



Small Grant Program

2026 Application Guidance



Program Goal and Objective

The Great Lakes Fishery Trust (GLFT) supports a wide range of projects in its various grant programs. The Small Grants program features a more streamlined application process for projects aligned with GLFT priorities but smaller in scope. The program will accept applications and have two review cycles in 2026. Up to \$127,500 will be disbursed; individual requests must not exceed \$20,000.

The GLFT will consider smaller grant requests that align with our [Small Grants Policy](#). As described in the policy, projects must demonstrate a direct contribution to one or more of the GLFT's program areas as defined by the respective policy documents or most recent grant program requests for proposals:

- [Access to the Great Lakes Fishery](#)
- [Ecological and Biological Research](#)
- [Habitat Protection and Restoration](#)
- [Human Dimensions Research and Engagement](#)
- [Great Lakes Stewardship](#)

Additionally, GLFT will accept proposals for funding symposia, workshops, and conferences that align with these program areas.

Applicant Eligibility

Organizations eligible to apply for GLFT grants include nonprofit organizations with a 501(c)(3) designation from the Internal Revenue Service (or nongovernmental organizations holding charitable status in their country), as well as educational and governmental (including tribal) organizations.

Submission and Award Dates

Applications for funding in 2026 will be accepted in alignment with the following schedule.

Funding Cycle	Submission Deadline	Notification Date (at latest)
1	October 9	November 27

Applicants are encouraged to review the Small Grants Program guidance and GLFT program information available on the GLFT website before beginning an application.

To apply:

- 1) Visit the Small Grants page at www.glft.org.
- 2) Select “Browse Our Active Grant Opportunities.”
- 3) Choose the Small Grants Program application.
- 4) Create an account or log in to an existing account.
- 5) Complete and submit the online application by the applicable deadline.

Applicants may save their work and return to complete the application at a later time. Once submitted, applications cannot be edited. If you need assistance with the application process or experience technical difficulties, please contact GLFT staff.

Applicants are encouraged to begin the application process well in advance of the submission deadline.

Application Requirements

Please complete the following information through the online application system:

Applicant Information and History

Provide the following information about the applicant organization:

- Organization name and address

- Organization type (nonprofit, educational institution, governmental entity, or tribal organization)
- Project manager name, title, phone number, and email address
- Authorized representative who will sign the grant agreement, if awarded
- History of previous GLFT applications and awards, if applicable

Project Snapshot

Provide basic information about the proposed project, event, or activity, including:

- Project title
- Amount requested from the GLFT (not to exceed \$20,000)
- Total project budget
- Project start and end dates
- Geographic focus area
- Primary and secondary GLFT program area(s)
- Other funding sources, including secured and pending funds (if applicable)

Project Summary

Describe the project goals using plain language suitable for a general audience. (Limit your response to 75 words.)

1. Alignment with GLFT Priorities (250 words)

The GLFT supports projects that enhance, protect, and rehabilitate Great Lakes fishery resources. Applicants should identify the primary GLFT program area(s) their proposal addresses and explain how the project, event, or activity contributes to those goals.

GLFT program areas are listed below.

- Access to the Great Lakes Fishery
- Ecological and Biological Research
- Habitat Protection and Restoration
- Human Dimensions Research and Engagement
- Great Lakes Stewardship

How does this project, event, or activity support the GLFT's mission and the goals of one or more program areas? Additional information about the GLFT's programs and priorities is available at <https://www.glft.org/apply/>.

2. Activities and Approach (300 words)

Describe the key activities, event components, or methods that will be used to achieve the project's objectives. Why is this approach likely to succeed? Technical and scientific aspects of the project should be described in this section.

3. Partnerships and Audience (200 words)

Who are the intended participants, audiences, or beneficiaries of this project, and what partners or collaborators will be involved? What sort of feedback have you received from these stakeholders at this point?

4. Outcomes and Evaluation (250 words)

What outcomes do you expect, and how will you assess whether the project, event, or activity was successful?

5. Organizational Capacity (150 words)

Why is your organization well-positioned to complete this project?

Project Budget

Budget

Submit a budget for the total project period. Please use the Detailed Budget Worksheet on the Proposal Resources page at www.glft.org. Some of the expense categories are irrelevant for the Small Grants program and can be ignored.

You may add or remove expense subcategories and lines, but the main expense categories may not be changed. **Note:** According to the GLFT Overhead Policy for all projects, administrative/overhead costs are limited to 10 percent of the total salaries and wages. Definitions on the budget categories can be found under Budget Forms and Definitions on the Proposal Resources page at www.glft.org.

Budget Narrative

Provide a brief budget narrative (250 words maximum) describing how costs were estimated and explaining the intended use of GLFT funds. If applicable, identify matching funds or in-kind contributions and indicate whether those resources are secured, pending, or anticipated.

Project Timeline

Please articulate a timeline for the project that addresses the following:

1. Major Activity or Milestone
2. Estimated Timeline
3. Expected Deliverable or Outcome

Questions

Prospective applicants are encouraged to contact GLFT staff prior to submission of a grant proposal to discuss project goals and alignment with GLFT priorities. Staff are also available to assist applicants in navigating the online grant proposal submission process. For questions about your proposed project, eligibility, or the application process, please contact Meagan O'Brien at 517-371-7468 or mobrien@glft.org.