



Estuary Management Plan (EMP) Small Grants Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: BULLETIN

Round 3 RFP

Summary of Changes

Updated: April 20, 2026

Purpose: This page provides a summary of all major changes to the Round 2 RFP released in January 2026 that are included in this Round 3 RFP released in April 2026.

All major changes can be found in blue text in the body of the Round 3 RFP.

Change	Description	Location in RFP
Slightly Longer Review Period	The Review period for Round 3 will be slightly longer to allow for reviewers to make best decisions for a lower funding ceiling for this round. This slightly impacts project lengths or timeframes.	Section 2 (Page 3)
<u>New Application Requirements:</u> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Pre-Application Meeting</i> <input type="checkbox"/> <i>Budget Narrative</i>	A meeting with SHEA will be required before submitting your application to help develop your application (Book your meeting). Additionally, a budget narrative justifying your funding request by line item will be required for additional context (See Template here).	Section 9 (Page 9)
Reduced Project Budgets (\$5k-\$15k)	There will also be a slight reduction in the overall budgets for this round to accommodate the lower budget ceiling in this cycle.	Section 1 (Page 2)

If you have any questions about these changes after reviewing this RFP, please reach out to HSE Collaborative Coordinator, Colette Tweeddale, at ctweeddale@shea4nh.org.



Estuary Management Plan (EMP) Small Grants Program

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Round 3

Updated: April 2026

1. Overview

Purpose & Goals

The [Seabrook-Hamptons Estuary Alliance \(SHEA\)](#) invites applicants to submit proposals for projects that advance the goals and actions identified in the [Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Management Plan \(EMP\) Action Plan](#). This [EMP Small Grants Program](#) was established with Congressionally-designated funds in 2024, with budget oversight from NOAA's Office of Coastal Management, and is being administered by SHEA. This program aims to provide guidance, support, and funding to the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary (HSE) watershed communities (For full list see: [Appendix: Figure A1](#)) and other local and regional partners to investigate, scope, and implement planning and outreach efforts that address emerging issues or challenges related to maintaining and improving the health of the HSE.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include any entity that conducts work and serves the HSE watershed communities (*see list on [Page 4](#) for more information*), including, but not limited to: municipalities, government agencies, nonprofits, academic institutions, amongst others, that conduct work and serve the HSE watershed with a focus on applicants already serving the communities surrounding the HSE (Hampton, Seabrook, Hampton Falls) and its watershed (Exeter, Kensington, North Hampton, and Stratham).

Budget & Timeline

Project budgets should generally be between **\$5,000- \$15,000** and do not require any external or matched funds to be considered for EMP grant funding. A total of \$93,000 total in awards has been allocated to the program to be distributed across all rounds. **The application deadline for the third round of funding is June 26, 2026 by 4pm via email (ctweeddale@shea4nh.org).**

Contact Information:

For any questions or to discuss potential projects, please contact:

Colette Tweeddale, HSE Collaborative Coordinator, ctweeddale@shea4nh.org

2. Important Dates & Deadlines

Important Deadlines- Round 3 Funding

April 20, 2026	Round 3 RFP & Application released & applicants prepare project proposals
May 11, 2026	SHEA hosts informational grant webinar & provides applicant support. (Register here)
June 26, 2026	Submission deadline: Email to ctweeddale@shea4nh.org by 4pm
Jun. 26 – Jul. 22 2026	Proposal review and selection
July 23, 2026	Notification of Funding Decisions
Jul. 31 - Sept. 14	NOAA Budget Review Period
Sept. 23, 2026	Contracts Executed and Project Kick-off
January 1, 2028	All Projects Completed

