

THE GULF COAST ECOLOGICAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

First Grant Cycle:

Applications due May 1, 2006
Decisions sent out May 22, 2006

Second Grant Cycle:

Applications due June 12, 2006
Decisions sent out July 15, 2006

ABOUT THE GULF COAST ECOLOGICAL HEALTH & COMMUNITY RENEWAL FUND

The Gulf Coast Ecological Health and Community Renewal Fund (the “Fund”) is a collaborative grant making fund supporting community, state and regional efforts that engage, empower and benefit displaced and returning residents, and that promote the sustainable and just rebuilding of neighborhoods, cities and ecosystems throughout the Gulf Coast.

The Fund is committed to an open and transparent decision-making process that is led by the communities most affected by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita. To achieve this, the Fund operates in partnership with an Advisory Group consisting of a cross-section of leaders working on the ground across the Gulf Coast. This Advisory Group informs the grant making process and identifies needs on an ongoing basis. All grant recommendations will be made by a panel of members of the Advisory Group through a Panel Process. Grant decisions will be approved by Rockefeller Philanthropy Advisors.

PURPOSE OF THE FUND

- Collaborative grant making fund dedicated to supporting community, state and regional efforts which will engage, empower and benefit displaced and returning residents and promote the sustainable and just rebuilding of neighborhoods, cities and ecosystems throughout the region.
- To support projects that help to lift up and strengthen local organizing, address justice concerns, and build movement.
- To operate in partnership with a cross-section of local and state community leaders from the Gulf Coast (Advisory Group) who will inform grant making and identify needs on an ongoing basis.

PRIORITY AREAS OF FUNDING

The Fund supports projects that strengthen and amplify local organizing, social justice concerns and movement-building, and that address the underlying causes that contributed to the severity of the disasters in the Gulf Coast. The Fund focuses on communities that have been historically disenfranchised due to race, class, gender, and/or immigration status. The majority of Fund grantees are organizations led by people of color and/or historically disenfranchised constituencies that reflect and are grounded in the communities in which they work. Further, the Fund seeks to support the building of community-level regional power that can inform and affect local, regional and national policy.

The Fund considers only those proposals that are developed by or in collaboration with residents and advocacy organizations affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and that demonstrate how they will address one or more of the following issues:

- *Right of Return and Right to Stay:* Facilitate, promote and create space for former residents to move back to any of the affected areas, and support their efforts to retain and rebuild communities (e.g. restoring levees, rehabilitation and rebuilding of houses, fair elections, restoring of cultural institutions, public schools, public transportation, jobs, mental health services, public health and health care).
- *Ecological Health:* Restore and support coastal wetlands and healthy coastal communities.
- *Environmental Justice and Health:* Monitor and clean up landfills, dumps and other health and environmental hazards; work toward the equitable cleanup of historically and newly contaminated areas; hold polluters accountable for environmental contamination; measure and track environmental contaminants and health impacts; initiate green chemistry projects; and protect right-to-know laws.
- *Just and Sustainable Rebuilding:* Incorporate sustainable solutions such as green and healthy buildings and smart and fair growth into rebuilding, giving all communities the right to return and rebuild; reduce fossil fuel use and production in the Gulf Coast; monitor where private and public sector monies are going and ensure that funds are being effectively drawn down and utilized.
- *Worker Rights:* Protect all workers' health and safety, protect low-wage workers and fight contractor abuses such as non-payment and immigration status-related threats, and promote analysis, advocacy and organizing which empowers both African American and immigrant workers.

Projects may use any number of strategies, including but not limited to community education, grassroots organizing, advocacy, policy development, media work, litigation and public interest education.

Special attention is given to projects that address one or more of the following:

- Resilience & Revitalization – helping the most vulnerable people and ecosystems recover
- Equity & Movement Building
- Amplifying New Voices
- Influencing Public Policy & Working with Governments
- Sharing Learnings
- Collective Advocacy and Education
- Networking & Collaboration
- Leadership Development
- Right to Self Determination
- Sustainable Human and Community-Based Development
- Accountability
- Empowerment of Women
- Civic Engagement

GEOGRAPHIC RESTRICTIONS

Initially, the Fund will focus on the rebuilding and revitalization of the following hurricane-impacted areas in Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama and Texas: (1) areas where community organizations have been advocating for environmental justice and working to stop the injustices of both unsustainable development and systemic racism that harm the health and lives of residents; and (2) areas where local organizations have been working to protect marine species, coastal lands, and coastal water quality. The recovery and rebuilding of these areas in a just and sustainable manner is the initial priority for the Fund.

