

2025-2026 OCPR/OC Cisma Community Habitat Improvement Projects

CHIPs: Funding Guidance

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Overview

- 2026 funds are approximately \$150,000
- Average project costs are usually as high as \$8,000-\$12,000, or as low as \$1,500
- Projects should:
 - i. Improve regional biodiversity
 - ii. Prevent and/or control of invasive species on/in waterways
 - iii. Increase native landscaping in urbanized areas
 - iv. Increase green infrastructure in urbanized areas (tree planting, rain garden installation, etc.)
- Funds are not meant to be inclusive of all invasive species related projects, native planting projects (*etc.*), communities should strive to allocate dedicated funding to invasive species management and habitat improvement in addition to these projects, especially to maintain project sites





Overview Cont.

- Any municipality or Cisma member can apply
 - Can be completed on private or public lands but **applicant** must manage the project with Cisma
 - *E.g.*, Cisma will not coordinate directly with homeowners associations. They can apply via their local CVT though.
 - Projects can involve the same kind of project in multiple locations
 - *E.g.* Knotweed treatments across a community submitted as one project.
- Non-municipality and non-Cisma members
 - Private businesses/landowners/HOAs/non-member nonprofits, can apply but must have sponsored support from CVT staff
 - If the CVT is a Cisma member they must contact the Cisma representative for project support
 - Generally, must show a dedication to continuing non development/natural resources management on site
- Funds are not distributed directly to communities. *Projects* are funded and OC Cisma/OCPR will utilize county contracts/processes to execute work.
- OC Cisma will utilize a portion of funds for OC Cisma strategic goals
 - *E.g.* Phragmites/knotweed roadside treatments

Schedule

- Applications are open now!
- Projects submittal deadline **August 31st**
- Project selection announced in the **Fall**
- Projects must be completed within approved fiscal year (October 1, 2025 - September 30, 2026).
 - Projects/funds do not roll over

***If projects weren't fully completed for reasons outside of control, usually weather reasons – e.g. – Burns. We can pull projects in for the next year



What projects are eligible?

Each applicant can request up to 2-3 projects per category, generally we fund up to 2 projects per application organization.

- a. Biodiversity and Habitat Restoration
 - a. Treatment of early detection species (terrestrial and aquatic)
 - b. Prevention and control of invasive species on/in priority waterways
 - c. Prescribed burning
 - d. Education and outreach materials/signage
- b. Climate Resilience and Green Infrastructure
 - a. Native landscaping in urbanized areas
 - b. Green infrastructure installation in urbanized areas (tree planting, rain garden installation, etc.)
 - c. Education and outreach materials/signage



What projects are eligible?

bit.ly/chipsmaps



How projects will be selected

1. Municipalities/CISMA members will submit complete project requests
 - a. Provide as much information as necessary for complete context
 - b. Include a map (google, screenshot, define boundary of project area)
 - c. Be specific about project details (what you want to happen)
2. OC CISMA/OCPR staff will evaluate and initially subdivide projects to be completed by:
 - a. Staff (CISMA crew) OR
 - b. Contractors
3. Contractual projects will be quoted with OCPR existing blanket contracts
4. The Prioritized Project List sent to OCPRC in September/October for review and approval by the OCPR Commission



