ZOOS, BOTANICAL GARDENS and AQUARIA

Z B G A
GRANTS PROGRAM

Request for Applications for a Three-Year Contract Term
April 1, 2023 - March 31, 2026

Revised March 1, 2023

OVERVIEW

This is a request for applications for the Zoos, Botanical Gardens, and Aquaria (ZBGA) grant program. These grants provide eligible local governments and not-for-profit organizations with timely and stable annual funding to maintain, operate, and secure permanent collections of natural specimens, and to offer robust educational programs interpreting those collections. Applicants will be evaluated based on the administrative and fiscal strength of their organization, the quality and care of its collections, and the level of service to the public.

The ZBGA Program is funded through annual appropriations from the New York State Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) and is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation (OPRHP or Agency).

APPLICATION CYCLE

Applications will be for Period 3 entrance into a five-year grant program. Contracts will begin April 1, 2023, and expire March 31, 2026, being active for the period from State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023-24 through SFY 2025-26.

Contract Period/Year	SFY	
1	2021-22	April 1, 2021 – March 31, 2022
2	2022-23	April 1, 2022 – March 31, 2023
3	**2023-24**	**April 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024**
4	2024-25	April 1, 2024 – March 31, 2025
5	2025-26	April 1, 2025 – March 31, 2026

The deadline for new applicants seeking admission in year three of the grant program will be April 21, 2023.

FUNDING

Amount of funding is based on the ZBGA budget appropriation, the number of eligible participants and their associated budgets and reimbursable expenses.

Awardees who are new to the program will receive an introductory rate of $15,000 annually or one-third of the organization's total operating budget for the NHC, whichever is less. No match is required.

Organizations that participated in previous grant cycles but did not apply in years one or two of the current cycle will be funded at the base rate tier or calculated rate tier based on submitted budgets and reimbursable expenses.

Regardless of the results of the grant award calculations, in no case will an institution receive an award more than one-third of the organization's total operating budget for the NHC, nor will the maximum award to any applicant/parent organization amount to more than one-third of the annual appropriation.

ELIGIBILITY

To be determined eligible, applicants must be a municipality or not-for-profit organization that owns, houses, cares for, and interprets for the public living or systematically organized collections of biological specimens of natural origin. Such collections are defined as:

(a)   preserved and systematically organized biological objects such as vascular and nonvascular plants, vertebrate and invertebrate animals and fossils that are interpreted in conjunction with living collections

(b)   living animals and plants that are cared for and interpreted for the public in artificial or substitute habitats as captives or transplants

(c)   natural habitats of New York State that are formally dedicated in perpetuity to be maintained as viable, natural ecological associations for wild animals and plants, and that are interpreted for the public

For narrative purposes within this program, organizations that meet at least one of the above criteria may be referred to as Natural Heritage Institutions or Institutions. This category may include, but is not necessarily limited to zoos, botanical gardens, arboretums, aquariums, bird sanctuaries, natural habitat preserves, natural science museums, and nature and environmental centers. The collections they own, manage and interpret for the public may be referred to as Natural Heritage Collections (NHC).

In addition, each applicant must meet **ALL** of the following criteria:

- be a municipality or a not-for-profit organization
- exist on a permanent basis to act as or for a Natural Heritage Institution
- must have had annual operating expenses of at least $15,000 in the last STATE fiscal year (April 1, 2021-March 31, 2022), and must expect to maintain such for SFYs 2023-2026
- have — as a primary purpose — an ongoing and robust education program that:
    - services children and adults, and
    - interprets the ecology of the Natural Heritage Collection
- support a facility from which to operate these programs and interpret the NHC that:
    - is open to the general public on a regular and predictable basis for at least seven consecutive months, and
    - has a continual full schedule of programs and services for the general public that interpret the Natural Heritage Collection
- have well-defined program goals
- support an organized and systematic program for care of the collection, in accordance with State and Federal standards
- have proven financial, administrative, and public service stability for a minimum of two years (not-for-profits must have maintained their status as a 501(c)(3) for the three State Fiscal Years preceding their application)
- conduct all institutional operations in accordance with requirements of Title VI of the Federal Civil Rights Act of 1964 and of the Rehabilitation Act of 1963, as amended, which bar discrimination on the basis of race, age, color, nationality, handicap or place of residence
- hold all captive animals and plants in accordance with State and Federal laws and maintain them in accordance with current professional standards of humane treatment and conservation
- comply with the Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) and Minority and Women-Owned Business Enterprise (M/WBE) requirements of Article 15A of the Executive Law
- adhere to applicable provisions of the:
    - 2019 NYS Gender Expression Non-Discrimination Act
    - Sexual Harassment Prevention in the Workplace Policy
    - Non-Discrimination Policy Related to Executive Order 177
    - Executive Order 16 Prohibiting State Agencies and Authorities from Contracting with Businesses Conducting Business in Russia

