



FY 2027

Soil Health Delivery Grant

GRANT REQUEST FOR INTEREST (RFI)

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)

www.bwsr.state.mn.us



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What is New for FY2027

No Match required.

Grant Overview

Purpose

The Soil Health Delivery Program is established via Laws of Minnesota 2025, Regular Session, Chapter 36, Article 2, Section 6, paragraph (o) to provide financial assistance, educational, and technical support activities needed to promote and facilitate the enhanced adoption of soil health practices and systems to achieve water quality and drinking water benefits.

The purpose of this funding request is to:

- 1) Provide expectations for soil health activities implemented through the Soil Health Delivery Program,
- 2) Identify those Soil and Water Conservation Districts (SWCDs) which intend to participate in the program, and
- 3) Identify the funding amounts requested by participating SWCDs

Timeline

Requests must be submitted by 4:30 PM CT/CST on October 15th, 2026. Late submissions or incomplete requests will not be considered for funding. The grant recipient is responsible for proving timely submittal.

Table 2: Grant Cycle Dates

Grant Cycle	Grant Cycle Dates
Request period open	September 14, 2026
Request period close	October 15, 2026
Anticipated awards	November 2026
Anticipated grant agreements sent to recipients	Estimated within 30 days of award
Work plan submittal deadline	January 15, 2027
Grant execution deadline	March 31, 2027
Grant agreement end date	December 31, 2029

Grant Eligibility and Program Requirements

Eligible Recipients

Eligible recipients for these grants include:

- Political subdivisions/Local governments
 - Soil and water conservation districts

Recipients must operate in Minnesota and conduct grant activities that benefit the resources of Minnesota. Recipients 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. Recipients that are debarred or suspended by the State of Minnesota or the Federal Government are not eligible. Recipients must be in compliance with all applicable federal, State, and local laws, policies, ordinances, rules, and regulations.

This is a formula-based grant opportunity. The total funding appropriation for this request for interest is \$3,220,000.

The maximum per district funding request for this program is the allocated amount specified in Table 1. Acceptance of a funding amount less than the allocated maximum will not have any bearing on, or serve to limit, eligibility for future program allocations.

No match required.

Table 1 lists allocation maximum amounts for each Soil & Water Conservation District.

Recipient	Funding Amount	Clearwater	Up to \$20,000	Morrison	Up to \$40,000
Ramsey	Up to \$7,500	Pine	Up to \$20,000	Becker	Up to \$40,000
Lake	Up to \$7,500	Mahnomen	Up to \$30,000	Chippewa	Up to \$40,000
Koochiching	Up to \$7,500	Dakota	Up to \$30,000	Pope	Up to \$40,000
South St. Louis	Up to \$7,500	Winona	Up to \$30,000	Sibley	Up to \$40,000
North St. Louis	Up to \$7,500	Red Lake	Up to \$30,000	Brown	Up to \$40,000
Cook	Up to \$7,500	Le Sueur	Up to \$30,000	Traverse	Up to \$40,000
Washington	Up to \$10,000	Wabasha	Up to \$30,000	Goodhue	Up to \$40,000
Lake of the Woods	Up to \$10,000	Nicollet	Up to \$30,000	Cottonwood	Up to \$50,000
		Rice	Up to \$30,000	Blue Earth	Up to \$50,000
Itasca	Up to \$10,000	Waseca	Up to \$30,000	Kandiyohi	Up to \$50,000
Crow Wing	Up to \$10,000	Steele	Up to \$30,000	Swift	Up to \$50,000
Carlton	Up to \$10,000	Big Stone	Up to \$30,000	Lac Qui Parle	Up to \$50,000
Aitkin	Up to \$10,000	Watsonwan	Up to \$30,000	Freeborn	Up to \$50,000
Kanabec	Up to \$10,000	Wright	Up to \$30,000	Jackson	Up to \$50,000
Anoka	Up to \$10,000	Dodge	Up to \$30,000	Lyon	Up to \$50,000
Hennepin	Up to \$10,000	Douglas	Up to \$30,000	West Otter Tail	Up to \$50,000
Hubbard	Up to \$10,000	McLeod	Up to \$40,000	Roseau	Up to \$50,000
Wadena	Up to \$20,000	East Polk	Up to \$40,000	Murray	Up to \$60,000
Chisago	Up to \$20,000	Pipestone	Up to \$40,000	Martin	Up to \$60,000
Sherburne	Up to \$20,000	Grant	Up to \$40,000	Fillmore	Up to \$60,000
Isanti	Up to \$20,000	East Otter Tail	Up to \$40,000	Mower	Up to \$60,000
Scott	Up to \$20,000	Rock	Up to \$40,000	Faribault	Up to \$60,000
Carver	Up to \$20,000	Todd	Up to \$40,000	Nobles	Up to \$60,000
Benton	Up to \$20,000	Pennington	Up to \$40,000	Yellow	Up to \$60,000
Root River	Up to \$20,000	Meeker	Up to \$40,000	Wilkin	Up to \$60,000
Beltrami	Up to \$20,000	Olmsted	Up to \$40,000	Kittson	Up to \$60,000
Cass	Up to \$20,000	Stevens	Up to \$40,000	Norman	Up to \$75,000
Mille Lacs	Up to \$20,000	Lincoln	Up to \$40,000	Redwood	Up to \$75,000

Clay	Up to \$75,000	Stearns	Up to \$75,000	West Polk	Up to \$75,000
Renville	Up to \$75,000	Marshall	Up to \$75,000	Total	\$3,220,000

