



Grant Activity at BWSR

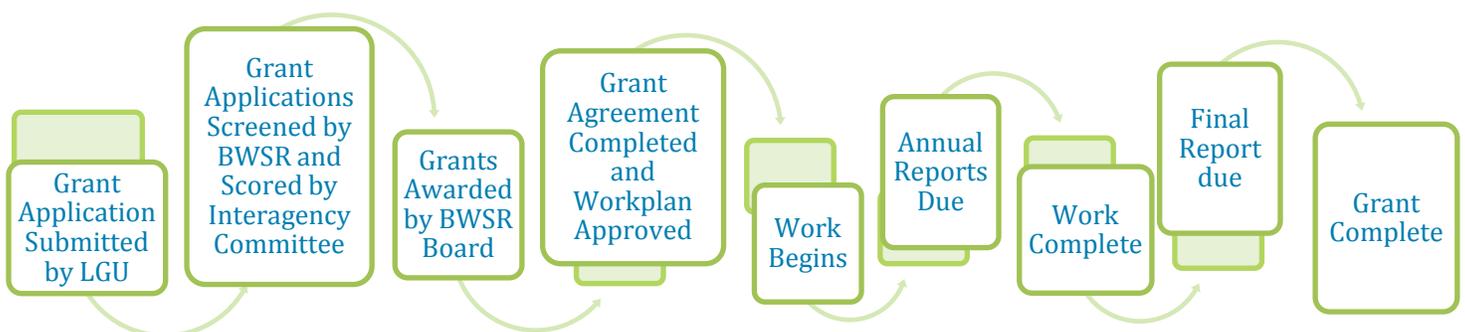
January 2014 Snapshots

A large portion of BWSR's business activity includes grant making to our local government unit (LGUs) partners. BWSR administers two different types of grants. Competitive Grants, such as those funded through the Clean Water Fund, are awarded through an application process. Non-competitive grants, such as Natural Resource Block Grants, are awarded to LGU partners annually.

To track the spending and progress of these grants, grant agreements between BWSR and the LGUs receiving funding are developed. A grant agreement between BWSR and the LGU receiving the funding must be developed and signed by both parties. For grant agreements that require a work plan, development and approval of the work plan is concurrent with the process of executing the grant agreement. These grant agreements help BWSR to provide accountability and transparency to Minnesota taxpayers, the legislature, and other interested parties by defining the terms of each grant. A grant agreement will define the start and end dates of the grant, grantee responsibilities, and guidelines for submitting reports and requesting amendments.

COMPETITIVE GRANT PROCESS

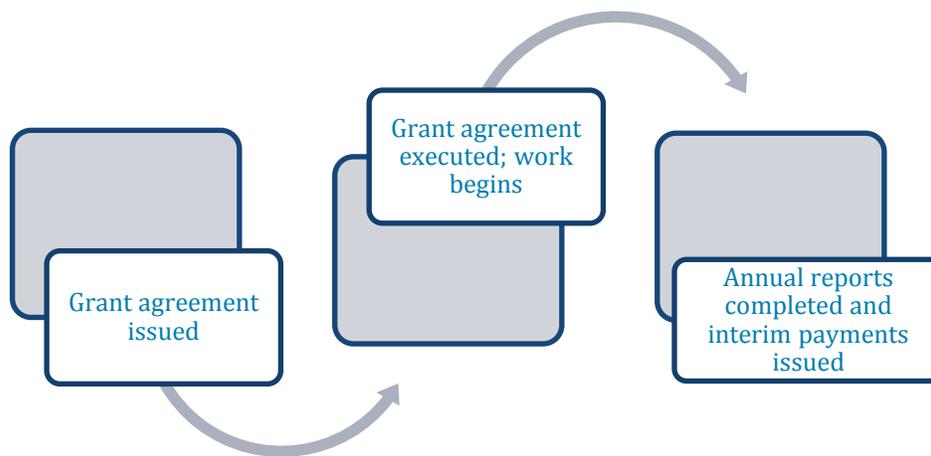
Competitive Grants, such as those awarded through the Clean Water Fund cycle, are often used by LGUs to complete specific projects or repair problems. In 2013, BWSR awarded 112 CWF grants totaling \$18,342,362 to Minnesota LGUs. While most Clean Water Fund grant agreements are three years in length, the full competitive grant process--from application to closeout--can add an additional six to nine months to the duration. During the grant period, annual reporting is required to provide accountability and trigger interim payments.



BWSR's competitive grant process

NON COMPETITIVE GRANTS

BWSR also administers a large number of non-competitive grants, including the Natural Resource Block Grants and the State Cost Share Program. The funds for these non-competitive grants are appropriated from the State's general fund, and are used for implementing state mandated programs as well as addressing specific resource concerns. Non-competitive grants help "provide consistent funding and stability to our LGU partners so that they can implement legislative mandates and keep local conservation projects moving forward. In FY2013, BWSR allocated more than \$22 million to LGU's in non-competitive grants. The full cycle of a non-competitive grant agreement—from the date the agreement is issued to final closeout—is between two to three years.



BWSR's non-competitive grant process

In general, the both the competitive and non-competitive grant processes are smooth ones, and ongoing improvements are made to make the process as efficient possible for both BWSR and LGUs. In 2013, BWSR debuted a new biennial agreement which requires one executed grant agreement for two fiscal years. By requiring only one executed agreement for two consecutive years of grants, BWSR will be able to get funding to LGUs faster and with less paperwork.

BWSR staff do their best to make sure LGU partners have up to date information as they need it. At the 2013 BWSR Academy, grants and compliance staff hosted a training session called "So...You're Getting A Grant." The session, attended by 30 LGU staff, highlighted important and sometimes misunderstood details of a standard grant agreement, decoded some of the legal language, and allowed new and veteran LGU staff alike an opportunity to ask questions.

Of course, unforeseen circumstances can prevent grantees from fulfilling the terms of a grant agreement. Amendments to the original agreement can be made, but must be made prior to the expiration of the agreement.

For more information on grants administration, including a comprehensive grants glossary, please visit BWSR's Grants Administration Manual at <http://bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/manual/>.

