

1. Name of Organization	2. Project Title:
City of Milwaukee Environmental Collaboration Office	Water Centric City 2020: Sharing Our Water Story and Accelerating Action
3. Brief Summary of the Project: <i>Please include: 1) the problem the project intends to address, 2) the activities your organization will conduct for this project, and 3) the outcomes you hope to achieve and the expected impact on Lake Michigan water quality. Your summary should fit in this box. Please note that this document will be shared with the trustees of the Fund for Lake Michigan.</i>	
<p>Water has been an essential part of our identity from the beginning: communities settled here because of it, our history was shaped by it, and our future depends on it. But when people from around the country hear about Milwaukee, many times they have no impression at all—not positive, not negative, but a blank slate. They may mention beer or cheese, but there is seldom recognition of the water that makes these industries possible. We turned our back to the water for decades and are left with a community and a global reputation that fails to acknowledge our strongest assets. But Milwaukee is in the midst of a renaissance with dedicated local leaders working to revive our watersheds and the communities within them. As we unite around these resources and establish ourselves as a uniquely Water Centric City, we are redefining our community norms and fostering the next generation of environmental stewards. But in order to continue on this trajectory, we are in need of dedicated staff to coordinate and catalyze these collaborative efforts. At the confluence of three great rivers pouring into the largest freshwater resource on the planet, we're not just the Midwest but a vibrant coastal city and we believe that's a story worth sharing.</p>	
<p>We are requesting support for our Water Centric City Coordinator and two student interns to implement the Water Centric City plans we developed in 2019 with the Fund's support. These projects specifically include:</p>	
<p>1. An interactive walking tour called “the Current,” to connect the historic RiverWalk to the Global Water Center and the UWM School of Freshwater Sciences. Milwaukee is preparing to face the global stage in an unprecedented way, providing an unparalleled opportunity to create an engaging visitors' experience around water. ECO organized a design workshop to generate conceptual designs including a native species art scavenger hunt, decorative route markers, painted crosswalks, and a water exhibit in the Convention Center. Your support would fund permanent educational signage and the significant staff time required to implement a project of this scale.</p>	
<p>2. The Plastic-Free MKE Movement. Each year, 22 million pounds of plastic flow into the Great Lakes, half of which is in Lake Michigan alone. In collaboration with local environmental organizations and community groups, we created the Lake Friendly Certification Program to help local businesses make the switch to reusable, compostable, and recyclable service ware. In 2020, ECO will facilitate strategic development and expansion of the Certification, conduct outreach for the City's new straw regulations, create an educator's toolkit with volunteer educators, and promote more sustainable public events.</p>	
<p>3. Implement the City's Green Infrastructure Plan which sets the goal of adding 36 million gallons of stormwater storage. The Plan identifies Milwaukee Public Schools and other City-owned properties like libraries as priority collaborations, to create healthier and more equitable environments for local families to live, work, and play. The Plan also directed the creation of a new Green Lots program to provide one-time grants to implement green infrastructure and landscaping projects on commercial properties. In 2020 we will work with other City departments to simplify the permitting process and provide more accessible avenues for commercial green infrastructure in the future.</p>	
<p>4. Support and communicate the City's role in Area of Concern projects. From translating an alphabet soup of acronyms to distinguishing between an ever-growing list of water projects and action plans, water issues are increasingly difficult to communicate to the general public. As larger sediment removal and habitat projects take shape, ECO is committed to helping the Milwaukee Blue Crew and AOC teams shape and convey that narrative, however most needed.</p>	
<p>5. Craft a narrative to communicate the projects embodied under the Water Centric City umbrella to neighboring communities. The full impact of the Water Centric City Initiative is in its reproducibility—we double our impact every time we share our program with other communities and successfully inspire them to take similar steps. Our two student interns will do this through website updates, new outreach materials, and social media campaigns.</p>	