



NYS Canal System Tourism Infrastructure & Event Grants

OVERVIEW

The New York State Canal Corporation (NYSCC) and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (ECNHC) offer competitive grant funding to support recreation and tourism along the New York State Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trails). The program prioritizes support for tourism infrastructure and amenity improvements, and events. Funding is open to counties, municipalities, units of local government, not-for-profit organizations, and federally recognized Native American tribes.

Applications can be made in the following categories:

1. Event Support, see pages 3-4
2. Tourism Infrastructure & Amenity Support, see pages 5-9

See page 10 for a list of useful resources when planning a tourism infrastructure project or event.

Projects submitted should demonstrate how they will achieve one or more program objectives:

- facilitate recreation and/or tourism
- enhance visitor amenities and/or improve the visitor experience
- encourage overnight stays
- commemorate the history, heritage, or culture of the canals
- make recreational and tourism assets more accessible for people with and without disabilities and expand audiences served
- improve and/or promote connectivity between recreation areas and communities or between waterways and land trails

The Erie Canal is celebrating its bicentennial in 2025. We will be prioritizing applications that help us commemorate this milestone and prepare for the next 100 years.



**APPLICATION
PROCESS**

Applicants may apply by completing an online application at:
www.eriecanalway.org/resources/grants/

TIMELINE

Application Opens: October 7, 2024
Applications Due: November 15, 2024
Awards Announced: January 2025

**EVALUATION
AND NOTIFICATION
OF AWARD**

This is a competitive grant program. Members of the review team and the evaluation criteria remain confidential. Applicants will be notified of decisions by email and letter; and all successful applicants will be posted online at www.canals.ny.gov and www.eriecanalway.org and announced through a joint press release.

The New York State Canal Corporation and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor have full discretion in the amount of funding available for the program and individually awarded to applicants.

CONTACTS

Program Managers will not answer any project or event specific questions after the application period has opened. Only eligibility and technical questions will be answered from October 7th, 2024 through November 15, 2024. All questions must be submitted via email to the contacts listed below. The questions and answers will be documented and posted to the grant page on the Erie Canalway website.

Tourism Infrastructure Support

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Event Support

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Event Support

OVERVIEW

This program supports public events and festivals that encourage exploration and enjoyment of the wealth of cultural, heritage, nature, and recreational offerings within New York State’s canal corridor.

USES OF FUNDS

Events may be, but are not limited to:

- Major events such as system-wide or regional celebrations focused on canal waterways and trails
- Events that focus on the heritage and culture of the canals, especially the Erie Canal bicentennial
- Events that promote recreation, especially when they encourage use of the NYS Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trails) – e.g., glamping, camping, races, bicycling and paddling tours, cross country skiing, rowing, birding, and fishing. Please consider four season recreational uses.
- Events that actively include or serve people of all ages and abilities.
- Events that draw a wide and diverse audience to the canal, including new users and people from underrepresented populations
- Events that promote performance-based art including theater and music
- Events that support the Canalway Challenge and 1st Mile Challenge
- Events that support overnight stays
- Events that highlight the canals as unique linear recreational assets

AWARD RANGE

\$500 to \$3,000

Funding will be advanced upon receipt of the signed agreement.

ELIGIBILITY

- Events must occur in 2025. Consideration will be given to events occurring in January and February of 2026.
- Funding is open to counties, municipalities, units of local government, not-for-profit organizations and federally recognized



Native American tribes located within the [National Heritage Corridor boundaries](#).

- Proposed events may include reasonable fees.

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

- Staff time
- Food and beverages
- Advertising expenses for the organization, though advertising expenses specific to your event or festival are allowed.
- Regular education programs, e.g., school programs and summer camps
- Applicants who are not in good standing for other projects funded by the NYS Canal Corporation or Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor are not eligible for funding.

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

1. **Permitting:** Awardees are responsible for identifying and obtaining the necessary required permits. Events taking place on New York State Canal Corporation (NYSCC) property require a permit. Anticipate a 4-week minimum time frame for the NYSCC permit process. Please plan accordingly to allow time for permit review and approval.
2. **Matching Funds:** The requested grant amount must be at least equally matched and be clearly demonstrated in the project budget. NYS Canal Corporation CFA grants cannot be used as match. Matching funds may include cash and in-kind services or donations, including volunteer hours, which must be recorded and sent with the final report. The current estimated value of volunteer time may be found [here](#).
3. **Recognition:** Sponsorship must be recognized on the event website and promotional materials. Guidelines supplied for use of logos must be followed. Recommended credit: ***This event is funded in part through the generous support of the New York State Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.***
4. **Final Report:** Awardees must submit a Financial Report (provided by Grantors) within 30 days of the end of the festival or event. Public attendance numbers, photos, and copies of event materials that document proper recognition must be included.



