

## **PROGRAM STATEMENT**

### **Technical Assistance Opportunity NBD2026**

Nature-based Design Technical Assistance Opportunity

#### **Issued by:**

Maine Office of Community Affairs

[Community Resilience Partnership](#)

Marquardt Building, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor,

32 Blossom Lane

Augusta, ME 04330

Issue Date: April 1, 2026

#### **APPLICATION DUE DATE:**

**FRIDAY, June 19, 2026; 5:00 P.M.**

All communication regarding this Program Statement should be sent to Casey Zorn, Lead By Example Project Coordinator, [Casey.Zorn@maine.gov](mailto:Casey.Zorn@maine.gov).

#### **Informational webinar: April 16, 2026; 12:00 p.m.**

Zoom Registration Link:

<https://mainestate.zoom.us/meeting/register/HVg6eV4NRiSXLscMQZjk7g>

A recording will be posted at: <https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership>



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## APPLICATION TERMS/ACRONYMS with DEFINITIONS

The following terms and acronyms, as referenced in the document, shall have the meanings indicated below:

Term/Acronym	Definition
<b>Department, MOCA</b>	Maine Office of Community Affairs
<b>CAG</b>	Community Action Grant
<b>Community</b>	A municipal government, Tribal Government, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Maine.
<b>CRP, “Partnership”</b>	Community Resilience Partnership
<b>CRRC</b>	The federal Climate Resilience Regional Challenge grant that is source of funds for this technical assistance opportunity
<b>Hybrid strategy</b>	Hybrid strategies, or hybrid nature-based strategies, are actions that combine engineered “grey” infrastructure with natural “green” systems to manage risks like flooding, erosion, and heat.
<b>Nature-based strategy, NbS</b>	Nature-based strategies are actions that protect, sustainably manage, and/or restore natural ecosystems to address vulnerabilities, such as those impacted by climate change, while simultaneously providing benefits for people and biodiversity.
<b>NBD opportunity</b>	The Nature-based Design technical assistance opportunity
<b>NEPA</b>	The National Environmental Policy Act
<b>NOAA</b>	The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration
<b>State</b>	State of Maine
<b>SVI</b>	Social Vulnerability Index

## Community Resilience Partnership Nature-based Design Opportunity

### SECTION 1. BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Application Purpose and Background

The Community Resilience Partnership at the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) is seeking applications from communities in Maine to participate in the Nature-based Design technical assistance opportunity as defined in this document.

The Nature-based Design (NBD) opportunity is a special technical assistance opportunity offered through the [Community Resilience Partnership](#) (Partnership). The Partnership provides grants and assistance to municipal governments, Tribal Governments, plantations, townships, or unorganized territories in Maine (“Communities”) for projects that reduce energy use and costs, transition to clean energy, and make communities more resilient to climate change impacts such as flooding, extreme temperatures, and public health risks.

The purpose of the NBD opportunity is to help Maine communities increase the resilience of high priority public land and property that is vulnerable to climate impacts through the development of preliminary engineering designs for nature-based strategies.

**The NBD technical assistance opportunity is not a grant. A successful application will not result in a funding award. Participating communities will receive technical assistance services as outlined in this Program Statement at NO COST to the communities.**

Historically, property owners have relied on engineered and hardened “gray” solutions when erosion, flooding, or other environmental hazards pose a risk to property and safety. Unfortunately, traditional hardened structures often prioritize short-term control over long-term ecosystem health and resilience, disrupting natural hydrology and disconnecting surrounding habitats. The use of hardened solutions, such as riprap or concrete stormwater control systems, can accelerate downstream erosion and reduce water quality, which often leads to increased long-term costs for maintenance or remediation.