- if affiliated with a larger organization, the applicant must also have a separate budget

PROGRAM RESTRICTIONS

The following entities, programs and activities **are not eligible** for funding under the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquaria Program:

Ineligible Entities include:

- for-profit organizations
- public school districts or their components
- Federal agencies and their programs
- New York State agencies and departments
- cemeteries (501(c)(13))

Ineligible Collections and Programs include:

- natural history collections
- historical, archaeological, or anthropological collections
- art collections
- science-technology collections
- astronomy collections
- gardens and plantings that are primarily decorative, ornamental, or commercial
- programs primarily concerned with horticulture, i.e., the culture of plants for food, comfort, or beauty
- programs primarily concerned with genetically domesticated plants and/or animals (i.e., petting zoos, farms)

Ineligible Activities include:

- research projects
- land acquisitions
- program activities solely restricted to or directed towards an organization's membership or clients
- lobbying or political activities
- fundraising activities
- collection acquisitions
- primarily commercial activities
- rescue and rehabilitation
- food services
- overhead and other indirect expenses.

NOTE: Institutions with collections or programs that include both eligible and ineligible categories and otherwise meet all program eligibility criteria are eligible **ONLY** for assistance in areas **relating to the natural heritage portions** of their collections and public service programs.

APPLICATION

Applications will only be accepted in the New York State Grants Gateway. Mailed, emailed, hand-delivered or faxed submissions will not be accepted.

GRANTS GATEWAY

The Grants Gateway is an online system that allows vendors to browse and apply for grant opportunities. The Grants Gateway system capabilities include the following:

- **Opportunity Portal** – A one-stop location to search for available and anticipated grant opportunities from all New York State agencies. Sign up to receive notification when specific types of grant opportunities are posted.
- **Document Vault** – A secure online document repository for vendors/grantees to store and share commonly requested documents with State agencies. The Document Vault is utilized for the Vendor Prequalification Process. All not-for-profit organizations must be prequalified in the Grants Gateway system to be considered eligible to apply for a grant opportunity.
- **Online Contracts** – Ability for vendors/grantees to develop and execute contracts online.

Grants Reform procedures require all applications to be developed and submitted online through the NYS Grants Gateway.

REGISTRATION AND PREQUALIFICATION

All NYS grant applicants must be registered in the NYS Grants Gateway to be eligible to:

- Apply for a NYS grant opportunity.
- Enter into a grant contract or amendment to an existing contract
- Apply for future grant payments.

In addition to registering, not-for-profit organizations must also complete the Vendor Prequalification process in the Grants Gateway to be considered eligible to apply for this grant opportunity. Government entities and public authorities are currently not required to complete the Vendor Prequalification Process.

CREATING ROLES

Once your organization is registered and prequalified (if applicable) in the Grants Gateway, the user with the Delegated Administrator Role must create additional roles to initiate, complete, and submit the application in Grants Gateway. Refer to Section 2.2 of the "Vendor User Manual", located on the Grants Management website at https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/apply-grant, for instructions on creating user roles in the Grants Gateway system. **"This step MUST be completed to submit an application in the Grants Gateway."**

REGISTRATION INSTRUCTIONS

Registration is NOT an online process. Register now to allow time for processing**!**

1.) On the Grants Management Website at https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/register-your-organization download a copy of the Registration Form for Administrator.
2.) Complete the form according to the instructions provided. The completed form must be signed and notarized and sent to the Grants Reform team via email to GrantsReform@its.ny.gov. After the form is received and reviewed, you will be notified via email with a Username and Password allowing you to access the Grants Gateway.
3.) Log in to the Grants Gateway at https://grantsgateway.ny.gov. You will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your Profile page. Enter a new password and click the SAVE button located on the top, right-hand side of the page.

