

Request for Proposals [RFP-20260420] Projects from Clarkson and ESF Faculty

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OVERVIEW

The vision of the **New York State Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions at Clarkson University and SUNY ESF (CoE)** is to ensure a healthy and sustainable future through the protection and conservation of water resources.

Our mission is to generate solutions that help protect and improve waters for sustainable natural environments, healthy populations, resilient communities and sound economies.

Besides addressing water science and technology needs, a key requirement for CoE projects is to demonstrate an ability to support economic development in New York State. All project proposals must include a component of economic development. This may entail: boosting employment, workforce training, enhancing recreational opportunities, reducing costs of environmental management and protection, or developing new technologies that can be commercialized.

Through this Request for Proposals (hereinafter referred to as “RFP”) process and funding, Clarkson and ESF faculty, staff, and students seek to strengthen existing partnerships and forge new collaborations with private industry, consultants/engineers, water districts, K-12 schools, colleges and universities, government agencies, policy-makers, and local stakeholders.

To meet these goals, the CoE is seeking concise proposals from Clarkson and ESF faculty for funding in the categories outlined in this Request for Proposals.



In 2019 New York State designated Clarkson University and SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry (ESF) to co-lead the Center of Excellence (CoE) in Healthy Water Solutions.

NYS Centers of Excellence are funded by the New York State Department of Economic Development's Division of Science, Technology, and Innovation ([NYSTAR](#)) to foster collaboration between the academic research community and the business sector to develop and commercialize new products and technologies, to promote critical private sector investment in emerging high-technology fields in New York State, and to create and expand technology-related businesses and employment.

TIMELINE

- 4/20/2026** **RFP Release**
- 6/1/2026** **Proposal Deadline 11:59pm (ET)**
- 6/22/2026** **Notification of Decision.** Awards are subject to the timely passing of the NYS Budget and availability of funds.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Submit to the Center via online portal by June 1, 2026, 11:59pm (ET).
Visit <https://healthywaters.org/funding-opportunities> to access the link to submit.
Proposals are accepted and considered on a competitive basis.

FUNDING PRIORITIES

The CoE will allocate available funds generally in this order of priority:

- 40% Concept Commercialization/Implementation
- 30% Research Seed
- 15% Education and Outreach
- 15% Grant Preparation

PROJECT & FUNDING PERIOD

Duration of funding will be from the time of award by the institution's Sponsored Research office or department for approximately 1 year.

Funds will be available **after July 1, 2026, and may not be available until on or about September 1, 2026** - pending approval of the NYSTAR contract and accounts being set up at respective institutions.

INTERNAL FORUM FOR CLARKSON AND ESF FACULTY

Applicants without an engaged partner are strongly encouraged to visit (and register for) the partner forum on the Healthy Water Solutions webpage:

<https://forum.healthywaters.org>

This password protected internal website features potential opportunities for projects, partnerships, and external funding. Designed for active engagement, forum participants can comment, pose questions, and dialogue with other faculty from both Clarkson and ESF, with the aim of shaping fundable projects as well as cross-institutional collaboration when possible and ideal.

EXTERNAL PARTNERS SEEKING COLLABORATION

Informed by our institutional and faculty research agendas and areas of expertise, the NYS CoE in Healthy Water Solutions is actively working year-round to identify potential external collaborators and partners across water challenges and opportunities – including individual companies and sector-specific industry, municipalities, associations, NGOs, and other organizations. Given partnership needs and funding cycles, the CoE will maintain a reserve fund to help support potential projects, including seed, larger-scale, and commercialization, on an interval and/or rolling basis beyond the timeframe of this RFP.

AREAS OF FOCUS

Research has focused in three general categories (Emerging and Traditional Contaminants, Water in the Natural Environment, and Water Resources Planning/Management). Below is a list of representative topics within each category. This is not an inclusive list of topics to be considered for funding but rather intended to provide an overview of potential projects.

Emerging and Traditional Contaminants

- Innovative PFAS treatment
- Sensor development for watershed management using citizen science
- Materials for cost effective nutrient recovery
- Solar-energy driven water desalination
- Aquaculture for nutrient management
- Resource recovery process development for improved agricultural land management
- Conservation, restoration, and enhancement of aquatic habitats
- Risk assessment frameworks for PFAS
- Predict and protect against HABs
- Hg fate and transport in aquatic systems

Water in the Natural Environment

- Predict and prevent flooding; predict and manage drought
- Preserve and restore wetlands
- Track microbial sources; microbial risk assessment
- Manage landscapes to reduce loading of stressors to water bodies
- Model sediment transport

Water Resources Planning and Management

- Sustainable infrastructure planning
- High resolution mapping and forecasting via low-cost sensors coupled with advanced data analytics
- Determine water consumption patterns and factors influencing consumption via detection systems and advanced data analytics

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES AND CENTERS

A cornerstone of the CoE is the ability to establish collaborative relationships between Clarkson University and SUNY ESF and across the breadth of resources. The following are some examples of potential partnerships that could be fostered to further your research goals and strengthen your proposal.