Important Deadlines- All Funding Rounds*

Deadline	Round 1	Round 2	Round 3	Round 4
Applications Open	August 30, 2025	January 12, 2026	April 20, 2026	July 15, 2026
Applications Due	October 15, 2025	March 2, 2026	June 26, 2026	September 16, 2026
Notification of Selected Proposals	October 29, 2025	March 17, 2026	July 23, 2026	October 1, 2026
Notification of NOAA-approved proposals ¹	~December 15, 2025	~ May 5, 2026	~September 14, 2026	~December 11, 2026
Contracts signed and Projects Begin	January 1, 2026	May 15, 2026	September 23, 2026	January 1, 2027
Maximum Project Length	24 Months	20 Months	15 Months	12 Months
All projects must conclude	January 2028	January 2028	January 2028	January 2028

¹ NOAA's review process is estimated to take 6-8 weeks

***Please Note:** Dates and available funds subject to change in subsequent funding rounds after first.

3. Eligible Applicants

Because the purpose of the grant is to fund projects that will advance the goals of the EMP, **any organization that works within and/or serves communities within the HSE watershed is eligible**. Please see the list below for anticipated eligible applicants. We especially encourage municipalities and regional planning commissions to apply. If you are unsure if your organization may be eligible to submit a proposal, please reach out to Colette Tweeddale at ctweeddale@shea4nh.org.

Eligible Applicants Include:

- Municipalities that are within the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Watershed (*See table below and Figure A1. in Appendix*).
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations
- Regional Planning Commissions
- Academic institutions
- County Conservation Districts
- UNH Cooperative Extension
- Watershed groups and/or organizations partnering with an eligible municipality
- *Any other Organizations, State Departments, or Institutions that conduct work within the HSE Watershed communities.*

Eligible Towns within the Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Watershed

State	Eligible Watershed Towns						
New Hampshire	Seabrook	Hampton	Hampton Falls	Kensington	Exeter	Stratham	North Hampton
Massachusetts	Salisbury						

4. Project Duration

This program funds projects that are 12 to 24 months in duration. Projects selected for the third round of funding are expected to begin by September 23, 2026 and will conclude no later than January 1, 2028. All funded projects across all rounds must be completed by January 2028. Therefore, proposals considered for each subsequent round after the first will have a shorter maximum project duration (*see graphic below*). Organizations can propose projects and receive funding in multiple rounds but will compete equally against other proposals in each round.

Maximum Project Duration: All Funding Rounds



5. Eligible Projects

Projects that advance the goals and/or specific actions identified in the EMP are eligible.

Project Eligibility Requirements

Projects must meet the following requirements to be considered eligible for funding:

1. Advance one or more of the five goals of the Estuary Management Plan.¹ (see table below).
2. Require no demolition, construction, or ground disturbance of any kind.²
3. Contain an outreach component: either as a central component throughout the project **OR** as a final component to communicate project results to community members **AND** has 20% of the total project budget dedicated to implementation of outreach.

¹Additional Consideration will be given to proposals advancing priority EMP Actions (See Section 6).

²Because of the terms of the congressional funding that was designated to establish this grant program, no activities that break-ground in any manner can be a part of funded projects.

Estuary Management Plan Goals & Objectives

Developed based on community and stakeholder values and vision for the Estuary, the EMP outlines five major goals, corresponding objectives, and a series of actions that collectively will help to support and strengthen the health and vitality of the estuary and its surrounding communities. **For a detailed breakdown of EMP goals and objectives, please refer to pages 62- 64 of the EMP.** Project proposals should target the identified **actions** associated with the EMP objectives, which are identified in Appendix B of the EMP (pages 109-128). Actions that are identified as being implemented in project proposals will serve as the benchmarks of success of the project and should be chosen deliberately as so. Applicants who are developing project ideas are encouraged to consult SHEA's high priority actions ([listed here](#)). The five EMP goals and examples of potential projects can be found below.

EMP Goals & Potential Projects

Projects that implement priority actions will continue to receive additional consideration in round 3.

(See note in [Section 6](#) & [here](#) for full list of priority actions.)