If you have previously registered and do not know your Username, please email grantsgateway@its.ny.gov. If you do not know your Password, please click the Forgot Password link from the main log in page and follow the prompts.

NOT-FOR-PROFIT PREQUALIFICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Pursuant to the New York State Division of Budget Bulletin H-1032, dated June 7, 2013, New York State instituted key reform initiatives to the grant application and contract processes. These initiatives require not-for-profit organizations to complete the Vendor Prequalification process to be considered eligible to apply for a grant.

Below is a summary of the steps to complete the prequalification requirements. The **Vendor User Manual** on the Grants Management website at https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/get-prequalified provides additional information and instruction.

1.) Complete your Prequalification Application.
- Log in to the Grants Gateway at https://grantsgateway.ny.gov. If this is your first time logging in, you will be prompted to change your password at the bottom of your Profile page. Enter a new password and click the SAVE button located on the top, right-hand side of the page.
- Click the *Organization(s)* link at the top of the page and complete the required fields including selecting the State agency you have the most grants with. This page should be completed in its entirety before you SAVE. A *Document Vault* link will become available near the top of the page. Click this link to access the main Document Vault page.
- Answer the questions in the *Required Forms* and upload the *Required Documents*. This constitutes your Prequalification Application. Optional Documents are not required unless specified in this Request for Applications.
- Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your agency representative or to the Grants Management Team at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov.

2.) Submit Your Prequalification Application.
- After completing your Prequalification Application, click the Submit Document Vault button located below the Required Documents section to submit your Prequalification Application for State agency review. Once submitted, the status of the Document Vault will change to In Review.
- If your Prequalification reviewer has questions or requests changes you will receive email notification from the Gateway system.
- Once your Prequalification Application has been approved, you will receive a Grants Gateway system-generated email notification that you are now prequalified to do business with New York State.

Additional registration and prequalification information, including a video tutorial, is available on the Grants Management website at https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/

ZBGA APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS

The ZBGA application in the Grants Gateway contains two parts. The first is a series of program-specific questions that will be used to evaluate an organization's eligibility. The second is a budget, which will be used—alongside other publicly available financial information—to determine an organization's capacity, which will be compared alongside the budgets of all other eligible organizations. This will be used to determine the percent of the total ZBGA budget appropriation that an organization is eligible to receive.

There are sections of the application that provide an option to upload an attachment. All attachments must be no larger than 10 megabytes and must be in Printable Document Format (.pdf), Microsoft Word (.doc/.docx), or Excel (.xls/.xlsx) formats.

Eligibility

All questions in this section must be answered. Some questions provide an opportunity to include an attachment. Organizations may respond to these questions solely using an attachment, or they may supplement their answer with an attachment. Organizations that choose to not use the upload function will not be penalized. In no case should language be duplicated between the text answer field and the attachment.

Historical Expenditure Summary

This section is used to determine an organization's capacity for interpretation and care of its Natural Heritage Collection. Organizations should only include those expenses that fit the definition of *direct*, *recurring costs for care and interpretation of the Natural Heritage Collection,* incurred during April 1, 2021 through March 31, 2022 *(see ZBGA Expense Guide for Award Calculation and Reimbursement).*

For the purposes of this application, all capital expenses are prohibited, as are those expenses noted in the Program Restrictions above, or in the *ZBGA Expense Guide for Award Calculation and Reimbursement*. Expenses incurred outside of this one-year period, even if paid during this period, are not eligible. Expenses *paid* after this period, but incurred during this period, may be included. The expectation is that the bulk of an organization's eligible expenses will be staff (or contractor) wages.

There are three parts to the Expenditure section. The first is the Expenditure Summary Table in the Grants Gateway (this table can be found within the Grants Gateway by navigating to the Forms Menu and scrolling down to the Expenditure Summary), the second is the Excel sheet known as the *Historical Expenditure Detail Report*, and the third is the backup to the *Historical Expenditure Detail Report*. The Expenditure Summary table is the total of your organization's eligible expenses for the period of 4/1/2021 to 3/31/2022, the *Historical Expenditure Detail Report* must align directly with the Expenditure Summary table, showing the breakdown of eligible expenses by State Fiscal Year 21-22 (4/1/21-3/31/22), and **every line of the** *Historical Expenditure Detail Report* **must reference a page or section of the backup documentation upload(s).**

