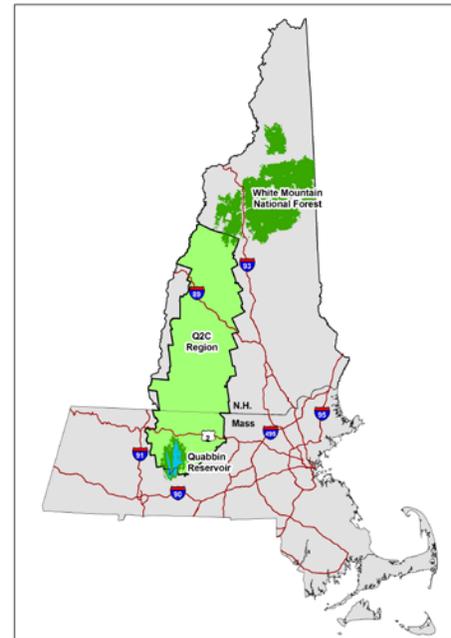


Q2C Request for Proposals

Q2C Land Grants Program 2020 Grant Round

In October 2020, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership (Q2C) will award its fourteenth round of Land Conservation grants in the “Quabbin-to-Cardigan” region of western New Hampshire and north-central Massachusetts. The Q2C Partnership has \$50,000 to re-grant in 2020. The two-state Quabbin-to-Cardigan region spans one hundred miles from the Quabbin Reservoir northward to the southern boundary of the White Mountain National Forest, and is bounded to the east and west by the Merrimack and Connecticut River Valleys. Encompassing approximately two million acres, the Q2C region is one of the largest remaining areas of intact, interconnected, ecologically significant forest in central New England and is a key headwater of the Merrimack and Connecticut Rivers.



Launched in 2003, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership is a collaborative effort of private organizations and public agencies working on land conservation in the Q2C landscape. The partners share a vision of conserving (on a strictly willing-seller/donor basis) the region’s most ecologically significant forests and key connections between them for wildlife passage and human recreation. In 2007, the Q2C Partnership completed a strategic conservation plan for the region that combines state-of-the-art natural resource data with the expertise and experience of the partner organizations.

In 2009, the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership launched its Land Conservation Grants program, which underwrites transaction costs—appraisals, surveys, title research, staff time, etc.—on key land conservation transactions that protect land identified in the Q2C conservation plan. Over the past eleven years, the grants program has awarded more than \$1,028,000 to 100 separate land conservation projects that have conserved more than 34,000 acres of land in the region.

Before applying for a Q2C grant, please carefully review this RFP and the application materials. For more information on the Quabbin-to-Cardigan region and conservation plan, grant application materials, maps, a list of towns in the region, etc., visit the “Grants” section of www.q2cpartnership.org. If you need help determining whether your project is eligible for funding, please call Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945.

Grant Amounts/Match Requirements:

Maximum grant amount per project is \$10,000. Applicants may apply for grants for more than one project, but no more than \$20,000 will be awarded to any one applicant.

The Q2C grants program has a cash match requirement. All applicants must provide matching funds equaling a **minimum of 25% of the grant award**. Cash match does not include any “in-kind” gifts.

The Q2C grants program also strongly encourages applicants to provide “non-cash” match in the form of donated land or easement value, volunteer labor and other in-kind contributions. Non-cash match may consist of any funds or the fair market value of materials and services donated in-kind. The value of volunteer labor should also be counted as non-cash match. For the 2020 grant year, unskilled volunteer labor is rated at \$18.58/hour and skilled volunteer labor is at fair market value. Grantees must be able to document and justify skilled labor value.

Labor provided by employees of the applicant organization and/or partners (i.e. town or government employees, public agency employees, non-profit org. employees, etc.) may be credited at their wages as cash match.

What Can Grants be Used For?

- ✿ **Transaction-related expenses on land protection projects (fee or easement).** These expenses may include but are not limited to the procurement of surveys, appraisals and appraisal reviews, attorney’s services to applicant related to the acquisition of easements, title searches, closing services, deed preparation and negotiation, baseline document preparation, easement and land recording, and other professional services.

Grant funds cannot be used to acquire direct real estate interests (fee or easement) in land. Grant funds also cannot be used to fund stewardship funds/endowment, property clean-up costs, or fundraising-related expenses.

