



Illinois Clean Energy

community foundation

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NATURAL AREAS PROGRAM

As you start the application process to request a grant for a natural area land acquisition project, your first step is a letter of inquiry (LOI). You are strongly encouraged to call the Foundation to discuss your project with the program officer before submitting a LOI. In your three-page LOI, you should cover the following points about your project (if applicable):

Describe the natural area you wish to acquire:

- A description of the property you are seeking to acquire, including any significant habitat features of the natural area;
- What's the current status of the property (forest, wetland, prairie, etc.);
- A list of any local, regional or statewide plans that have identified the property as a conservation priority;
- A description of any other protected lands in proximity to proposed acquisition; and
- A list of other organizations interested in or supportive of your efforts to acquire the property, if any.

Describe the status of your acquisition:

- Status of your negotiations to acquire the property;
- The current property owner's name;
- An outline of your acquisition budget;
- How long do you anticipate it will take to close the acquisition? and
(Please note that requests for land acquisition funding should be submitted after a specific parcel has been identified and the owner of that parcel has agreed to sell the land to the applicant for a mutually acceptable price. Grant funds will not be released until land purchase prices are confirmed by an independent appraisal performed by a certified Illinois appraiser.)
- Availability of other funds to complete the acquisition and your progress in securing them.

Describe what will happen to the property if it is acquired:

- A description of the public access available on the property after the acquisition;
- A description of the long-term preservation strategy for the property (fee title held by your organization, fee title held by another entity, subject to a conservation easement, etc.); and
- If your organization will hold the property for the long term, describe how stewardship costs will be funded.

If this is your first application to the Foundation, please also provide:

- A brief description of your organization's mission and history;
- Your organization's annual budget; and
- A list of your board members.

If you have any questions about drafting the letter of inquiry, please contact Elizabeth Cisar, Program Officer, at ecisar@illinoiscleanenergy.org