

FY 2027 Request for Proposals (RFP)

BWSR Clean Water Fund Projects and Practices and
Drinking Water Projects and Practices Grants

MPCA Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Program Loans

MDA AgBMP Loan Program



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WHAT IS NEW FOR FY2027

- Changed or added eligible and ineligible activity language related to financial assistance, in-lake/in-channel treatment, feedlots, drinking water, and feasibility study requirements.
- Additional language was added related to equity, allowable and unallowable costs, pre-award review, native vegetation, and sub-agreements to ensure consistency with current state policies. Equity priorities were added to the ranking criteria and as an application question.
- Formatting and minor language changes were made that include, but are not limited to, creating topical categories for eligible and ineligible activities to make the RFP easier to navigate for applicants. Projects and practices application questions were simplified for clarity.

GRANT OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

The appropriation language establishing these funds is in Laws of Minnesota 2025, Regular Session, Chapter 36, Article 2, Section 6(b), Laws of Minnesota 2015, 1st Special Session, Chapter 2, Article 2, Section 7(b), and Laws of Minnesota 2013, Regular Session, Chapter 137, Article 2, Section 7(b).

The Clean Water Fund (CWF) 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. These funds must supplement traditional sources of funding and may not be used as a substitute.

This RFP includes the following:

- Grants: Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) Projects and Practices and Drinking Water Projects and Practices
- Loans: Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Program, Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) AgBMP Loan Program

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: Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) document
- Weighted scoring criteria: Environmental justice, positively impacting these communities

FUNDING AVAILABLE AND MATCH

Table 1 lists the CWF grant programs available from BWSR and loans from other state agencies. Final funding decisions will be dependent on the actual funds available.

Grants require a non-state match equal to at least 10% of the amount of CWFs received and/or expended, unless specified otherwise by BWSR Board action. Activities listed as ineligible under the [Activity Eligibility section](#) below may not be counted towards match, except land acquisition and easement costs which can count toward the required match if directly associated with the project and incurred within the grant period. Match can be provided by a landowner, land occupier, private organization, local 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. Funds used for match for this program cannot be used as match for any other state grant program.

Table 1: FY 2027 Grant and Loan Funding Available¹

Agency Fund	Funding Amount ¹	Required Match	Award Minimum
BWSR Projects and Practices Grant	Up to \$3,350,000	10%	\$30,000
BWSR Drinking Water Projects and Practices Grant	Up to \$3,350,000	10%	\$30,000
MPCA Clean Water Partnership Program Loans	Up to \$3,500,000	Not Required	Not Required
MDA AgBMP Loan Program	Up to \$13,500,000	Not Required	Not Required

¹ Amounts shown are estimates. Actual amounts will be determined prior to the end of the application period.

TIMELINE

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on **March 25, 2026**. Late submissions or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding. The grant applicant is responsible for proving timely submittal.

Table 2: Grant Cycle Dates

Grant Cycle Milestones	Grant Cycle Dates
Application period open	February 11, 2026
Application period close	March 25, 2026
Anticipated awards	June 2026
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	July 2026
Work plan submittal deadline	August 31, 2026
Grant execution deadline	September 18, 2026
Grant agreement end date	December 31, 2029

GRANT ELIGIBILITY AND PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Eligible applicants for competitive grants include:

- a) Local governments (counties, watershed districts, watershed management organizations, and soil and water conservation districts or local government joint power boards) working under a current State approved and locally adopted local water management plan, comprehensive watershed management plan or soil and water conservation district comprehensive plan.
- b) Municipalities are eligible if they: 1) have a water plan that has been approved by a watershed district or a watershed management organization as provided under Minn. Stat. 103B.235; or 2) adopted an approved comprehensive watershed management plan developed under Minn. Stat. 103B.801.
- c) Counties in the seven-county metropolitan area are eligible if they have adopted a county groundwater plan under Minn Stat. 103B.255 or county comprehensive plan that has been approved by the Metropolitan Council under Minn. Stat. Chapter 473.
- d) DRINKING WATER PROJECTS & PRACTICES GRANT ONLY: Eligible entities include those listed in a) and c) above, as well as, municipalities if they have a state approved Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) approved source water (drinking water) protection plan such as a wellhead protection plan, wellhead protection action plan or surface water intake protection plan (public water suppliers and rural water systems defined by Minn. Stat. 116A.01 Public Water Systems).

Applicable plans must be current when the BWSR Board approves awards to be eligible to receive grant funds.

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. Application questions for competitive grants in this RFP ask about complementary work partners are implementing to achieve priority water goals.

ACTIVITY ELIGIBILITY

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

Eligible activities must 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, surface water intake plan, or wellhead protection plan. Local governments may include programs and projects in their grant application that are derived from an eligible plan of another local government. BWSR may request documentation outlining the cooperation between the local government submitting the grant application and the local government that has adopted the plan. The [BWSR webpage on eLINK Guidance: Practices](#) includes a list of most, but not all, practices available for users to select within eLINK.

