NARRAGANSETT BAY ESTUARY PROGRAM

RWU Roger Williams UNIVERSITY

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Synthesis of Secondary Data to Describe the Social, Economic, and/or Environmental Condition of the Providence-Seekonk River Region

January 5, 2026

I. DEFINITIONS

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this Request for Proposal (RFP).

- Synthesis Activities include combining and analyzing data to provide updated or new information
- Secondary Data include data that has been collected previously
- Social, Economic, and/or Environmental Condition of the region includes the data needed to describe the current state of information or how the information has changed with time. Social, economic, and environmental refer to the purpose of the data. The data should inform how people live, work and play, and how that information relates to the natural ecosystem and resources in the region.

II. OVERVIEW

The Narragansett Bay Estuary Program (NBEP), through its host, Roger Williams University (RWU), is issuing this RFP for synthesis of secondary data to describe the social, economic, and/or environmental condition of the Providence-Seekonk River Region. Federal funding is provided under the NBEP. Projects funded via this request will advance implementation of NBEP's mission and its Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan (CCMP) and be responsive to its Research Plan. The specific purpose of this opportunity is to fund data synthesis describing the environmental and social conditions of the Providence-Seekonk River region. Approximately **$75,000 is available with a proposal due date of February 16, 2026, and an expected award notification date of April 1, 2026**.

In 2024, NBEP released its first Research Plan to direct limited funds, capacity, and time to priority, gap-filling local research and create a pipeline to new and exciting research and projects which will help address the complex questions impacting the region's water, wildlife, and quality of life. The Plan established the Coastal Urban Waters Research Collaborative (CUWRC), the initial efforts of which focus on the Providence-Seekonk Rivers and the surrounding communities. The Providence-Seekonk Rivers region includes two states (Massachusetts and Rhode Island) and touches 12 municipalities in Rhode Island and 6 in

Massachusetts. This area is home to over 706,000 people with 46% of the population living in underserved communities. Many management initiatives or interventions, including reducing heavy metals, nitrogen, and bacteria through better wastewater and stormwater management, and improving the coastline through habitat restoration, have occurred in the region.

A key component of the Providence-Seekonk River CUWRC launch was a literature review that collected and organized existing research for the Providence-Seekonk River region of Narragansett Bay. This review includes a literature and data resource database, synthesizes fundamental knowledge, and highlights gaps in understandings of regional socioeconomic and environmental conditions.

This RFP provides funding to fill gaps identified in the literature review and synthesize existing data to contribute to better understanding and management of the social, economic, and biophysical conditions of the Providence-Seekonk River region.

III. FUNDING DETAILS

A total of $75,000 is available. NBEP expects individual awards to range from approximately $30,000 to $75,000 and anticipates funding 1-2 projects. All funds are provided on a reimbursement basis. Match is not required. These funds expire on September 30, 2027 so all proposed work must be complete by that date, although 1-year project timelines are preferred.

IV. FUNDING TEAM

Financial Administration: RWU

RWU is NBEP's fiscal sponsor and will make formal funding awards, establish agreements, receive invoices, and provide reimbursement to awardees.

Project Oversight: NBEP

NBEP and its Grants Subcommittee will select projects, manage agreements, evaluate reports and deliverables, and provide technical assistance to awardees.

V. PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

Location

Projects must take place within the boundaries of the Providence-Seekonk River region as defined by NBEP's Coastal Urban Waters Research Collaborative (Figure 1). Please check this link to see if your project qualifies (click the magnifying glass on the right side of the map to enter an address, if needed).

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include state or local government agencies, tribes, interstate agencies, private non-profit organizations and institutions, and academic or educational institutions. For-profit organizations or individuals are not eligible to lead applications; however, they may be subcontracted by the applicant. Those eligible to respond to this RFP become a "subawardee" of RWU if selected for funding. Although multiple partners may be involved with a project, a single subawardee will be the recipient of funds, and partners receiving funds through the subawardee will be considered subcontractors. The subawardee has primary responsibility for the completion of all tasks, including those undertaken by subcontracted partners.

