

**Tonawanda Community Environmental Benefits Fund
Request for Proposals
February 1, 2021**

The Tonawanda Community Environmental Benefits Program (Tonawanda Community EBP) is an environmental grant program established from \$1 million in funding obtained as part of a consent decree between the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, the New York Office of the Attorney General (collectively referred to as the State) and the Tonawanda Coke Corporation (TCC) regarding various environmental violations at TCC's former facility in Tonawanda, New York.

The primary purpose of the Tonawanda Community EBP is to fund environmental benefit projects designed to secure environmental or public health protection and improvements for the Tonawanda community. The State is committed to a transparent and objective process, and fully engaging and partnering with the Tonawanda community in implementing the Tonawanda Community EBP.

The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo was selected by the State through a competitive process to serve as the TCEBP's General Administrator (GA). The GA is responsible for managing the day-to-day operations of the Tonawanda Community EBP on behalf of the State.

The State established the Tonawanda Community Advisory Panel (CAP), which consists of Tonawanda residents, representatives of local organizations, and elected officials to provide direct, ongoing input to the State on the Tonawanda Community EBP. The CAP plays a central role in guiding the Fund's development and implementation, including providing guidance on the process for soliciting, evaluating, and selecting projects to receive grant funding. The Tonawanda CAP participated in the development of this RFP and is leading the effort to engage the public in a meaningful process to prioritize projects for support.

Due to the State's fiduciary obligation under the consent decree, the State has the final approval authority for the selection of project(s) to receive grant funds.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY AND MATCH

Tier 1:

Grants ranging in value from \$5,000 to \$25,000 will be available for small to medium scale projects. Examples of Tier 1 grant projects include (but are not limited to): air or water quality monitoring; installing a rain garden at a park; installing rain barrels; creating environmental education opportunities; development of new community gardens; expanding tree boxes on a block; planting trees and/or native plant gardens at a school; holding a trash clean up event; conducting a reusable bag giveaway; and conducting an energy audit or an indoor air quality audit at public facilities.

Match: *Applicants are **not required** to provide a matching contribution but will be awarded bonus points on their evaluation if a cash match is secured.*

Tier 2:

Grants ranging in value from \$25,001 to \$250,000 will be available for projects that have a more significant scale and scope than Tier 1 Grants. These projects typically will involve multiple sites and/or projects at a single site that integrate multiple environmental benefits. Examples of Tier 2 grant projects include (but are not limited to): green street projects; reducing energy use in public buildings through energy efficiency improvements; greening public facilities inside and out; implementing a community-wide litter reduction effort; facilitating community-wide investment in renewable energy or energy efficiency; large-scale site or neighborhood-wide planning; design or engineering related to the development and implementation of environmental projects; reducing releases of pollutants and minimizing public exposure to them; neighborhood-wide education and environmental stewardship programs with broad-based citizen participation; and improving open spaces.

Match: *Applicants for grants \$100,000 or greater are **required** to provide a cash match and will be evaluated on a sliding scale (max 10%) in regard to the size of the match. Applicants for grants less than \$100,000 are **not required** to provide a matching contribution but will be awarded bonus points on their evaluation if a cash match is secured.*

PROGRAM PRIORITIES

The following list of project types broadly reflect environmental improvement priorities for the Tonawanda community:

- **Parks and Open Space.** The creation and/or enhancement of parks and public spaces, including playgrounds and sports fields, as well as undeveloped areas. The purpose of such projects may be to reduce air and water pollution impacts in Tonawanda, while also providing recreational opportunities and enhancing community quality-of-life.
Example projects might include: design and development of new park space; resurfacing basketball and tennis courts with pervious pavement; installing solar powered lighting; planting native trees and shrubs; holding park cleanups and installing dog waste stations; and providing or improving public access to public natural areas.
- **Environmental Education and Stewardship.** The fostering of careful and responsible management of Tonawanda's environment and the promotion of broad public environmental awareness.
Example projects might include: increasing public understanding and appreciation of natural resources and the environment; engaging students and citizens in monitoring air and/or water quality and communicating data to the community; launching behavior change campaigns to tackle issues such as pet waste, car idling, littering, clean and healthy water; developing outreach, training and incentive programs to help residents and businesses implement environmental benefit projects; providing "green jobs" training and work experience opportunities.
- **Green Streets and Other Community Green Infrastructure.** The installation of a selection of environmental benefit projects along neighborhood streets to slow, filter, and

cleanse stormwater runoff, improve water and air quality, reduce energy consumption, reduce elevated urban temperatures, and improve neighborhood aesthetics.

