

CLEAN OHIO GREEN SPACE CONSERVATION PROGRAM

*Natural Resources Assistance Council (NRAC)
District 12 Lucas County, Ohio*

Round 16 Applicant Manual

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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, high quality ecological areas, and stream corridors. 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 Ohio Revised Code (ORC) Sections 164.20 to 164.27. **Applicants must request a [subdivision applicant code](#) from OPWC prior to application; the code is required on page 1 of the application.**

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 Green Space Conservation Fund grant is eligible for the additional development funds.

GRANT FUNDING LIMITATIONS

District 12 has \$1,213,662 in Round 16 funding available. 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 via Public WorksWise, which can be found on the [OPWC website](#). If you have questions, contact the District 12 Natural Resources Assistance Council Liaison:

Sara Guiher
guiher@tmacog.org
419.241.9155 x 1147

APPLICATION DOCUMENTS

Are available online at: <https://tmacog.org/water/clean-ohio-fund-nrac>

APPLICATION DEADLINE

All applications must be submitted by 5:00 pm (local time) on March 11, 2022.

AWARD NOTIFICATION

All applicants will be notified of NRAC's recommendation to the Ohio Public Works OPWC by April 30, 2022.

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 ORC 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 as required in ORC Section 164.23 (B) and (C) *note that this does not apply to all applicants – review requirements in the referenced sections of ORC
- (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 pursuant to ORC 164.23 (B)(2).

(3) Documentation that indicates compliance with division (A) of section 164.26 of the ORC related to the long-term ownership or control of the property that is the subject of the grant application pursuant to ORC 164.23 (B)(3).

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](mailto:guiher@tmacog.org).

(4) Projects including public access improvements must submit a stamped engineer's estimate and a justification for improvements

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please read carefully the application materials and all attached information prior to beginning to prepare the application form. OPWC provides [instructions for applicants](#) and the [Clean Ohio application](#). NRAC reserves the right to individually score parcels that are a part of non-contiguous multiple parcel applications.

This manual highlights items that may be overlooked or that are of significance to the Council. **Please review the attached 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, with the necessary supporting information; the attached sheets can be filled in and submitted with application materials.**

If you have questions regarding the program or application process, please contact the District 12 NRAC Liaison, Sara Guiher, guiher@tmacog.org.

APPRAISALS

Applications will be required to have an appraisal report performed by a certified general real estate appraiser holding a current certificate as issued by the Ohio Department of

Commerce and who is also an Ohio Department of Transportation (ODOT) Prequalified Appraiser credentialed in Appraisal.

All appraisals shall be at the request of the applicant or any party involved with the project except for the seller of the property. Appraisals shall be deemed valid for twelve months from the time they are performed.

While the Ohio Revised Code allows the Clean Ohio Greenspace Conservation Program to acquire properties above appraised value, the NRAC must be cognizant of this variance. Justification must be provided to the NRAC for any purchase price above appraised value, and any difference greater than 5% must be covered with other funding. 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 OPWC participation ratio. Information on the location of the ODOT Prequalified Appraiser list is on the [OPWC website](#). This is not a comprehensive summary of OPWC appraisal standards for the current round. Please be sure to review the current appraisal standards on the OPWC website: [OPWC Appraisal Standards](#)

PROJECT COSTS

The allowance for funding the acquisition of existing structures as a portion of a Clean Ohio project will be judged on a case-by-case basis. Property appraisal cannot include the valuation of structures to be demolished.

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 OPWC 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 OPWC approval.

OIL AND GAS LEASING

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 ORC 164.22 (A) or (B).

FARMLAND PRESERVATION – AGRICULTURAL EASEMENTS

Under ORC 164.25 the Ohio Public Works OPWC is authorized to approve applications for Clean Ohio Funds for open space acquisition and related development projects to protect and enhance riparian corridors or watersheds, according to the criteria for such projects described in ORC 164.22. The term “agricultural” does not appear in ORC 164.22. The Ohio Department of Agriculture (ODA) has statutory authority under Ohio Revised Code 901.22 to administer the Clean Ohio Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program, for the 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 ODA and the OPWC over the programs within their purview is mutually exclusive and they do not overlap. The OPWC 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 Clean Ohio project may contain agricultural land that would 1) 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 ORC 164.22 (A) and (B).

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 OPWC.

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

PROJECT EVALUATION AND SELECTION

Submitted applications will be provided to NRAC members by the District 12 Liaison. This will begin the project review process, which includes:

- Determination of project eligibility based on the ORC and OPWC advisories
- A meeting to review applications (applicants will be invited to this meeting)
- Scoring of the projects using the District 12 Methodology (below)
- A meeting to review scores of NRAC members, rank projects, and determine whether any projects will be recommended for Clean Ohio funding (applicants will be invited to this meeting)

MINIMUM SCORE

A project must receive at least 60% of possible points to be considered for recommendation to OPWC. Improvement only projects are at the discretion of the NRAC.

