

# NYS Canal System Tourism Infrastructure & Event Grants

## OVERVIEW

The New York State Canal Corporation (NYSCC), through the Reimagine the Canals initiative, and the Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor (ECNHC) offer competitive grant funding to support tourism and recreation along the New York State Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trail). 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 5-8

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
- celebrate the history, heritage, or culture of the canals
- make recreational and tourism assets more accessible for all ages and abilities and expand audiences served
- improve and/or promote connectivity between recreation areas and communities or between waterways and land trails

## APPLICATION PROCESS

Applicants may apply by completing an online application at:

[www.eriecanalway.org/resources/grants/](http://www.eriecanalway.org/resources/grants/)

## TIMELINE

Application Opens: January 9, 2023  
Applications Due: February 24, 2023  
Awards Announced: April 2023

**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 status by letter; and all successful applicants will be posted online at [www.eriecanalway.org](http://www.eriecanalway.org) and [www.canals.ny.gov](http://www.canals.ny.gov), 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 awarded to applicants.

**CONTACTS**

Those applying for Tourism Infrastructure & Amenity Support and/or first-time Event Support applicants are strongly encouraged to discuss their project with the appropriate Grant Manager, below, prior to submission:

**Tourism Infrastructure & Amenity Support**

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Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor  
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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 including the canals' bicentennial period (1817-1825)
- Events that promote recreation, especially when they encourage use of the NYS Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trail), Empire State Trail, or participation in On the Canals, Canalway Challenge, glamping, camping, races, bicycling and paddling tours, rowing or in connection with *Reimagine the Canals* projects: this includes four season recreational uses
- Events that promote performance-based art on the canals including theater and music
- Events that actively include or serve people with disabilities or people from underserved populations

Events must meet New York State COVID-19 guidelines. In addition, applicants may be asked for a contingency plan or alternative project if the original event cannot be held as planned. <https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/>

### AWARD RANGE

\$500 to \$3,000

### ELIGIBILITY

- Events must occur in 2023.
- 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 allowable for any media
- Regular education programs, e.g., school programs and summer camps
- Applicants who are not in good standing for other projects funded by the New York State Canal Corporation or Erie Canalway National Heritage Corridor

## FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

- 1. Matching Funds:** The requested grant amount must be at least equally matched by the applicant, clearly demonstrated in the project budget. Federal and state dollars may not be used as a match. Matching funds may include cash and in-kind donations, including volunteer hours.  
  
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 matching funds form. The current estimated value of volunteer time may be found here: [Value of Volunteer Time — Independent Sector](#).
- 2. 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.***
- 3. Final Report:** Awardees must submit a Matching Funds Form (provided by Grantors) within 30 days of the festival or event. Public attendance numbers, photos, and copies of event materials (e.g., brochure, flyer, poster, etc.) that document proper recognition must be included.

## AWARD DISTRIBUTION

Funding for Event Support will be advanced upon receipt of signed contract.

# Tourism Infrastructure & Amenity Support

## OVERVIEW

Program supports capital improvement projects and acquisition of equipment and amenities that enhance tourism, especially overnight stays, and recreational assets along the NYS Canal System (Canal waterways and Canalway Trail).

## USES OF FUNDS

1. Construction or improvement of recreational assets including trails, parking areas, accessible boat launches, docks, storage facilities, rest stops, and aesthetic features such as public art, plazas, gardens or amphitheaters.
2. Purchase and installation 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, wayfinding signage (following New York State Guidelines), WIFI, and security upgrades.
3. Repair and restoration of existing waterway and trail features or amenities.
4. Preservation, rehabilitation, or enhancement of canal-specific historic, cultural or natural resources.
5. Enhancements or equipment to improve access to the NYS Canal System, visitor centers, or canal-related tourism sites.
6. Contracted services including garbage removal, porta-johns, bike and kayak 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 to be eligible:

- 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](#).
- Applicant must include a resolution or other clear and strong documentation demonstrating organizational, municipal or tribal leadership 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, 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 of an organization
- General organizational marketing (including development of websites)
- Projects or programs that will re-grant the funds received
- Festivals or events (these are 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, clearly demonstrated in the project budget. Sources of Matching Funds may include:

- **Cash Match:** Cash donations, including foundation or local government grants, corporate contributions, or income from products or services. Federal and state funding may not be used as match.
  - **In-Kind Match:** Donated goods and services to the proposed project including volunteer and staff time. Staff time may only be used as in-kind 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 match** includes operating costs of the site/organization, routine repair and maintenance costs, and staff and volunteer costs/time unrelated to the project.
2. **Permits:** The applicant is responsible for obtaining all required permits and approvals from federal, state, and local agencies, including, but not limited to, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, and NYS State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, and any others that may be required by the NYS Canal Corporation or Erie Canalway.
  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. **Design Guidelines and Artwork Approval:** Applicants are required to follow NYS Canal Corporation and Empire State Trail 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.
  5. **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.***

- 6. Interim and Final Reporting:** Grantees must submit a six-month interim project update and a final report with expense 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 (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 applicant 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 have up to two (2) years to complete their projects, if necessary.** The grant period begins at the date of award notification. 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 within six months of grant agreement may result in cancellation of award.