Nature-based strategies (NbS), also known as nature-based solutions, are actions that protect, sustainably manage, and/or restore natural ecosystems to manage risks while simultaneously providing benefits for people and biodiversity. Where NbS cannot act alone to provide adequate protection, hybrid strategies can be developed that combine engineered “gray” infrastructure with natural “green” systems to manage risks like flooding, erosion, and heat. [Visit the Maine](#)

[Department of Environmental Protection's OURSHORE webpage to learn more about NbS in Maine.](#)

Through the NBD technical assistance opportunity, participating communities will receive direct support from a qualified engineering firm, who will provide a set number of hours to each community to develop 30% preliminary engineering designs for nature-based or hybrid strategies for one or more high priority public properties. Designs developed through this technical assistance will help prepare communities to seek additional design and construction funding to further develop these projects. Properties must be publicly owned or legally protected for public access through a mechanism such as an easement. Both inland and coastal property are eligible to be included in an application for the NBD opportunity.

Funding for the services advertised in this Program Statement is provided through the Resilient Maine project from the U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA)'s Climate Resilience Regional Challenge (CRRC), awarded in Fall 2024. This opportunity will adhere to the terms and conditions under this award, including compliance with environmental review under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

### **1.2 Eligibility to Submit Applications**

To be eligible for the Nature-based Design technical assistance opportunity, a community must be enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership.

There are two (2) eligible types of applicants for the Nature-based Design technical assistance offering:

- 1) Individual Communities, a municipal government, Tribal government, plantation, township, or unorganized territory in Maine, who are enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership.
  - a. Applicants may submit enrollment materials through the enrollment portal simultaneously with the application. (Unorganized territories, townships, and plantations are eligible and are strongly encouraged to work with a Service Provider to complete the enrollment process).
  - b. A Service Providers may apply on behalf of a community. A letter of support must be provided from the community.
- 2) Multiple Communities may apply jointly for projects that address mutual goals and have interrelated scopes of work.
  - a. All communities participating in the application must be enrolled in the Partnership at the time the application is submitted or submit enrollment materials through the enrollment portal simultaneously with the application.
  - b. Service Providers may apply on behalf of communities. Letters of support must be provided from each participating community.

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- c. In a multi-community application, the communities are required to designate a lead applicant. The lead applicant is expected to provide a community liaison and manage the contracting and reporting on behalf of the partner communities. The communities may wish to have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) that spells out the responsibilities of each community. If an MOU is established, the Maine Office of Community Affairs (MOCA) may request a copy of the document during the contracting phase.

A community may participate in no more than one (1) Nature-based design opportunity application in an application round. (Concurrent participation in a Community Action Grant or Track 2 Service Provider Grant application is allowed. [See CAG2026-7 Program Statement and SPG2026-7 Program Statement for more information](#)).

School districts, water and sewer districts, neighborhood associations, and similar entities are not eligible to be primary applicants and are encouraged to partner with a municipality or other eligible entity described above.

### **1.3 Cohort Size and Technical Assistance Duration**

The Community Resilience Partnership anticipates selecting seven (7) to ten (10) communities to receive the services laid out in this document, dependent on available funding and project size. The CRP will select communities and properties according to the criteria described in Section 2.2.

Participants are anticipated to be selected by early August 2026, with an expected start date on or after August 15, 2026. The technical assistance will span approximately one year.

### **1.4 Future Rounds**

The Community Resilience Partnership anticipates holding a second application period for the NBD opportunity in early 2027. Note that eligibility requirements may differ in future Program Statements for this technical assistance opportunity.

### **1.5 Cancellation Notice**

The Community Resilience Partnership reserves the right to cancel this Program Statement at any time.

### **1.6 Final Action on Selection**

Communities and projects selected through this competitive process are considered final and are not subject to internal agency appeal. Any person aggrieved by a decision may pursue judicial review according to the provisions of 5 MRS §§ 11001 – 11008 within 30 days of the selection announcement.

## 1.7 Contact information

Questions about this Program Statement should be sent via email to [Casey.Zorn@maine.gov](mailto:Casey.Zorn@maine.gov).