TIEBREAKER

In the event that two or more projects receive the same score, the NRAC will break the tie based on the scores each project receives on the following:

- First tiebreaker: conservation value
- Second tiebreaker: local match

ROUND 16 RESOURCE GUIDE

METHODOLOGY: PART 1 – PRELIMINARY SCREENING

- NRAC Application Documents
 - [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](#)
- [Ohio Invasive Plant Fact Sheets](#)
- [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

Resources for additional guidance

- [ORAM: Ohio Rapid Assessment Method for Wetlands](#)
- [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
- [District 12 NRAC](#) – will review applications prior to final submission (must submit to liaison by February 26, 2021 for review)

NRAC DISTRICT 12 METHODOLOGY

Project Name: _____

Applicant: _____

PART I: PRELIMINARY SCREENING

Yes: No:

___ ___ Applicant is eligible entity

___ ___ Complete application received by 5:00 PM on March 11, 2022

Project purpose must involve at least one of the following from A. or B. below:

A. Open Space (ORC 146.22 A)

Yes: No:

___ ___ Acquires land for parks

___ ___ Acquires land for public forests

___ ___ Acquires land for wetland preservation or enhancement

___ ___ Acquires land for natural areas protecting potentially threatened, threated or endangered species

___ ___ Acquires land for other natural areas

___ ___ Acquires land for connecting corridors for natural areas

___ ___ Permanent conservation easement

___ ___ *Constructs or enhances facilities necessary to make open space area acquired by Clean Ohio greenspace grant accessible & usable by the general public.

Any additional details:

B. Riparian Corridors or Watersheds (ORC 164.22 B)

Yes: No:

___ ___ Protects or enhances riparian corridors or watersheds including the protection and enhancement of streams, rivers and other waters of the state.

___ ___ Reforests land in riparian corridors or watersheds

___ ___ Plants vegetation for filtration purposes

___ ___ Acquires land for purposes of providing access to riparian corridors or watersheds

___ ___ Acquires land for other purposes necessary for the protection and enhancement of riparian corridors or watersheds.

___ ___ Acquires permanent easements for the purpose of protecting and enhancing riparian corridors or watersheds.

Any additional details:

C. Construction or Enhancement of Facilities

Yes: No: N/A:

___ ___ ___ Is this project only for development including construction or enhancement of facilities necessary to make open space accessible and useable by the general public, and does not include acquisition of any property? If yes, continue to next question; if no, skip the next two questions and continue with the ADA question.

___ ___ ___ Was the property which is to be developed or enhanced acquired using a prior Clean Ohio grant? If yes, continue with next question; if no the project is ineligible

If the previous question was yes, enter the Clean Ohio Fund project name and number that provided funding for acquisition. If the previous answer was no, this project is ineligible (ORC 164.22).

Enter Name and Number of project by which the property was acquired:

___ ___ ___ Will the planned development project, including facilities necessary to make open space accessible and useable by the general public, be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and/or any other law, if applicable, relating to accessibility by individuals with disabilities or handicaps?

Any additional details:

"Facilities necessary to make open space accessible and useable by the general public" include parking lots, benches, fencing, invasive species removal (1st time), kiosks/signs, observation decks, pedestrian bridges, plantings for restoration, trails and trash receptacles.

D. Would the project:

Yes: No:

___ ___ Accelerate untreated water runoff

___ ___ Encourage invasive nonnative species

___ ___ Initiate or perpetuate hydromodification projects such as dams, dredging, sedimentation, bank clearing, ditch development or channelization?

___ ___ Fund current legal obligations (such as fines, penalties, litigation expenses, mitigation or reclamation) under state or federal laws or local ordinances?

___ ___ Fund facilities other than those required to provide public access to or use of open space?

___ ___ *Fund facilities for active recreation, such as tennis courts, ball fields or recreation centers

If Yes to any of the above in D, the project is ineligible (ORC Section 164.22).

Any additional details:

If project meets Preliminary Scoring Requirements move on to next Section.

PART II: NRAC SCORING METHODOLOGY

Per ORC 164.24, NRACs shall consider all the following in approving or disapproving a grant:

Does the project emphasize the following pursuant to Section 164.22 (A or B), ORC? (Applicants must provide supporting information for each question)

1) Protects existing natural habitat for potentially threatened, threatened, or endangered species. Must list existing natural habitat and species

2) Includes a plan to reduce or eliminate nonnative, invasive species of plants or animals. A management program must be outlined in detail to receive points.

3) Preserves high quality, viable habitat for native plant or animal species B refer to glossary and Habitat Suitability Index.

4) Restores or preserves aquatic biological communities.

5) Preserves headwater streams or wetlands that provide environmental benefits such as flood attenuation, aquatic habitat, and pollution assimilation.

6) Preserves or restores functioning floodplains.

7) Preserves or restores water quality.

8) Preserves or restores natural stream channels as defined in the Glossary. Natural stream channels are not channelized (i.e. ditches).