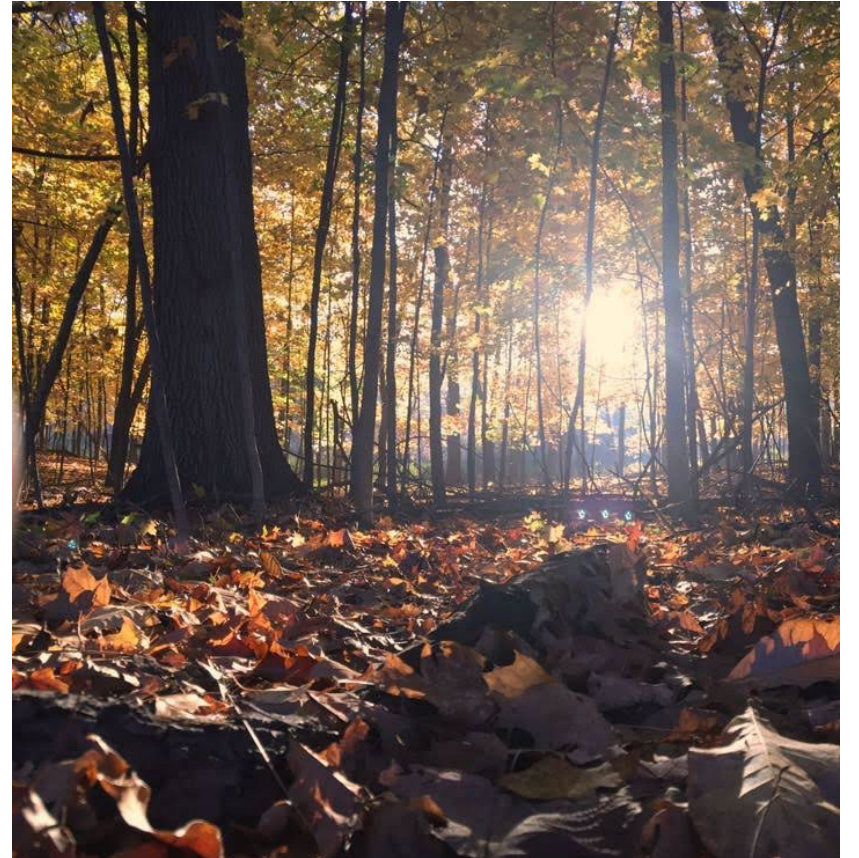
A close-up photograph of a forest floor. In the foreground, there is a dense layer of green moss. A small, bright green plant with a single leaf is growing out of the moss. To the right, there are some brown, fallen leaves. In the background, a thin, light-colored branch extends diagonally across the frame. The background is filled with out-of-focus green foliage, creating a sense of depth and a natural setting.

What gets funded?

- Projects will be approved/selected in the order they appear on the Prioritized Project List, up to the funding total
 - OCPD may right-size projects and maximize equity
 - Example: Unlikely to fund 2 huge projects vs. a smaller number of projects
 - If initially “selected” projects cannot be completed the next project(s) on the list will be funded.
- Initially approved/selected projects may not be completed due to factors outside of anyone's control (weather, contractor scheduling, etc.)
 - Those projects will be prioritized at the top of the following years list (no need to re-apply)
 - All other projects will need to re-apply

Applicant Responsibilities

- Reply in a timely manner to messages from OCPR/OC Cisma staff.
- Communicate and obtain necessary permissions from the property owner(s) and/or neighbor(s)
- Attend project walk throughs
- Complete project maintenance such as sign installation and maintenance, watering of seeds/trees/native plants and other maintenance (i.e. follow-up treatments).
 - Specific guidance about required maintenance for each project type will be provided.
- Promote the project funding source through installation of small signage provided by OCPR at the project location and promote the projects through newsletters, social media or other relevant communication channels.
- Provide photos of project before/after or progression in the following years



OCPR/OC CISMA Responsibilities

- Retain contractor(s) and provide all project related oversight in the areas of:
 - Bidding and payment
 - Permitting
 - Scheduling
- Follow best management practices
- Communicate schedule requests to applicants in a timely matter for approval and discussion



Project Examples

- A local city has garden beds in front of City Hall they would like to convert to a pollinator garden
 - Measure the area, seek internal approvals, apply for restoration funding
- 3 homeowners associations have complained about phragmites in their neighborhoods
 - Collect permissions from all affected landowners and apply for treatment funding
- A community trail would like to install boot brush stations at all their primary entrance points with signage
 - Ensure all landowners have provided permission and apply for prevention funding
- A public school wants to assist in restoration activities, school staff and city staff work together on seed ball creation/spreading activity in a restored woodland (real example!)
- You have something that looks “bad”
 - Call Patrick for a site visit! OC CISMA/OC Parks staff will help you scope projects and techniques



[Application form: bit.ly/chipsform](https://bit.ly/chipsform)

Questions

bit.ly/chipsmaps



bit.ly/chipswebpage