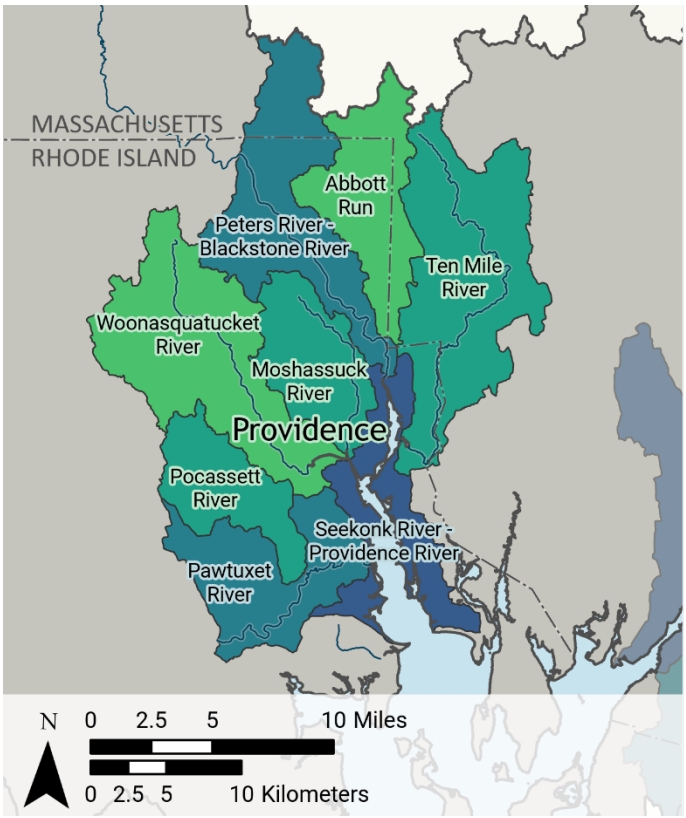


Figure 1: Providence-Seekonk River Region.

Please note that applicants must meet the following minimum requirements to receive and manage federal funds before funds are subawarded:

1. Organization is legally registered in its country of operations;
2. Subawardee has an active registration in SAM.gov and a Unique Entity Identifier (UIE) number;
3. Has or will adopt a financial conflict of interest policy prior to subaward, or agrees to use RWU's policy;
4. Has identified no reasons (local conditions, laws, or institutional circumstances) that would prevent an independent accountant from performing an audit of the organization;
5. The applicant organization is not subject to an active exclusion and not currently debarred, suspended, proposed for debarment, or declared ineligible for the award of contracts by any federal agency;
6. Accounting records can:
    a. separate the receipts and payments of an RWU award from the receipts and payments of the organization's other activities, and
    b. record expenditures on the RWU award according to budget categories such as salaries, supplies, travel and equipment;
7. Proof of Comprehensive General Liability and Workers Compensation insurance;
8. If the project involves purchasing, the organization has or will adopt a purchasing/procurement policy creating standards in the procurement of supplies and other expendable property, equipment, real property and other services, and;
9. If the project involves staff time, the organization can provide signed timesheets with invoices. Note that none of the funds appropriated in this RFP shall be used to pay the

salary of an individual at a rate in excess of Executive Level II ($225,700 per year for 2025).

RWU's Subrecipient Financial Questionnaire, which selected subawardees will be required to complete prior to award, provides more information on subawardee requirements. NBEP recommends that all applicants review the Questionnaire and contact NBEP with questions or concerns. NBEP and RWU will be available to assist selected subawardees in developing required policies and procedures.

Eligible Projects

Funds are intended to develop projects which synthesize data identified in the CUWRC literature review, as well as other data not identified, to describe the social, economic, and biophysical systems of the Providence-Seekonk River region.

