no specific budgetary limitation for eligibility, it is highly unlikely a group with an annual budget over approx. \$200,000 will be considered eligible as a grassroots initiative.

TYPES OF ACTIVITIES WE DO NOT FUND

- Education projects that do not include an action component to create permanent change
- On-the-ground restoration projects without an action component
- Water sampling projects without an advocacy component
- Governmental functions (including governmental entities such as units of government, governmental agencies, conservation districts, & conservation authorities)
- Lobbying activities (activities that attempt to influence specific pieces of legislation)
- Projects that are completed
- Consulting activities for organizational capacity building or strategy development services – these activities are available through our Coaching and Consulting Grants Program. See website for more information. freshwaterfuture.org/coaching-and-consulting/

APPLY SOON!

**Fall Deadline:
September 30
2026**