

RIM Application Guidance

Required Components and Instructions

This document contains a summary of the application materials required for all RIM programs except for the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). See the following website for guidance on submitting a CREP application package: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/mn-crep-swcds>

A complete RIM application package should include the following items:

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| 1. Conservation Easement Application | 6. Map(s) with Aerial Background |
| 2. Area Assessment Form | 7. GIS Shapefile of Easement Boundary |
| 3. Program Scoresheet | 8. Current Property Deed(s) |
| 4. Conservation Easement Financial Worksheet | 9. Entity Documents (Trust, Partnership, LLC, Corp.)* |
| • Standard RIM Rate CEFW | 10. Agreement Information Form (AIF) |
| • Tax Assessed Calculation CEFW | 11. W-9 for Easement Payee |
| 5. Parcel Report(s)* | |

**Submit when applicable*

RIM application materials can now be uploaded securely online through SharePoint. If you do not already have a SharePoint account set up with BWSR Easements, email bwsr.rim@state.mn.us.

Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) staff should refer to the following instructions when preparing a RIM easement application package.

1. Conservation Easement Application

- Select the correct program using the drop-down menu near the top of the form. If unsure which program to select, contact the BWSR program manager for your region.
- The estimated acreage and payment on page 1 must be taken directly from the Conservation Easement Financial Worksheet (CEFW)
- The applicant should fill out the Landowner Questionnaire to ensure accuracy (Page 2 of App.)

2. Area Assessment Form

- Must be filled out and signed by SWCD staff to record observations during initial site visit.
- SWCD staff should indicate the public water resource or wellhead protection area to be protected by the easement.

3. Program Scoresheet

Each RIM program has a separate scoresheet, which must be completed and submitted with the application. Scoresheets can be found on each program's webpage: <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/what-programs-are-available>. Contact the BWSR Program Manager with questions on scoresheets.

4. Conservation Easement Financial Worksheet (CEFW)

There are two versions of the CEFW form, one for easement payments that are calculated using standard RIM rates based on average Township tillable land values, and one for easement payments that are calculated using a property's tax assessed value. See application form to determine the correct CEFW for each program (programs that use a tax-assessed value CEFW have an asterisk on the application).

- [Standard RIM Rate CEFW](#)
 - The correct program must be selected from the “**Easement Type**” drop down menu to ensure the payment calculation is correct.
 - Rates are calculated annually using average Township tillable land values and are locked in at the time of application submittal. BWSR will provide the SWCD with updated rates each year, typically in March.
 - Public waters located within the easement boundary must be shown as “Donated Land.”
- [Tax Assessed Calculation CEFW](#)
 - The correct program must be selected from the “**Easement Type**” drop down menu to ensure the payment calculation is correct.
 - Complete a separate line item for each county parcel that the proposed easement lies within (one line for each Parcel Report)
 - The “**Assessor's Land Value**” should correspond with the taxable value of the land for the pay year that matches the calendar year in which the application is submitted, as listed on the Parcel Report. List the value of the land only. Do not include the value of any buildings or improvements. The rates calculated from this value are locked in at the time of application submittal.
 - If the application is submitted near the end of the calendar year, the applicant may use either the current pay year's value or the upcoming pay year's value.
 - See [Conservation Easement Financial Worksheet-Tax Assessed QA](#) for detailed guidance.
 - If you are unsure which value to use, contact BWSR easement acquisition staff.
 - The “**Assessor's Acres**” must be rounded to the nearest hundredth and correspond with the parcel size stated on the Parcel Report. If the acreage stated on the parcel report is different than the measured size of the parcel in GIS, BWSR staff may request additional information upon review of the application.
 - The “**Easement Acres**” must be rounded to the nearest tenth and the quantity cannot exceed the “**Assessor's Acres**” for that parcel, as listed on the Parcel Report.
 - Public waters located within the easement boundary must be shown as “Donated Acres” near the bottom of the CEFW.

5. Parcel Reports (if applicable)

- Only required if program uses the **Tax-Assessed CEFW**.
- Must submit a separate Parcel Report for each parcel the proposed easement boundary lies within.
- Look for the current calendar year's “pay year value” on the parcel report, which was determined based on the prior year's assessment. For example, the 2026 “pay year” value is the same as the 2025 assessed value.
- If you are unsure which information to look for on the Parcel Reports, contact BWSR easement acquisition staff.
- See [Tax Assessed CEFW Calculation Q&A](#) document for additional guidance.

6. Map(s) with Aerial Background

Each easement application must include at least one aerial map with the following information identified:

- Boundary of the proposed easement area(s).
- All rivers, streams, ditches, lakes, etc. Include the name or number designation.
- Section corners and/or center of section clearly identified.
- All known utilities including: pipelines (natural gas, petroleum, etc.), power/telephone/internet lines that run across, or along the edge of, or under the proposed easement area.
- Building sites, current, abandoned, or future building sites adjacent to the easement.
- Conservation easement numbers and boundaries of any adjacent BWSR conservation easements.
- If the easement is not adjacent to a public road right-of-way, provide an existing or proposed access route location.