EMP Goal	Description	EMP Project Examples
Goal 1.	A thriving, healthy estuarine environment with an abundant diversity of fish, birds, plants, and other native species is achieved and maintained.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Item 1.1-17: “Review and improve the environmental sustainability of harbor operations related to the handling of hazardous waste, marine debris, and human wastewater. Develop and implement a marine debris reduction plan for the estuary and harbor.” <i>(EMP, pg. 111)</i> ● Action Item 1.1-18: “Reduce pet waste entering tributaries and the estuary through town ordinance and education.” <i>(EMP, pg. 111)</i> ● Action Item 1.2-2: “Prioritize saltmarsh restoration and/or natural upland protection..., Utilize SMARTeams to facilitate the development of conceptual salt marsh restoration designs” <i>(EMP, pg. 111)</i>
Goal 2.	Flood storage and mitigation benefits are protected and enhanced for ecosystem resiliency and sustainable infrastructure protection.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Item 2.4-2: “Continue dune management in Seabrook and Hampton to identify vulnerable dune areas and best options for protecting and enhancing dunes.” <i>(EMP, pg. 114)</i> ● Action Item 2.5-1: “Incorporate high-priority tidal crossings into town planning documents to target funding for eventual replacement. Work with partners to advance moderate and high priority tidal crossings through feasibility, engineering, permitting, and construction.” <i>(EMP, pg. 114)</i>
Goal 3.	Recreational and commercial opportunities are well-managed and sustainable, with equitable, safe, and	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Item 3.1-3: “Develop a shellfish management plan that details use of BMPs for restoring and maintaining sustainable shellfish populations for aquaculture, recreational, and commercial harvesting in HSE <i>(EMP, pg. 114)</i> ● Action Item 3.1-2: “Continue to document the water quality impacts of rainfall events in the 1 to 1.5 inch range, as well as larger storms, to maintain updated information for the evaluation of the 1- inch rainfall closure threshold for Hampton Harbor.” <i>(EMP, pg. 114)</i> ● Action Item 3.2-2: Minimize residential dumping in the saltmarsh through public

EMP Goal	Description	EMP Project Examples
	enjoyable access to the public.	outreach and programs including enhanced leaf and yard waste collection, spring clean-up, and hazardous waste collection. <i>(EMP, pg. 114)</i>
Goal 4.	Education, outreach, and volunteer activities link the community with the estuary. The community is well-informed and active in protecting the estuary and its watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Item 4.1-2: “Continue and enhance public outreach efforts to engage and inform community members of flood hazards, vulnerability, and opportunities to increase resiliency and to solicit input from residents.” <i>(EMP, 115)</i> ● Action Item 4.1-4: “Engage with residents living along or adjacent to the salt marsh to see the salt marsh as an ecosystem service for storm surge protection.” <i>(EMP, pg. 115)</i> ● Action Item 4.4-1: “Develop a public outreach and awareness program aimed at residents to promote stewardship on private property.” <i>(EMP, pg. 116)</i> ● Action Item 4.1-3: “Provide information to property owners about living shorelines and the importance of retaining the functions of natural shorelines, and implementing landscaping best practices.” <i>(EMP, pg. 115)</i> ● Action Item 4.4-2: “Publicize success stories of coastal resiliency projects to inspire other property owners to do the same. Examples can be from elevated homes, floodproofed buildings, property buyouts, etc. Property owners can receive technical assistance for coastal resiliency projects through the NH Coastal Landowner Technical Assistance Program (LTAP).” <i>(EMP, pg. 116)</i>
Goal 5.	Planning and management efforts utilize sound science and are coordinated and implemented to protect vital ecosystem services, adapt to the effects of climate change, and ultimately ensure the health, safety, and well-being of the people who live in and visit the watershed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Action Item 5.1-11: “Investigate opportunities to improve applicant, local board awareness of flood vulnerability by restructuring the project review process. Consider the merits of requiring Project Review Committee meeting before ZBA hearing.” <i>(EMP, pg. 117)</i> ● Action Item 5.1-19: “Form a subcommittee to work on development of a new coastal hazard overlay district that has higher regulatory standards for areas of the community at risk to flooding and sea level rise.” <i>(EMP, pg. 118)</i> ● Action Item 5.2-1: “Maintain or commence stewardship of fee-owned conservation lands, including documenting and mapping the property's natural resource values and features, determining management goals through a management plan, secure funding or other resources for stewards, and institute a long-term monitoring program.” <i>(EMP, pg. 122)</i>