I. GENERAL

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Project support to advance project implementation such as administrative, technical and engineering expenses, design and cost estimates, site investigations and assessments, construction or installation supervision, and inspections.
2. Equipment necessary for the implementation of water quality practices and programs consistent with the purposes of these funds.
3. Targeted public participation and engagement and other activities directly necessary for the implementation of water quality practices and programs.
4. Grant administration, management, and reporting activities that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the project(s) or activity(ies) associated with the grant.

B. INELIGIBLE

1. Incentive payments.
2. Activities that meet minimum requirements of law or permit including but not limited to: Buffer Law, Drainage Law, Groundwater Protection Rule, NPDES Construction Stormwater Permit, Shoreland Law, and Wetland Conservation Act except subsurface sewage treatment systems and feedlots as described below.
3. Development and delivery of educational activities and curriculum that do not support or lead to the implementation of water quality practices.
4. Routine maintenance activities or repair of best management practices, capital equipment and infrastructure within the effective life of existing practices or projects.

II. STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL PRACTICES AND ACTIVITIES

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Structural and non-structural practices and 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.

B. INELIGIBLE

1. Activities that outlet landlocked basins.
2. Stormwater conveyances that collect and move runoff, but do not provide a water quality treatment.
3. Replacement, realignment or creation of bridges, trails or roads.

C. REQUIRES ADDITIONAL BWSR APPROVAL

1. The BWSR grant manager, in consultation with regional managers, must approve the use of grant funds to provide financial assistance for a duration longer than three years for non-structural land management practices prior to work plan approval.

III. EASEMENTS AND FEE TITLE ACQUISITION

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Easement and fee title land acquisition costs can count toward the required match if directly associated with the project and incurred within the grant period.

IV. IN-LAKE OR IN-CHANNEL TREATMENT

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Management practices such as carp and goldfish management, lake drawdown, and alum treatments that have been identified as an implementation activity in a TMDL study or watershed restoration and protection strategies report and/or in a comprehensive watershed management plan or metro water management plan.

B. INELIGIBLE

1. 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.
2. All subsequent applications and treatments after the initial design and implementation. These are considered operation and maintenance expenses and are a project sponsor responsibility.

C. REQUIRES ADDITIONAL BWSR REVIEW

1. A feasibility study must be completed prior to applying for funding. **The feasibility study needs to be attached to the eLINK grant application.** The study must include the following:
 - 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.

V. FEEDLOTS

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Eligible practices are limited to: livestock management facilities that were initially registered before January 1, 2005; and livestock operations registered with the MPCA 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 Rules Chapter 7020. BWSR reserves the right to deny, postpone or cancel funding where financial penalties related to violations have been imposed on the operator.

B. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS:

1. Funded projects must comply with standards in MN Rules Chapter 7020 upon completion (i.e., no partial fixes allowed).
2. Eligible practices are limited to best management practices listed by the Minnesota Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) or other applicable standards as certified by a professional engineer.
3. Practices and project components must meet all applicable local, state, Tribal, 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.

C. INELIGIBLE

1. Slats placed on top of manure storage structures.

D. REQUIRES ADDITIONAL BWSR REVIEW

1. **Supplemental questions, found on the [BWSR Apply for Grants web page](#), must be submitted in eLINK via attachment as part of any application that contains feedlot practices including practices to address stockpiles.** Applications that do not have this attachment will be deemed ineligible. Funding will only be provided for those facilities listed on the supplemental questions sheet, which shall be incorporated into the grant work plan.

VI. SUBSURFACE SEWAGE TREATMENT SYSTEMS

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Replacing systems on homesteaded properties identified as an imminent threat to public health or safety or systems that are failing to protect groundwater. Landowners must meet low-income thresholds established by the grant recipient according to U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development or similar published criteria.
2. Costs associated with connecting a home into a sewer line that goes to a municipal or community wastewater treatment plant if the criteria in A1 (above) is met.

B. INELIGIBLE

1. 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).

C. REQUIRES ADDITIONAL BWSR REVIEW

1. Proposed community wastewater treatment solutions involving multiple landowners are eligible for funding if they are listed on the MPCA's Project Priority List and have a

Community Assessment Report or facilities plan (Minn. Rule 7077.0272) developed prior to the application deadline.

VII. DRAINAGE SYSTEMS AND DRAINAGE MANAGEMENT

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Funds can be used as an external source of funding for Minnesota Statutes 103E.011 Subd. 5 to facilitate multi-purpose drainage management practices with a primary purpose of improving water quality by reducing erosion and sedimentation or excess nutrient delivery and which may provide secondary benefits of reducing peak flows and flooding while protecting drainage system efficiency and reducing drainage system maintenance.