Examples of eligible projects include (but are not limited to):

- Analysis of biophysical data to explore hydrodynamics, stratification, and channel flow
- Analysis of available social and economic data to understand coastal resource use
- Synthesis of data to explore how social, economic and natural systems are coupled
- Analysis of fisheries data to understand commercial and recreational fishing potential

Ineligible Projects

The following types of projects will **not** be considered:

- Projects requiring new data collection, including surveys
- Projects that synthesize data collected **only** outside of the Providence-Seekonk River Region. NBEP will consider proposals that synthesize data that space a broader region as long as the primary focus of the synthesis is the Providence-Seekonk River Region.

Match

Match is not required for this RFP and will not factor into project scoring. If match is included in a proposal, it must be tracked and included in financial reports and invoices. Match can be provided with cash, in-kind services, or a combination of both.

Deliverables

1. *Quarterly reports* delivered to the designated NBEP Project Manager no later than the 10th day of April, July, October, and January for the duration of the project. At a minimum, reports should include a summary of activities, problems and opportunities encountered, and activities planned for the next quarter. NBEP will provide a quarterly report template that outlines these and other reporting requirements.
2. *Final data outputs*, including any data that underlie the final report (e.g., data tables, data images, modeling outputs, ArcGIS layers).
3. *Final report in MS Word format* including a description of all project activities, results and conclusions drawn from data analysis, future avenues for inquiry, etc. NBEP will provide a final report template that outlines these and other reporting requirements.
4. *Approved final report in Adobe PDF format* following the incorporation of feedback from RWU and NBEP.

Deliverable Ownership

All deliverables funded under this RFP in whole or in part shall be made available to RWU, NBEP, and EPA. These parties shall have unrestricted right to use these materials.

Insurance Requirements

RWU and NBEP require subawardees to maintain insurance, including Comprehensive General Liability and Workers Compensation insurance, at all times for the term of the subaward at least at the minimum level as defined by the State of Rhode Island. More details on such insurance requirements will be provided to applicants selected for funding.

Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP)

A Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) is a planning document that provides the plan for obtaining the type, quantity, and quality of data needed to support environmental decision making. If a project is using data to make a decision, then a QAPP is needed. Environmental data include information collected directly from field measurements, produced from models, and compiled from other sources such as databases or literature and evaluated for a project. Data are defined as both natural and social science information collected and analyzed for a project. A QAPP is also needed when using or developing a computer model to aid in decision making.

The projects funded through this RFP are included under NBEP's existing Secondary Data QAPP for the development of its science updates. Projects do not need to develop a QAPP as part of their proposal.

Compliance with Subawardee Requirements

Subawardees must comply with the terms and conditions in their agreement with RWU, to include timelines for deliverables and reporting, as well as all EPA General Terms and Conditions.

VI. PROPOSAL SUBMITTAL AND EVALUATION

A two-step proposal process will be used for this RFP. Note that proposals will be eliminated from consideration that do not follow the two-step process, contain all information requested, or exceed the stated page-limit.

1. *Pre-proposal Consultation.* All project leads must discuss the potential project with NBEP's Staff Scientist to ensure the project is consistent with the CUWRC needs, NBEP's Research Plan, and CCMP. Be prepared to share a summary of the project potential data sources to be analyzed. Please reach out to Courtney Schmidt (Courtney.Schmidt@nbep.org) to schedule a virtual or phone meeting. **All pre-proposal consultations must be completed by February 9, 2026**.
2. *Proposals*. Note that proposals will be eliminated from consideration that do not contain all information requested or that exceed the stated page limit. Hyperlinks may be included in proposals, but the Grants Subcommittee is not obligated to review them. Minimum font size allowed is 11 point. The following information is required:

a. Cover letter. One (1) page cover letter, printed on official letterhead and signed by an authorized representative of the project applicant. The cover letter must state that you are applying for funds under this RFP and acknowledge that funding is provided on a reimbursement basis.