Tourism Infrastructure & Amenity Support

OVERVIEW

This program supports capital improvement projects and purchase of equipment that enhance recreational amenities and tourism, especially overnight stays, along the NYS Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trails).

PROGRAM CATEGORIES

1. Enhancements which include new or restoration of existing waterway and trail features; including trail construction, trail resurfacing, parking areas, access sites and crosswalks.
2. Construction and/or improvements to the condition of recreational and visitor amenities. Improvements may include the construction or restoration of pocket parks, boat launches, docks, storage facilities, rest stops, and other amenities (e.g., plazas, gardens, or amphitheaters, visitor centers and canal-related tourism sites). Universal design principles should be incorporated with special attention to ADA standards (resource linked on page 10).
3. Purchase, installation, and maintenance of equipment, machinery and materials designed to create or enhance visitor experiences such as grounds maintenance equipment, bike racks, potable water, restrooms, porta-johns, showers, benches, WIFI, and security upgrades.
4. Purchase and installation of wayfinding signage. Requests for wayfinding signage on NYS Canal Corporation property must follow Canal Corporation branding guidelines and receive written approval by the Grantor during the design stage.
5. Preservation, conservation, or enhancement of canal-specific historic, cultural or natural resources.
6. Enhancements that improve access and connection to the NYS Canal System. These improvements should feature universal design principles.
7. Contracted services including garbage removal, porta-johns, bike and paddle craft rental services, and maintenance crews.

Applicant may request up to 10 percent of the grant award amount for project management (unless staff salary is used to meet match



requirements). If requested, the 10 percent must be included in the project budget as part of the total grant request (not in addition to the grant request).

AWARD RANGE \$5,000 to \$24,000

ELIGIBILITY Applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Projects led by counties, municipalities, units of local government, not-for-profit organizations and federally recognized Native American tribes located within the National Heritage Corridor. Applications for infrastructure projects located on land owned by the New York State Canal Corporation are open only to federal/state/local governments, unless a not-for-profit applicant is currently named as a permittee on an existing Canal Corporation Use and Occupancy Permit.
- Applicants must be able to demonstrate project site control.
- Applicant must include a resolution or similar documentation demonstrating applicant governing body support for the project.
- The New York State Canal Corporation is subject to the [State Smart Growth Public Infrastructure Act](#) (Chapter 433 of the Laws of 2010) and must, to the extent possible, make funding decisions consistent with the provisions of that Act.
- **Ineligible applicants** include private individuals, for-profit businesses, not-for-profit organizations applying for projects on NYSCC owned land without a Use and Occupancy Permit, political or religious based organizations, and certain special purpose units of government, such as schools or fire districts.

INELIGIBLE USES OF FUNDS

Applicants cannot request funds for:

- Payments for previous activities and projects
- Continuation of projects funded in prior grant rounds
- Reduction of existing debt
- Indirect costs
- Purchase of real property
- Political or religious activities
- Additions to reserve funds or endowments



- General organizational marketing (including websites)
- Projects or programs that will re-grant the funds received
- Festivals or events (funded separately through the Event Support grants)

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Matching Funds:** The requested grant amount must be at least equally matched by the applicant, and clearly demonstrated in the project budget. Sources of Matching Funds may include:
 - **Cash Match:** Private or public sector grants (except NYSCC CFA grants), private contributions, or income from fees or services.
 - **In-Kind Match:** Donated goods and services to the proposed project including staff and volunteer time. Staff time may only be used as match if the applicant is not requesting staff time (up to 10% of grant request) as part of the grant award. If volunteer hours are used as a match, then the name of each volunteer, tasks performed, work hours and signature must be recorded on a separate document sent with the final report. The current estimated value of volunteer time may be found here: [Value of Volunteer Time — Independent Sector](#).
 - **Unacceptable matches** include operating costs of the site/organization, routine repair and maintenance costs, and staff and volunteer costs/time unrelated to the project.
- 2. Site Ownership or Control:** Applicant must clearly identify who owns and maintains the subject site and describe who is responsible for site control and long-term maintenance.
 - a. Applicants who do not have site ownership must submit (1) proof of site control (e.g. a lease) and (2) a letter of support from the property owner demonstrating support for the proposed project.
 - b. Those applying for projects on Canal Corporation property must reach out to Canal Corporation's Real Property Department to ensure the site is eligible for such a project. Correspondence should be submitted as part of the application. Regional Real Property Coordinator contact information is available here: <https://www.canals.ny.gov/Real-Property-and-Permits/Permits>
- 3. Historic Preservation Compliance:** Most projects will require a formal review by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) to determine compliance with historic preservation laws and regulations. Successful applicants will be advised of obligations to meet this requirement upon

award notice.