B. INELIGIBLE

1. Drain tile, except for tile outlets required for water and sediment control basins, tile required to make eligible drainage water management practices function, tile required to collect and move runoff to a treatment system, and dense pattern tile to replace open tile inlet(s).
2. Ditching except if needed for the creation of a storage and treatment wetland restoration.
3. Back-flow preventing flap gates on side inlet structure pipes where a system-wide analysis has not been completed.
4. Continuous berms greater than an average of 3 feet high (above existing ground) along Minnesota Statutes 103E drainage ditches.
5. Components or activities otherwise required by Minnesota Statutes 103E Drainage Law.

VIII. WATER MONITORING AND CONSERVATION

A. INELIGIBLE

1. Water quality monitoring including, but not limited to, routine, baseline, diagnostic, long-term trend, or effectiveness monitoring. This includes both surface and groundwater monitoring activities.
2. Municipal drinking water supply facilities or individual drinking water treatment systems.
3. Household water conservation appliances and water fixtures.

IX. STREAMBANK STABILIZATION OR STREAM RESTORATION

A. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. If a Projects and Practices grant application includes streambank stabilization or stream restoration activities, applicants will be more successful if they present sufficient data and information that demonstrates a detailed understanding of the channel and watershed conditions for the project, the proposed approach to channel design, and substantial early coordination efforts to ensure a successful project. Application questions 6 and 10 provide opportunities to include the following information in your answers:

- a. Describe assessments of watershed, channel, and floodplain conditions that helped identify the root cause of the pollution issue being addressed by the proposed project (Question 6).
- b. Describe geomorphic assessments, stream surveys, and other analysis that have been completed to assess channel and floodplain conditions (Question 6).
- c. Describe the proposed approach to channel design and the specific factors considered in the design including the restoration potential of the site given the channel, floodplain, and watershed conditions (Question 10).
- d. Describe the status of early coordination efforts with landowners, partners, and permitting agencies and level of concurrence on the assessment, design, and permitting for the proposed project (Question 10).

X. DRINKING WATER (DRINKING WATER PROJECTS AND PRACTICES GRANTS ONLY)

A. ELIGIBLE

1. Private well testing and cost of lab analysis for the following contaminants: coliform bacteria, nitrate, arsenic, lead and manganese via clinics/events/in office for the purpose of well user awareness of their drinking water quality.

B. ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

1. Projects will be more competitive when located within MDH Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA), a Level 1 or Level 2 area identified by the Groundwater Protection Rule, and/or township with high nitrate levels through the MDA Township Testing Program, or if it includes well sealing located in a low sensitivity/vulnerability area.
 - a. Note that DWSMA, Wellhead Protection Areas (WHPA) and groundwater vulnerability information can be found using the [MDH's Source Water Protection Web Map Viewer](#).
 - b. Level 1 or Level 2 areas identified by the Groundwater Protection Rule can be found at [MDA's Mitigation Level Determination for DWSMAs webpage](#).
 - c. Townships showing high nitrate levels can be found at [MDA's Township Testing Program webpage](#).
 - d. A list of Minnesota's impaired waters can be found on the [MPCA webpage: Minnesota's Impaired Waters list](#).
2. **Attaching a map of the proposed project area in eLINK as part of the project application is required to show why the area is targeted for drinking water protection.** Note that these layers can be found online as part of the [Watershed Health Assessment Framework \(WHAF\)](#). For guidance on how to make your required map, please review the document Discover Groundwater Information using the WHAF Tool found on the [Apply for BWSR Grants webpage](#). You will need to capture a screenshot from the WHAF tool (Alt + Print Screen for Windows computers), then save it as an image file (e.g. .jpg, .tif, or .png), and then upload this as your Application Image. It will be attached to your official application upon submittal. For additional information and resources please go to [BWSR's Groundwater Protection webpage](#). On this page, you will also find the Groundwater/Drinking Water Protection

Practices for Agricultural Lands guidance document that describes various groundwater protection practices. Data layers to consider are:

- a. Pollution Sensitivity of Near-Surface Materials showing expanded key (i.e., High = coarse grain material)
- b. DWSMAs with vulnerability ratings showing an expanded key (e.g., High, Moderate, Low)
- c. Primary Aquifers by section
- d. Township Testing Initial/Final Nitrate Results
- e. MDA Groundwater Protection Rule Part II Mitigation Level 1 and 2 DWSMAs/Townships
- f. Source Water DWSMAs, Priority Areas A & B (note that Priority Areas A & B only apply to the St. Cloud, Minneapolis, and St. Paul source water DWSMAs)
- g. Maximum Nitrate (mg/L) (shows maximum nitrate levels in drinking water wells)

C. INELIGIBLE

1. Projects that are not primarily focused on protecting the drinking water source of concern or minimizing the contaminant sources/risks impacting the drinking water source of concern.
2. Streambank restoration and stabilization projects.
3. Wells that must be sealed as part of state or local enforcement of State Well Code requirements. Consultation with MDH staff is strongly advised if uncertain of the regulatory status. Find contact information for the Wellhead Protection Program in the [MDH's Source Water Protection Unit Contacts and Districts document](#).