b. Cover page. One (1) page cover page using the format provided. For the Project Abstract, include text that fits within the provided area on the cover page (~200-word limit). Appendix 1 offers this cover page as a fillable .pdf or applicants may download the fillable form from NBEP's Forms and Guidance webpage.

c. Project Narrative. Up to five (5)-page text narrative that describes the:
   i. Project consistency with this RFP;
   ii. Expected tasks, outputs/deliverables, and outcomes;
   iii. Project timeline;
   iv. Project description, importance, and includes a list of potential data sources needed to complete the analysis;
   v. Expertise of key project participants in relevant subject areas and a description of the applicant/participants' successful completion of past projects similar to the proposed project;

d. Figures. Up to five (5) pages of maps, photographs, and other figures included as appendices.

e. Project Budget. One (1) page budget using the format provided as Appendix 2. The Project Budget provided as Appendix 2 is an example only; an editable MS Excel version of this sheet is provided separately on the NBEP website. The filled form should be saved and added to the final PDF file submission.

f. Budget Narrative. One (1) page summary narrative that provides a brief justification for the proposed costs in terms of completing project deliverables, an explanation of how indirect costs are calculated, description and justification for any subcontracts, and information on current and pending financial resources for non-federal cost share or matching funds that are intended to support the project. Note that entities intending to use a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate must provide documentation of their rate. Applicants without a Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement may include a de minimis indirect cost budget line not to exceed 15% of modified total direct costs. If match is offered, include a description of the committed cash and/or in-kind match. If letters, forms, or other formal documentation of match are available, please provide (these do not count toward the one-page limit).

3. *Submittal*. Submit your proposal and all supporting information as a single PDF document to Courtney Schmidt, Staff Scientist, at courtney.schmidt@nbeporg. If received successfully, you will receive an email from NBEP with the subject line "RFP Submission Confirmation" confirming your submission. **Applications must be received by 11:59pm EST on Monday, February 16, 2026**.

4. *Evaluation*. All proposals deemed complete and received by the deadline will be provided to the NBEP Grants Subcommittee for review, scoring, and pursuit of consensus funding decisions. This is an independent subcommittee consisting of NBEP Steering Committee members and other regional experts. The Project Scoring Sheet provided as Appendix 3 will be used to guide consideration of proposals by the subcommittee. Note that RWU and NBEP staff are not members of the subcommittee and will not participate in scoring. Note

that the Project Scoring Sheet is included for information purposes only and is not to be filled out by the applicant.

VII. FUNDING ADMINISTRATION

RWU's Office of Research and Special Programs will administer awards under this RFP. Once selected by the NBEP Grants Subcommittee, awardees will be notified in writing by RWU, and development of an agreement between RWU and the subawardee will begin. The funding team aims to have agreements in place for all awards by May 15, 2026 so expenditures can begin by that date. RWU will handle billing, reimbursement, any amendments, and other financial administration.

VIII. SCHEDULE

The schedule for this RFP is as follows:

RFP released	**September 30, 2025**
Pre-proposal consultation due	**February 9, 2026**
Proposals due	**February 16, 2026 11:59 PM EST**
Proposal review by Grants Subcommittee	March 2026
Subaward selections announced	~April 1, 2026
Agreements for subawards in place	~May 15, 2026
Earliest project start date	~June 1, 2026
Complete project work	~July 31, 2027
Funds expire	**September 30, 2027**

IX. PUBLIC INFORMATION

Since this RFP and subsequent awards are supported by federal funds, all materials submitted to NBEP may be made available for public review. RWU, NBEP, and EPA expect to use the abstract noted in Appendix 1 and quarterly reports to produce online updates and to post final project deliverables and reports on the NBEP website in the Resources Library and the Funded Projects Map.

X. CONTACT INFORMATION

RFP Questions
Courtney Schmidt,
Staff Scientist
NBEP
Courtney.Schmidt@nbep.org
(401) 633-0550

Financial Questions
Bob McCarthy, Research & Sponsored Programs
RWU
rmccarthy@rwu.edu
(401) 254-3552

XI. APPENDICES

1. Application Cover Page – fillable .PDF provided in RFP package, or download from NBEP's Forms and Guidance webpage.
2. Budget Format – example only; download an Excel template from NBEP's Forms and Guidance webpage.
3. Project Scoring Sheet—provided for information purposes only; not to be filled out by the applicant.

