



Regional Centers of Excellence Application

The *Regional Centers of Excellence Initiative*, a program of the National Association of Regional Councils (NARC) in partnership with the U.S. Forest Service, promotes green infrastructure planning and projects at the regional level by supporting communication and peer-to-peer exchange among regional planning organizations engaged in this work. By identifying *Regional Centers of Excellence* with exemplary green infrastructure programs and facilitating peer-to-peer exchange, the initiative strengthens existing green infrastructure projects and catalyzes new efforts.

Grant Opportunity

NARC will award grants of \$5,000-7,500 to two regional planning organizations selected as 2010 *Regional Centers of Excellence (RCEs)* to enhance their outreach activities and serve as national models for regional green infrastructure planning and implementation. As an RCE, each recipient will inform other regions about the benefits of green infrastructure activities, particularly those with a focus on mitigating or adapting to climate change; managing wildland/urban interfaces with public lands; or, promoting regional livability through integrated planning. Activities eligible for grant funds include website enhancement, presentations at meetings and conferences, writing and distributing case studies and project profiles, and/or other communication or peer-to-peer exchange activities. Designation as an RCE provides regional planning organizations with national leadership opportunities, including access to NARC staff for technical assistance and information, as well as promotion on NARC's website and at NARC conferences.

Application Components

All proposals must be submitted by Wednesday, June 30, 2010 to Jenee Kresge at jenee@narc.org. Proposals should be no longer than five pages and include:

- **Description of the regional planning organization's green infrastructure project(s)**, including a brief description of the existing green infrastructure activities, including project status (e.g., complete or ongoing), project scope, and existing or expected outcomes and impact. You may provide links to additional project materials and outputs.
 - A project focus on mitigating or adapting to climate change; managing wildland/urban interfaces (e.g. gateway regions) with national forests or other public lands; or promoting livability and sustainable development through integrated environmental, transportation and land use planning is encouraged.
- **Description and qualifications of the regional planning organization**, including the region's basic geographic and demographic information, as well as background on the regional planning organization. Please also describe existing relationships and partnerships, peer-to-peer information sharing activities and grant administration experience that would qualify you to receive this grant.
- **Outline of the proposed RCE communication and peer-to-peer information sharing project**, including all tasks expected to be completed with the award.
 - The description should feature the RCE project's timeframe; audience, whether in-person (conferences, workshops, presentations) or virtual (improved website, virtual event); and expected impact (how many regions could be reached, nation/state/region-wide effort, etc.).
- **Budget for RCE communication and information sharing project, including any matching funds**, with costs allocated to general categories (e.g. staff time, supplies, travel costs). Please note grant expenditures are guided by federal grant requirements. See page 2 for more information.



Applicant Qualifications

Applicants must:

- **Be a regional planning organization** (e.g. COG, MPO, RPO, PDD, EDD, etc.).
- **Administer a green infrastructure project** (see below for more detailed definitions) that is ongoing or completed within the last year.
- Be willing to **attend NARC's 45th Annual Conference, June 12-16, 2011 in San Diego, CA**, to deliver a presentation on their green infrastructure program and RCE project.
Note that travel costs for staff directly involved in the project may be built into the RCE proposed project budget; please contact NARC with questions.
- **Complete the proposed RCE project before June 30, 2011**. While the project hopes to catalyze longer term efforts, RCEs should complete the activities listed in this grant application by this date.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

All proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- **Quality of green infrastructure planning and/or implementation projects to be shared**
- **Proposed RCE project's potential to reach peer regional planning organizations**
- **Relevant organizational experience and capacity**
- **Geographic and demographic diversity**
- **Reasonable and creative use of funds, including the availability of matching funds**

About Green Infrastructure

Green infrastructure is the network of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that are strategically planned and managed to conserve their ecological functions while also providing associated benefits to human populations. Please see [NARC's Green Regions Campaign website](#), the [U.S. Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry website](#) and the [Conservation Fund's Green Infrastructure website](#) for more information.

About NARC and the Forest Service

For more than four decades, **NARC** has advocated for building regional communities through the representation of multi-purpose, multi-jurisdictional regional councils (RCs) and metropolitan planning organizations (MPOs) that develop strategies for addressing complex issues like transportation, economic development, homeland security and environment. NARC has an active membership within the network of over 500 organized RCs in the U.S. that are involved in regional planning, development and implementation. The **Forest Service** manages over 193 million acres of National Forests, has the world's largest forestry research organization, and facilitates the conservation of state and privately owned forest land across the country. The Forest Service promotes the use of Green Infrastructure and Landcare to help conserve and manage public and private forest land that spans the urban to rural continuum.

Please contact Jenee Kresge at jenee@narc.org or (202) 986-1032 ext. 215 with any questions.

Notes

NARC requests the right to summarize existing green infrastructure and Landcare project descriptions provided within an application for use on our Green Regions website, www.GreenRegions.org, and in other related NARC green infrastructure and Landcare work.

From the USDA Forest Service: The grant awardee will be subject to all the terms and conditions of the original grant made to the National Association of Regional Councils by the US Forest Service and all modifications made thereto. In addition, as this is an award of Federal Assistance it is subject to the Office of Management and Budget OMB Circular A-110, Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Other Agreements with Institution of Higher Education, Hospitals and Nonprofit Organizations, as implemented by the United State U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Uniform Federal Assistance Regulations, 7 CFR, 3019; OMB Circular A-122, Cost Principles for Nonprofit Organizations; and OMB Circular A-133, Audits of Institutions of Higher Education and Other Nonprofit Organizations as implemented by USDA regulation at 7 CFR 3052. The OMB Circulars are available on the internet at www.whitehouse.gov/OMB/grants. Electronic copies of the CFR's can be obtained at the following internet site: www.access.gpo.gov/nara/cfr. If you are unable to retrieve these regulations electronically, please contact the Acquisition Management Staff, Grants and Agreements Office at 703-605-4870.