



**FY 2027**

# **Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant Program**

**Request for Proposals (RFP)**



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## GRANT OVERVIEW

### PURPOSE

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant Program expands partnerships to protect and restore Minnesota’s water resources. The funding is outlined in the Laws of Minnesota 2025, Chapter 36, Article 2, Section 6 (m) for developing and implementing a water legacy grant program to expand partnerships for clean water.

The Clean Water Fund was established in Minnesota Statutes 114D.50 to implement part of Article XI, Section 15, of the Minnesota Constitution, with the purpose of protecting, enhancing, and restoring water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and protecting groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation. Clean Water Funds must supplement traditional sources of funding and may not be used as a substitute.

### 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: RFP informational meetings
- Resources for applicants: Application Guidance document
- Resources for applicants: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
- Resources for applicants: One-on-one application support sessions
- Resources for applicants: Resources can be made available in alternate, accessible formats
- Weighted scoring criteria: Economic justice, positively impacting underserved communities

### FUNDING AVAILABLE AND MATCH

A total of \$1,155,434 is available through this RFP. Requests of \$50,000 to \$250,000 will be considered. Proposals that do not fall within this dollar range will not be accepted. Applicants may receive partial funding based on eligibility or availability of funds. Actual awards may be less than this minimum if proposals receive partial funding. 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. The anticipated source(s) for the match shall be identified in the grant work plan. Match can be provided by a landowner, land occupier, private organization, local, federal, or Tribal government or other non-state source and can be in the form of cash or the cash value of services or materials contributed to the accomplishment of grant objectives. State funded loans repaid with non-state funds may be used for the match. Activities listed as ineligible under the Ineligible Activities section may not be counted towards match. Activities completed prior to execution of the grant agreement may not be used as match for this program. Funds used for match for this program cannot be used as match for any other state grant program.

## Clean Water Legacy Partners FY2027 Grant Program

### Tribal Entities

Amount to grant	\$655,434
Estimated number of awards	3-6 awards
Award maximum	\$250,000
Award minimum	\$50,000

### Nongovernmental Organizations

Amount to grant	\$500,000
Estimated number of awards	2-5 awards
Award maximum	\$250,000
Award minimum	\$50,000

## TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on May 19, 2026. 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	February 18, 2026
Application period close	May 19, 2026
Anticipated awards	July 2026
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	August 2026
Work plan submittal deadline	August 31, 2026
Grant execution deadline	September 30, 2026
Grant agreement end date	December 31, 2029

## GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

### ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for competitive grants include:

- 1) Non-governmental organizations
  - Nonprofit organizations
- 2) Tribal Organizations
  - Tribal Governments
  - 1854 Treaty Authority, Great Lakes Indian Fish and Wildlife Commission

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, and local laws, policies, ordinances, rules, and regulations.

## COLLABORATION

Multi-organization collaboration is welcome and considered in the program's ranking criteria (see Selection and Ranking Criteria, below). Application questions ask for a summary of how partnerships and collaborative efforts are included in the proposal.

## ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Consistent with the Clean Water Legacy Act (Minnesota Statutes 114D), the primary purpose of activities must be to protect, enhance, or restore water quality in lakes, rivers, or streams or to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation.

Eligible activities can include, but are not limited to, structural practices and projects, non-structural practices, education and information, project development, grant administration and coordination, and project support. Technical and engineering assistance necessary to implement these activities are considered essential and are to be included in the total project or practice cost. See below for additional information on select activities.

Questions on eligibility can be directed to: [cwfquestions@state.mn.us](mailto:cwfquestions@state.mn.us) with "Clean Water Legacy Partners" in the subject line. More information is also in the Frequently Asked Questions page on the [Apply for Grants](#) webpage.

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## STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

Structural activities include the design and construction of a physical facility or measure. Examples include stormwater control or treatment structures, streambank or shoreland protection, and wetland restoration or creation. These are distinct from non-structural activities which do not require construction and typically include vegetative or management practices. Examples include street sweeping, nutrient management, prescribed grazing, and source reductions of chloride. The BWSR website provides a [list of the practices available](#) for users to select within eLINK. It is not an inclusive list.

Non-structural activities that supplement or exceed current minimum state standards 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 Field Office Technical Guide, Minnesota Stormwater Manual, 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. Innovative approaches may be incorporated on a case-by-case basis. 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.

**Financial Assistance:** Financial assistance can be provided to a land occupier to share the cost to install or adopt a conservation practice. Financial assistance is limited to flat rate and percent-based payments. Flat rate financial assistance is provided at a predetermined fixed rate, must be reasonable and justifiable, and supported by grant recipient policy, and sub-recipient policy, if applicable. Percentage-based financial assistance is provided at a predetermined percentage of actual documented costs to install or adopt a conservation practice. Financial assistance for percent-based payments must not result in grantee financial assistance agreements paying greater than 100% of the cost of any activity.