If submitting a wetland restoration application, consult that particular program's guidance for a list of additional required maps and information.

7. GIS Shapefile of Easement Boundary

- The GIS shapefile of easement boundary should be a polygon feature projected in the NAD 83 UTM 15N coordinate system. The minimum required files are .shp, .shx, .dbf, and .prj.
- Submit one shapefile of the entire proposed easement area. Do not divide the easement area into multiple shapefiles or features of individual fields.
- The GIS shapefile must be submitted through SharePoint with the other application materials.

8. Current Property Deed(s)

- Copies of the current property deed(s) are required to confirm the legal name of the current owner(s) of the easement area. The applicant name used on all RIM application materials should be the same as the primary landowner name listed on the deed(s).
- The legal description on the deed(s) must encompass all of the lands within the proposed easement area. Please review the deed's legal description to verify ownership prior to submitting the application package to BWSR.
- Must be a copy of recorded deed(s) and show at least one year of ownership.
- If the deed references a plat or subdivision, obtain and include a copy of the plat map with the application package.
- If one of the owners on the deed is deceased, obtain and submit a copy of the death certificate.
- Potential types of deeds include but are not limited to the following:
 - **Warranty Deed** – this is the most common type of deed used in real estate transactions. With this deed the grantor warrants that he or she has good title to the property being transferred.
 - **Quit Claim Deed** – this deed is used when the grantor does not warrant that he or she has good title to the property being transferred. It only conveys the interest that the owner has in the property.
 - **Contract for Deed** – note that both the buyer and the seller on a contract for deed will be required to sign the RIM Agreement and Easement document.
 - **Trustee's Deed**
 - **Probate or Personal Representatives Deed**

9. Entity Documentation (if applicable)

If the landowner is an entity such as a Trust, Partnership, LLC, or Corporation, additional documentation is required to confirm the name(s) and title(s) of the individuals signing on behalf of the entity. The documentation required for each entity type is outlined on the following pages.

- **Trust Documents:** If a landowner listed on the deed is a Trust, the application package must include a notarized Certificate of Trust OR the Trust Agreement document (and any amendments), either of which must include the following information:
 - Full name of the Trust, which should match the property deed
 - Full name(s) of current Trustee(s), indicating which/how many Trustees are authorized to act on behalf of the Trust
 - Language confirming that the Trustee(s) have the authority to convey real estate on behalf of the Trust

Note: If the landowner is an **Irrevocable Trust**, they must not be prohibited from owning and operating Farmland under the MN Corporate Farm Law. The landowner may contact the MN Department of Agriculture to determine if MDA certification is required: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/minnesotas-corporate-farm-report>

- **Partnership Documents (GP, LP, LLP or LLLP):** If a landowner listed on the deed is a Partnership, the application package must include the Partnership Agreement document, stating the official name of the Partnership (which should match the deed) and outlining the names, authorities, and responsibilities of all partners.

If the Partnership Agreement does not clearly delegate an authorized signer or decision maker, all partners will be required to sign the forthcoming Agreement and Easement documents. Ask the landowner if the names of the partners stated in the Partnership Agreement are current and accurate. If not, they will need to provide additional documentation to indicate the names of all current partners.

Note: If the landowner is a Limited Partnership (LP) or Limited Liability Limited Partnership (LLLP), they must not be prohibited from owning and operating Farmland under the MN Corporate Farm Law. The landowner may contact the MN Department of Agriculture to determine if MDA certification is required: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/minnesotas-corporate-farm-report>

- **Limited Liability Company Documents (LLC):** If a landowner listed on the deed is an LLC, the application package must include the following:
 - The LLC's Operating Agreement or Member Control Agreement which indicates the title(s), member(s), or name(s) of the individual(s) that have the authority to make decisions and/or to sign documents on behalf of the company.
 - If the above does not clearly outline the name(s) of the individuals who *currently* have this authority, then the landowner will also need to provide meeting minutes or a written action from within the last year, clearly designating this authority, and signed by the appropriate members.