Example projects might include: installing rain gardens; replacing impervious surfaces with pervious concrete or other permeable materials; expanding tree boxes and planting street trees; creating native plant gardens and community gardens in open space; installing green roofs; implementing campaigns to reduce litter; and installing solar-powered trash receptacles. Project proposals could include some combination of these or other practices that increase the environmental benefits of neighborhood streets in the community.

- **Waterfront Restoration and Infrastructure.** The creation of public access to the waterfront and efforts to restore its natural functions.
Example projects might include: stabilizing river and stream banks and reconnecting natural floodplains; restoring wetlands; planting shade trees and native plants for cooling and to serve as natural buffers; installing rain gardens, pervious pavers, and other bio-retention practices to better filter water; and enhancing the usability of the waterfront through green projects.
- **Greening Community Buildings, Facilities and Related Infrastructure.** The reduction of the environmental impacts, both inside and out, of schools, libraries, community centers, the firehouse, and other community buildings.
Example projects on these sites might include: conducting indoor air quality audits and energy audits; painting “cool white roofs;” installing high efficiency lighting, solar electricity generation, or cisterns to capture and reuse rainwater; creating rain gardens; installing green roofs; planting shade trees; and planting native plant and pollinator gardens to provide habitat for pollinators and native wildlife.

GENERAL GUIDANCE FOR APPLICANTS

- Projects must be located in the Tonawanda community and benefit the public in that community. For purposes of the program, the Tonawanda community includes the Town of Tonawanda, City of Tonawanda, North Tonawanda, Village of Kenmore, southern portions of the Town of Grand Island and a portion of the City of Buffalo, including Riverside, encompassed by the U.S Postal Service zip codes of 14207, 14216, 14150, 14217, 14223, 14120, and 14072.
- There must be a discernable environmental benefit from the implementation of the project. For purposes of the Tonawanda Community EBP, an environmental benefit is an enhancement or protection of an environmental media (i.e. air, water, land) that improves the health, safety, welfare, or overall economic and social well-being of the Tonawanda community.
- The following project types are ineligible to receive funding from the TCEBP: research, capital campaigns, creation of endowments, event sponsorships, and projects for regrating purposes.

- TCEBP funding cannot be used for political advocacy, lobbying, boycotts, litigation expenses, terrorist activities, or activities conducted in violation of the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.
- All projects must begin implementation within one month of grant award and be completed within two years.
- Projects must also be consistent with the consent decree for the Tonawanda Coke Corporation¹ and the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Environmental Benefits Policy.² In addition to the above, a project:
 - Cannot be a project that an entity is otherwise legally required to be performed under law, regulation, permit or other legal instrument;
 - Cannot cover or reimburse costs the State would incur during the normal course of business, including payments for State staff, except that the DEC Commissioner or DEC General Counsel may authorize an Environmental Benefit Project (EBP) that includes the reimbursement of extraordinary expenses incurred by the DEC in the implementation or oversight of a specific EBP;
 - Cannot generate revenue for the State;
 - Cannot involve remedial or similar work at the former TCC facility;
 - Cannot be proposed or implemented by an entity affiliated with TCC;
 - Cannot benefit TCC in any manner; and
 - Must comply with all applicable federal, state and/or local laws and should be consistent with all applicable State and local policies.

ELIGIBILITY

- Eligible applicants include non-profit 501(c) organizations, local governments, and academic and educational institutions. Individuals and for-profit businesses are not eligible applicants. Groups without 501(c) non-profit status may partner with an eligible applicant, including a fiscal agent. Fiscal agents are non-profit organizations that enable the movement of resources from funders to organizations that share the fiscal agent's mission. The fiscal agent handles donations and assumes fiduciary responsibility for the grant.
- The application must be completed in the name of the applicant organization or, in the case where an application is to be submitted by a fiscal agent, the name of the fiscal agent. The application must be fully and properly executed by an authorized official of the applicant or where a fiscal agent is being used the authorized representative of that agent.
- All certifications, filings, and other federal, state, and local requirements associated with the applicant's 501(c) status must be current at the time an application is submitted.
- Applicants must be fully current in the New York State Office of the Attorney General Charities Bureau registration and reporting requirements.

¹ Consent Decree in the matter of the United States of America and State of New York v. Tonawanda Coke Corporation, No. 15-CV-00420 (WMS) (W.D.N.Y), October 27, 2015.

² New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Policy 37 / Environmental Benefit Projects Policy.