CONDITIONS THAT APPLY TO ALL STRUCTURAL AND NON-STRUCTURAL ACTIVITIES

PRACTICE STANDARDS

The grantee must use methods and practices consistent with the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), 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.

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.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Financial assistance is limited to flat rate payments and percent-based payments. Flat rate financial assistance must be reasonable and justifiable, and supported by grant recipient policy (and sub-recipient policy, if applicable). Financial assistance for percent-based payments must not result in grantee financial assistance agreements paying greater than 100% of the cost of any activity. BWSR may review and/or advise the grantee regarding financial assistance rates.

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

Eligible activities include local grant administration, management, and reporting that are directly related to and necessary for implementing the project or activity associated with the grant. 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, 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

BWSR CLEAN WATER FUND PROJECTS AND PRACTICES AND DRINKING WATER PROJECTS AND PRACTICES GRANTS

For questions regarding the BWSR Projects and Practices and Drinking Water Projects and Practices Grant Programs and RFP, contact your BWSR area Board Conservationist or Clean Water Specialist; a map of work areas and contact information is available at the [BWSR Maps and Apps Gallery](#). Questions may also be submitted by email to cwfquestions@state.mn.us. Responses will be posted on the BWSR website as [“Frequently Asked Questions” \(FAQ\)](#) regularly throughout the RFP application period. The final update will be posted on March 18, 2026.

MPCA CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP LOAN PROGRAM

Questions about the MPCA Clean Water Partnership Loan Program can be answered by calling Christopher Lundeen at 218-316-3873 or sending an email to CWP.Loan.PCA@state.mn.us.

MDA AGBMP LOAN PROGRAM

Questions about the MDA AgBMP Loan Program and requesting funds through this application can be answered by calling Richard Gruenes at (651) 201-6609 or sending an email to AgBMP.Loans@state.mn.us. Questions regarding the MDA Groundwater Protection Rule can be answered by Larry Gunderson at 651-201-6168 or larry.gunderson@state.mn.us, or by Margaret Wagner at (651) 201-6488 or margaret.wagner@state.mn.us. Questions about Township Testing can be answered by Kim Kaiser at 651-201-6280 or kimberly.kaiser@state.mn.us.

DRINKING WATER SUPPLY MANAGEMENT AREAS OR WELLHEAD PROTECTION AREAS

For more information on who to contact at MDH for questions about Drinking Water Supply Management Areas or Wellhead Protection areas, see the [Source Water Protection Unit Contacts and Districts information](#).

ELINK GRANTS MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

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 [BWSR's Conservation Tracking System: eLINK](#). **Eligible applicants without a current eLINK user account must register for an account in eLINK 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 [eLINK Guidance: Creating and Submitting a Funding Request in eLINK video](#) 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.
- 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, BWSR staff 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.

- Proposals should clearly articulate what water resource is being targeted in the application. Proposals should demonstrate significant, measurable project outputs and outcomes targeted to critical pollution source areas that will help achieve water quality objectives for the water resource of concern; be consistent with a water management plan that has been state approved and locally adopted or an approved total maximum daily load study (TMDL), Watershed Restoration and Protection Strategy (WRAPS), Groundwater Restoration and Protection Strategy (GRAPS), surface water intake plan, or wellhead protection plan.
- Applications with unrealistic pollution reduction estimates will not be considered.
- Proposals for projects meeting a waste load allocation and located on publicly owned land and exceeding \$750,000 should first consult with the [Minnesota Public Facilities Authority](#) before applying for BWSR grants.
- Applicants should evaluate the impacts that climate change (such as fluctuating precipitation patterns and drought) may have on the ability of the proposed project to meet objectives and whether the proposed project increases landscape resiliency.
- For projects that are proposing to infiltrate stormwater, the following guidance should be taken into consideration: [Minnesota Stormwater Manual's stormwater and wellhead protection guidance](#).
- Proposals from applicants that were previously awarded CWFs will be considered during the review process for applications submitted in response to this RFP. However, applicants that have expended less than 50% of previous award(s) at the time of this application will need to demonstrate organizational capacity to finalize current projects and to complete new projects concurrently.
- **Proposals involving in-lake/in-channel treatment, feedlot projects, and those that are applying for Drinking Water Projects and Practices funds must include required attachments in eLINK at the time of application.**

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

FY2027 PROJECTS AND PRACTICES QUESTIONS

Answers to each question are limited to 2,000 characters. Note that the following questions need to be answered in eLINK and the character limit in eLINK is NOT the same as Microsoft Word.

OVERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Project Abstract (5 points):

Succinctly describe the water resources you are trying to restore or protect, the activities associated with your proposed project, and the expected outcomes if implemented.

Proposed Measurable Outcomes (0 points):

Clearly state the specific, measurable outcomes expected from the proposed activities, including numeric estimates where possible.

NUMBERED QUESTIONS:

1. **Water Resource (0 points):**
What water resource(s) and water quality issue will this proposed project help protect or improve?
2. **Clean Water Fund (CWF) Grants (0 points):**
Please list any current BWSR CWF grants your organization holds, including fiscal year and percentage spent. Then describe your organization's capacity to manage an additional CWF grant (e.g., available staff, FTEs, or contracted support).
3. **Prioritization - Relationship to Plan (15 points):**
Why is this water resource and this water quality issue a priority? Describe how it is identified as a priority in a local water plan.
4. **Prioritization - Relationship to Plan (0 points):**
Provide references and hyperlinks to any plans you cite in Question Number 3.
5. **Prioritization - Relationship to Plan (2 points):**
How does the proposed project for this resource align with at least one of the state priorities referenced in the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan?
6. **Targeting (20 points):**
Describe the methods used to identify, inventory, and target the type and location of the proposed actions and what alternative approaches were considered to address this water quality issue and its root cause. Explain why the proposed solution is the preferred option and one of the most cost-effective choices for achieving the expected water quality outcomes.
7. **Targeting (5 points):**
Describe how the proposed project aligns with and complements other ongoing or planned work by you and your partners. Explain how these efforts together create a comprehensive approach to addressing the water quality issue.
8. **Measurable Outcomes and Project Impact (25 points):**
What actions are you proposing to address this water quality concern, and what water quality outcomes do you expect? How do these expected outcomes relate to goals identified in the water management plan or other relevant water quality plans (e.g. TMDL, WRAPS, etc.)? Describe the methods used to quantify outcomes. If no pollutant reduction goal has been set, describe the water quality trends or other relevant management goals that have been established.
9. **Measurable Outcomes and Project Impact (5 points):**
What secondary benefits do you expect from this project beyond the primary water quality issue(s) described in previous questions? Please specifically describe and quantify them as much as possible.

10. Project Readiness (13 points):

Describe your proposed project's readiness for implementation. List steps completed or underway for siting and design, permitting or environmental review status and needs, landowner discussions and agreements, and any other factors that demonstrate the project can begin promptly after a grant is awarded.

11. Project Readiness (5 points):

Describe how the eLINK Activity Categories (see [eLINK Guidance: Activity Categories](#) for more information) support the budget in your application. Please provide adequate detail in your budget table to support your application.

12. Public Benefit (2 points):

What additional communication or outreach efforts will support this project? Describe how you will communicate the need, benefits, and long-term impacts to the community beyond standard newsletters, signs, or press releases.

13. Public Benefit (3 points):

Does your proposed project directly benefit water resources (e.g., lakes, streams, and/or groundwater/drinking water) in an environmental justice area (as defined in Minnesota Statutes 116.065)? Describe how your proposed project will benefit the communities in this identified area(s). Use and cite verifiable and measurable sources such as the [MPCA's map of environmental justice areas](#).

14. Amendment (0 points):

The Constitutional Amendment requires that Amendment funding must not substitute for traditional state sources of funding. Briefly describe how this project will provide water quality benefits to the State of Minnesota without substituting for existing funding.

15. Stream Restoration Projects Only (0 points):

The Legacy Fund Restoration Evaluation Report recommends early coordination and comprehensive planning for stream projects. Describe the expertise of your team (e.g., geomorphology, hydrology, plant and animal ecology, construction site management, and engineering) and early coordination efforts you have been part of to ensure project success.

16. Stream Restoration Projects Only (0 points):

Financial project assurance (recommended at least 20 percent of total project cost) for streambank stabilization or stream restoration projects should be documented prior to work plan approval to ensure projects provide the proposed long-term clean water benefits. Describe how your organization will provide financial assurance that operations and maintenance funds are available if needed from local sources for repairs and maintenance.

17. Feedlot or In-Lake/In-Channel Treatment Projects Only (Required Attachments) (0 points):
Grant applicants must attach a feedlot worksheet found on the [Apply for BWSR Grants web page](#) in the eLINK grant application as required in this RFP for livestock waste activities. Grant

applicants must attach a feasibility study in the eLINK grant application as described in this RFP for in-lake management activities. Have you attached these required documents if applicable?

18. Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Loans:

Please enter the dollar amount requested for CWP Loans. If you are not interested, indicate "not applicable".

19. AgBMP Loans:

Please enter the dollar amount requested for the AgBMP Loan Program. If you are not interested, indicate "not applicable".

FY2027 DRINKING WATER PROJECTS AND PRACTICES QUESTIONS

Answers to each question are limited to 2,000 characters. Note that the following questions need to be answered in eLINK and the character limit in eLINK is NOT the same as Microsoft Word.

