

Lawns to Legumes Phase 2 Demonstration Neighborhood Grant Program Policy

From the Board of Water and Soil Resources, State of Minnesota

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Policy Statement

The Lawns to Legumes program was established to provide demonstration projects to plant residential lawns with native vegetation and pollinator-friendly forbs and legumes to protect a diversity of pollinators, as authorized by Minnesota Session Laws 2021, First Special Session, Chapter 6, Section 2, Subd. 8(M) and Subd. 20(B), and Article 6, Section 2, Subd. 8(P); and future similar appropriations.

Reason for this Policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear expectations for the implementation of grants delivered through this program. More specific requirements or criteria may apply when specified by statute, rule, funding source, or appropriation language.

Grantees are responsible for the administration and decisions concerning the use of these funds in accordance with applicable Minnesota Statutes, state agency policies, and other applicable laws. BWSR will use grant agreements as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with applicable laws and program policies.

The BWSR Grants Administration Manual provides the primary framework for management of these funds.
<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/gam>

Lawns to Legumes Program

1. Applicant Eligibility

Eligible applicants include any of the following entities from across the State of Minnesota:

- Cities
- Counties
- Watershed Districts
- Soil and Water Conservation Districts
- Nongovernmental organizations
- Tribal Governments

Notwithstanding Minnesota Statutes, 103B.3369, grants for this program are exempt from the Local Water Plan requirements outlined in the Grants Administration Manual Local Water Plan Status and Grant Eligibility Policy.

Definition of non-governmental organization follows the Office of Grants Management definition as outlined in [Policy 08-06](#) on Financial Review of Nongovernmental Organizations.

2. Match Requirements

A minimum non-state match equal to at least 25% is required, except in areas identified by the United States Fish and Wildlife Service as areas where there is a high potential for rusty patched bumble bees to be present, where only a 10% match is required. The linked [map](#) from BWSR provides locations for high potential for rusty patched bumble bees and shows other key habitat corridors in the state. The match must be cash or in-kind cash value of goods, materials, and services directly attributed to project accomplishments.

3. Eligible Activities

The primary purpose of activities funded through this program is to increase the populations of rusty patched bumble bees and other at-risk pollinators through planting residential lawns with native vegetation and pollinator-friendly forbs. Eligible activities include the following categories:

- 3.1. **Technical Assistance.** Eligible activities include but are not limited to: development of project plans and specifications.
- 3.2. **Grant Management and Reporting.** Grant funds may be used for local grant management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the program.
- 3.3. **Conservation Practice Cost Share and Incentives.** Eligible expenses include site preparation, planting and management costs including but not limited to, tilling, burning, sod removal, temporary weed barriers, seeds, containerized plants, flowering trees, flowering shrubs, seeding, inter-seeding, weed removal, in accordance with the approved grant work plan.
 - 3.3.1. Non-herbicide methods of site preparation and management are preferred, see Xerces Society guide to "[Organic Site Preparation Methods](#)."
- 3.4. **Maintenance through grant period.** It is important that plantings that are funded through this program are maintained. All landowners receiving funding will be asked to sign a BWSR provided landowner agreement that summarizes the expected lifespan of the project and provides information about project maintenance. Maintenance must focus both on maintaining the habitat value and aesthetics of projects.

4. Ineligible Expenses

- 4.1. Large labor expenses such as excavation or grading costs for large scale best management practices such as raingardens, lakeshore buffers or boulevards.
- 4.2. Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) funding cannot be used to pay for space and other associated overhead costs. Billing rates charged to these grants may include the employee's base hourly rate plus benefits. Required match can be provided through other facilities and administration costs such as space, vehicle, computers, and other associated overhead costs. Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood grants can only be used for the Lawns to Legumes Demonstration Neighborhood program and not for other Federal or State programs.
- 4.3. See the unallowable costs as defined in the Grant Administration Manual – [Allowable and Unallowable Cost](#) section.

5. Technical Quality Assurance

Technical advisors working with landowners on project design and implementation must have experience working on residential habitat, native vegetation projects, and be able to successfully guide project design and maintenance. In some cases, planting templates or pollinator lawn guidance developed by BWSR or Blue Thumb can be used as guidance for plantings. More complex plantings may need a planting plan. Applicants that do not have staff with sufficient technical knowledge can partner with Soil and Water Conservation Districts, other local governments, non-profits or consultants that have sufficient expertise.

6. Grant Work Plan and Reporting Requirements

To ensure the success of the program, development of grant work plans, regular reporting of expenditures, and technical assistance and accomplishments are required.

- 6.1. **Grant Execution.** Grant agreement must be executed (signed by grantee and BWSR) before work can begin on this grant and all work must occur within the grant period.
- 6.2. **Grant Work Plan.** Work plans shall be developed in eLINK and must be approved before work can begin on this grant. Work plans shall reflect each eligible activity, a description of the anticipated activity accomplishments, and grant and match funding amounts to accomplish each of the activities.
- 6.3. **Grant Reporting.** Descriptions of actual results and financial expenditures for each work plan activity must be reported in eLINK by February 1 of each year.
- 6.4. **Grant Closeout.** Within thirty (30) calendar days of the expiration of each grant agreement or expenditure of all grant funds, whichever occurs first, grantees are required to:
 - a. Provide a summary of all work plan accomplishments with grant funding in eLINK; and
 - b. Submit a signed eLINK Financial Report to BWSR.
- 6.5. **Grant Agreement.** Read through signed agreement for further directions and reimbursement request deadlines.

7. BWSR Grant Administration Requirements

BWSR staff is authorized to review grant applicant's financial records to establish capacity to successfully manage state grant funds, develop grant agreements, including requirements and processes for work plans, project outcomes reporting, closeouts, and fiscal reconciliations. All grantees must follow the grant agreement and applicable sections of the Grants Administration Manual.

In the event there is a violation of the terms of the grant agreement, BWSR will enforce the grant agreement and evaluate appropriate actions, up to and including repayment of grant funds at a rate up to 100% of the grant agreement.

History

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