- Projects led by organizations and agencies that are not based in the designated Tonawanda community must demonstrate that the impact of the project will benefit the community of Tonawanda.

PROPOSAL SCREENING, EVALUATION & DECISIONMAKING PROCESS

The GA will screen all grant proposals to ensure they meet minimum standards (i.e. they are complete and meet the Grant Guidelines) and are feasible in terms of methods, budget, and timeline. Proposals will then be reviewed by an Independent Review Committee (IRC) comprised of neutral persons with no relationship to any of the proposals under consideration. IRC scores and associated review comments will be used by the State to guide its selection of projects to participate in the Tonawanda Community Preferencing Event. That process will ensure that residents in the Tonawanda community have a direct role in guiding the selection of those projects that will be implemented in the community. Following the IRC review process and the State’s selection of projects to participate in community preferencing, residents will have an opportunity to express their preferences for proposals that should be considered for funding. The results of the preferencing will guide the State in its decision-making process for selecting grant recipients.

HOW TO APPLY

Proposals must be submitted electronically through the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo’s online application system. To make a submission, [click here](#). Follow the instructions on the Grant Portal page to complete your application.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

All proposals will be evaluated and scored based on the extent to which they meet the criteria listed below. The scoring criteria (and approximate associated weighting) are:

Environmental Results—30%

- The project will create and/or implement one or more discernible environmental benefit(s) for the Tonawanda community.
- The project will result in significant, quantifiable, and public environmental benefits, with highest scores to be awarded to those projects that will provide the most significant and quantifiable environmental benefits to the greatest number of residents in the affected Tonawanda community area. Applicants will be expected to achieve environmental benefits at a scale appropriate to the size of their request.
- An appropriate community-based partnership exists to implement and sustain the project, and the project has significant community support.
- The implementation of the project will not create any public safety concerns.
- The project will enhance environmental sustainability and improve the community for the future.

Sustainability—25%

- The work plan demonstrates the ability of the activities, objectives, and environmental benefits to carry on beyond the project’s completion date. Tier 1 applicants seeking

funding for a one-time or discrete project (e.g., workshops, cleanups) are not required to demonstrate that the project's activities, objectives, and environmental benefits carry on beyond the project's completion date.

- Community members and/or community-based organizations will be significantly engaged as project partners in implementing and ensuring the project benefits continue after the life of the grant.
- If the project is designed to continue after the life cycle of the grant, the applicant has a maintenance plan in place.

Feasibility/Capacity—20%

- The work plan is clear and logical and will accomplish the activities, objectives, and results described in the proposal.
- The project team has the appropriate expertise, training, and experience to execute the project and achieve its goals.
- The work plan demonstrates that the activities, objectives, and results can be accomplished within the program's two-year timeframe.
- The applicant has the institutional capacity, policies, and procedures necessary to track and administer the funds requested.
- The applicant will collaborate with other community groups (as applicable) for the success of the project especially if collaboration increases the applicant's capacity to implement the project.

Cost/Budget—20%

- The budget is cost-effective and reasonable.
- The proposed expenditures are directly related to the objectives and activities of the project.
- The proposal includes a detailed explanation for each budget line.
- The budget is sufficient to accomplish the activities described in the work plan.

Diversity/Inclusion—5%

- The project is located in a place publicly accessible to the community.
- The project accommodates people of varying physical abilities.
- The project demonstrates a commitment to demographic diversity and inclusion, including age, race, and income.

*Applicants seeking a grant less than \$100,000 are **not required** to provide a matching contribution but will be awarded bonus points on their evaluation if a cash match is secured. If Grant Request is \$100,000 or greater, a match is **required** and will be scored at an additional 10%*

- The applicant will be scored on a sliding scale depending on the size of the match in proportion to the cost of the total project.

INFORMATION SESSION

We strongly encourage all prospective applicants to attend one or more Tonawanda Community EBP Information Sessions. These online webinars will provide a broad overview of the grant

program and tips for using the online application system. Applicants planning to participate in a workshop or webinar must register in advance.

IMPORTANT DATES

- ⇒ TCEBP Grant Information Sessions— February 10 and 16, 2021
- ⇒ All Proposals Due – March 26, 2021 4:00pm
- ⇒ Announcement of Proposals Advancing to Preferencing Event—By June 1, 2021
- ⇒ Community Preferencing—September 2021
- ⇒ Announcement of Grant Funding –By November 2021

GENERAL QUESTIONS?

Contact Allie Urbanski at allieu@cfgb.org or 716-852-2857 ext. 223