OVERVIEW QUESTIONS:

Project Abstract (5 points):

Succinctly describe what you are trying to achieve and how you intend to achieve those results, including the type and quantity of projects and/or practices included in the application budget and anticipated outcomes.

Proposed Measurable Outcomes (0 points):

Succinctly describe the proposed measurable outcomes of this grant application.

NUMBERED QUESTIONS:

1. Drinking Water Source (0 points):

Identify the specific drinking water source the application is targeting for water quality.

2. Clean Water Fund (CWF) Grants (0 points):

Does your organization have any active CWF 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 CWF grant dollars.

3. Prioritization - Relationship to Plan (20 points):

For the proposed drinking water project, list the specific water management plan(s) that identifies this drinking water issue, including a 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 AND/OR the MN Department of Health (MDH) approved source water /wellhead protection plan with a designated Drinking Water Supply Management Area (DWSMA). What prioritized activities from the plan (referred to above) does this application address?

4. Prioritization - Relationship to Plan (0 points):

Provide references and hyperlinks to any plans you cite in Question Number 3.

5. Targeting - Public Water Supplies and Private Wells (25 points):

- (a) Describe the methods/assessments used to identify, inventory, and target the contaminant sources or risks impacting the drinking water source of concern and why this specific area poses a high risk to drinking water.
- (b) What are the risks, land uses, or potential contaminant sources that may be impacting the drinking water source? Are the proposed activities appropriate for the geology, sensitivity, and/or DWSMA vulnerability? If the project involves well sealing, provide information about the well(s), aquifer(s), and pollution sensitivity. If the project falls in a DWSMA, identify the vulnerability (e.g., high, low).

Attaching a map in eLINK as part of the project proposal is required to show why the area is targeted for drinking water protection. For guidance on how to make your required map, please review the document Discover Groundwater Information using the Watershed Health Assessment Framework Tool found on the [Apply for BWSR Grants webpage](#). For additional information and resources regarding your specific project area please go to [BWSR's Groundwater Protection webpage](#).

6. Targeting - Public Water Supplies and Private Wells (7 points):

How does this proposal fit with complementary work that you and your partners are implementing to achieve the goal(s) for the priority drinking water source(s) of concern? Describe the comprehensive management approach to this drinking water source(s) with examples such as: other financial assistance or incentive programs, easements, regulatory enforcement, or community engagement activities that are directly or indirectly related to this proposal.

7. Project Impact (10 points):

- (a) Describe the supporting information for the contaminant(s) subject to this application (such as nitrate clinic, MDA Township Testing Program, Ambient Water Quality Monitoring, TMDL, GRAPS or WRAPS) and its results. If there is trend data and analysis, please describe that information here as well.
- (b) What is the drinking water standard (via Maximum Contaminant Level, Health Risk Limit, or Health Based Value) for the contaminant(s) that is the subject of this application? If no drinking water standard has been set, describe the health risks associated with the drinking water contaminant.

8. Project Impact (17 points):

- (a) Indicate the measurable outputs such as acres of protected land, quantity of potential contaminant sources removed or managed, changes in land use, employing multiple strategies or practices for drinking water protection, etc.
- (b) Demonstrate the impact that this project will have on the drinking water source. Where applicable, identify the progress toward the plan(s) goal that is achieved for the drinking water source after this project is completed.

(c) Why is this the most cost-effective project compared to alternatives? Discuss why alternative practices were not selected.

9. **Project Impact (3 points):**

If the project will have secondary benefits, specifically describe, (quantify if possible) those benefits. Examples: hydrologic benefits, improved water quality for nearby private wells, enhancement of aquatic and terrestrial wildlife species, climate resiliency, enhancement of pollinator populations, or protection of rare and/or native species.

10. **Project Readiness (8 points):**

What steps have been taken or do you expect to take to ensure that project implementation can begin soon after the grant award? 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.

11. **Public Benefit (2 points):**

What activities, if any proposed, will accompany your project(s) that will communicate the need, benefits, and long-term impacts to your local community? This should go above and beyond the standard newsletters, signs and press releases.

12. **Public Benefit (3 points):**

Does your proposed project directly benefit drinking water sources in an environmental justice area (as defined in Minnesota Statutes 116.065)? Describe how your proposed project will benefit these communities in this identified area(s). Use and cite verifiable and measurable data such as the [MPCA's map of environmental justice areas](#).

13. **Amendment (0 points):**

The Constitutional Amendment requires that Amendment funding must not substitute for traditional state funding. Briefly describe how this project will provide water quality benefits to the State of Minnesota without substituting for existing funding.

14. **Clean Water Partnership (CWP) Loans:**

Please enter the dollar amount requested for CWP Loans. If you are not interested, indicate "not applicable".

