



Westchester County Soil & Water Conservation District
Room 420, 148 Martine Avenue
White Plains, NY 10601

Request for Proposals

Potable Projects for Tomorrow:

Grants Supporting School-based Environmental Projects

The Soil and Water Conservation District (the “District”) is seeking to fund a limited number of school-sponsored projects and educational initiatives related to Envirothon topics. Applications and proposals in response to this Request for Proposals (RFP) are **due by 4:00 pm on September 30, 2025** and should be e-mailed to **Matthew Castro at mvc1@wetschetsercountyny.gov**. Award letters are expected to be issued by the end of August, which provides the opportunity for a fall project. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2025.

Purpose

The District and Westchester County host the annual Westchester County Regional Envirothon. The Envirothon is an environmental education competition that engages students in hands-on, inquiry-based learning focused on environmental science and natural resource management. Students test their knowledge through oral presentations, aquatics, ecology, forestry, wildlife, and soils and land use. This important program helps to develop students’ skills, and provides an awareness for future careers in the environmental field.

To raise a greater awareness of the Westchester County Regional Envirothon, and to enhance the educational experience of students, this RFP seeks to implement projects and educational initiatives that align with Envirothon topics and learning objectives.

Eligibility

This funding opportunity is intended for Westchester County educators and schools teaching a 9-12 environmental science curriculum. Proposals should have a direct connection to the Envirothon’s topics of aquatics, ecology, forestry, wildlife, and soils and land use. However, annually the Envirothon has a “Current Issue” problem that speaks to a relevant environmental topic. Proposals that seek to address a current issue or need for the school will also be accepted. Priority will be given to applicants that have previously or currently participated, or plan to participate in the Westchester County Regional Envirothon.

Project Funding

Funding amounts will vary based on the scale and scope of the proposed project, but each proposal can receive up to One Thousand Dollars and No Cents (\$1,000.00) in funding. Funding may be used to cover direct costs for a specific project as identified in **Project Scope** below.

Applicants should be aware that these project funds are available on a reimbursement basis only, and that total project costs must be absorbed by the applicant up front. Reimbursements are issued upon receiving a budget report and receipts. If you are unable to cover the upfront costs of your project but would still like to apply, please provide an explanation as to your school's financial situation. If funding is awarded, Westchester County requires completion of a W9 as well as an EFT form – Westchester County can only pay by electronic fund transfers.

Project Scope

The Purpose of this RFP is to solicit proposals for projects or educational initiatives in the areas of aquatics, ecology, forestry, wildlife, and soils and land use. Proposals that seek to address a current issue or need for the school are also accepted. Funds will assist with reimbursing costs associated with teaching materials and environmental projects, which must be directly related to the aforementioned topics. Educators are encouraged to develop innovative, hands-on, and locally relevant projects (e.g., rain gardens) that inspire student engagement and deepen their understanding of environmental science. The following are examples of projects that teachers can fund through this program:

1. Educational Materials. Purchasing of educational resources to add in environmental educational activities such as an Enviroscope, curriculum guides, lesson tools such as forestry tape or compasses.
2. Field Trips and Experiential Learning. Costs associated with organizing field trips to local ecosystems, nature preserves, or waterbodies, for example.
3. Guest Speakers and Workshops. Funding to invite guest speakers, host or attend workshops/hands-on training sessions with environmental professionals. Presentations should be recorded and shared with the District to be posted publicly for others to learn from.
4. Nature-based Physical Projects and Initiatives. Constructing or creating school-based projects such as tree plantings, rain gardens, or organizing student-led environmental awareness campaigns related to sustainable practices like a composting club.

Application Procedure, Timeline and Requirements

1. Application Submission. An application should be requested from Matthew Castro, District Manager, at mvcl@WestchesterCountyNY.gov.
2. Proposal Submission. Schools shall submit a completed application form along with a written proposal outlining the details of the project/initiative and its intended value. Proposals must address aquatics,

ecology, forestry, wildlife, and soils and land use. Proposals that seek to address a current issue or need for the school are also accepted. Proposals for training or educational curricula should attach a more detail, including a written curriculum if available, to be supported by funding. Physical projects should include a description of the project and how it will be constructed, a site plan, budget breakdown, and timeline for implementation.

3. **Project Award.** Successful applicants will be notified following District review before the end of August.
4. **Contract.** An awardee must enter into a contract with Westchester County and the District to be eligible for receiving funds.
5. **Project Start.** Once the contract is executed, an awardee may begin purchasing supplies and implementing the project.
6. **Project Completion.** Awardees are required to submit a final report that should include a summary of outcomes, including student engagement, key learnings, how the project enhanced understanding of the Envirothon material, any metrics used to evaluate effectiveness, and any photos taken or recordings produced. More details will be included in the contract.
7. **Funding Reimbursement.** Reimbursements are issued upon receiving a budget report, necessary supporting documents, and a completed County voucher form. Processing and payment generally takes approximately three weeks.
8. **Press and Media.** All press and media materials generated by this project should be coordinated with the District. At a minimum, mention of the District and its logo should be included in all press and outreach materials.

District Responsibilities

The District is able to answer clarifying questions during the RFP process but is unable to provide direct feedback or support prior to award. The District will provide funding to an awardee, and during implementation, may provide some support and guidance when available and upon request.

If you have any questions and need further information or clarification, please contact Matthew Castro at Westchester County Planning Department (914) 995-4423.

All proposals shall be e-mailed to Matthew Castro, Principal Environmental Planner / District Manager, Westchester County SWCD at mvcl@WestchesterCountyNY.gov by 4:00 pm on September 30, 2025.