CLARKSON UNIVERSITY

[Center for Air and Aquatic Resources Engineering and Sciences \(CAARES\)](#)

[The Center for Advanced Materials Processing \(CAMP\)](#)

[The Shipley Center for Innovation](#)

[Institute for STEM Education](#)

[Institute for a Sustainable Environment](#)

SUNY ESF

[Adirondack Ecological Center](#)

[Analytical & Technical Services](#)

[Cranberry Lake Biological Station](#)

[ESF Open Academy](#)

PROPOSAL CATEGORIES

1. Research Seed Grants

Objective

Seed funding can be used to support novel applied research concepts, but it can also be used for development of plans to support commercialization of a technology. For instance, seed funding could be used to develop an application to an NSF I-Corps regional course (<https://www.unyicorps.org/regional-courses>).

Seed funds **cannot** be used for basic research. All seed proposals should ideally include the involvement of an external partner that is not a NY state agency (NGO, federal agency, municipality, lake or watershed association, company, etc.). Partners may have direct involvement in the research, but they may also be involved by disseminating results, training project participants, offering feedback on policy implications, or similar activities.

Eligibility

All projects **must include** at least one collaborator from both Clarkson University and SUNY ESF.

Funds Available

Project budgets cannot exceed \$30,000 over the project period (shared between Clarkson and ESF).

Proposed budget must include line item description and amount of 1:1 matching funds. Matching funds must be equal to or greater than the funding request. *[See “MATCHING FUNDS” section for details.]*

Allowed Expenses

Eligible expenses include student salary, tuition, supplies, equipment, analytical costs, and project travel. Summer salary is not allowed for seed proposals as the limited funding is intended to generate knowledge and data for future proposals.

2. Concept Commercialization/Implementation

Objective

A primary objective of the Centers of Excellence (CoE) within New York State is to support development of technology that can be commercialized or development of improved environmental management practices that can bring societal benefit. Thus, besides involving the development of a product that can be sold or a technology that could be patented, these projects may entail implementation of practices that lead to tangible economic gains to municipalities or resource users, possibly in the form of reduced costs. Unlike the seed funding program, these funds are intended for more mature projects that are near a commercialization or implementation phase.

Proposals should justify commercial viability and clearly define project steps and how they will be accomplished.

Eligibility

The key requisite to be eligible for this pool of funds is that an applicant must have 1:1 matching funds from a private sector partner, a federal grant (Clarkson Only) or internal (university) sources (e.g. investigator salary cost sharing or tuition for students). *[See “MATCHING FUNDS” section for details.]*

Additionally, the applicant must be proposing a technology or management approach related to water quality that is at the applied testing phase, such that further work could in the near term lead to commercialization or implementation of a new policy or management scheme.

Multiple PIs from both Clarkson and ESF are encouraged, but not required. A proposal may include a single PI from either Clarkson or ESF.

An individual faculty member may serve as the primary PI for only one proposal. However, any individual may serve as co-PI on multiple proposals.

Funds Available

Project budgets cannot exceed \$100,000 over the project period.

Allowed Expenses

Eligible expenses include student salary, tuition, supplies, equipment, project travel, and PI summer salary.

Funds **cannot** be used for basic research.

3. Education and Outreach

Objective

This funding category is intended to support projects involving K-12 education, community outreach, partnership building, or workforce development. Examples include providing research opportunities to underrepresented minority high school students in the fields of water science, creating a training workshop to build critical skills in a water-related field; or developing a workshop that builds industry-academic-government relationships around a water-related topic.

Eligibility

Multiple PIs from both Clarkson and ESF are encouraged, but not required. A proposal may include a single PI from either Clarkson or ESF.

Funds Available

Project budgets cannot not exceed \$30,000 over the project period (shared if proposal is between Clarkson and ESF).

Proposed budget must include line item description and amount of 1:1 matching funds. Matching funds must be equal to or greater than the funding request. *[See “MATCHING FUNDS” section for details.]*

Allowed Expenses

Eligible expenses include external partner expenses that directly support the project, student salary, summer salary for faculty, tuition, supplies, equipment, and project travel.

Funds **cannot** be used for basic research.

4. Grant Preparation

Objective

A primary goal of the CoE is to build new partnerships. Of particular interest are the creation of research centers or hubs that provide long term support for collaborative research and development among multiple partners. Writing proposals to obtain grants for hubs or centers is time intensive. The intent of this category is to provide support to PIs who are seeking to coordinate proposals for large grants (> \$1M). While not limited to these items, it could include support to a graduate student or postdoctoral helping write a proposal, support for course release, or summer salary.