15. **AgBMP Loans:**

Please enter the dollar amount requested for the AgBMP Loan Program. If you are not interested, indicate "not applicable".

APPLICATION REVIEW

BWSR staff initially screen all applications for eligibility. Eligible applications are then forwarded to an interagency work team with representatives from BWSR, MPCA, MDA, MDH and the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) that will review and rank the applications using standardized scoring guidance documents in order to make a funding recommendation to the BWSR Board. The BWSR

Board considers the review teams’ recommendations and makes the award decision. See Selection and Ranking Criteria for each grant in the sections below.

SELECTION AND RANKING CRITERIA

PROJECTS AND PRACTICES GRANTS

This grant makes an investment in on-the-ground projects and practices to protect, enhance, and restore water quality in lakes, rivers, and streams and to protect groundwater and drinking water sources from degradation.

Table 3: Projects and Practices Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria	Criteria Description	Maximum Points Possible
Project Abstract	The project abstract succinctly describes what results the applicant is trying to achieve and how they intend to achieve those results.	5
Prioritization (Relationship to Plans)	The proposal is based on priority protection or restoration actions listed in or derived from a current state approved and locally adopted plan for the project area (see plans listed in the Activity Eligibility section of this RFP) and is linked to state priorities in the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan.	17
Targeting	The proposal describes the methods used to select the proposed project, alternatives considered, why it a cost-effective solution to achieve water quality outcomes, and how it aligns with complementary work.	25
Measurable Outcomes and Project Impact	The proposed project has a quantifiable reduction in pollution for restoration projects or measurable water quality outputs for protection projects, directly addresses the water quality concern identified in the application and considers potential secondary benefits.	30
Project Readiness	The application has a set of specific activities that can be implemented soon after the grant is awarded and the budget provided has adequate detail.	18
Public Benefit	Proposal describes outreach efforts to support the proposed project beyond standard methods and how the proposed water quality project benefits communities in an environmental justice area.	5
Total Points Available		100

DRINKING WATER PROJECTS AND PRACTICES GRANTS

This grant makes an investment in land treatment projects and practices that will protect or improve drinking water sources. Surface water (streams, rivers, and lakes) and groundwater (aquifers) can both serve as sources of drinking water. Drinking water projects must be consistent with wellhead protection

plans, protection plans for surface water intakes, groundwater restoration and protection strategies (GRAPS), or local water management plans or their equivalents.

Table 4: Drinking Water Projects and Practices Ranking Criteria

Ranking Criteria	Criteria Description	Maximum Points Possible
Project Abstract	The project abstract succinctly describes what results the applicant is trying to achieve and how they intend to achieve those results.	5
Prioritization	The proposal is based on priority actions from a current state approved and locally adopted plan (see plans listed in the Activity Eligibility section of this RFP) or a Minnesota Department of Health approved source water (drinking water) protection plan such as a wellhead protection plan, wellhead protection action plan or surface water intake plan.	20
Targeting	The proposed project addresses contaminant sources or risks directly impacting drinking water sources. The project is in an area designated as one of the following: a Drinking Water Supply Management Area, vulnerable to groundwater contamination, high groundwater sensitivity, or in an area with elevated levels of contamination that pose a risk to human health such as Level 1 or Level 2 areas identified by the Groundwater Protection Rule and/or townships showing high nitrate level through the MDA township testing and/or listed on the Minnesota’s Impaired Waters list for a contaminant that poses a risk to human health (e.g., nitrate). Project fits with complementary work and multiple strategies aimed at drinking water protection.	32
Project Impact	The proposed project reduces an identified contaminant source posing the greatest risk to drinking water sources. Project will have measurable outputs, justifiable costs, and may have secondary benefits.	30
Project Readiness	The application has a set of specific activities that can be implemented soon after the grant is awarded.	8
Public Benefit	Proposal describes outreach efforts to support the proposed project beyond standard methods and how the proposed drinking water project benefits communities in an environmental justice area.	5
Total Points Available		100

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

State Grant Policy 08-01, Conflict of Interest for State Grant-Making, also applies to BWSR grantees (see the [Grants Management Policies, Statutes and Forms](#) for more information). 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 webpage](#).

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.
- 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 CWF. The logo and specifications can be found at the [Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment's Legacy Logo webpage](#).
- All grant recipients are subject to [BWSR's Implementing Contracts with Land Occupiers 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 [BWSR's 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). 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 [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry \(DOLI\) 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 CWF may be subject to an evaluation in accordance with Minn. Stat. 114D.50 Subd. 6. The 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 [Minnesota DNR's Restoration Evaluation Program webpage](#).

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 [MDA's 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) through the use of 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:

1. Technical Assistance Provider

The recipient must designate technical assistance provider(s) that have appropriate credentials for investigation, design, and construction.