Eligible Activities

Funding may be used broadly for financial assistance, educational efforts, and technical support activities needed to promote and facilitate the enhanced adoption of soil health practices and systems to achieve water quality and drinking water benefits. Funding for the following core soil health practices are eligible statewide:

The following activities are eligible for these funds:

- Alley Cropping
- Conservation Cover
- Contour Buffer Strips
- Cover Crop
- Critical Area Planting
- Field Border
- Filter Strip
- Forest Farming
- Forest Stand Improvement
- Pasture and Hay Planting
- Prescribed Grazing
- Residue and Tillage Management (No Till)
- Riparian Forest Buffer
- Silvopasture
- Tree/Shrub Establishment
- Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation

Eligible practices are NOT limited to those above. In addition, local priority or other supporting soil health practices may be eligible, but grantees must identify these activities during the work plan process.

For Example: Nutrient Management practice(s) would be eligible in the following scenario. The Stormy SWCD is struggling with nitrate concentration increases in several public water supplies. They are proposing Nutrient Management practices emphasizing improvement of organic matter as a BMP, and since the area has a high incidence of confined animal facilities, they specifically want to implement Manure Management plans in addition to cover crops for operators who apply manure or other nitrogen fertilizer within the Stormy public water supply. Additional local priority or supporting soil health practices may be eligible if approved through the grant work plan.

A list of the practices available for users to select within eLINK are available at BWSR's [eLINK Guidance Practices webpage](#). It is not an inclusive list.

Conditions that apply to all structural and non-structural activities

Practice Standards

The grantee must use methods and practices consistent with the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Field Office Technical Guide (FOTG), 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 soil health and 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.

District Financial Assistance Policy

If contracts are awarded to landowners for project implementation, a local SWCD financial assistance policy must be attached within eLINK. Financial Assistance Policies should describe local program information such as payment rates, contract terms, and inspection schedules.

Ineligible Activities

Funds may not be used for the purchase of equipment that will be used to establish, improve, or accelerate soil health. Examples of equipment include, but are not limited to, no till drills, air seeders, high boys, variable rate equipment, and retrofit projects to convert corn detasslers to high boys.

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's Soil Health Financial Assistance Grant provides cost-share for the purchase and retrofit of soil health equipment. Additional information can be found at [Soil Health Financial Assistance Program Grants | Minnesota Department of Agriculture](#).

The Minnesota Department of Agriculture's AgBMP Loan program is a water quality program that provides low-interest loans to farmers, rural landowners, and agriculture supply businesses. Soil Health equipment purchases that address water quality concerns are eligible. Additional information can be found at [Agriculture Best Management Practices \(BMP\) Loan Program | Minnesota Department of Agriculture \(state.mn.us\)](#)

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. Recipients 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.

Requesting Funds

How To Submit a Question

Questions regarding grant program funding requests should be directed to your area Board Conservationist; a map of work areas and contact information is available at [BWSR Maps and Apps Gallery](#). Questions may also be submitted to Jared House by email to Jared.House@state.mn.us. Responses will be posted on the BWSR website as a “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) document regularly throughout the RFI. The final update will be posted on October 9th, 2026.

For questions regarding this Grant Program and RFI, contact Jared House at Jared.House@state.mn.us.

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

How to Apply Using eLINK

1. Set up your eLINK user account
Requests need to be submitted via [BWSR’s grants and conservation tracking system, eLINK](#). Eligible recipients 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
See the [eLINK Guidance: Completing a Funding Request in eLINK video](#) to view a 11-minute online module describing how to complete a Funding Request within eLINK.
 - Answers to each question is limited to 2,000 characters. Due to differences in how programs are encoded, be aware that the character limit in eLINK is not the same as Microsoft Word or other text editors.
 - Requests may include only one image to be submitted within their eLINK application. Only .jpg, .tiff, or .png file types are allowed.

Recipients must provide answers to the Application Questions as part of their request submitted in eLINK.

Application Questions

1. How much funding is being requested? Maximum allocations can be found in Table 1.
2. Do you intend on providing financial assistance to landowners/land occupiers with these funds?
3. (Required if answered yes to #2) Do you have a locally adopted financial assistance policy? If not, please describe your anticipated timeline for adopting such a policy.

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 (visit the [BWSR Grant Agreement Amendments and Work Plan Revisions webpage](#) for more information). 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 recipient 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.

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 recipient 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

- 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 webpage](#) 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 at the [Clean Water, Land & Legacy Amendment's Legacy Logo webpage](#).
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Providing Financial Assistance chapter](#).
- BWSR recommends all contracts be reviewed by the grant recipient's legal counsel.
- All grant recipients are required to report on the outcomes, activities, and accomplishments of the grant.
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Grant Monitoring and Financial Reconciliation Procedure chapter](#).
- All grant recipients are subject to BWSR's [Grant Noncompliance Policy chapter](#).
- 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 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 RFI shall be paid wages at rates not less than those prevailing on projects of a character similar in the locality. Additional information on prevailing wage requirements is available on the [Department of Labor and Industry \(DOLI\) website](#). Questions about the application of prevailing wage rates should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091.

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 recipient is responsible for obtaining and complying with all permits necessary to execute the project. Recipients are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory agencies early in the grant 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.

Practice or Project Construction and Sign-off

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

Project and Practice Assurances

A written agreement is required to ensure program requirements are met when installing projects and practices or providing financial assistance to a landowner or authorized agent. 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

All BWSR funds used by a recipient to provide financial assistance to a landowner or authorized agent 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.