Any projects proposing to provide financial assistance for installing or adopting non-structural land management practices for a duration longer than three years must be approved by the BWSR grants manager, in consultation with regional managers, prior to workplan approval. BWSR reserves the right to review and/or advise the grantee regarding financial assistance rates.

**Structural Practice Lifespan:** 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 shall be defined by current and acceptable design standards or criteria.

**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.

**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.

**Subsurface Sewage Treatment Systems (SSTS):** Replacing systems on homesteaded properties identified as an imminent threat to public health or safety (ITPHS) or systems that are failing to protect groundwater are eligible activities. Landowners must meet low-income thresholds established by the grant recipient according to USDA Rural Development or similar published criteria. Where these criteria are met, costs associated with connecting a home into a sewer line that goes to a municipal or community wastewater treatment plant are also eligible.

Tribal Governments replacing systems identified as ITPHS or systems that are failing to protect groundwater is an eligible activity. Tribal Governments may define criteria for replacing ITPHS SSTS.

**In-lake management:** Proposals that contain in-lake management activities must have a feasibility study sent via email to [BWSR.grants@state.mn.us](mailto:BWSR.grants@state.mn.us) before the RFP closes. The study must include:

- a. Lake/stream and watershed information based on data that has been collected within the last 10-years (at minimum, include lake morphology and depth, summary of water quality information, and the assessment of aquatic invasive species);
- b. A description of original internal load vs. external load nutrient reductions needed to meet the state's water quality standard and approximate external and internal reductions remaining;
- c. A history of projects completed in the lake's/stream's watershed (if none have been completed, that should be stated), as well as other in-lake/in-channel activities, if applicable;

- d. A cost benefit analysis of all options considered and justifications for the proposed activities;
- e. The projected effective life of the proposed activities;
- f. The expected water quality outcome of the proposed activity;
- g. A plan for monitoring water quality to assure the proposed activity's total phosphorus goal will be achieved during its effective life (monitoring plans should include monitoring through the effective life);
- h. A description of how the proposed practices could change the population and diversity of aquatic vegetation, what outreach occurred with stakeholders about these potential outcomes, and whether a vegetation management plan exists or is proposed to be completed.
- i. An explanation of how propeller wash generated by motorized recreational boats (e.g. wakesurf boats) and carp and/or goldfish may impact the longevity of proposed practices; and
- j. For activities related to carp and/or goldfish, the feasibility study must also include:
  - i. An estimate of adult and juvenile carp and/or goldfish populations and method(s) used;
  - ii. Description of the known interconnectedness of waterbodies (lakes, ponds, streams, wetlands, etc.);
  - iii. Identified nursery areas;
  - iv. Methods used to track carp and/or goldfish movement;
  - v. Proposed actions to limit recruitment and movement; and
  - vi. Proposed actions to reduce adult carp and/or goldfish populations.

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#### EDUCATION AND INFORMATION

Eligible activities include the development and implementation of environmental education materials, activities, curriculum, and programming designed to support water quality. Examples include informational signs, workshops, clinics, publications, websites, and presentations.

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#### TECHNICAL AND ENGINEERING ASSISTANCE

Eligible activities include actual technical and engineering expenses to advance project implementation. Eligible expenses include but are not limited to the following activities: site investigations and assessments, surveys, preliminary analysis and design, final design, environmental review, cultural assessments, construction supervision, installation, inspection, and completion of projects. Technical and engineering expenditures must be appropriately documented according to the Grants Administration Manual.

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#### PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Eligible activities include staff time and direct costs that are required to support or supplement the goals and outcomes of the work plan. Examples include project management, civic engagement, public outreach, initial contacts, activities with landowners and/or partners, preliminary information gathering, conservation marketing, or other activities.

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#### GRANT ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION

Eligible activities include coordination, management, and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for grant administration. This category may also reflect costs of facilities and operations if not included in a billing rate or indirect cost allocation.

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#### SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT

Eligible activities include the acquisition of equipment, hardware, software, or supplies. Equipment must comply with Grants Administration Manual procedure for purchase of equipment and other capital assets.

## INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

The ineligible activities described below cannot be included in grant proposals or be used as match to the grant program.

