



FY 2026

Manure Management and Groundwater
Protection Grant
Request for Proposals (RFP)

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GRANT OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

Provide funding to plan for and implement Manure management activities that reduce nitrates to enhance groundwater protection and reduce greenhouse gases associated with agriculture. Priority will be given to areas with high groundwater nitrate levels or geology conducive to groundwater pollution. This must be completed through activities that protect or enhance groundwater quality. All feedlot projects funded must be associated with a nutrient management plan.

EQUITY PRIORITIES

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making.

Multiple DEI approaches will be included in this grant process including:

- Resources for applicants: one-on-one application support
- Weighted scoring criteria: economic justice, positively impacting underserved communities

This grant will serve local communities the value the benefits of healthy groundwater. All Minnesotans have a right to healthy drinking water. This grant will prioritize practices that support the protection of resources that may be at risk for drinking water contamination.

This grant will prioritize projects that demonstrate a commitment to positive environmental impacts, promote economic justice, and serve underserved communities.

FUNDING AVAILABLE AND MATCH

A total of \$807,500 is available through this RFP. Requests of \$50,000 to \$807,500 will be considered. A non-state match equal to at least 10% of the amount of the grant received and/or expended is required. Match can be provided by landowners, land occupiers, private organizations, Tribal, federal, or local governments, or other non-state sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind for services or materials contributed to the accomplishment of grant objectives. Funds used for match for this program cannot be used as match for any other state grant program.

Table 1 FY26 Manure Management Grant	
Grant Program Awards	Funding Estimates
Amount to grant	\$807,500
Award maximum	\$807,500
Award minimum	\$50,000

TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on December 16, 2025. Late submissions or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. The grant applicant is responsible for proving timely submittal.

Grant Cycle	Grant Cycle Dates
Application period open	Nov 13, 2025
Application period close	Dec. 16, 2025
Anticipated awards	February
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	March
Work plan submittal deadline	April 17, 2026
Grant execution deadline	May 15, 2026
Grant agreement end date	May 1 st , 2027

GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

The statutory language provides an opportunity for BWSR to request proposals from the following groups. Eligible applicants for competitive grants include:

- a) Non-Profit Organizations
 - Political subdivisions/Local governments
 - Cities
 - Counties
 - Joint Powers Organizations
 - Soil and water conservation districts
 - Townships
 - Watershed districts
 - Watershed management organizations
- b) Federally recognized Indian Tribes, Intertribal Consortiums

Applicants must operate in Minnesota and conduct agreement activities that benefit the resources of Minnesota. Applicants must have state or federal recognition as a formal organization or entity, such as a Minnesota Tax ID or Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. Organizations or groups that do not have state or federal recognition must apply with a fiscal agent. Applicants that are debarred or suspended by the State of Minnesota or the Federal Government are not eligible. Applicants must be in compliance with all applicable federal, Tribal, State, and local laws, policies, ordinances, rules, and regulations.

COLLABORATION

This grant encourages multi-organization collaboration. Projects that leverage partnership and mutual resource benefits is encouraged. One entity may apply on behalf of others.

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The purpose of this program is for manure management activities to enhance groundwater protection and reduce greenhouse gases associated with agriculture. Priority must be given to areas with high groundwater nitrate levels or geology conducive to groundwater pollution, such as those shown on the Department of Agriculture's vulnerable groundwater area map. Funded activities may include: projects and practices that limit agricultural use of vulnerable land, such as establishing karst feature buffers or conservation easements; and cost-share assistance for constructing manure management and storage facilities. All funded projects must be designed to result in improved water quality or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Feedlot funding recipients must have a nutrient management plan and must operate at fewer than 1,000 animal units. Funding for expanded liquid manure storage capacity must not exceed 12 months of storage based on current animal numbers. Anaerobic digesters are not eligible for funding under this subdivision.