BUDGET REQUIREMENTS

Preference is given to applicants with a budget under \$1 million, although organizations that fall outside of this range may apply.

GRANT SIZE AND DURATION

One year grant requests in the \$5,000-\$40,000 range will be considered. Most grants will be \$20,000 or less due to the size of the Fund. Smaller grants and emergency grants may also be considered if requested.

APPLICATION AND DECISION DEADLINES

We expect to have three grant cycles in 2006 with May, June and September deadlines. The first deadline has been set for May 1, 2006, with a decision date of May 22, 2006. The deadline for second grant cycle is June 12, 2006.

GRANT CRITERIA

The following criteria will be used in the review of grant applications (projects do not have to meet all the criteria for funding consideration):

- ✓ There is a clear statement of the problem/need to be addressed and the applicant demonstrates why this problem is significant to the ecological health, community renewal and/or self determination of affected communities.
- ✓ The project described clearly falls into the Fund's Priority Areas of Funding (see page one of this document for "Priority Areas of Funding").
- ✓ The goals of the project are clearly stated and relate directly to the community challenges identified by the applicant.
- ✓ Project leadership and staff reflect significant participation from affected communities.
- ✓ There is enough planning detail provided to indicate a well thought out work plan including a timeline, communication goals, and evaluation steps.
- ✓ Accountability to the community has been built in and the applicant indicates how the project will garner community feedback.
- ✓ Are there any aspects of this project that might be replicable in other communities?
- ✓ The applicant provides a well thought out, realistic budget and the numbers add up correctly.
- ✓ Would this grant leverage greater resources or fill a need that won't be met otherwise?
- ✓ Does the project expand advocacy for an under-recognized issue or unmet need?
- ✓ Does this project help to build community power? Encourage human rights, social and environmental justice and/or increase equity in a community?
- ✓ Does this project support the collaboration or networking of constituencies?
- ✓ Does this project promote diverse constituencies coming together around an important cross-cutting issue?

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Applications Must Include:

1. A 2-page proposal (see questions below).
2. If you are not applying online, you must include a Proposal Summary Sheet, signed by an authorized representative of your organization (use attached “Summary Sheet”).
3. Current organization budget and most recent organization financial statement (if available).
4. Project budget.
5. List of board members and their affiliations, and short bio(s) of key project staff or volunteers (if applicable).
6. An organizational newsletter or press clippings (if applicable and easily available).
7. Copy of 501(c)(3) IRS letter if you are a nonprofit organization with 501 (c)(3) status. If you or your organization do not have 501 (c)(3) status, you may still be eligible. You can ask another organization to serve as a “fiscal sponsor” for your project. Please include a letter from the organization that confirms it will act as a fiscal sponsor for your project, plus a copy of the fiscal sponsor’s 501(c)(3) IRS letter. If you have questions please call Penny Fujiko Willgerodt at 212-812-4326 or email pwillgerodt@rockpa.org.

Questions to Address in the 2-Page Proposal:

1. Describe your organization’s mission and recent accomplishments. Please include any relevant accomplishments before Hurricanes Katrina and Rita as well.
2. What are the specific issues that your organization will address over the next year?
3. What are the project’s goals and objectives?
4. Who from your organization will work on this project? Are they paid or volunteer?
5. What is the timeline?
6. How will you define success for your project?
7. If you have an alternative organizational structure, please describe it and your decision-making process.
8. If your organizational budget is over \$1,000,000, please explain briefly how the Fund’s grant would have an impact on this project.

If your organization has a tax-identification number you can apply via the internet at:

www.rockpa.org

Otherwise please email your application to:

pwillgerodt@rockpa.org

Please send any additional materials which must be faxed or mailed to:

Penny Fujiko Willgerodt
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PROPOSALS MUST BE RECEIVED BY May 1, 2006, 5:00 pm E.S.T.

Organization Name:

Address:

If you have a fiscal sponsor, please provide the Organization's Name, Address, Contact Person, Email and Phone number:

Signature: _____ Date: _____