1. Activities that do not have a primary benefit of water quality.
2. Water quality monitoring such as, but not limited to, routine, baseline, diagnostic, long-term trend, or effectiveness monitoring. This includes both surface and groundwater monitoring activities.
3. Household water conservation appliances and water fixtures.
4. Systems regulated by National Pollution Discharge Elimination System or State Disposal System permits (treated surface discharge or systems discharging over 10,000 gallons per day).
5. Stormwater conveyances that collect and move runoff, but do not provide water quality treatment benefit.
6. Activities that outlet land locked basins.
7. Development and delivery of educational activities and curriculum that do not support water quality outcomes.
8. Replacement, realignment or creation of bridges, trails, or roads.
9. Water treatment activities with unknown long-term benefits, water quality outcomes, ecological impacts, or effective life including but not limited to harvesting or chemical treatment of aquatic plants, lanthanum, or nanobubble technology.
10. Routine maintenance activities or repair of best management practices, capital equipment and infrastructure within the effective life of existing practices or projects.
11. 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, and NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit except subsurface sewage treatment systems as described under the "Eligible Activities" section, above.
12. Feedlot related activities, including animal waste management systems, closing, expansion or relocating of facilities.

## 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, monetary settlements and judgements, 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

Grantee is required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments. Applicants who have previously received a grant 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**

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](mailto: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.*

### HOW TO SUBMIT A QUESTION

For questions regarding this Grant Program and RFP, email [cwfquestions@state.mn.us](mailto:cwfquestions@state.mn.us) with “Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant” in the subject line. Responses will be posted to BWSR’s [Question and Answer webpage](#) and updated weekly throughout the RFP. Submit your questions in writing by 4:30 pm Central Standard Time by **May 15, 2026**.

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.

### INFORMATIONAL WEBINAR

BWSR program managers will be holding an optional informational webinar to review the RFP requirements and application process. The webinar will be offered through MS Teams on **March 19, 2026, at 11:00 a.m.**

**Registration is required to attend the webinar.** Please visit the BWSR [Apply for Grants](#) website and follow the webinar registration instructions included with the Clean Water Legacy Partners Request for Proposals. If you are unable to attend the webinar, a recording will be posted in this location.

### HOW TO APPLY USING ELINK

#### **1. Set up your eLINK user account**

Proposals need to be submitted via [eLINK](#). Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must [register for an account](#) 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 an 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 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

BWSR has prepared an Application Guide specific to the Clean Water Legacy Partners Grant Program. The Application Guide is a tool designed to help applicants prepare a complete and competitive application. Referencing and using the Application Guide is optional. The Application Guide is posted on the Apply for Grants webpage.

General guidelines applicable to applications being prepared under this RFP include the following:

- 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.
- Proposals should clearly articulate what water resource is being targeted in the application. Proposals should demonstrate significant, measurable project outputs and outcomes.
- 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.**
- Proposals involving in-lake/in-channel treatment must email required attachments to [BWSR.grants@state.mn.us](mailto:BWSR.grants@state.mn.us) at the time of application.

## APPLICATION QUESTIONS

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.

### Abstract

**Proposal Abstract and Proposed Measurable Outcomes (5 points):** Succinctly describe what you are trying to achieve, the anticipated outcomes of the proposed activities, and how you intend to achieve those results.

### Water Resource

**Question 1 (10 points):** Identify the water resource that will benefit from the proposal. Why is this water resource a high priority for the proposed activities?

### Activities

**Question 2 (15 points):** What activities are included in your proposal? Provide a brief explanation of the budget assigned to each of your activities. Demonstrate how the proposed activities will benefit the water resource.

### Organizational Readiness

**Question 3 (10 points):** Detail your organization's capacity and readiness to implement the proposed project soon after grant award. Include information on organizational expertise, previous project and funding experience, and how the required 10% match and final 10% grant payment that is provided as reimbursement will be secured.

### Plan Alignment

**Question 4 (15 points):** Describe how your proposal supports or is connected to a local, state, or Tribal water management plan addressing high-priority or impaired waters. Explain how your project contributes to achieving progress toward established goals.

### Outcomes

**Question 5 (15 points):** Summarize your proposal's intended outcomes. What quantitative or qualitative metrics will you use to demonstrate success? How will the proposal's outcomes be sustained or built upon after completion of the grant?

### Environmental Justice

**Question 6 (5 points):** Does the project occur in or benefit an Environmental Justice Area as defined by the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency ([link to map](#))?

### Public Benefit

**Question 7 (10 points):** Describe the community or communities your project will serve and their water quality challenges. How will these communities participate in or benefit from the project?

### Partnerships and Collaboration

**Question 8 (15 points):** Demonstrate how you will use partnerships and collaborative efforts to expand your proposal's impact or enhance its effectiveness.

## APPLICATION REVIEW

BWSR staff will initially review all proposals for grant eligibility. Eligible proposals will be reviewed by a team made up of BWSR staff in conjunction with external parties (e.g. other state agencies, tribal liaisons, etc.). Nongovernmental organizations and Tribal organization proposals will be reviewed and scored independently, using the ranking criteria

below. Funding recommendations from the review team go to the BWSR Board or staff with delegated authority to approve grant awards.

