



Casco Bay Estuary

PARTNERSHIP

Caring for our waters together

## Casco Bay Community Grants 2026 Request for Proposals

### SUMMARY

Small, community-focused grants (\$500–\$5,000) that support environmental education, stewardship, and community engagement projects in Casco Bay and its watershed. Open to municipalities, nonprofits, and educators, in collaboration with smaller community groups if appropriate.

**DEADLINE:** MONDAY, January 26, 2026, 5:00pm

### BACKGROUND

Casco Bay Estuary Partnership (CBEP) invites proposals for the *Casco Bay Community Grants* program. CBEP's mission is to protect the health of Casco Bay and its watershed through science, community involvement, and practical, on-the-ground projects. We work with towns, nonprofits, schools, and state and federal agencies to reduce pollution, protect and restore habitat, and prepare for climate change. CBEP is part of the Environmental Protection Agency's National Estuary Program and is part of the Catherine Cutler Institute at the University of Southern Maine. Learn more at: [www.cascobayestuary.org](http://www.cascobayestuary.org).

Through this [grant program](#), we support new partnerships and creative projects that connect people with Casco Bay and its watershed. Grants range from **\$500 to \$5,000**.

### ELIGIBILITY

#### Who can apply:

- Municipalities, schools, land trusts, and other nonprofit organizations
- Educators and community groups applying through an eligible organization
- CBEP encourages partnerships with civic groups (committees, churches, clubs, school groups, neighborhood associations)

#### Who cannot apply:

- For-profit companies (though they may collaborate on a project)

#### Where projects must take place:

- Completely or partially in the Casco Bay or its watershed (map attached)

## WHAT WE FUND

Funded projects must address at least one of the priority topics in the 2024 Casco Bay Plan.

Examples include:

- **Marine or environmental education**, especially related to climate change, water quality, marine habitats (eelgrass, salt marshes, mudflats, rocky shore), and local marine species
- **Community science and stewardship projects**
- **Climate change education or community engagement activities**
- **Storytelling, arts, or creative projects** that help people connect with Casco Bay
- **Place-based or outdoor learning**
- **Activities that raise awareness about local issues**, such as nutrient pollution, ocean acidification, stormwater, habitat connectivity, or community resilience
- Funded projects must address at least one of the priority topics in the 2024 Casco Bay Plan.

## EXAMPLES OF PAST PROJECTS

*These are illustrative only—CBEP welcomes innovative ideas and approaches.*

- **Student-led science and stewardship**, such as middle-school and high-school classes monitoring clam recruitment, water quality, or local habitats.
- **Hands-on environmental education**, including outdoor learning programs for early childhood groups, watershed demonstrations in classrooms, and field experiences tied to school curricula.
- **Community science and volunteer efforts**, such as bioblitz events, shoreline or island stewardship days, and citizen monitoring of marine species.
- **Programs serving diverse or underserved youth**, including summer programs that introduce immigrant and multilingual students to the natural and cultural importance of Casco Bay.
- **Arts, storytelling, and community events** that connect people to the Bay through intergenerational programs, public talks, creative projects, or guided experiences.
- **Collaborations with local resource managers**, such as projects that engage local committees and other municipal partners in habitat education.

## WHAT TO INCLUDE

A review committee will score proposals based on:

- Strong community partnerships, especially with small or community-based groups
- A project model that others could use or adapt
- Clear connection to one or more project themes
- A realistic plan with clear goals, achievable steps, and evidence that the project can be completed
- A reasonable and well-explained budget
- Evidence of community support (such as volunteer time, donated materials, or partner involvement)
- For education projects: preference for those that include outdoor or field components
- The committee may request additional information or a brief conversation if needed.

## APPLICATIONS

Send proposals by email to [victoria.boundy@maine.edu](mailto:victoria.boundy@maine.edu) by 5:00pm, Monday, January 26, 2026.

You are welcome to contact us before applying with questions or to discuss your idea:

Victoria Boundy, Community Engagement and Planning Manager, [victoria.boundy@maine.edu](mailto:victoria.boundy@maine.edu)

All grant materials can be found on the [CBEP Grant Opportunities web page](#).

### How to apply:

You may submit either:

1. A short, written proposal (up to two pages), or
2. [A completed Application Form \(editable PDF\)](#). CBEP can mail hard-copy forms upon request.

### Your proposal should include:

- Project title
- Applicant organization
- Contact person (name, role, email, phone)
- Amount requested
- Project theme(s)
- Location
- Project description and why it matters
- Goals and expected outcomes
- Key tasks and timeline
- Project team
- Community support and partner involvement
- How others could use or adapt your project
- Budget and budget explanation

## AWARDS AND FOLLOW-UP

- CBEP will make funding announcements in **mid-February**. Some projects may receive partial funding.
- Successful applicants will need to register as a supplier in the University of Maine's eProcurement system (MaineStreet Marketplace). CBEP will arrange payment schedules based on project needs. Awardees should complete projects **within one year** of the award date.
- Grantees must acknowledge CBEP in materials related to the project (e.g., signs, newsletters, websites, press releases). We will provide our logo.
- Awardees must provide a short final report (½–1 page) within three months of project completion. You may include photos or media coverage. We will also ask grantees to provide match and leveraging documentation.



Casco Bay Watershed boundaries