Who Can Apply For and Receive Funding?

- ✿ Nonprofit tax exempt 501(c)(3) organizations that have land conservation as their primary function;
- ✿ State agencies that have land conservation as a primary function;
- ✿ Local governments (see list of eligible communities on the “Grants” page).

All other entities, including but not limited to units of federal government and individuals, cannot apply to or receive funding from this grant program.

How Will Projects Be Selected?

Primary Criteria

A.1. Eligible projects must be located in the Quabbin to Cardigan region of New Hampshire and Massachusetts. See list of towns (under the Grants tab at q2cpartnership.org) to determine whether your project is eligible to apply.

A.2. The project must protect land that has been identified as a “Core Focus Area” or be within a “Connectivity Corridor” in the newly updated 2019 Q2C Conservation Map. To determine whether your project protects land in one or both of these categories, see the map on the “Resources” page of the Q2C website (<https://q2cpartnership.files.wordpress.com/2019/07/display-map102918.pdf>). Geographic Information System (GIS) users may also request copies of the shapefiles of these Q2C Core Focus Areas and Connectivity Corridor. All applicants are required to submit, with their application, a GIS shapefile of their proposed project or, if one is not available, supply other information from which a GIS shapefile can be created. See application form for details.

Applicants are advised that the GIS shapefiles will be used to calculate total acres of Q2C “conservation focus area” and/or “supporting landscape” protected by proposed projects. Because funding is awarded based on Q2C focus area acreage and not based on the grant request, projects with higher total focus area acreage will be awarded a larger portion of the available funding.

A.3. The project must *permanently* protect the land through acquisition of fee interest or with a permanent conservation easement or conservation restriction **and only the intended holder of the fee interest or conservation easement or conservation restriction interest is eligible to apply.**

A.4. The project should be completed and all grant funds spent within 1.5 years from the date of the grant award. (*Expenses incurred before January 1, 2020 are not eligible for funding through this grant round.*)

A.5. The applicant must demonstrate (through a P&S Agreement, landowner letter or email) that the current owner(s) of the land to be conserved through the project has been notified that a Q2C grant application is being submitted and is willing to donate and/or sell their land or an easement to the applicant organization if funding is awarded.

A.6. The applicant must demonstrate the capacity and financial ability to execute the transaction and ensure perpetual stewardship of the protected property.

A.7. Applicant must meet a cash match requirement of 25% of the grant award.

Additional Considerations (not in order of priority)

B.1. Extent to which the project adds to existing protected land and/or provides linkage between protected lands.

B.2. Extent to which the project provides financial leverage of grant dollars invested, in terms of total value of land protected.

B.3. Type and degree of conversion threat to land.

B.4. Extent to which project provides public recreational access. *The provision of public pedestrian access is not required, but is encouraged, and will be considered in the grant review process.*

Grant payments:

Q2C grants are paid on a reimbursement basis. Grantees must incur costs for work actually completed. At project completion, the grantee will submit a request for reimbursement along with a final budget reflecting eligible and non-eligible expenses, including cash match expenses, and attach any cashed checks and/or paid-in-full receipts. Your itemized invoice should also be accompanied by a cover letter stating that the project has been completed (i.e. the real estate transaction has closed) and must include the date of closing along with the book and page of the recorded deed and registry of recording. Expenses and items may not be reimbursed if they are not included in the original project proposal and budget. No partial reimbursements will be made.

Application Deadline

Completed applications must be received no later than 5 p.m. on September 15, 2020.

Completed applications may be submitted electronically to ccolton@forestsociety.org.

Completed applications may also be sent by mail, and **must be postmarked no later than September 15, 2020**. Mail applications to: Connie Colton, Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests, 54 Portsmouth Street, Concord, NH 03301. Successful grant applicants will be notified by **October 30, 2020**. For questions regarding the grant program and the application process, please contact Brian Hotz at (603) 224-9945 x 316 or bhotz@forestsociety.org.

The Q2C Grants program is privately funded and administered by the Society for the Protection of New Hampshire Forests on behalf of the Quabbin-to-Cardigan Partnership.

The Q2C Partnership reserves the right to modify this and other application materials in future grant rounds, based on experience gained from administering the program, changes in funding, and/or legal requirements.