6. Evaluation Criteria

Project proposals will be evaluated by a review committee that will use the following major criteria to score and select which projects are funded for each round:

- 1. EMP Goal Alignment¹:** How well do project objectives and proposed activities align with the goals and actions identified in the EMP? *Please note: that the depth and completeness with which a goal or action item is addressed is more important than partially addressing multiple goals or actions items.*
- 2. Organizational Capacity & Need:** How well has the organization demonstrated that they have the technical and administrative capacity (as an organization and/or project team) to conduct project activities? To what extent does the timing, scope, and funding of the project dictate increased need or urgency for project activities to be undertaken?
- 3. Community Involvement:** To what degree is the organization already connected with the community that it intends to work with, and/or to what extent was that community involved in developing the proposed project? How will the community benefit from project activities?
- 4. Budget:** Is the budget reasonable to accomplish all project goals and activities within the proposed timeline and does it include funds for outreach?
- 5. Technical Assessment:** Are the proposed methods suited to meet project goals and have reasonable justification for their use in this project, community, and landscape?
- 6. Outreach:** Does the project identify interested parties to participate in project activities and discussion of a plan to engage these audiences with outreach?

¹Continued Additional Considerations for Round 3 Applications:

Although the 6 criteria mentioned above represent the core factors that reviewers will use to evaluate applications, review of applications in Round 3 will continue to provide additional consideration to projects that implement priority EMP actions as identified by SHEA in [this table](#). This consideration will be used as a holistic tool for reviewers to ensure project work is representative of the both the diversity in scope and hierarchy of need of action items identified in the EMP. Further, projects that are able to fully implement an action or propose a creative interdisciplinary solution or new action will also receive additional consideration in the review process in fulfillment of the goals of the grant program.

7. Contact Information

Please contact **Colette Tweeddale, HSE Collaborative Coordinator, at ctweeddale@shea4nh.org** with questions and to [schedule a meeting](#) for help developing or discussing your proposed project.

Colette will be available for virtual office hours on demand to answer individual questions and to discuss and advise in project development. Office hours are available by appointment starting on

April 20th. **Schedule time with Colette to discuss your project via [this link](#) or reach out via email (ctweeddale@shea4nh.org) if you require timeslots later in the day.**

Please also see the resource list that is available in the [appendix](#) of this document to aid in project development and proposal drafting.

8. Informational Webinar

Colette Tweeddale, HSE Coordinator, will host a **webinar May 11th at 2pm over Zoom** to provide prospective applicants with an overview of the grant program, the EMP, and to respond to questions. **Register for Round 3 Webinar [here](#).** See Round 1 Webinar [recording](#) and [slides](#) available on the [EMP Small Grants Webpage](#).

9. Submission Requirements

Applicants must submit the following to Colette Tweeddale, Hampton-Seabrook Estuary (HSE) Coordinator, via email (ctweeddale@shea4nh.org) **by 4pm on June 26, 2026**. Please **include “EMP Grant Program Application” in the subject line**. Faxed or mailed applications will not be accepted.

****A Pre-Application Meeting with SHEA is [required](#) before application submission.*
Please schedule [here](#) or reach out via email.***

***The following required application materials are available
as fillable documents on [SHEA’s website](#):***

- 1. Application Instructions:** Detailed instructions for filling out and submitting the application as well as a list of helpful resources.
- 2. Project Description & Narrative Form:** Project title, project description (background, methodology, audience, etc.), timeline, and project location(s).
- 3. Budget Table:** Requested funds broken down by line item, and matching funds if any (matching funds are not required).
- 4. Budget Narrative:** A budget narrative will be required for Round 3 that provides written justification for each line item in the corresponding budget ([template](#) provided).

For additional information and resources to aid in development of proposals, please see the linked resources in the appendix below and the [EMP Small Grants Webpage](#).