Eligible activities should be consistent with a watershed management plan, comprehensive watershed management plan, county comprehensive local water management plan, soil and water conservation district comprehensive plan, metropolitan local water plan or metropolitan groundwater plan that has been State approved and locally adopted or an approved total maximum daily load study (TMDL), watershed restoration and protection strategy (WRAPS) document, groundwater restoration and protection strategy (GRAPS) document, drinking water protection plan, surface water intake plan, or source water/wellhead protection plan, or has been identified as a priority by a federally recognized Indian Tribe or Intertribal Consortium.

Eligible activities can consist of structural practices and projects, non-structural practices, project support, grant management and reporting. Technical and engineering assistance necessary to implement these activities are considered essential and are to be included in the total project or practice cost.

Eligible practices are limited to: livestock management facilities that were initially registered before January 1, 2005; and livestock operations currently registered with the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency Database or its equivalent, not classified as a Concentrated Animal Feeding Operation (CAFO), and facilities that are not expanding beyond the current number of registered animal units in accordance with Minnesota Rule Chapter 7020. BWSR reserves the right to deny, postpone or cancel funding where financial penalties related to violations have been imposed on the operator.

1. Funded projects must comply with standards in MN Rule Chapter 7020 upon completion (ie. no partial fixes allowed).
2. Eligible practices are limited to best management practices listed by the Minnesota NRCS or other applicable standards as certified by a professional engineer.
3. Eligible practices and project components must meet all applicable local, Tribal, State, and federal standards and permitting requirements.
4. Feedlot roof structures are eligible up to \$100,000 per project with state grant funds and not to exceed 100% of construction costs.
5. Feedlot relocations are eligible, up to \$100,000 per project with state grant funds and not to exceed 100% of the construction costs. The existing eligible feedlot must be permanently closed in accordance with local and State requirements. The existing and relocated livestock waste management systems sites are considered one project for grant funding.

STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

The BWSR website provides a list of the practices available for users to select within eLINK, see <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink-guidance-practices>. It is not an inclusive list.

NON-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

Non-structural activities that supplement or exceed current minimum state requirements or procedures for protection, enhancement, and restoration of water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation are eligible.

CONDITIONS THAT APPLY TO ALL STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

Practice Standards: The grantee must use methods and practices consistent with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG) or be a professionally accepted engineering or ecological practice that have a demonstrated effectiveness and provide the greatest long-term positive impact on water quality. Design standards for all practices must include specifications for operation and maintenance for the effective life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure. Producers participating in manure management activities must have fewer than 1000 animal units. Funding for expanded liquid manure storage capacity must not exceed 12 months of storage based on current animal numbers. Anaerobic digesters are not eligible for funding under this subdivision.

Effective Life: All structural practices must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of ten years for best management practices and 25 years for capital improvement practices. The beginning date for a practice's effective life is the same date final payment is approved and the project is considered complete. Where questions arise under this section, the effective lifespan of structural practices and projects shall be defined by current and acceptable design standards or criteria.

Project Assurances: The grantee must provide assurances that the landowner or land occupier will keep the practice in place for its intended use for the effective life of the practice. Such assurances may include easements, deed recordings, enforceable contracts. BWSR may allow replacement of a practice or project that does not comply with expected lifespan requirements with a practice or project that provides equivalent water quality benefits. See also the Assurances section of the [Grants Administration Manual](#).

Operation, Maintenance and Inspections: Identifying operation and maintenance activities specific to the installed practices is critical to ongoing performance of installed practices as well as to planning and scheduling those activities. An operation and maintenance plan must be prepared by designated technical staff for the life of the practice and be included with the design standards. An inspection schedule, procedure, and assured access to the practice site shall be included as a component of maintaining the effectiveness of the practice.

TECHNICAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANCE

Funds may be used for actual technical and administrative expenses to advance project implementation. Eligible expenses include the following activities: grant administration, site investigations and assessments, design and cost estimates, development of project plans and specifications necessary to implement activities, construction supervision, and construction inspections. Technical and administrative expenditures must be appropriately documented according to the [Grants Administration Manual](#).

INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The following activities are ineligible for these funds:

- a. Water quality monitoring such as, but not limited to, routine, baseline, diagnostic, or effectiveness monitoring. This includes both surface and groundwater monitoring activities.
- b. Anerobic Digestors
- c. Liquid Manure Storage Capacity that exceeds 12 months of storage based on current animal numbers.
- d. Feedlot project;
 - a. Expansions beyond state registered number of animal units, and
 - b. slats placed on top of manure storage structures.
- e. State-held easements or fee title land acquisition, unless approved by BWSR staff ; State-held easements or fee title land acquisition can count toward the required match if directly associated with the project and incurred within the grant period.
- f. Activities that meet minimum requirements of law or permit including but not limited to: Buffer Law, Drainage Law, Shoreland Law, Groundwater Protection Rule, Wetland Conservation Act.
- g. Routine maintenance activities or repair of capital equipment and infrastructure within the effective life of existing practices or projects.

Allowable and Unallowable costs

Allowable costs are those costs solely incurred through project activities that are directly related to and necessary for producing the project outcomes described in the proposal. Grant recipients are required to account for the staff time charged to BWSR grants in order to track the expenditure of grant funds and match to ensure the use of the funds is consistent with applicable State and BWSR requirements. Unallowable costs to be charged to BWSR grants include but are not limited to:

- Bad debts, late payment fees, and investment management fees
- Donations, fundraising, sponsorships, and acknowledgements
- Entertainment, gifts, prizes, and decorations
- Alcohol
- Interest on loans not authorized under state statute
- Loans of BWSR grant funds
- Lobbying, lobbyists, and political contributions
- Merit awards and bonuses

GRANT MANAGEMENT AND REPORTING

All recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments. The funds may be used for grant agreement management and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the project or activity. Applicants who have previously received a grant or agreement from BWSR must be in compliance with BWSR requirements for grantee website and eLINK reporting before grant execution and payment.

APPLYING FOR A GRANT

PRE-AWARD REVIEW

Applicants will be required to comply with [OGM Policy 08-06](#), and may be asked to submit documents relevant to their entity type; nonprofit organizations, for-profit businesses, political sub-divisions.

Nonprofit organizations

All nonprofit organizations applying for grants in the state of Minnesota must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award of \$50,000 and higher.

To comply with Policy 08-06, applicants must submit the following:

- A completed “Pre-Award Nonprofit Form” available on the [Apply For BWSR Grants webpage](#), posted with this RFP.
- Related documentation requested within the form may include but is not limited to: A copy of the nonprofit’s most recent Form 990 or Form 990-EZ, most recent certified financial audit, confirmation of good standing with the Office of the Secretary of State.

Completed forms and related documentation must be submitted to BWSR.grants@state.mn.us by the application deadline.

If the completed form and related documents are not submitted by the application deadline, the application will be considered incomplete and will not be reviewed.

Political sub-divisions

All political sub-divisions selected for a grant award must undergo a financial review prior to receiving a grant award. Applicants may be asked to submit additional information once the application period closes.

HOW TO SUBMIT A QUESTION

For questions regarding the grant program, email at mark.hiles@state.mn.us

For questions regarding the eLINK grants management system, email elinksupport@state.mn.us. Please review the eLINK-related topics below and on BWSR’s eLINK webpage before contacting eLINK support.

HOW TO APPLY USING ELINK

1. Set up your eLINK user account

Proposals need to be submitted via <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>. Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must register for an account at <https://elink.bwsr.state.mn.us> no later than seven days prior to the proposal deadline. For eLINK related questions, first visit the eLINK section of the [Frequently Asked Questions \(FAQ\)](#) page. If your question is not addressed here, please contact elinksupport@state.mn.us.

2. Complete your funding request (proposal)

See the “[Completing a Funding Request in eLINK](#)” under the “eLINK Training Videos” tab on the eLINK webpage to view a 11-minute online module describing how to complete a Funding Request within eLINK.

- Answers to each question is limited to 2,000 characters. Due to differences in how programs are encoded, be aware that the character limit in eLINK is not the same as Microsoft Word or other text editors.