2. Practice Standards

Practices and projects must use appropriate standards for design, construction, effective life, operation, and maintenance.

3. 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.

4. Operation and Maintenance

Technical assistance provider(s) must prepare an operation and maintenance (O&M) plan specific to the site and practice(s) implemented.

5. 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.

The grantee has the responsibility to ensure that the designated technical staff have the appropriate technical expertise, skills and training for their assigned role(s). See also the Assurances section of the [BWSR Grants Administration Manual](#).

Grantees must identify the technical assistance provider(s) for the practice or project and their credentials for providing this assistance. The technical assistance provider(s) must have appropriate credentials for practice investigation, design, and construction inspection. Credentials can include conservation partnership Job Approval Authority (JAA), also known as technical approval authority; applicable professional licensure; reputable vendor with applicable expertise and liability coverage; or other applicable credentials, training, and/or experience.

BWSR may review the qualifications of all persons providing technical assistance and review the technical project design if a recognized standard is not available.

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.

Funds repaid to a grantee from a landowner or other land occupier who has failed to maintain a practice for its effective life must be reallocated to a local cost share program or project account consistent with Minnesota Statutes Chapter 114D.50, less the administrative cost of the grantee. The grantee board is the authority and has the responsibility to approve the expenditure of funds within their own organization. The approval or denial of expenditures of funds must be documented in the grantee board's meeting minutes. BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grant recipient's legal counsel.

See also the Assurances section of the [BWSR Grants Administration Manual](#).

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.

MPCA CLEAN WATER PARTNERSHIP (CWP) PROGRAM LOANS

The Clean Water Partnership (CWP) program offers loans up to \$750,000 per loan (1.5% interest) with the potential to increase the amount per loan by \$500,000 to local units of government for addressing nonpoint-source pollution to improve water quality. The funds are available to fund urban green infrastructure, including pervious pavers, rain gardens, inflow and infiltration or a suite of rural best management practices including buffers, septic tank upgrades/replacements, etc. In addition to funding implementation, LGUs can use these funds for technical assistance, equipment purchases such as street sweepers or seeder equipment, feedlot upgrades/fixes, and any other nonpoint source best management practice. For more information, please contact Christopher Lundeen at CWP.Loan.PCA@state.mn.us or 218-316-3873.

BWSR and the MPCA have agreed to coordinate the CWF Projects and Practices Grant Program and the CWP Loan Program application process. Approved CWP Loans for nonpoint source pollution projects could be used as cash match for BWSR grants. An applicant for BWSR grants does not have to submit a separate application to the MPCA. Applications approved by BWSR and the interagency work team will be submitted to the commissioner of the MPCA for final approval.

The applicant will work with the MPCA to complete the loan documents. Applications are accepted at any time throughout the year. Applicants to BWSR's Grants do not need to submit a separate application, but for more information, or to apply at any time, please visit the [MPCA Clean Water Partnership Loans webpage](#).

AG BMP LOANS

The AgBMP Loan Program is established in all areas of the state providing loan funds since 1996. Requests from watershed organizations, drainage authorities, cities, townships, and other RFP applicants will be coordinated through existing contracts with the local AgBMP administrator. Local AgBMP administrators can be found at [MDA's AGBMP County Current Prod interactive map](#).

The AgBMP Loan Program provides low interest loans to landowners to solve virtually any water quality problem. The program encourages implementation of best management practices that prevent, reduce, or eliminate pollution. Examples include runoff from feedlots; farm nutrient management and conservation tillage equipment; erosion, drainage, and buffers; noncompliant septic systems and wells; and many other practices. For more information on program eligibility, please contact Richard Gruenes at AgBMP.Loans@state.mn.us or 651-201-6618, or go to the [Minnesota Department of Agriculture \(MDA\) website](#).

The AgBMP Loan Program is funded through multiple funding sources. The estimated funding that Local Government Units will have available for 2026 from all funding sources is approximately \$13.5 million. Please feel free to reach out to your local government unit contacts with possible projects. You can find your local government unit contacts with the following link: [Map of AgBMP Loan Program County Contacts and Lenders](#).

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- The AgBMP Loan funds can be coordinated with requested grant funds to fully finance proposed projects. Please contact the AgBMP Loan Program staff or local AgBMP administrators to determine availability.
- AgBMP loans can be issued to rural landowners, farmers, and farm supply businesses; however, in some cases, urban landowners may also be eligible; please contact the program to verify borrower eligibility for AgBMP loans.
- The maximum loan amount for an individual person receiving a loan is \$200,000. Terms include 3% interest and a maximum maturity of 10 years. Please contact the program to verify limits if the proposed project involves multiple individuals.
- AgBMP Loan awards are ONLY for implementation of proven BMPs. Education, research, and demonstration projects are not eligible components of an AgBMP Loan request.
- AgBMP Loans can be considered MATCH funds provided by the landowner for all state and federal grant programs.