Forms of eligible documentation include, but are not limited to copies of receipts, invoices, payroll registers, IRS form 941, employee signed and approved time sheets, check registers, bank statements and cancelled checks. In summary:

1. Complete the Expenditure Summary table in Grants Gateway
2. Upload the *Historical Expenditure Detail Report* (available https://parks.ny.gov/grants/zoos-botanical-gardens/default.aspx)
3. Upload backup documents

Given the limitations of the Grants Gateway, all uploads should be optimized for minimum size. The recommended upload format is PDF at 150-300DPI, optimized for reduced size. Multiple upload fields have been provided in the application. Password protected documents are not allowed. If an organization has backup documentation that—after optimization for reduced size—is nonetheless more than the maximum required size, such documents may be e-mailed to ZBGAGrants@parks.ny.gov must state "Backup Documentation for ZBGA 2023-26 RFA: [Organization Name]".

SUBMISSION

All required components of applications must be entered in the Grants Gateway by the below date and time for consideration.

Applications are due not later than:

Friday, April 21, 2023, at 4:00 p.m. EST

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Awards will be announced shortly after application review period.

CONTRACTING

The Agency will establish a contractual agreement with each awarded organization. This will define the relationship between the Agency and the awarded entity for the duration of the contract period, subject to amendments and formal modifications.

The process of establishing this contract will not begin prior to formal Agency award announcement and notification to the awarded organization. Contracting will occur in the NYS Grants Gateway and will entail the provision of various documents to the Agency that may include but is not limited to certificates of workers' compensation and disability insurance, a municipal resolution accepting funds, organization by-laws, proof of registration with the NYS Attorney General's Charities Bureau, completion of a Vendor Responsibility Questionnaire, and documents to establish vendor responsibility.

DISBURSEMENT

Each organization must submit all necessary materials to allow payment within 60 days of the end of that fiscal year.

Reimbursement requests comprise of a State Aid Voucher, A-2 Expense Report, and Grantee Certification. Backup documentation for all expenses must be readily available to be provided electronically within two business days upon request but should not be submitted with reimbursement requests. Backup documentation can take various forms including, but not limited to, copies of receipts, invoices, payroll registers, IRS form 941, employee signed and approved time sheets, check registers, bank statements and cancelled checks. Reimbursement requests should be submitted by e-mail to the Agency, unless directed otherwise.

The Agency preferred payment schedule is as follows. Organizations should adhere to this schedule insofar as possible.

> **Annual Reimbursement:** Payments should be submitted in January or February of the SFY for which reimbursement is being requested

> **Or**

> **Quarterly Reimbursement:** For SFY Q1-Q3, reimbursement should be requested within 30 days of quarter end. For Q4, reimbursement should be requested February or early March.

AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

OPRHP is committed to programs of Affirmative Action and agency staff will assist organizations in undertaking Affirmative Action initiatives. Article 15A of the Executive Law pertains to Minority and Women-owned Business Enterprises (MWBE) and Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO). State agencies are required to ensure that all state contracts in excess of $25,000 comply with EEO requirements. Projects in excess of $25,000 for labor, services, supplies, equipment, materials or a combination thereof, or $100,000 for capital construction projects may be assigned specific goals for participation by MWBEs. These goals will be based on the scope of the project and the availability of MWBEs to perform work in the project area. The grantee will be required to report on their utilization of MWBEs with each payment request and final report.

Projects which fall below the $25,000 threshold for goods and services and $100,000 for capital construction will be requested to show "good faith efforts" to solicit MWBEs during the project and document these efforts with each payment request and final report.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

All materials, public information and publications developed with funds from the ZBGA grant must acknowledge funding assistance by inclusion of the phrase; "This project was funded by the Zoos, Botanical Gardens and Aquaria Grant Program which is administered by the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation."

FOIL

Applications to the State, including their accompanying documents, are subject to the Freedom of Information Law (FOIL) found in Article 6 of the N.Y. Public Officer Law. FOIL provides that certain records are exempt from disclosure, including those that contain (1) trade secrets, (2) information that, if disclosed, would cause substantial injury to the competitive position of your organization, or (3) critical infrastructure information. All efforts should be made to provide such Information in the questions marked "restricted".

CONTACT
ZBGAGrants@parks.ny.gov