- As part of the proposal, eLINK will require applicants to map the location of the proposed project area.
- Proposals may include only one image to be submitted within their eLINK application. Only .jpg, .tiff, or .png file types are allowed.

Applicants must provide answers to the Application Questions as part of their proposal submitted in eLINK. The questions are related to the ranking criteria categories, which determine how proposals are scored by reviewers. The ranking criteria can be found in the “Application Review” section of this RFP.

APPLICATION GUIDELINES

- Proposals may receive partial funding based on eligibility or availability of funds. Prior to final selection, the Board may engage applicants to resolve questions or to discuss modifications to the project or funding request. Actual awards may be less than this minimum if proposals receive partial funding.
- Applications may receive partial funding for the following reasons: 1) an absence of or limited identification of specific project locations, 2) budgeted items that were not discussed in the application or have no connection to the central purpose of the application were included by an applicant; 3) to address budget categories out of balance with the project scope; 4) application contains ineligible components; and 5) insufficient funds remaining in a grant category to fully fund a project.
- Proposals that do not comply with all proposal requirements will not be considered for funding, as provided below:
 - Components of the proposal are incomplete or missing;
 - The match amount does not meet grant requirements; or
 - The minimum grant dollar amount is not met.
- *As appropriate, outputs should include scientifically credible estimates of pollutant reductions expected as a result of the project, as well as other measures such as acres of wetlands/forest, miles of riparian buffer or stream bank restored, acres treated by stormwater BMPs, or acres of specific agricultural conservation practices implemented including acres treated by the installation of the practice. **Applications with unrealistic pollution reduction estimates will not be considered.***

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

MN Statute 16B.981 Subd. 2 (6) requires that no current principals of a grantee have been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years. A principal is defined as a public official, a board member, or staff (paid or volunteer) with the authority to access funds provided by this grant opportunity.

Attestation check box within eLINK application form: I attest that no current principal of my organization with authority to access funds has been convicted of a felony financial crime in the last 10 years.

The final 10% of your award will be reimbursed following project completion, final reporting, and financial reconciliation. Describe your organization’s capacity to finance the final 10% of the grant funding that would be provided as reimbursement.

(Answers to each question are limited to 2000 characters) Note that the following questions need to be answered in eLINK. The character limit in eLINK is NOT the same as Microsoft Word.
Proposal Abstract
Proposal Abstract (5 points): Succinctly describe what you are trying to achieve with the anticipated outcomes of the proposed activities, and how you intend to achieve those results.
Does your organization have any active BWSR competitive grants? If so, specify FY and percentage spent. Also, explain your organization's capacity (including available FTEs or contracted resources) to effectively implement additional grant dollars.
Prioritization and Relationship to Plan
Question 2a. (10 points): (i) List the specific water management plan(s) and describe how it supports this proposal. Reference the document name, section, page number, and organization (if different than applicant). (ii) List other relevant documents and describe how these documents support this project. Plan examples are provided earlier in this RFP. Question 2b. Provide web links to all plans referenced.
Targeting
Question 3a. (20 Points): Identify the groundwater resource issue and where the project is located in relation to areas with high groundwater nitrate levels or geology conducive to groundwater pollution (such as the Department of Agriculture's vulnerable groundwater area map). Question 3b. (10 points): Priority Location: Clarify if the project is located in the counties of Dodge, Fillmore, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmsted, Wabasha, Winona as these are priority drinking water protection areas. Note that projects will be awarded the maximum points in this category if they are in these priority areas. Projects outside of this priority area will receive zero points in this category.
Project Impact
Question 4. (35 points): a) Describe the proposed outcomes of this grant application. Describe how the project is designed to result in improved water quality benefits or reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Describe how the project will have a positive public outcome; improving access to healthy drinking water for all individuals.
Project Rationale and Readiness
Question 5. (15 points): Why are these the most important and needed activities to implement at this time? Discuss alternatives considered and why those were not selected. How does this proposal complement other watershed work that you and your partners are conducting?
Question 6. (5 points): Provide an anticipated timeline for completion of the proposed activities. Include steps taken or expected to ensure that the proposed activities can begin soon after the grant award and important project milestones. Describe general environmental review and permitting needs required by the project (list if needed). Also, describe any discussions with landowners, status of agreements/contracts, contingency plans, and other elements essential to project implementation.
Question 7. (0 points) <u>Feedlot Projects Only:</u> Indicate the year the livestock management facility was initially registered, number of animal units, if livestock operations are currently registered, and if there is a completed nutrient management plan. Verify that this is not an expansion, CAFO, anaerobic digester, or liquid manure storage project with a capacity that exceeds 12 months of storage.