#### SELECTION AND RANKING CRITERIA

Ranking Criteria	Maximum Points Possible
<b>Abstract:</b> A concise proposal summary including the following: Project location, problem statement, goals and objectives, activities, and expected outcomes.	5
<b>Water Resource:</b> Identifies a high-priority or impaired water resource and presents a clear rationale for why it is considered a priority for Clean Water Legacy Partners.	10
<b>Activities:</b> Activities and budgets are feasible and demonstrate clear and direct water quality benefits.	15
<b>Organizational Readiness:</b> Demonstrates organizational readiness to begin implementation soon after award. Identifies staff with expertise managing similar projects. Provides evidence of successful past performance and a plan for meeting the required 10% match and 10% reimbursement.	10
<b>Plan Alignment:</b> Clearly identifies and aligns with a specific local, state, or Tribal plans. Explains how the project will advance the plan's goals or outcomes.	15
<b>Outcomes:</b> Articulates specific and relevant metrics tied directly to the project's outcomes. Provides a realistic plan for sustaining proposal benefits after the grant funding period ends.	15
<b>Environmental Justice:</b> Explains whether the project is located in or benefits an MPCA Environmental Justice Area.	5
<b>Public Benefit:</b> Defines communities in the project area and their water quality challenges. Engages communities as appropriate in project development, implementation, or stewardship.	10
<b>Partnerships and Collaborations:</b> Presents a diverse partnership structure, including nontraditional or community-based partners. Collaboration enhances project outcomes or builds community capacity.	15
<b>Total Points Available</b>	<b>100</b>

#### CONFLICT OF INTEREST

[State Grant Policy 08-01](#), 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, 2029. 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.
- When practicable, grant recipients shall prominently display the legacy logo on their website. Grant recipients must display on their website either a link to their project from the [Legislative Coordinating Commission Legacy Site](#) or a clean water project summary that includes a description of the grant activities, including expenditure of grant funds and measurable outcomes.
- When practicable, grant recipients must display a sign with the Legacy Logo at the project site or other public location identifying the project was built with assistance from Clean Water, Land and Legacy Amendment. When practicable, grant recipients must display the Legacy Logo on printed and other media funded with money from the Clean Water Fund. The logo and specifications can be found on the [Legacy Amendment website](#).
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Providing Financial Assistance to Land Occupiers GAM chapter](#)
- BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grant recipient's legal counsel.
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Grant Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Procedure](#)
- 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](#).

## 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). When prevailing wage requirements apply, 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 website](#). Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091.

## RESTORATION EVALUATION PROGRAM

All restoration projects with restoration benefits funded via the Clean Water Fund may be subject to an evaluation in accordance with Minn. Stat. 114D.50 Subd. 6. Primary goals of the restoration evaluation program are to evaluate the projects relative to the law, current science, and the stated goals and standards in the restoration plan and to improve future habitat restorations by creating a feedback loop from lessons learned in the field. For more information visit the [Restoration Evaluation Program website](#).

Key recommendations that applicants should follow are:

1. **Improved training** - Continued development and implementation of training is essential to promote science-based practices
2. **Improved Project Planning** - Thorough project planning will enable project managers to make informed decisions and improve capacity to achieve desired outcomes.
3. **Improved Vegetation for Stream Projects** - Well established vegetation is critical for the long-term success of stream projects. Establishing native vegetation takes planning and diligent maintenance.
4. **Improved use of minimum design criteria for lakeshore projects** – Projects that mimic the shoreline’s natural structure and vegetation have achieved greater ecological benefits.
5. **Improved Project Teams** - Bringing more sets of expertise to the table will ideally: minimize instances of non-native plant use, identify plan components with high risk of limited success, help plan contingencies for potential challenges, and broaden project goals.
6. **Improved Documentation** - Documentation is critical for understanding, tracking, and achieving successful restorations.

## 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 exceptions 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 permits 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.

## SUBAGREEMENTS

Funds may be distributed to partner(s) using sub-agreements. Activities identified in the sub-agreement must fit within the scope of the agreement between BWSR and the recipient and include requirements for fund distribution, implementation, and reporting.

## 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.

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## 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.

## PROVIDING FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO LAND OCCUPIERS

All BWSR funds used by a recipient to provide financial assistance to a landowner or land occupier requires adequate project assurances.

### **Project Application and Agreements**

Work completed prior to the signing of the agreement is not eligible.

### **Conservation Practice Contract Noncompliance**

Failure to complete, maintain, or repair a conservation practice or unauthorized alteration is considered non-compliance with an executed conservation practice agreement. If the organization discovers noncompliance, they must take action to resolve and notify BWSR.