4. **Permits:** Work on NYS Canal Corporation land requires both a *Use and Occupancy Permit* AND a *Work Permit* specific to the requested activities. All permits, including other required federal, state, and municipal permits, must be secured prior to implementing grant funded activities, including those activities related to the match. All applicants should anticipate a minimum of 4 weeks for initial review of application by the NYSCC. Applicants must reach out to the NYS Canal Corporation's Real Property Department at (518) 449-6000 to ensure the site is eligible for the proposed project in advance of grant application. Regional Real Property Coordinator contact information is available here: <https://www.canals.ny.gov/Real-Property-and-Permits/Permits>
 - a. If your project includes any disturbance below the mean high-water mark, US Army Corps of Engineers and NYS Department of Environmental Conservation permit(s) will be required.
 - b. Project work that advances without obtaining all required permits may result in retraction of the grant award.
5. **Insurance:** Grantees, at their own expense, will provide and maintain insurance as follows:
 - a. Worker's compensation, and disability benefit insurance required under New York State Law.
 - b. Commercial general liability insurance including protective and contractual liability with a single combined limit of \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$1,000,000 aggregate for bodily injury, including death and property damage.

Grantees will furnish ECNHC with a certificate of insurance evidencing the coverage and providing thirty (30) days prior written notice in the event cancellation or material change in coverage. Additional insurance requirements for projects on Canal Corporation property will be addressed as part of the permitting process.
6. **Design Guidelines and Artwork Approval:** Applicants are required to follow NYS Canal Corporation and/or Empire State Trail and Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) design guidelines for wayfinding signs and trail amenities. The Grantor reserves the right to review and comment on any infrastructure or signage produced through the grant. Projects such as interpretive signs and murals must receive written approval on final designs by the Grantor during the design stage prior to final design and production. Designs not meeting stated design standards will not be reimbursed.



7. Recognition: Grant funding must be recognized in press releases, websites, and other promotional materials. Guidelines supplied for use of logos must be followed. Recommended credit:

This project is funded in part through the generous support of the NYS Canal Corporation and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor.

8. Interim and Final Reporting: Grantees must submit interim project updates every six months and a final report with actual expenses compared to original project budget and matching funds documentation using forms provided. Reports will include a summary of the project and results achieved, copies or examples of documents or other products produced, and photographs of the project.

CONSULTANT SERVICES

Support requested for consultant services (e.g., planning, engineering, architectural, graphic design or other professional services) shall summarize the contractor selection process and the contractor's qualifications. If a consultant is to be selected after a grant commitment, the Grantees must submit the proposed consultant's qualifications to the Grant Manager for review and approval, prior to finalizing grant funding. The use of NYS-certified minority and women-owned business enterprises and service-disabled veteran-owned businesses is strongly encouraged. For additional guidance, please contact the Grant Manager.

AWARD DISTRIBUTION

Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis at project conclusion, contingent upon receipt and approval of the Grantee's final report. Only fully documented (e.g., copies of checks, bank statements, contracts, etc.) and approved expenses will be reimbursed. Matching funds must also be fully documented. *Requests for advances will not be considered.*

Recipients will negotiate a reasonable project completion date with the Grant Manager based on current project status, overall complexity, and the types of permits required. Requests for contract extensions will be considered only if received in writing; the NYS Canal Corporation and Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor have sole discretion to approve any extension requests. Failure to begin project as originally proposed may result in cancellation of award.



Resources

GENERAL

[ECNHC Preservation and Management Plan](#)

TOURISM INFRASTRUCTURE & AMENITIES

NYSCC Wayfinding Signage Design Guide – Coming Soon

Guidelines for Canalway Trail wayfinding signage located on NYS Canal Corporation Land

[Empire State Trail Design Guidelines for Signage](#)

Guidelines for Canalway Trail wayfinding signage on property that is owned by any entity outside of the NYS Canal Corporation.

[Manual on Uniform Traffic Control Devices for Streets and Highways](#)

Guidelines for on-road wayfinding signage

[Universal Design Principles](#)

Guidelines to maximize access by everyone.

[Hand-Launch Facility Design Guide](#)

Best practices and guidelines for design, construction, and operation of paddle craft launches on the NYS Canalway Water Trail.

EVENTS

[Adaptive Cycling Along the Erie Canalway: TRAIID on the Trails](#)

Fitness Inclusion Network (Fit-IN)'s guide to adaptive cycling and planning an inclusive recreational event along the Canalway Trail

[Guide to Planning a Paddling Event](#)

[Rochester Accessible Adventures Inclusive Event Guide](#)

Rochester Accessible Adventures guide to planning an event through a lens of inclusion