APPLICATION REVIEW

BWSR staff will initially review all applications for eligibility and will then review and rank the applications to make a funding recommendation to the BWSR Board. See Ranking Criteria for each grant in the section below.

RANKING CRITERIA

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
<u>Project Abstract</u> : Clearly describes the project and the expected project results.	5
<u>Prioritization (Relationship to Plan)</u> : The proposal is based on priority groundwater protection actions listed in a water management plan and other related plans.	10
<u>Targeting</u> : The proposal is in an area with high groundwater nitrate levels or where the geology is conducive to groundwater pollution and in priority drinking water protection areas as described in the question.	30
<u>Project Impact</u> : The proposed activities will enhance groundwater protection and/or reduce greenhouse gases associated with agriculture. The project will have a positive public outcome; improving access to healthy drinking water for all individuals.	35
<u>Project Rationale and Readiness</u> : The proposal describes the need and readiness for the project and other approaches considered to meet the project purpose. It also has a set of specific activities that can be implemented soon after the grant is awarded.	20
Total Points Available	100

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 when:

- A grantee is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice due to competing duties or loyalties,
- A grantee's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties, or
- 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.

PRIVACY NOTICE

Under Minnesota Statute 13.599, responses to an RFP are nonpublic until the application 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 application 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.

GRANT RECIPIENT INFORMATION

GRANT AGREEMENT AND PROJECT PERIOD

Notification of grant award will be in the form of an automated notification from the BWSR eLINK system or an email from BWSR Grants staff to the grantee. Notifications are sent to the Day-to-Day Contact(s) identified by the organization within the eLINK system. This notification includes instructions for further processing of the grant agreement and may also contain grant-specific information such as requirements for completing work plans, disbursement terms, or additional required documentation for processing the grant. Read these instructions carefully as requirements can vary by grant and fiscal year.

BWSR will use grant agreements, and an associated work plan, as contracts for assurance of deliverables and compliance with appropriate statutes, rules, and established policies. BWSR has the right to require a work plan revision or grant agreement amendment for changes in scope. Willful or negligent disregard of relevant statutes, rules and policies may lead to imposition of financial penalties on the grant recipient. Upon receiving the notification of grant award, which indicates approval of an application, and prior to beginning work on the grant project(s) and receiving grant funds, the applicant is required to do the following:

1. Complete an IRS W-9 form or register as a vendor in SWIFT, the state's accounting system, and submit other required documentation within 30 days of award notification.
2. Sign a grant contract agreement indicating their intention to complete the project(s) contained in the application. The agreement also authorizes BWSR to monitor progress of the grant. The grant contract agreement must be signed within 30 days of being sent to the grantee.

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 and cannot be used as match.

Grant contract agreement templates can be reviewed on the [Office of Grants Management Forms and FAQs website](#).

The grant agreement will expire on December 31, 2028. If a project receives federal funds, the period of the grant agreement may be extended to equal the length of time that the federal funds are available, subject to limitation. Applicants using federal funds are encouraged to contact BWSR soon after the award of funds to ensure the grant agreement can be developed appropriately.

PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Grant payments will be distributed in three installments to the grantee. The first payment of 50% of the grant amount will be paid after work plan approval and execution of the grant agreement provided the grant applicant 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 reviewed and approved the eLINK reporting, and possibly completes a grant reconciliation of the initial payment. The last 10% will be paid after all final reporting requirements are met, and BWSR has reconciled these expenditures.