## SECTION 2. PROGRAM DETAILS

### 2.1 Description

The Community Resilience Partnership is seeking communities in Maine to participate in the Nature-based Design (NBD) technical assistance opportunity, which will provide each community with direct services from a qualified engineering firm to develop a 30% preliminary engineering design for nature-based or hybrid strategies for one or more high priority public properties.

These services will be provided at NO COST to the participating communities. (Note: Community participation by staff and/or volunteers is expected and is not reimbursable.)

### Eligible Projects

This technical assistance opportunity will provide participating communities with engineering design services for eligible projects. Each community will receive engineering services for a single project; however, the project may span multiple neighboring properties. Projects submitted for participation in the technical assistance opportunity must meet the following requirements and expectations:

**1. Property(ies) must be publicly owned or legally protected for public access.**

Properties submitted in an application for this technical assistance opportunity must be publicly owned or be protected for public access and benefit through a public easement, covenant, or other legal structure. Private property included in an application must serve a clear public interest. If an applicant includes private property in an application, the applicant will be required to provide a letter of support from the landowner and proof of public access protection.

**2. Project must be a resilience priority.**

Properties submitted in an application for this technical assistance opportunity must be a climate resilience priority for the community and/or region. Applicants must demonstrate that the property is highly vulnerable to climate-related hazards. Climate-

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related hazards may include flooding (coastal, riverine, or stormwater), erosion, or other risks caused by increased precipitation, more intense storms, and increased temperatures. Priority properties must already be impacted by climate-related hazards or applicants must have data that indicates urgency regarding the vulnerability of the property.

### **3. Project must be a community priority.**

Properties submitted in an application for this technical assistance opportunity must be an important public asset for the community and/or region. Priority projects might include properties that house critical services, enable access to high-use routes, or have economic or community value.

Priority project sites may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- A municipal property that houses critical services
- A public park or beach
- A priority road segment or access point
- A public boat launch or pier
- A lake or pond that is valued for recreation
- A river or stream segment with a high use walking path
- A river or stream segment that supports valuable species
- Agricultural land
- A high use parking area

### **4. Project must be suitable for a nature-based or hybrid design as developed through this technical assistance offering.**

Proposed projects must be suitable for nature-based or hybrid strategy approach. Proposed projects must also be appropriately scaled for the expertise and budget of the supporting engineering firm. Large-scale or highly complex projects may require more assistance than can be provided through this technical assistance opportunity. (See the Technical Assistance Deliverables section below for more information regarding the scope and scale of this technical assistance offering.)

Appropriate projects may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Shoreline stabilization design along inland water bodies and coastal shores
- Hybrid stream crossing/culvert replacement designed to StreamSmart standards with habitat connectivity

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- Low impact design practices to manage stormwater
- Raised road segment design with vegetated banks
- Redesign of failing hardscape installations (e.g., riprap) with hybrid strategies

### **Technical Assistance Deliverables**

Through this technical assistance opportunity, the engineering firm will provide each selected community with the following services:

- (1) Kick-off meeting with community
- (2) Site survey/assessment
- (3) Selection of key design elements
- (4) Preliminary cost estimate
- (5) Considerations for environmental assessment and permitting
- (6) 30% design drawing and report

On average, each community will receive approximately \$25,000 worth of engineering support. Designs will be developed to meet state standards and align with relevant state permitting.

### **Community Roles and Responsibilities**

To support the engineering firm's work, the community will provide the following:

- **Project Selection**  
The community will identify and describe a public project to include in an application for the technical assistance opportunity and, if applicable, will work with neighboring property owners to ensure support and coordination.
- **Community Liaison**  
The community will select a staff liaison to communicate with and support the engineering firm. The staff liaison will support the engineering firm by coordinating site visits, organizing public/staff presentations, and gathering requested historic documents and data, as needed. If the community's project requires extensive public input and support, the staff liaison will additionally help facilitate this process.
- **Community Engagement**  
The community will conduct public engagement activities related to the project, which may include the following types of activities:
  - Public displays that communicate the project's benefits;
  - Public events that educate residents on the benefits of nature-based strategies and climate resilience; and/or

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- Outreach activities that encourage community participation and engagement with the project.

