



FY 2025-2026

**Keep it Clean Grant Program  
Request for Proposals (RFP)**

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## GRANT OVERIVEW

### PURPOSE

The Keep it Clean Grant Program, as administered by the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), works to protect Minnesota's lakes by preventing pollution from garbage and human waste left on the ice of state waters during winter use activities. The funding is outlined in the Minnesota Laws 2025, 1<sup>st</sup> Special Session, Chapter 1, Article 1, Section 4(i).

## 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, equity, and inclusion (DEI) in grant-making.

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

- Resources for applicants: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
- Resources for applicants: one-on-one application support sessions
- Weighted scoring criteria: economic justice, positively impacting underserved communities

## FUNDING AVAILABLE AND MATCH

A total of \$185,000 is available through this Request for Proposal. Grant requests must be between a minimum of \$10,000 and a maximum of \$40,000. Proposals that do not fall within this dollar range will not be accepted. Prior to final selection, BWSR staff may engage applicants to resolve questions or discuss modifications to the project or funding request.

A non-state match equal to at least 10% of the amount of the grant received is required. Match can be provided by landowners, land occupiers, private organizations, local governments, Tribal 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.

## TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on October 29, 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	September 29, 2025
Application period close	October 29, 2025
Anticipated awards	November, 2025
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	December, 2025
Work plan submittal deadline	January 15, 2026
Grant execution deadline	January 31, 2026
Grant agreement end date	December 31, 2028

## GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for competitive grants include Local Units of Government are eligible for this funding.

- a) Local governments
  - o Cities
  - o Counties
  - o Joint powers organizations
  - o MASWCD Technical Service Area
  - o Soil and water conservation districts
  - o Townships
  - o Watershed districts
  - o Watershed management organizations

Applicants must operate in Minnesota and conduct grant 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, State, Tribal, and local laws, policies, ordinances, rules, and regulations.

### ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Activities must include an education and/or outreach component. Eligible activities can consist of pollution prevention practices; project development; program and project support; and technical assistance necessary to implement a program to reduce water pollution from garbage and human waste associated with winter activities. Eligible activities can also include local grant administration, management, and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the project or activity associated with the grant.

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### 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.

### 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 grant recipients are subject to BWSR's Grants Monitoring and Reconciliation Chapter (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/node/12461>)
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's Grant Noncompliance Policy (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-noncompliance-policy>)
- All BWSR funded grants are managed through eLINK. Successful applicants will be required to complete a work plan in eLINK. All required reporting will be completed through eLINK. For more information go to <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>.
- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments. Outputs will serve as surrogates for outcomes.

## 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.

**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 [ara.gallo@state.mn.us](mailto:ara.gallo@state.mn.us) with "Keep it Clean Grant" in the subject line.

For questions regarding the eLINK grants management system, email [elinksupport@state.mn.us](mailto: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](mailto: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.

- Proposals may include only one image submitted with their eLINK application. Only .jpg, .tiff, or .png file types are allowed. PDF files are not accepted.

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.
- 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 or the request is greater than the maximum.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

1. Succinctly describe your anticipated achievements and outcomes, as well as the geographic area of your project (5 points).
2. What is the water resource(s) that the activities will focus on and why was it/were they chosen? Describe previous activities your organization has completed with, and your organization’s affiliation with Keep it Clean Minnesota. (15 points).
3. Describe the proposed activities and how they will prevent water pollution from garbage or human waste left on the ice of state waters. Describe the scale of the problem to be addressed on the water body by providing information that shows evidence of garbage/human waste during the winter sports season. (40 points).
4. Describe how and when activities are ready to be started soon after grant award. Also describe how this project will complement current or previous efforts to combat water pollution from garbage and/or human waste. (30 points).
5. Describe how work is being accomplished in environmental justice areas as identified by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency [here](#). (10 points).

## APPLICATION REVIEW

BWSR staff will initially review all proposals for grant eligibility. Eligible proposals may be reviewed by a team made up of BWSR staff in conjunction with external parties (e.g. other state agencies, etc.). The review teams make funding recommendations to the BWSR Board. These recommendations may be for complete or partial funding of a proposal. The BWSR Board considers the review teams’ recommendations and makes the award decisions.

## SELECTION AND RANKING CRITERIA

<b>Ranking Criteria</b>	<b>Maximum Points Possible</b>
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Abstract: A brief description of anticipated achievements and outcomes as well as the project area.	5
Activities will focus on water resource(s) that were specifically chosen. Organization has worked with or is affiliated with Keep it Clean Minnesota.	15
Water Resource Outcome(s): Activities will prevent water pollution from garbage and human waste during winter months. Evidence of pollution and winter activity usage is provided.	40
Activities can be implemented soon after grant award and supports efforts to combat water pollution.	30
Organization is addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion by performing activities in an MPCA defined environmental justice area.	10
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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.

#### PAYMENT SCHEDULE

Grant payments will be distributed in one advance payment to the grantee upon approval of a work plan and execution of the grant agreement.

#### REPORTING AND ADMINISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of the grant.

- 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.

## BWSR GRANT WORK PLAN, REPORTING AND RECONCILIATION REQUIREMENTS

BWSR staff is authorized to develop grant agreements, requirements and processes for work plans and project outcomes reporting, closeouts, and fiscal reconciliations. 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.