REPORTING AND ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of the grant.
- Outputs will serve as surrogates for outcomes and will be reported as estimated pollutant reductions and progress towards goals based on the best available information.
- BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the funding recipient's legal counsel.

- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Grant Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation](#)
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Grant Noncompliance Policy](#)
- 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.
- Grant reporting, fiscal management, and administration requirements are the responsibility of the grant recipient.
- Additional information regarding BWSR grant reporting and administration can be found in the Grants Administration Manual (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grants/manual/>)

PREVAILING WAGE

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on construction projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply (Minn. Stat. 177.42 – 177.44). All laborers and mechanics employed by grant recipients and subcontractors funded in whole or in part with state funds included in this RFP shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality. Additional information on prevailing wage requirements is available on the Department of Labor and Industry (DOLI) website <https://www.dli.mn.gov/business/employment-practices/prevailing-wage-information>. Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091. Note that prevailing wage does not apply to Tribal Governments.

NATIVE VEGETATION

Projects that involve vegetation restoration or establishment must use native vegetation and seed and plant sources consistent with BWSR's Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines, with the exceptions listed below. Use of plant species on the Minnesota [Noxious Weed List](#) is prohibited for all projects. Non-native species used for projects must not pose a risk to native plant communities. The maximum distance for sources of herbaceous species seed and plants is 200 miles; and for tree and shrubs seed and plants the distance is 300 miles.

Exceptions

- Non-native, non-invasive perennial crops, hay crops or forage crops may be used:
 - As part of a drinking water protection strategy in a vulnerable or highly vulnerable DWSMA as designated by the Department of Health or in a Township Well Testing high-priority area as determined by the Department of Agriculture;
 - In buffers, borders, grass waterways or other areas likely to be exposed to pesticides or part of agricultural production;
 - For soil stabilization, erosion prevention and carbon sequestration in an agricultural production setting;
 - On fields that will be hayed, grazed or harvested.
- For the exemptions above, if the project area is under 20 acres in size, the exception may be approved by local conservation staff. If the project area is 20 acres or larger, or for any exceptions not listed here, grantees must request approval from the BWSR Grant Manager.
- Cover crops used to improve soil health and/or water quality are allowed without a maximum acreage limit.
- Temporary cover is allowed without a maximum acreage limit when needed to stabilize project sites prior to the construction of structural conservation practices.

Cultivars of native species may be used in urban stormwater plantings if they accomplish similar or greater ecological functions, help achieve aesthetic goals and do not pose an invasive or other environmental risk

PERMITTING

The applicant is responsible for obtaining and complying with all reviews, permits, approvals necessary to execute the project. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory agencies early in the grant application development process to ensure potential projects can meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

TECHNICAL QUALITY ASSURANCE

Practices and projects must meet the following requirements to ensure long-term public benefit:

- **Technical Assistance Provider.** The recipient must designate technical assistance provider(s) that have appropriate credentials for investigation, design, and construction.
- **Practice Standards.** Practices and projects must use appropriate standards for design, construction, effective life, operation, and maintenance.
- **Practice Certification.** Technical assistance provider(s) must certify that the practice or project was installed or constructed in accordance with the applicable plans and specifications, including approved modifications, prior to authorization for payment.
- **Operation and Maintenance.** Technical Assistance Provider(s) must prepare an operation and maintenance (O&M) plan specific to the site and practice(s) implemented.
- **Periodic Practice/Project Inspection.** Inspections shall confirm that the operation and maintenance plan is being followed and the project has not been altered or removed.

PRACTICE OR PROJECT CONSTRUCTION AND SIGN-OFF

Grant recipients shall verify that the practice or project was properly installed and completed according to the plans and specifications, including technically approved modifications, prior to authorization for payment.

PROJECT AND PRACTICE ASSURANCES

A written agreement is required to ensure program requirements are met when installing projects and practices or providing financial assistance to a land occupier. Project and Practice Assurances must include technical and financial obligations and requirements for the installation, operation, and maintenance of the practice or project, including a plan for failures or noncompliance.