CRP staff will help coordinate between the engineering firm and participating communities to ensure both parties uphold their respective responsibilities and the communities receive high quality service in a timely manner.

### **2.2 Application Guidelines and Required Format**

A complete and scoreable application for services will include the following components.

#### **A. Criteria 1: General Information and Eligibility**

Applicants must complete the following documents as part of their application:

- Application Cover Page & General Assurances
- Debarment, Performance and Non-Collusion Certification
- Eligibility and Applicant Information (see Section 1.2 above)

#### **B. Criteria 2: Community Characteristics**

Additional application scoring points are available for communities with small- and medium-sized populations and communities with high and medium social vulnerability.

Applicants should refer to the [Maine Social Vulnerability Index \(SVI\)](#) categorization information to complete the Community Characteristics section of the application form.

#### **C. Criteria 3: Project Identification & Alignment**

- Property Identification - List the property(ies) that are included in the proposed project. For each property, provide the name of the property, property address, and property owner. For any property not owned by the applicant, the applicant must provide a letter of support from the landowner. For any property that is not publicly owned, the applicant must include both a letter of support from the landowner and proof of legal protection for public access, such as an easement, covenant, etc.
- Project Description – Describe the project that the community envisions for this technical assistance opportunity. In this description, include the following details:
  - Size of property or area of concern
  - Property Use (Describe how the property is used and by whom.)
  - Progress to Date (Describe the steps that have already been taken by the community to improve the resilience of this site. This might include an

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alternatives analysis, temporary or short-term interventions in place, and any relevant plans/designs.)

- Type(s) of desired solutions, if known (This might include shoreline stabilization, hybrid culvert, low impact design, raised road with plantings, or other nature-based designs.)
- Public Input: (Describe steps that have already been taken by the community to engage the public on this project and describe what public input has been gathered to inform the development of a conceptual design.)
- Other Information (Provide any additional information that may be important for the project, not required.)

### **D. Criteria 4: Project Need**

- Resilience Need – Describe the type and severity of climate-related hazards that are impacting this site and what functions are impaired or at risk by the hazards. Describe how the technical assistance services might address the impact of these hazards on the project site. Climate-related hazards may include flooding, erosion, or other risks caused by increased precipitation, more intense storms, and increased temperatures. Priority properties must already be impacted by climate-related hazards or applicants must have data that indicates urgency regarding the vulnerability of the property.
- Community Need and Impact – Describe the importance of this project in terms of community impact. How will this project benefit the public? How will this project benefit underrepresented populations and/or community members particularly vulnerable to climate impacts? Is this a high visibility site that will encourage community engagement? Properties submitted in an application for this technical assistance opportunity must be an important public asset for the community and/or region. Priority projects might include properties that house critical services, enable access to high-use routes, or have economic or community value.

### **E. Criteria 5: Community Outcomes**

- Project Outcomes and Implementation - Describe how the community will incorporate project deliverables (30% engineering design) into community planning and budgeting. How does your community envision funding final design and implementation? Reference specific funding sources/opportunities, if known.

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- Project Management - Describe the roles and responsibilities that key staff will have in coordinating with the engineering firm. Identify the lead point of contact who will serve as the community liaison, communicate directly with the engineering firm and the CRP on this project, coordinate site visits and meetings, and provide historic documents and data.
- Community Engagement - Describe specific actions that will be taken to engage the community around this project. Engagement activities may include an open house, presentations, websites updates, newsletters, public meetings, etc.

