

2026 INPS Research Grant: Explanation & Guidelines

The Illinois Native Plant Society Research Grant was developed to promote the conservation of Illinois native plants and communities through scientific research.

Availability of Funding

Research grants are available for funds up to \$3000 each.

INPS acknowledges the Central Chapter's contribution to the Research Grant Program to help fund a successful project to be implemented all or largely in the central Illinois region. (For a listing of the counties in the Central Chapter's region, see <https://illinoisplants.org/central-chapter-grant-info/>).

NOTE: APPLICATION DEADLINE IS JANUARY 15, 2026.

Eligibility

1. Any person, institution, or group conducting research on Illinois native plants can apply, with the exception of Illinois Native Plant Society State Officers and Board members. Only one Research Grant award will be given to any applicant.

2. Eligible research projects may include studies on Illinois native plants and communities (including those that are threatened or endangered), such as life history, reproductive biology, demography, genetics, community ecology, ecological interactions, threat impacts, analytic floristic inventories of a single site or multiple sites, and comprehensive surveys of priority* plant species.

*Priority plant species are listed at <https://illinoisplants.org/grants/>

3. Laboratory projects involving native plants are eligible.

4. Projects focused on **research** relating to education about or restoration of native plants and plant communities, including the effects of management practices, will be considered. However, INPS funds cannot be used for restoration projects, including seeds, plants, supplies or equipment, unless as an essential part of a research project.

5. Projects are limited to one year; multiple-year projects will not be funded, although extensions can be granted with appropriate justification.

Literature references or other reliable documentation must be included to demonstrate justification or need for the research project.

Special consideration is given to:

- student research or projects that involve students
- citizen science projects by qualified individuals
- projects involving qualified volunteers (e.g. students, interns, or citizen scientists)

- applicants who have not received funding in the prior three years through the INPS Research Grant Program
- projects conducted by non-profit individuals or organizations; however, applications from for-profit individuals or organizations will be considered based on the merits of the application. For-profit group applications involving partnerships with non-profit groups or individuals are given preference.
- projects having additional sources of funding, such as grants, although matching funds are not required

Consideration will be given to a geographic spread within the State among qualified projects. All projects must demonstrate how they support the mission of the Illinois Native Plant Society: *“The Illinois Native Plant Society is dedicated to the study, appreciation and conservation of the native flora and natural communities of Illinois.”*

Project Requirements

The project must be all or largely conducted in Illinois.

Projects which require a permit (e.g. scientific collector’s permit, endangered species permit, nature preserves special use permit, or permit to conduct research on federal, state, county, or local municipality properties) will not be considered unless copies of permit applications or copies of permits that are already in place are included as part of the application. For private property, documentation such as an email or letter permitting access is required. INPS will not submit permit applications.

NOTE: To facilitate the process of receiving permits from the Illinois Nature Preserves Commission (INPC), it is strongly recommended that applicants whose research will be conducted on an IL Nature Preserve or a Land and Water Reserve contact landowners simultaneously with submitting a permit application to INPC. INPC will not issue permits for Nature Preserves without landowner approval, for both public and private lands.

Travel expenditures cannot exceed Illinois standard rates for mileage, lodging and per diem as outlined in the *Instructions for Completing the Application*, Item 10.

Budget: Stipend

Grant funds cannot be used to displace Principal Investigator [PI] or other staff institutional salaries or for institutional indirect costs; however, up to \$1000 is available - for the PI only or shared with a Co-PI - for compensation for time and effort over and above regular salary. If, however, contractual services of a qualified individual or entity are needed for specific tasks the PI lacks the resources to perform, the stipend must be decreased accordingly so that a maximum of \$1000 is applied toward stipend and contractual services combined. Funds apart from the stipend or stipend/contractual services can be used for project assistants such as interns. The PI is responsible for distributing any funds to the Co-PI, contractor, or other assistants.

Budget: Matching funds are not required; however, matching funds from other sources, such as grants or volunteer hours that support the project (excluding grantee salaries and institutional indirect costs) will merit consideration.

Budget: Equipment purchases with a value of \$150 or greater must be described specifically in the application budget. (Technically equipment purchases of this value would be the property of INPS; however, upon request of the grantee, the equipment is usually allowed to stay with the grantee.) Receipts are not required except for equipment valued at \$150 or greater.