Eligibility

Multiple PIs from both Clarkson and ESF are encouraged, but not required. If there are not PIs from both Clarkson and ESF, proposals must then include one or more partners or collaborators from external entities (i.e. business, lake associations). A PI from ESF or Clarkson does not necessarily need to be the lead entity on the grant, but they should play a sizable role.

Funds Available

Project budgets should not exceed \$20,000.

Allowed Expenses

Eligible expenses include external partner expenses that directly support the project, student salary, summer salary for faculty, funds for teaching release, tuition, supplies, equipment, analytical costs, analytical costs, and project travel.

MATCHING FUNDS

Proposed budget must include line item description and amount of 1:1 matching funds.

Matching funds must be equal to or greater than the funding request.

Matching funds can include:

- Cash and in-kind contributions from external partners, including federal funding agencies (for Clarkson only). In-kind contributions can include salary and fringe benefits.
- Faculty academic salaries, including indirect costs (15% for salaries and 15% for fringe for this grant) paid by Clarkson or ESF for percent of time working on the project.
 - Clarkson Academic Salaries have a 30.1% Fringe rate
- **For Clarkson only:** Student salaries, including indirect costs (15% for salaries and 15% for fringe for this grant) paid by Clarkson for percent of time working on the project.
[NOTE: ESF cannot use student salaries as a match.]
 - Clarkson Graduate students have 0% Fringe Rates
 - Clarkson Undergrads have a 7.65% Fringe rate only during the summer, 0% during the school year
 - Clarkson proposals **MUST** include the following language for anyone wanting to use undergraduate or graduate salaries from other awards for Cost Share: "I confirm that the [sponsor] award entitled, "...” project number "...” has project goals, expected outcomes, and project dates with enough overlap and congruency that I believe we can consider the [graduate student stipend/tuition and/or Undergraduate salary] funded by this project to also serve as matching funds for this CoE project proposal. I also confirm that this project has not previously and will not be used as matching funds for any other non-federal projects for this same time period."
- **For Clarkson only:** Graduate tuition paid through a federal or foundation grant, or the university, for graduate students participating on the project (related to industry). Budget must include the name of the agency that provided the grant.

With the exception of federal grants where match can be documented by the research office, matching funds (cash or in-kind) from partners should be stated in a letter of support from the partner and included with proposal submission. *[Sample "Third Party Cost Sharing Commitment" letter template is included in this RFP below.]*

If cost share commitment by 3rd party covers the entire proposed budget when there is both a Clarkson PI and ESF PI, separate cost share letters should be supplied by the 3rd party to outline match for Clarkson side, and separate letter to outline ESF side match to streamline institutional accounting.

REVIEW AND SELECTION CRITERIA

Proposals will be evaluated by an internal review committee composed of representative faculty experts from each campus who are not competing in this call for proposals, as well as a panel of external reviewers.

Proposals will be evaluated on the following criteria:

1. **Feasibility:** Does the project team have sufficient expertise and appropriate institutional resources (e.g. lab space, instrumentation, etc.)? Is the scope commensurate with the budget? Those who received prior CoE funding, was there a demonstration of impactful outcomes?
2. **Quality of Science/Relevance:** Does the proposal provide sufficient description to contextualize the proposed work within the broader state of knowledge in the field? If focused on workforce development, does it provide evidence of need for the training? Is the work timely and important?
3. **Economic Development Potential:** Is there evidence of potential for economic impacts? Examples could include matching funds from an industry partner (ideally from NYS), industry collaboration, technology transfer, workforce development, licensing and commercialization. Applicants should provide concrete details and measurable milestones for success in this area. This is a critical part of each proposal and should not be short changed.

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

1. **PROGRESS REPORTS** - Progress Reports **for all projects** are due to the CoE on December 31st and June 30th of each year. CoE will provide a report format.
2. **THIRD PARTY COST SHARE REPORTS** - External partners are required to complete and submit a **Third Party Cost Share Report** for both the **December 31st and the June 30th** internal due date of Progress Report periods detailing their contributions by budget lines. Form will be provided by CoE with reporting reminders.
3. **NYS ECONOMIC IMPACT** - New York State Economic Impact Forms must be completed by all external partners once a year, and are due with the June 30th Progress Report. CoE will provide the form template.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

Format:

- 1 inch margins
- 1.08 multi-line spacing
- 12 point Times New Roman font
- Number pages

Cover Page which includes items 1-6 (1 page)

1. Category of Funding
2. Ideal Funding Start and End Date
3. Project Title
4. Clarkson/ESF Team Members (names and contact information)
5. External Partners
6. Water research area addressed in proposal
7. Is this work of this project being supported by additional funding sources? If yes, please list or describe.
8. For those with prior CoE funding, include a brief description of prior project outcomes.

