



Lake Washington/Cedar/Sammamish Watershed (WRIA 8) Salmon Recovery Project Innovation and Community Grants – Request for Proposals

September 2, 2025

Purpose of funding awards:

Salmon recovery requires inclusive, collaborative, and innovative approaches to developing projects and advancing programmatic initiatives. The WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council encourages proposals that support innovative projects that contribute to early stages of future capital project development and/or center equity and environmental justice in salmon recovery work. These funds provide an exciting opportunity to advance key aspects of salmon recovery by initiating project planning and development in priority areas of the watershed and fostering community-building and collaboration to meet multiple objectives.

Priority Project Types

With these grants, the WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council seeks to fund projects that fall into two categories:

1. Targeted project development
2. Equity and environmental justice

Descriptions of these project types and examples of potential projects are below.

Targeted Project Development

This category funds early phases of project development that will lead to capital projects supporting the recovery strategies listed below:

- Restore shallow-water rearing and refuge habitat and remove or reduce impact of overwater structures in Lake Sammamish and Lake Washington with a preference for areas south of I-90
- Reconnect and enhance creek mouths in the Sammamish River, Lake Sammamish, and Lake Washington with a preference for areas south of I-90
- Reconnect backshore areas and pocket estuaries in the Puget Sound nearshore
- Protect and restore cold-water sources and reduce thermal barriers to migration in the Sammamish River and Lake Washington Ship Canal
- Improve juvenile and adult survival at the Ballard Locks
- Reduce impacts of stormwater on salmon, including improving water quality and providing adequate streamflow in Tier 1 areas: Bear Creek, Issaquah Creek, the Sammamish River; Tier 2 areas: North Creek, Little Bear Creek, Evans Creek, and Kelsey

Creek; and select Tier 3 areas: Coal Creek and May Creek. Preference for Tier 1 and 2 streams but will also consider Tier 3 streams.

Examples of work conducted under this project type include:

- Feasibility studies
- Early phases of design work, including [community / landowner engagement](#) related to project development
- Working with private property owners to connect existing restored areas or identify restoration opportunities
- Integrating salmon recovery and stormwater management
- Habitat assessments
- Technical studies that inform project development
- Conceptual design

Equity and Environmental Justice

This category funds proposals that seek to center equity and environmental justice in salmon recovery and provide culturally appropriate and accessible opportunities and information for the watershed's communities. The WRIA 8 Salmon Recovery Council specifically seeks proposals that support authentic partnerships with Black, Indigenous and people of color, immigrants and refugees, and English language learners, or other communities that have been less represented in salmon recovery opportunities.

We are also seeking proposals that are related to salmon recovery and benefit communities located in a [King County Land Conservation Initiative opportunity area](#) or that support a healthy natural environment supporting salmon in an area identified on the [Washington State Environmental Health Disparities Map](#) as having high environmental health disparities.

Work conducted under this project type includes:

- Work with community groups on restoration and stewardship efforts
- Grow sponsor capacity to center equity and environmental justice in planning and projects
- Growing new partner organizational capacity
- Authentic relationship building and engagement with communities previously underrepresented in salmon recovery
- Projects that connect salmon recovery with local environmental and public health issues
- Use best available science for salmon recovery to develop model ordinances or inform local land use planning efforts that also align with equity and environmental justice
- Other work that connects communities to salmon recovery in the watershed.

Guidelines:

- Maximum award amount \$75,000
- Eligible applicants - cities, counties, tribes, non-profit organizations, special purpose districts, and state and federal agencies.
- Deliverables – presentation and/or written progress report that details the project’s objectives, expected outcomes, performance indicators and whether expected outcomes were achieved within the grant timeframe

Timeline:

- Release preliminary announcement of funding opportunity: September 2nd
- Release application and final evaluation criteria: September 2nd
- Applications Due: October 24th
- Selection Process: Late October – Early November
- Funding Recommendations Finalized: November 14th
- Approval by Salmon Recovery Council: November 20th
- Contracting: November - December
- Funding expires: June 30, 2027

Proposed Process:

Each member of the review team will read applications and score according to basic criteria:

Criteria for Project Development Awards			
#	Evaluation Criteria	Description	Max. Points
1	Project Approach	Proposals should clearly articulate an approach and scope grounded in an understanding of the way in which the proposed action will benefit salmon recovery, with clear goals and objectives. Does this proposal contain a clear description of the project approach, including identifying the issue the proposal seeks to address, outlining roles and responsibilities, and explaining the method of achieving the desired outputs?	10
2	Support for Salmon Recovery in WRIA 8 - Alignment with Recovery Strategies	Projects should align with key strategies for salmon recovery in the watershed. How well does this proposal align with specific recovery strategies identified in the RFP?	10
3	Likelihood of Success	Proposals that are feasible and demonstrate a higher degree of readiness for implementation are a higher priority for receiving grant funds. A component of readiness is identifying and demonstrating how risks or constraints to implementation will be managed. How likely is this	5

		project to succeed as described in the timeline identified? Is it likely to result in a feasible capital project?	
4	Partnerships and Engagement	Effectively reaching out to and involving the local community and key partners in project development, design, and implementation is important to the success of a project. This is especially true for projects with significant risks or constraints. Appropriate outreach and engagement will vary by project type, size, location, and identified risks/constraints. Are the appropriate partners identified and engaged in this work?	5
5	Cost Effectiveness	A project's cost effectiveness is based on the cost of the project relative to its anticipated benefits to Chinook. Do the benefits justify the cost and are they reasonable based on the work proposed?	5
		Total	35

Criteria for Equity and Environmental Justice Awards			
#	Evaluation Criteria	Description	Max. Points
1	Project Approach	Proposals should clearly articulate an approach and scope grounded in an understanding of the way in which the proposed action will benefit salmon recovery, with clear goals and objectives. Does this proposal contain a clear description of the project approach, including outlining roles and responsibilities, identifying tools used, and explaining the method of achieving the desired?	10
1	Support for Salmon Recovery in WRIA 8	Projects should advance salmon recovery in the watershed. Does this proposal contribute to salmon recovery in WRIA 8? How well does it align with the types of activities identified in the RFP?	10
2	Likelihood of Success	Proposals that are feasible and demonstrate a higher degree of readiness for implementation are a higher priority for receiving grant funds. A component of readiness is identifying and demonstrating how risks or constraints to implementation will be managed. How likely is this project to succeed as described in the timeline identified? Does the project team have experience	5

		working with identified populations and community partners?	
3	Equity and Environmental Justice	To what extent does this proposal contribute to advancing equity and environmental justice in the watershed?	10
5	Cost Effectiveness	A project's cost effectiveness is based on the cost of the project relative to its anticipated benefits to equity and environmental justice Do the benefits justify the cost and are they reasonable based on the work proposed?	5
		Total	40

Each member of the review team will read applications and score according to basic criteria described above.

The review team will evaluate proposals using the final criteria and meet to discuss and finalize scoring and proposed funding package. Funding Recommendations will be presented to Salmon Recovery Council for consideration in November.

Upon approval by the Salmon Recovery Council, WRIA 8 will enter negotiations with successful applicants to finalize contract scopes of work, terms and conditions. For grant awards, there is an expectation that sponsors will work with the WRIA 8 team on project or program development and implementation.