Application Process and Funding Cycle

1. Proposals are due by **January 15, 2026**. They must include copies of any permit applications or copies of permits already in place. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered. Proposals must be in PDF format: one PDF for the application proper and a second PDF to include all attachments. These documents are to be submitted to the Grant email: grants@illinoisplants.org
2. Permits, and private landowner letters of permission to access (if applicable), must be in place before funding is released.
3. Confirmation of receipt of application will be made by email upon submission.
4. Applicants will be notified by March 15, 2026 of the outcome of their application – whether successful, successful providing certain conditions are met, or unsuccessful with explanation. 50% of grant funds will be disbursed to successful grant recipients by separate USPS mail, upon fulfilling the conditions described below in # 5. and # 6. The PI is responsible for providing funds to any Co-PIs or assistants included in the budget.
5. Successful recipients will be asked to confirm via email (grants@illinoisplants.org) that they agree to accept funding, and that they will comply with the award criteria as outlined in these Guidelines, with the project proposed in their application, and with any stipulations for revisions requested by the grant reviewers.
6. Approved projects are considered contractual arrangements between the Illinois Native Plant Society and the individual or group who submitted the application – the PI. Following receipt of the confirmation email by INPS, recipients will be sent a contract to be signed and returned to INPS for the President's signature.

On the contract, recipients are asked to provide a Social Security number or, if applicable, an institutional Federal Employer Identification Number (FEIN), and also to provide the name, address and phone number of the person or entity who is to receive the funds. When the contract is completed and fully signed by the President, it will be resent to the grantee and a check for half the grant amount will be issued by the Treasurer.
7. INPS will issue a 1099-MISC federal tax form to grant recipients in January of the year following receipt of \$600 or greater in the previous year.

Final Report Requirements

1. A final report must be submitted electronically by March 15, 2027 to the Grant email: grants@illinoisplants.org (Single PDF format, to include report, all attachments and a budget report). The report should use format of a technical report or a manuscript for publication and

should include: Abstract, Introduction, Materials and Methods, Results, Discussion and Summary sections. If the project is a part of a thesis, dissertation, or publication in preparation, draft sections of these documents are acceptable as a stand-alone report, provided the draft includes a results section that demonstrates the grantee fulfilled all Research Grant requirements. A budget report must be included to demonstrate alignment with the budget submitted with the original application. A receipt for any equipment greater than \$150 in value must be submitted. Volunteer hours contributed should be reported. PDF must be entitled: Last_First_2026_Research Grant Report Title (or abbreviated title).

1A. Grantees undertaking floristic inventories must provide an analytic component to their report. This could include community analysis and comparison (e.g., species richness or abundance compared to similar sites), native vs. non-native richness, a Floristic Quality Assessment (FQA), etc.

1B. Grantees undertaking comprehensive surveys of priority species must provide detailed descriptions of each population surveyed, including a population size estimate, threats, and species associates.

2. At least five color, high quality, digital images depicting the study species, project site, project activities, or other aspects of the project must accompany the final report as five separate JPEG files (not included in the main PDF). Photo titles must begin with the PI's last name followed first name and by a brief description of the image. Unless the grantee requests otherwise, these images may be used for INPS digital media and marketing materials, such as the INPS website or *The Harbinger*.

Upon approval of the report the remaining 50% of funds will be issued, but not before January 2027.

3. Grantees must submit a short, popular-type article to the INPS member newsletter, *The Harbinger*, or to an INPS Chapter newsletter, local newspaper or conservation newsletter, within three months of project report submission. The article should describe the project, its results, its importance to native plant understanding/conservation, and how the project supports the INPS mission. Locations of Endangered or Threatened species should not be included in these articles, or on any social media platforms such as iNaturalist. If the project is suitable, recipients are encouraged to submit an article to INPS's professional journal, *Erigenia*, or another peer-reviewed journal, to fulfill the publication requirement. In the final report, grantees must provide the name of the publication, whether the article has been submitted, or when the article is expected to be submitted.

4. Links to any future publications or popular articles resulting from the grant project (apart from those appearing in *The Harbinger* or *Erigenia*) must be sent to the INPS Grant email grants@illinoisplants.org. Unless the grantee requests otherwise, these may be referenced or linked on the INPS Grants website or social media sites, with appropriate credits or permissions given.

5. All publications and presentations resulting from the project funded by an INPS Research Grant must include a statement acknowledging that the project was funded all or in part by the Illinois Native Plant Society Grant Program.

PIs of successful grants will be invited, as complimentary guests, to present **their completed and approved** research project at the INPS Annual Gathering and are also encouraged to present to a local INPS chapter meeting or to another conservation group. PIs are also offered complimentary membership in INPS for the year after their project is completed and final report approved.