APPENDIX

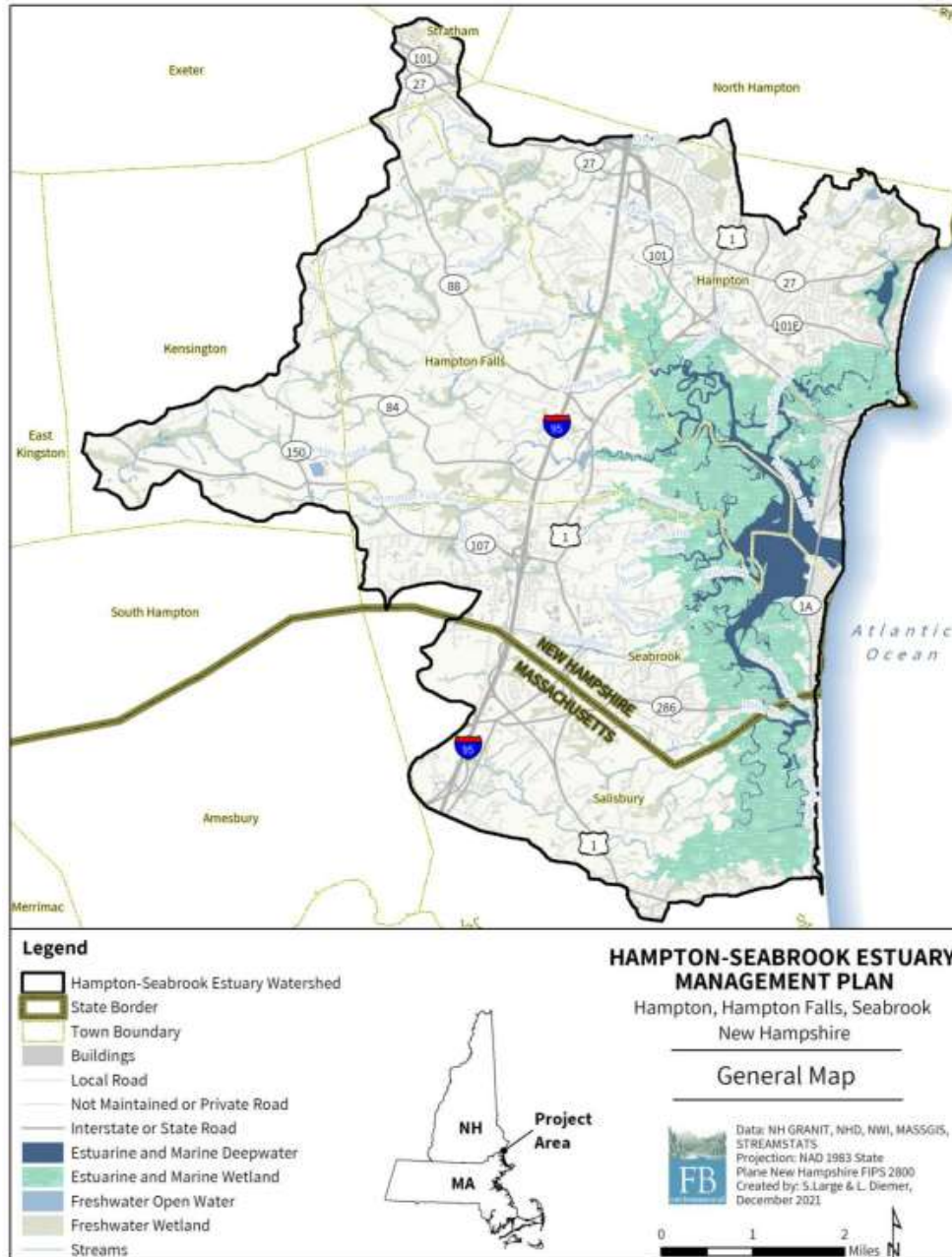


Figure A1. Map of Hampton-Seabrook Estuary Watershed (black outline) and towns within the watershed (Massachusetts: Salisbury ; New Hampshire: Seabrook, Hampton, Hampton Falls, Kensington, Exeter, Stratham, North Hampton).

