



REQUEST FOR LETTERS OF INTEREST

Long Island Water Quality Challenge

A STEAM Competition to Curb Nitrogen Pollution on School Grounds

An initiative of the Long Island Nitrogen Action Plan ([LINAP](#)), the Long Island Regional Planning Council ([LIRPC](#)) is requesting Letters of Interest (LOI) from Nassau and Suffolk County schools in grades 6-12 to develop Green Infrastructure innovations that can make an impact on reducing nitrogen pollution on school grounds. The goal of the Long Island Water Quality Challenge ([LIWQC](#)) is to promote project-based learning in Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics (STEAM) in Long Island schools, encouraging enthusiasm for STEAM learning and an interest in pursuing STEAM-related careers.

Project Details

Rain and snow flow over the streets, roofs, parking lots, and other hard surfaces, before directly entering a storm drain or waterbody. As the water travels, it picks up fertilizer, waste, and other pollutants along the way. The water can flow directly into a storm drain or waterbody, without the opportunity for a water treatment facility or soil and plants to filter out excess nitrogen. The goal of the Challenge is to create a green infrastructure design that aims to reduce nitrogen pollution from stormwater runoff on school grounds.

[Green Infrastructure](#) refers to a wide array of actions that restore, protect, and imitate the natural water cycle. Green Infrastructure uses soil, vegetation, and other natural resources to better control where rainwater falls and reduce stormwater runoff. By incorporating natural processes onto school grounds, green infrastructure can play a role in improving water quality on Long Island.

Green Infrastructure examples include [rain gardens](#), [planter boxes](#), [green roofs](#), [permeable pavement](#), [rainwater harvesting](#), and [bioswales](#). Student teams can build off an existing concept or create an innovation to improve water quality and reduce nitrogen pollution on school grounds.

Student teams will compete with the possibility of being awarded a grant up to \$2,500 to be used for implementation or partial implementation of the winning project design. Any NYS accredited school in Nassau and Suffolk counties that serve students in grades 6-12 is eligible.

Letter of Interest Submission

Prior to submitting the attached Letter of Interest form, student teams must review the LIWQC Overview video to better understand where nitrogen pollution comes from and how it impacts water quality on Long Island. Upon viewing the video, the attached Letter of Interest form can be completed, signed by the faculty lead, and returned by email to rtitus@lirpc.org. The Letter of Interest form is a fillable PDF or can be handwritten.

Communication

The LIRPC will answer questions prior to the project proposal due date. All inquiries and responses will be posted on the LIRPC website. A technical advisor will be available to answer questions throughout the proposal submission process. Contact Rachel Titus at rtitus@lirpc.org or 516-571-7613.

Final Project Submission

We recommend that all project proposals follow the Project Proposal Requirements. It is also helpful to follow the Scoring Rubric to earn as many points as possible.

Evaluation of Final Project

The Scoring Rubric will be used by the Selection Committee to review and score each project proposal. Teams will be evaluated according to grade category: 1) Grade 6; 2) Grades 7 and 8; 3) Grades 9-12.

Recognition/Award Presentation

Teams with the highest scoring project proposals will be recognized within each of the grade categories with the option to be awarded a grant not to exceed \$2500 for project implementation on school grounds. LIRPC will coordinate an award ceremony at each winning school. All students that participate in a winning team will receive *Certificates of Recognition*. Each participant that submits a proposal will receive a *Certificate of Participation*.

Project Schedule

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|----------------------|--|
| • September 22, 2025 | Request for Letters of Interest issued |
| • November 7, 2025 | Letters of Interest due |
| • February 6, 2026 | Final project proposals submitted |
| • March/April 2026 | Awardees Announced |
| • May/June 2026 | Awards Presented |

Helpful Links and Documents

- [Project Proposal Requirements 6TH-8TH Grades](#)
- [Scoring Rubric 6th – 8th Grades](#)
- [Project Proposal Requirements 9th-12 Grades](#)
- [Scoring Rubric 9th – 12th Grades](#)
- [Green Infrastructure Fact Sheet](#)
- [Resource Library](#)
- [LIWQC Informational Video](#)
- [LIRPC.org](#)

Information Contact

Rachel Titus

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Letter of Interest Submission Form

School: _____

Club or Class: _____

Grade: _____

Students: _____

Teacher/Advisor: _____

Contact Information: _____

Brief Description of Green Infrastructure Project Concept:

Each team should view the [LIWQC Informational Video](#) prior to submitting the Letter of Interest Submission. The team advisor/teacher's signature indicates that the team has viewed the Overview and is entering the Challenge. *The LOI is not binding; the school may withdraw from the competition at any time.*

Teacher/Advisor Signature: _____