

New England Land Conservation Due Diligence Fund

Request for Proposals

The Open Space Institute (OSI) invites land trusts to submit proposals for funding through the **New England Land Conservation Due Diligence Fund**. The Fund supports small and mid-sized land trusts in early-stage project development expenses to advance fee acquisition conservation projects. The purpose of this funding is to offset costs required to advance a project to the contract stage. Grants up to \$25,000 will be awarded quarterly through the fall of 2027, while funds are available. The Fund currently has \$500,000 and may expand to \$1,000,000 depending, in part, on the level of demand. This opportunity has been made possible with generous support from an anonymous source.

Funding Priorities

Projects should:

- Be located within the Eligibility Area shown in the [New England Due Diligence Fund map](#)
- Enhance regional landscape connectivity
- Demonstrate strong potential to advance toward a formal conservation agreement, such as an Option or Purchase and Sale Agreement, within a reasonable timeframe
- Pertain to acquisition of the *fee simple interest* in property (i.e. not conservation easements)

Eligible Uses of Funds

Funding may support the following for fee acquisition projects only:

- Pre-contract Appraisal(s)*
- Title research*
- Legal services needed to advance to stage of executing a contract
- Other early phase diligence activities that would increase likelihood of reaching the signed contract stage (excluding Ineligible Uses as described below), which may include phase 1 environmental assessments, commission of professional photography for fundraising, or other activities that may be necessary to catalyze project momentum

- On a case-by-case basis, OSI will consider supporting conservation-based estate planning and/or facilitation or mediation services that may be necessary to advance a project

*Please note that OSI prefers to fund pre-contract appraisals and title research simultaneously if neither have been completed at the time of application.

Ineligible Uses of Funds

Funding may not support:

- Reimbursements for diligence activities already paid for at the time of application
- Diligence activities (including appraisals, title work, and legal services) to be incurred **after** the project is under contract
- Costs associated with conservation easements
- Staff time
- Surveys
- Recording fees or other closing costs
- Stewardship expenses

Eligible Applicants

OSI encourages applications from:

- Small and mid-sized land trusts (preferably with 15 or fewer full-time staff) that have adopted the Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices

Applicants may submit multiple applications, provided they are for distinct projects. The Fund seeks to support smaller organizations that have identified viable project(s) but have limited means to develop the initial due diligence required to make full offers or otherwise reach the written contract stage.

Timeline

Proposals will be accepted on a rolling basis, with grants awarded quarterly while funds are available. Proposals must be received two weeks prior to the Award Decisions date for consideration in that quarter's cycle, as listed below:

Proposals Due	Award Decisions
Friday, September 25, 2026	Friday, October 9, 2026
Friday, December 18, 2026	Monday, January 4, 2027
Friday, March 12, 2027	Friday, March 26, 2027
Friday, June 11, 2027	Friday, June 25, 2027

Friday, September 10, 2027	Friday, September 24, 2027
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Any awarded funds are anticipated to be disbursed by OSI within approximately three weeks from the Award Decision date and should be deployed by the grantee within 3-6 months.

OSI may exercise discretion in funding proposals outside of this cycle if the applicant can demonstrate a strong and specific need for doing so.

Proposal Requirements

Applicants will apply for funding through Foundant, OSI's grant management platform. The application addresses the following:

1. Project location and description
2. Contribution to regional connectivity and resilience
3. Estimated due diligence costs and requested funding amount (up to \$25,000)
4. Project timeline
5. Organizational experience and capacity to complete the project
6. Expected/most likely path to conservation transaction and long-term protection

Applicants will also be required to submit a shapefile for the project. Please reach out to OSI if assistance is needed.

Selection Criteria

Projects will be evaluated based on:

- Readiness to use diligence funds
- Contribution to regional connectivity and resilience
- Likelihood of advancing to the contract stage within 6 months
- Likelihood of advancing to a successful closing within 24 months

OSI seeks to support the development of a strong pipeline of conservation projects that will contribute to a more connected, resilient, and permanently protected New England landscape.

Disbursement of Funds

If selected for funding, awardees will receive a grant letter and term sheet for review and countersignature and will be asked to provide a W-9 and wiring instructions. Additional information may also be requested. Funds are anticipated to be wired within 2 weeks following completion of these steps.

Reporting Requirements

Grantees will be expected to provide brief, informal status updates to OSI as the project develops over the 24-month period following the grant award. These updates should confirm spend-down of the award and any progress toward contract stage and closing. It is understood that not all projects awarded funding will advance to the contract or closing stages.

Support

Please reach out to Sarah Wells (swells@osiny.org) with any questions.