Resource List

Below is a list of helpful documents to use for helping to reference and use when drafting your project and proposal.

Linked Resource	Description	Helpful Sections
Estuary Management Plan	This original master document includes the full body of text of the Estuary Management plan, including the executive summary, full description of all goals and objectives, and the full action plan.	Executive Summary: <i>Pg.s iv - ix</i> Goals & Objectives: <i>Pg.s 62-64</i> Action Matrix: <i>Pg.s 109-128</i>
Hampton Seabrook Estuary Management Plan Follow Up: Regulatory Audit	This regulatory audit conducted in 2025, identifies current regulation and land-use plans for HSE towns that could benefit from better alignment with EMP regulatory and planning action items.	Key Recommendations for Municipalities: <i>Pg.. 16</i>
Prospectus (HSE Collaborative)	This report outlines how a survey and webinar series informed collaborations among coastal science and management organizations. Focused on aligning resources for long-term monitoring, adaptive management, and restoration, especially regarding salt marsh habitats, to support the SHEA's management plan.	Opportunities for Collaboration: <i>Pg.s. 9-11</i>
Town of Hampton Master Plan	Town of Hampton, NH Master Plan, adopted in 2023.	Coastal Resilience Strategies: <i>Pg.. 54</i> Implementation Matrix: <i>Pg.. 102</i>
Hampton Beach Area Master Plan	Master plan for Hampton Beach Area, adopted in 2001.	Environmental Recommendations: <i>Pg.. IV-39</i>
Seabrook Master Plan	Town of Seabrook, NH Master Plan, adopted in 2011.	Coastal Hazards and Adaptation: Section 9 Seabrook Adaptation Study

Linked Resource	Description	Helpful Sections
Town of Hampton Falls Master Plan	Town of Hampton Falls, NH Master Plan, adopted in 2019.	Coastal Resources: <i>Pg. 8-17</i> Climate Change and Adaptation Planning: <i>Pg.. 8-26</i> Recommendations: Natural Resources: <i>Pg.. 8-28</i>
Town of Seabrook Wastewater Treatment Facility Climate Resilience Assessment (2021)	2021 project that assessed the vulnerability of Seabrook’s wastewater treatment facility to coastal flooding and development of conceptual options for increasing resiliency at the facility and nearby wastewater pump station.	Wastewater Treatment Facility Climate Resilience Options: <i>Pg.. 4-1</i>
Preparing NH for Projected Storm Surge, Sea-Level Rise, and Extreme Precipitation	A 2016 report put out by the New Hampshire Coastal Risk and Hazards Commission lists recommendations for legislators, state agencies, and coastal municipalities to better prepare for and minimize coastal risks and hazards in NH.	Assessment & Implementation recommendations: Natural Resources: <i>Pg.. 61</i> Suggested Next Steps: <i>Pg.. 74</i>
The NH Salt Marsh Plan	This comprehensive guide for sustaining tidal wetlands in New Hampshire developed by the NH Dept. of Fish and Game and the Great Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve includes a data viewer that provides basic facts for tidal wetlands in NH as well as calculates a resilience score for and potential recommendations for management measures to improve resiliency for each section of marsh evaluated.	
2022 Hampton Coastal Hazards Adaptation Team (CHAT) Recommendations	This 2022 document provides a table summarizing the Coastal Hazard Adaptation Team's recommendations for the town of Hampton, NH to address flood hazards & sea level rise.	

Linked Resource	Description	Helpful Sections
CHAT Recommendations: Engagement Strategy	<p>This Engagement Strategy was developed to guide community outreach and engagement on CHAT’s recommendations to the Town of Hampton to increase resilience to flooding and coastal hazards.</p>	<p>Recommended Outreach Approach: <i>Pg..8</i></p> <p>Priority Near-Term Engagement Strategies: <i>Pg.. 23</i></p>