

One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants

Request for Proposals

March 28, 2024

Request for Proposals (RFP) General Information

The Clean Water Fund was established to implement part of Article XI, Section 15 of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams in addition to protecting ground water and drinking water sources from degradation. The appropriation language governing the use of these funds is in Laws of Minnesota 2021, 1st Special session, Chapter 1, Article 2, Section 6 (i) and Laws of Minnesota 2023, Chapter 40, Article 2, Section 6 (i). These funds must supplement traditional sources of funding and may not be used as a substitute to fund activities or programs. Final funding decisions will be dependent on the actual funds available. BWSR is currently making approximately \$1,000,000 available. Consistent with the legislative goal of a full transition to watershed planning by 2025, BWSR anticipates this will be the final RFP for One Watershed, One Plan Planning Grants.

Proposal Guidelines

Proposals must be in PDF format and will be submitted electronically via: BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us.

1. Proposals are subject to a five-page limit, minimum font size 11 pt.
2. Proposals must include a one-page map of the watershed (maps are not included in the page limit) in PDF format. The map may be letter, legal, or ledger size and should identify the planning boundary, the boundaries of the planning partners, and any requested changes to the boundary. The One Watershed, One Plan Suggested Planning Boundaries, including a geodatabase, can be found in the Boundary Framework section of <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan-policies>
3. Proposals may be submitted by one or more of the eligible local governments on behalf of others in the watershed area. Respondents should demonstrate that a sufficient commitment exists to implement the project through a supporting motion or resolution from the board of each identified participant. A formal agreement between participants establishing a partnership to develop a plan will be required prior to execution of the grant agreement. If participants are unable to establish a formal agreement and work plan within six months of successful grant notification, the grant may be rescinded, and funds redistributed.
4. A cost estimate is a requirement for the project proposal. The final grant amount for successful respondents will be determined upon completion of a grant work plan and detailed budget. No cash match will be required of grant recipients.

Grant Execution

Successful respondents will be required to complete a planning agreement and submit a detailed budget and work plan prior to execution of the grant agreement. For template agreements, work plans, and budgets, contact julie.westerlund@state.mn.us.

Policies for participating in the program as well as additional resources for planning, can be found at: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/one-watershed-one-plan>. Successful respondents will be subject to the versions the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures* and the *One Watershed, One Plan - Plan Content Requirements* that are in place when planning grants are approved.

Project Period

The project period starts when the grant agreement is executed, meaning all required signatures have been obtained. Work that occurs before this date is not eligible for reimbursement with grant funds. All grants must be completed by June 30, 2027.

Payment Schedule

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the designated grantee for the planning region. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement, provided the grantee is in compliance with all BWSR website and eLINK reporting requirements for previously awarded BWSR grants. The second payment of 40% of the grant amount will be paid once the grantee has provided BWSR with notification and BWSR has reconciled expenditures of the initial payment. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met, the grantee has provided BWSR with a final financial report, and BWSR has reconciled these expenditures.

Incomplete Proposals

Proposals that do not comply with all requirements, including incomplete or missing proposal components, may not be considered for funding.

Clean Water Fund Project Reporting Requirements

1. All grantees are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of Clean Water Fund grants. All BWSR funded projects will be required to develop a work plan, including detail relating to the outcome(s) of the proposed project. All activities will be reported via the eLINK reporting system. Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing this activity. For more information go to <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
2. BWSR Clean Water Funds will be administered via a standard grant agreement. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules and established policies. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient.
3. When practicable, grantees shall prominently display on their website the legacy logo. Grant recipients must display on their website either a link to their project from the Legislative Coordinating Commission Legacy Site (<http://legacy.leg.mn>) or a clean water project summary that includes a description of the grant activities, including expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes (www.bwsr.state.mn.us/cleanwaterfund/stories/)

4. When practicable, grantees must display the legacy logo on printed and other materials funded with money from the Clean Water Fund. The logo and specifications can be found at <http://www.legacy.leg.mn/legacy-logo>
5. Grantees may be required to document local involvement in the plan development process to demonstrate that the grant is supplementing/enhancing water resource restoration and protection activities and not supplanting traditional sources of funding.

Grants and Public Information

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the proposal deadline is reached. At that time, the name and address of the grantee, and the amount requested becomes public. All other data is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee is completed. After the evaluation process is completed, all data (except trade secret data) becomes public. Data created during the evaluation process is nonpublic until the negotiation of the grant agreement with the selected grantee(s) is completed.

Conflict of Interest

State Grant Policy 08-01, (see <https://mn.gov/admin/government/grants/policies-statutes-forms/>) Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making also applies to BWSR grantees. Grantees' conflicts of interest are generally considered organizational conflicts of interest. Organizational conflicts of interest occur with any of the following scenarios:

1. A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties.
2. A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.
3. A grantee or potential grantee has an unfair competitive advantage through being furnished unauthorized proprietary information or source selection information that is not available to all competitors.

Submittal

All responses must be electronically delivered to: BWSR.Grants@state.mn.us and must be received no later than 4:30 p.m. June 14, 2024. Late responses will not be considered. The burden of proving timely receipt is on the respondent.

Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Development Proposals

To propose a watershed area, describe the qualifications of interested respondents. Responses should address the items in selection criteria #1 (see below).

1. Provide a general watershed map of the proposed planning boundary (map may be separate from the written information). If the proposed planning boundary deviates from the [1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries](#), provide a brief narrative of the reasons for the deviation, and whether all partners and affected or potentially affected partners in adjacent planning boundaries concur with the revised planning boundary.
2. Provide the name for your watershed planning boundary. Each planning partnership determines the name for the planning boundary (prior to participation in the program, boundaries are only numbered).

3. In consideration of the local government units (LGUs) within the boundary, provide a table with a list of all counties, soils and water conservation districts, watershed districts, and watershed management organizations, and the percentage of the jurisdictional land area of each local government within the boundary. The table must include:
 - a. Whether each LGU is a required participant (see section II of the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*)
 - b. Indication of interest of each LGU (e.g. verbal, letter, resolution, etc.) or why a given LGU is not interested
 - c. Name and contact information for the primary staff contact(s) for each LGU

Proposals may also list potential or confirmed optional participants as described in the *One Watershed, One Plan Operating Procedures*. For a list of required participants and land percentages for planning boundaries shown on the *1W1P Suggested Planning Boundaries*, contact julie.westerlund@state.mn.us.

4. Describe technical information data sources for surface water, groundwater, and land management (plans, TMDLs, models, targeting tools, WRAPS, landscape stewardship plans, etc.) that will help inform the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
5. Describe the capability (experience with plan development, project and consultant management, facilitation, etc.) and availability (ability to commit time to the effort) of staff and local officials to participate in plan development.
6. Describe how the planning partnership will leverage each partner's watershed management capacities and strengths (e.g. current water programs, areas of expertise), and how completing the plan will result in better resource outcomes and collaborative implementation approaches, shared services, and acquiring non-local funds for implementation.
7. Describe discussions among the partners within the boundary regarding the plan development process (the minimum requirement is that initial discussions have taken place, not that decisions have been made).
 - a. Potential governance structure for the planning effort (e.g., memorandum of agreement/joint powers collaboration or joint powers entity)
 - b. Roles and responsibilities for the planning effort (e.g. administrative lead, fiscal agent, plan writing and facilitation consultants, etc.)
 - c. Cost estimate (the cost estimate must include a 10% contingency amount)

Selection Criteria

All complete proposals submitted by the deadline will be reviewed by BWSR staff, with assistance from an inter-agency review committee. The successful respondents will be selected by the Board of Water and Soil Resources based on:

1. Responses to questions in this RFP, considered as follows (failure to include information that addresses each of the elements below will be considered an incomplete proposal):
 - a. Inclusion of general watershed map and description of any boundary changes consistent with question 1.
 - Minimum: map (including proposed boundary changes if applicable) included with proposal

- b. Inclusion of a name for the watershed planning boundary consistent with question 2.
- c. Inclusion of a table of local government information consistent with question 3.
 - Minimum: indication of support from required participants
 - Minimum: potential optional participants have been identified and invited
 - Preferred: resolution of support, specific to the proposed planning boundary, signed by required participants
 - Preferred: optional participants have responded to invitation to participate
- d. Pertinence of existing studies, plans, and information consistent with question 4 to the development of the comprehensive watershed management plan.
 - Minimum: the group has discussed and identified existing data, plans, and reports that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
 - Preferred: the group has discussed and identified models and tools that will be used to develop a prioritized, targeted, and measurable plan
- e. Demonstration of the partnership’s readiness and commitment to planning together, based on early discussions of: capability, availability, and commitment to plan together, a shared understanding of one another’s current work and strengths, and a vision for future watershed management that includes better resource outcomes and improved use of existing and future funding, consistent with questions 5 and 6.
 - Minimum: the group (staff) has met to discuss staff capability and availability for planning, information about capacity and strengths present in each partner
 - Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) demonstrates that a majority of participants are committed to ongoing collaboration and contributing resources to developing the plan.
 - Highly Preferred: the group (staff and governing bodies) has shared information about one another’s current plan priorities and local programs and has discussed a common vision for the future management of the watershed.
- f. Demonstration of understanding of the scope of work required for development of a comprehensive watershed management plan, consistent with questions 6 and 7.
 - Minimum: group has discussed administrative roles.
 - Preferred: potential policy members have been identified and have met; MOA is drafted.
 - Preferred: group has a clear vision for developing the plan (e.g., relative contributions of partners and/or consultants)
 - Highly preferred: MOA is signed by all participants

2. Recommendation of BWSR staff.

BWSR Grant Administration

BWSR reserves the right to provide funding to any and all proposals based on the number of eligible proposals submitted, anticipated staff time requirements, and the amount of funding available.

Timeline

- March 28, 2024– Proposal period begins
- June 13, 2024 – Proposal deadline at 4:30 PM
- June – August – Proposal review
- August 29, 2024 - BWSR Board approval of planning grant recipients
- March 14, 2025 Work plan submittal deadline
- Plans submitted to BWSR by June 30, 2027

Questions

For more information concerning the request for proposal, contact BWSR's One Watershed, One Plan Coordinator: Julie Westerlund, julie.westerlund@state.mn.us or 651-600-0694.