LLC Notes:

- The LLC must be registered with the **Minnesota Secretary of State** and their registered name should match the property deed. Questions on this process should be directed to the [Secretary of State](#).
- The LLC cannot be prohibited from owning and operating Farmland under the MN Corporate Farm Law. The landowner may contact the MN Department of Agriculture to determine if MDA certification is required: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/minnesotas-corporate-farm-report>

- **Corporation Documents (business names ending in “Inc.”):** If a landowner listed on a deed is a Corporation, the application package must include the following:
 - **Bylaws:** If the Articles of Incorporation do not clearly outline the name(s) of the individual(s) or member(s) authorized to make decisions and/or sign documents on behalf of the corporation, the landowner must also provide the Bylaws.
 - If the above documents do not clearly outline the name(s) of the individuals who *currently* have this authority, then the landowner will also need to provide meeting minutes or a written action from within the last year that clearly designates who has the authority to sign on behalf of the corporation. This document must be signed by the appropriate members.

Corporation Notes:

- The Corporation must be registered with the **Minnesota Secretary of State** and their registered name should match the property deed. Questions on this process should be directed to the [Secretary of State](#).
- The Corporation cannot be prohibited from owning and operating Farmland under the MN Corporate Farm Law. The landowner may contact the MN Department of Agriculture to determine if MDA certification is required: <https://www.mda.state.mn.us/business-dev-loans-grants/minnesotas-corporate-farm-report>

10. **Agreement Information Form (AIF)**

The first page of the AIF captures the **Grantor Information**, which should correspond with the most recent recorded property deed(s). The second page of the AIF captures the **Payee Information**, which should correspond with the W-9 submitted with the application (discussed more below).

- **AIF Page 1: Grantor Information**
 - Type or legibly print the exact names of all grantors as shown on the property deed(s) in the spaces provided under Grantor Full Name(s). In real estate transactions the name(s) must be listed exactly as shown on the deed; this includes any middle initial or middle name. If a grantor's name is now different from the spelling on the deed, list the grantor's current or correct name followed by either AKA (also known as) or FKA (formerly known as) and then the grantor's name as shown on the deed.
 - You must indicate the marital status of all grantors listed on the deed in the spaces provided on the AIF. Always consult directly with the landowner(s) to obtain marital status information since the information on the deed may not be current. If currently married, the spouse's name must be listed on the AIF (on the same line as their spouse) even if the spouse is not listed on the deed. Spouses are required by law to sign any real estate document.
 - If the proposed easement area has been purchased by landowner(s) who own the property via a contract for deed, list, under Grantor Full Name(s), both the buyers and sellers of the property (along with their spouses) as identified in the contract for deed. Please list the buyer (landowner applicant) first.
 - If a Grantor is an entity such as a Trust, LLC, Corporation, or Partnership, or if a different individual has the legal authority to sign on behalf of a Grantor, indicate the name(s) and title(s) of the person(s) who plan to sign under the *Individuals Signing on Behalf of Grantors* section of the AIF.

- **AIF Page 2: Easement Payee Information (top section)**

- The primary Easement Payee must be one of the easement Grantors listed on page 1 of the AIF (i.e. a landowner who is listed on the current deed). Include the address where the Grantor would like the check to be mailed.
 - As discussed below under number 11, a signed W-9 form is required for the primary Easement Payee listed on the AIF.
- Easement Co-Payee(s), if any, will later be included on the check for the easement payment and will therefore be required to sign that check before it can be cashed or deposited. Mortgage lenders sometimes require that they be included as a co-payee on the easement check. Do not list an address for the co-payee(s).
 - Note that the easement payment can only be issued via a singular check or electronic deposit, regardless of whether a co-payee is listed on the AIF. If there are multiple Grantors, each of them will later be asked to fill out a 1099-S Information Form at the time they sign the Easement document (end of process) to indicate the total payment amount each will be receiving and therefore claiming as taxable income.
- Electronic Payments: If the Grantor is interested in receiving an electronic deposit instead of a paper check, see instructions at the following link: https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2025-05/BWSR-RIM_Electronic_Payment_Guidance.pdf

- **AIF Page 2: Conservation Practice Payee Information (bottom section)**

- If the Easement Payee stated on the top of page 2 will also receive the Conservation Practice Reimbursement payments, check the “Same as Easement Payee” box and leave the bottom section blank.
- If someone other than the primary Easement Payee wishes to receive the Conservation Practice Reimbursement payment(s), include their full name and mailing address here and submit a W-9 for that party as well.

11. W-9 for Primary Easement Payee

- A completed and signed version of the standard [IRS W-9 Form](#) must be submitted for the Grantor who is listed as the primary Easement Payee on the Agreement Information Form. The name listed on line 1 of the W-9 must be entered exactly how it appears on the grantor’s IRS record or income tax return. This is especially important when the grantor is an entity such as a trust, LLC, or partnership.
- The landowner must complete boxes 1, 3a, 5, and 6 at a minimum, must include either their Social Security Number or Employer Identification Number, and must sign and date the form in ink.
- The landowner should be sure to select the correct tax classification in box 3 according to how they file their taxes.
- A completed and signed W-9 is also required for the Conservation Practice Payee (if different from the Easement Payee).