REPLACE WITH NEW FORM AFTER CONVERTING TO PDF

Please extract as a separate document or download from the NBEP website and attach to your application.

Project Title:

Project Location:

Project Applicant:

Applicant Contact Name: **Applicant Contact Email:**

Funding Request: $ **Match Funds: $**

Project Start Date: **Project End Date:**

Deliverables: (check all that apply)
☐ QAPP ☐ Data Tables ☐ Results/Analysis ☐ Next Steps ☐ Final Report
☐ Geodatabase ☐ Other: _____

PROJECT ABSTRACT

1. ☐ I acknowledge that funds provided through this RFP are awarded on a reimbursement basis.

Appendix 2: Budget

Visit the NBEP website to download an Excel version of this budget template

PROJECT BUDGET			
BUDGET CATEGORY *(add/remove itemizing lines below as necessary but do not delete major categories)*			**PROPOSAL REQUEST**
A. Personnel Total *(list individual names and titles below):*	Hours*	Rate*	$ -
B. Fringe Benefits_____**%** (e.g., 10% of total personnel costs)			$
C. Travel Total (estimate number/purpose of trips below):			$ -
D. Equipment Total (itemize below):			$ -
E. Supplies Total (itemize below):			$ -
F. Contracts Total (itemize below):			$ -
G. Other Total (itemize below):			$ -
H. TOTAL DIRECT COSTS (sum of rows A-G)			$ -
I. INDIRECT COSTS_____% of_____:			$
J. TOTAL PROJECT COSTS (sum of H-I):			$ -

*Timesheets will be required to document personnel costs for invoicing. If your organization cannot provide timesheets, please contact NBEP staff.

Appendix 3: Project Scoring Sheet. DO NOT COMPLETE, FOR INFORMATION ONLY

Project Title			
Project Applicant			
Funding Request		Match	
Reviewer Name			
Reviewer Organization		Final Total	0

Under Evaluation Criteria, unless otherwise noted, score each criterion from 0-3, where "0" does not meet the criterion or the criterion is not applicable to the action, "1" partially meets the evaluation criterion, "2" meets the criterion, and "3" exceeds the criterion. For each criterion, unless otherwise noted, multiply the Weight Column by the Score Column to create the Total Column, and then add the Totals to create the Final Total on the second page of the sheet. The Final Total should also be added above.

Screening Criteria*	Yes	No
1. The project meets the "Project Requirements" in Section V of the RFP.		

*If you answer 'No' to this criterion, do not further score.

Evaluation Criteria	Weight	Score	Total
1. Quality. Proposal cover, narrative, qualifications, and budget information are sufficiently detailed, realistic, and clear.	2		0
Reviewer Comments:			
2. Probability of Success. Project is well-conceived, strategy is reasonable and clear. Project is consistent with current scientific understanding of the problem and potential solution.	3		0
Reviewer Comments:			
3. Importance. The project addresses a gap or need identified by the NBEP Research Plan and CUWRC Literature Review, and highlights how the proposed analysis will fill that need.	3		0
Reviewer Comments:			
4. Benefits. The project will meaningfully address an aspect of the Providence-Seekonk River region; outputs will contribute to NBEP's future science updates (including status and trends)	3		0
Reviewer Comments:			
5. Collaboration. Project highlights collaborations with partners at an appropriate scale and scope, and include strategies and plans to share results and outcomes with end users	2		0
Reviewer Comments:			
6. Capacity and Function. Applicant has or will have access to the necessary expertise and capacity to carry out the project based on completion of projects of similar scope, duration, and complexity.	2		0
Reviewer Comments:			
		Final Total	0

Final Comments