Project Description (< 2 pages for Seed and Education; 3-5 pages for Commercialization):*

- Problem Statement
- Objectives
- Tasks
- Project Impacts (summarize briefly here)
 - Social/Environmental
 - Business/Economic Development
- Expected Scientific Outcomes
- Expected Economic Development Outcomes

* For Commercialization proposals: include narrative providing overview of technology/management scheme, development history, current status, and next steps for commercialization. This section should clearly indicate how these funds will be used and the benefit of these funds in moving toward commercialization or implementation.

Budget and Budget Justification (<1 page)

Provide a table that identifies

- Primary budget categories (student pay, supplies, travel, etc.).
- Per CoE funding guidelines, 15% indirect cost needs to be applied to all personnel costs. For other costs, indirect costs have been waived.
- Travel is only allowed within NYS unless prior permission is given.
- Budget must include a column with line item description and amount of 1:1 matching funds. Matching funds must be equal to or greater than the funding request. [see “MATCHING FUNDS” section for details.]
- For proposals with more than one PI per institution, include % of effort for each PI and Co-PI for the project.

Budget Template Including Cost Share Identification to Attach to Proposal Submission as a separate Excel file attachment. Clarkson PIs to use Clarkson form. ESF PIs to use ESF form. If the proposals include budgets for each institution, put them on separate tabs of the same spreadsheet and upload just one Excel file.

- CLARKSON BUDGET TEMPLATE
 - https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-IBPVIG-9ZWU2P_EfW9eJeeJsm2WYd1L/edit?usp=sharing&ouid=113730857010100194335&rtpof=true&sd=true
 - Inquiries on budget specifics for Clarkson PIs, please contact proposals@clarkson.edu so that the Sponsored Research Services Pre-Award team can assist you.
- ESF BUDGET TEMPLATE
 - <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/15JzxvAdwiD4SyBvXNGpdOnzP5NaB22c5/edit?gid=832092510#gid=832092510>
 - Please email a draft of your budget to Morgan Bronner at ESFProposals@esf.edu for final approval before submitting your final proposal to the CoE. Inquiries on budget specifics may also be directed to this address so that the ESF Office of Research Programs can assist you.

Investigator CV

Provide a 2-page biosketch for each investigator following the [NSF](#) or similar format.

PAST FUNDED PROJECTS

See: <https://healthywaters.org/funded-projects>

THIRD PARTY COST SHARING COMMITMENT LETTER

[Date]

[Cost Sharing Source]

[Name]

[Title]

[Address]

[City], [State] [ZIP]

RE: Letter of Cost Sharing Commitment for Proposal [Title, Start Date]

Thank you for matching support in the amount of **\$0** as part of a [Seed/Commercialization/Education & Outreach/Grant Prep] project proposed to *NYS Center of Excellence in Healthy Water Solutions at Clarkson University and SUNY ESF* titled “[Project Title]” under my direction as Principal Investigator. In the event that the proposal is approved, the University must meet all matching commitments.

By signing this form, [Cost Sharing Source] agrees to supply an auditable record of **the above support to the institution by June 30th and December 31st** each year for the duration of the Project. You also confirm this cost share commitment has not nor will be counted or documented for any other awards.

Cost Share Sample:

Salaries	[\$xxx.xx]
Fringe Benefits	[\$xxx.xx]
Indirect Costs	[\$xxx.xx]
Equipment	[\$xxx.xx]
Materials & Supplies	[\$xxx.xx]
Tuition	[\$xxx.xx]
Travel	[\$xxx.xx]
Subcontracts	[\$xxx.xx]
Other	[\$xxx.xx]
TOTAL Match Provided	[\$xxx.xx]

Best,

[PI Name]

Copy to: [University's Sponsored Research]
Donna Kowal, Program Manager, NYS CoE in Healthy Water Solutions

Signature

Date

CONTACTS

PROJECT BUDGET INQUIRIES:

For budget creation inquiries please contact your institution's sponsored research representative:

- **Clarkson University Sponsored Research Services:** SRS Pre-Award team, proposals@clarkson.edu
- **SUNY ESF Office of Research Programs:** Morgan Bronner at ESFProposals@esf.edu.
ESF faculty should email a draft of your budget for final approval before submitting a proposal to the CoE.

COE CONTACTS:

Stefan Grimberg

Co-Director

Professor, Civil & Environmental Engineering, Clarkson University

grimberg@clarkson.edu

Stephen B. Shaw

Co-Director

Chair and Professor, Environmental Resources Engineering, SUNY ESF

sbshaw@esf.edu

Courtney Johnson-Woods

Business Development Manager

cwoods@clarkson.edu

Donna Kowal

Program Manager, Clarkson University

coe@healthywaters.org

Molly Schultz

Research Support Specialist, SUNY ESF

moschult@esf.edu

www.healthywaters.org



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