9) Preserves or restores streamside forests.

10) Preserves Category 3 (high quality) wetlands. Must include ORAM scoring sheet.

11) Enhances wetlands.

12) Preserves or restores other natural features that contribute to quality of life and state's natural heritage.

13) Adds high quality habitat to an existing protected high-quality natural area of at least 100 acres.

14) Re-vegetates with native plants for filtration to improve water quality.

15) *Incorporates aesthetically pleasing and ecologically informed design including sensitivity to the terrain, natural resources and heritage of the property.

16) Enhances environmental educational opportunities through formal programs.

17) *Provides physical links to schools and/or after school centers.

18) *Includes pedestrian/bicycle linkages to other open space preserves and population centers.

19) *Provides multiple recreational, economic and aesthetic preservation benefits.

20) Allows proper management of areas where safe fishing, hunting and trapping may take place in a manner that will preserve balanced natural ecosystems.

21) *Enhances economic development that relies on recreation and ecotourism.

22) Provides connecting corridor for protected natural areas.

PART III: NRAC SCORING METHODOLOGY

NRAC shall consider the following in approving or disapproving a grant (Applicants must provide supporting information for each question):

1) **Percentage of Clean Ohio matching funds necessary to complete** project (ORC 164.24 A2-3):

- ◆ 75%
- ◆ 74-70%
- ◆ 69-65%
- ◆ 64-60%
- ◆ < 60%

2) **Level of coordination** (ORC 164.24 A4): Coordination means project carries out a specific plan of an agency/organization that was adopted more than one (1) year prior to application submittal. An agency or organization could offer in-kind or monetary contribution to the project to help implement another organization's plan.

- ___ local political subdivisions
- ___ state agencies
- ___ federal agencies
- ___ community organizations
- ___ conservation organizations
- ___ local business groups

3) **Level of conservation coordination** (ORC 164.24 A5) with other Open space or Riparian Corridor projects under the Clean Ohio Fund in other Public Works OPWC districts:

- is a joint project
- carries out an adopted open space, watershed or other plan overlapping another district

4) ***Community benefits** (ORC 164.24 A6): Relative economic, social/recreational and environmental benefits the proposed project will bring to the geographical area represented by the NRAC as compared to other proposed projects:

- economic
- social/recreational
- environmental

5) ***Extent of public access** (ORC 164.24 A8) once project is completed (check one):

- open days and weekends
- open limited, but regular hours
- open by appointment or with written permission

6) **Mineral, oil, and gas leases** (check one):

The property has **no** mineral, oil, and/or gas leases

The property has mineral, oil, and/or gas leases

7) **Operation and Maintenance** once project is completed (check one):

operation and maintenance plan in place

operation and maintenance rely on volunteers

8) **Project Management Experience** of similar or related projects (check one):

successfully completed 3-5 similar projects in the last 10 years

successfully completed 1-2 similar project in the last 5 years

has partnered on at least one similar project in the last 5 years

9) **Prior Clean Ohio Funds Received** by the applying organization:

has not received Clean Ohio Funds previously

has received Clean Ohio Funds previously

PART IV: NRAC SCORING METHODOLOGY

Other Factors. (each applicant must explain each scoring category and how they qualify to receive those points)

1) **Community Planning:** Project is in concert with an adopted comprehensive open space or watershed plan. **Note: See Glossary for listing and location of plan(s)** (check one):

- project identified as important in the plan
- area identified as important in the plan
- project would be consistent with plan

2) **Regional Significance:** What is the regional significance of the proposed project? (check one):

- project located in a multi county area
- project located in multiple local political subdivisions within one county

3) **Natural Resource Viability** (ORC 164.22 A3): How important is the project to the viability of the natural resources affected by the project? (check one):

- protects an existing globally endangered species or biological community (G1 through G3)
- protects existing populations of more than 5 state Natural Heritage Inventory (NHI) S1 species or endangered species
- protects existing populations of 1 -5 state NHI ranked S1 through S3 species (gets 1 point)
- May support endangered species of communities after restoration; or less than 1/4 of project site is in natural condition

4) **Level of funding provided (list: % and \$)** by sources other than the applicant, both funding, and in kind (ORC 164.24 A3):

Private: \$ _____ % ____

Federal: \$ _____ % ____

State: \$ _____ % ____

Other Local: \$ _____ % ____

5) **Readiness to proceed factors** (164.24 A10): Contract with the owner and evidence from seller that closing will take place within 1 year.

6) ***Open space related facilities construction readiness:** construction to begin within a year.

7) **Other Project Factors:**

___ project addresses a situation where action must be taken now, or opportunity will be lost forever

8) **Acquisition of Property:**

_____ project acquires property or conservation easement; as opposed to enhancing past OPWC awarded projects

**Items and questions marked with an asterisk (*) indicate that they relate to projects involving the construction or enhancement of facilities that are necessary to make an open space area accessible and useable by the general public.*