**F. Appendix**

The appendix may include:

- Letters of support from municipal and county officials, local civic leaders, state legislators, participating department heads, or owners of neighboring properties
- Letters of support from landowners of properties submitted for participation that are not publicly owned but are legally protected for public access AND proof of legal protection
- Pertinent maps, imagery or other essential (brief) supporting documents

**2.3 Selection Process**

An evaluation team will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria below:

**Application Evaluation and Selection**

Scoring Criteria	Points Available
<b>Criteria 1: General Information and Eligibility</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Enrolled in the Community Resilience Partnership (CRP)</li><li>• Provides a minimum of one (1) property that is publicly owned or legally protected for public access</li></ul>	Pass/Fail

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<p><b>Criteria 2: Community Characteristics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <u>5 points</u> for a small (population less than 4,000) community or high social vulnerability.</li> <li>• <u>3 points</u> for a medium (population between 4,000 and 10,000) community or medium social vulnerability.</li> </ul>	<p>Up to 5 points</p>
<p><b>Criteria 3: Project Identification &amp; Alignment</b></p>	<p>35 points</p>
<p><b>Criteria 4: Project Need</b></p>	<p>35 points</p>
<p><b>Criteria 5: Community Outcomes</b></p>	<p>25 points total:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Project Outcomes and Implementation and Project Management (10 points)</li> <li>• Community Engagement (15 points)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Total Points</b></p>	<p><b>100 points</b></p>

For applications that demonstrate meeting the eligibility requirements in Criteria 1, the evaluation team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score the remaining Criteria sections shown above. The evaluation team will consider the suitability of each project for this technical assistance opportunity (i.e., does the project fall within the engineering firm’s areas of expertise and the NBD opportunity budget), the geographic distribution of the projects, and the diversity of project types.

**2.4 Application Deadline and Submission**

**A. Application Submission:**

Proposals are due by the time and date listed on page 1. Proposals must be submitted via the MOCA grant portal:

<https://maineofficeofcommunityaffairs.submittable.com/submit>.

Directions on how to create an account and use the grant portal for application submission can be found [here](#).

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For technical support, use the [Submitter Resource Center](#), or contact [Submittable Customer Support](#), your program lead at MOCA, or email [submittable.moca@maine.gov](mailto:submittable.moca@maine.gov).

Please plan ahead; CRP assumes no responsibility for delays caused by internet outages.

### **B. Submitting Question about the Program Statement**

Questions about this program statement and the application process may be directed to [Casey.Zorn@maine.gov](mailto:Casey.Zorn@maine.gov). Include the subject line “**NBD2026 – Questions**”

Responses provided by program staff should be considered advisory and are not a guarantee of a successful application.

Any responses deemed substantive and binding will be summarized and posted on the [Community Resilience Partnership website](#) on a rolling basis until May 22, 2026. It is the applicant’s responsibility to consult this summary.

### **C. Informational Meeting**

The CRP will host a virtual Informational Meeting concerning the Program Statement. See the Program Statement cover page for the date, time, and web link for the meeting.

The purpose of the Informational Meeting is to answer and/or field questions, clarify aspects of the Program Statement requirements, and provide supplemental information to assist potential Applicants in applying. Although attendance at the Informational Meeting is not mandatory, it is strongly encouraged that interested Applicants attend.

The meeting will be recorded and posted to the [Community Resilience Partnership website](#).

## **SECTION 3. TERMS & CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION**

### **3.1 Participation Agreement**

Communities participating in this technical assistance opportunity must enter into a written Participation Agreement with the Maine Office of Community Affairs.

### **3.2 Reporting Requirements**

Participating communities will be asked to complete a final report upon completion of the technical assistance opportunity. The final report will be due 30 days after the end of the technical assistance opportunity.

### **3.3 Public Records**

Following announcement of a selection decision, scoring and review notes for all submissions will be public records, available for public inspection pursuant to the State of Maine Freedom of Access Act (FOAA) ([1 M.R.S. § 401](#) et seq.).