

Charter: Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grants advisory council

APPROVED BY: _____ DATE APPROVED: _____
Name, Title

Purpose and scope of activity

Purpose statement

The purpose of the advisory council is to provide strategic guidance and recommendations that enhance the management and distribution of Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) Community Grant Program grants. The council will promote transparency, accessibility, equity and effectiveness in the allocation of ENRTF Community Grant Program resources.

Functions and scope

The advisory council will review the ENRTF Community Grant Program's policies and guidelines, program structure, and recipient and program/project eligibility criteria, and provide recommendations on improving management of the grant program to the Commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and the Minnesota Legislature.

Desired outcomes/products

The advisory council will seek to promote transparency, accessibility, equity and effectiveness in the allocation of resources through the ENRTF Community Grant Program. It will advise the DNR Commissioner and Minnesota Legislature on improvements to the management of ENRTF Community Grant Program that will ensure the inclusion of communities historically excluded from environmental funding, while advancing the purpose of the ENRTF for the benefit of all Minnesotans.

Source of advisory council's authority

This advisory council is authorized by Minnesota Statutes, Section 116X.05.

Membership

Members, how membership is determined

The DNR Commissioner will appoint at least 14 members to the advisory council but not more than the statutory maximum of 19 members. The DNR will solicit applications from the public, and members will be selected to align

advisory council membership with the criteria outlined in statute. Before members are appointed, the DNR will consult with the commissioners of Health and the Pollution Control Agency on the proposed appointments.

According to statute, advisory council members must be Minnesota residents and must include two enrolled members of an Ojibwe Tribal Nation that lies within Minnesota boundaries and two enrolled members of a Dakota Tribal Nation that lies within Minnesota boundaries. The advisory council also must include four members who identify as Black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, or as members of a community of color. Additional residents of Minnesota will be appointed to the advisory council to ensure that, at the DNR Commissioner's discretion, the advisory council is sufficiently representative of various Minnesota communities.

Collectively, advisory council membership must include individuals with specific experience, including:

- Experience or expertise in the science, policy, or practice of the protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources, including expertise in understanding the cultural context in which these activities are undertaken from the perspective of Tribal communities.
- A strong knowledge of environment and natural resource issues around the state, including those that are of particular importance to Tribal communities.
- A demonstrated ability to work in a collaborative environment.
- Grant management experience and/or a demonstrated history of experience applying for, managing, evaluating or administering public grants and/or working with government.

The advisory council appointment process must result in substantially equal representation of rural, suburban, and urban communities. Registered lobbyists may not be appointed to this advisory council.

Members will serve staggered three-year terms beginning in January of their first year and continuing through the end of December of their final year. Members whose term has expired may continue to serve until their replacement is named.

Initial appointments to the advisory council will be divided equally between one-year, two-year, and three-year terms to establish a structure of staggered terms. To comply with statute, the terms of members appointed in calendar year 2026 will begin January 2026, regardless of the date of their appointment in 2026.

Meeting schedule

Advisory council meetings will be open to the public. This body will meet quarterly, unless specific circumstances require greater frequency. Advisory council members will inform and confirm the meeting cadence, schedule, and location(s).

Agendas, meeting process

The DNR will support meeting logistics, planning and facilitation. Agendas and meeting processes will be developed with input from the advisory council members.

Communications

The DNR will ensure that all advisory council members receive meeting materials and other pertinent information. In addition, the DNR will provide the council with support for report production and other communications. All advisory council products will be available online and by request.

Other details specific to this council

To be determined.

Roles and responsibilities

Specific roles

According to Minn. Stat., Sect. 116X.05, subd. 3, the advisory council must:

- (1) Advise the commissioner on developing forms and applications and reporting for grants awarded under the grant program.
- (2) Review proposed grant program policies and budgets for the upcoming year.
- (3) Propose changes to the grant program, as needed.
- (4) Review other relevant information.
- (5) Make recommendations to the legislature and the commissioner for improving management of the grant program.
- (6) Review and advise on recipient eligibility.

The commissioner must provide the council with the information required to perform its duties under this subdivision.

Participation expectations

Advisory council members will discuss and develop recommendations on topics within the scope defined in statute. Members are expected to attend scheduled meetings, or to advise in advance of their absence. If a member is unable to attend meetings regularly (either in-person or remotely), the commissioner may rescind the member's appointment.

The DNR is committed to providing a positive environment in which all staff, members of the public, and others doing business with the state are treated with respect. Council members are expected to demonstrate these behaviors with their fellow council members and with DNR employees:

- Be open and honest.
- Respect others.
- Work together.
- Respect council and departmental processes.
- Value personal and physical safety.

Members of the council are entitled to per diem and reimbursement for expenses incurred in the service of the council, as provided in Minn. Stat., Sect. 15.059, subd. 3.

Conflicts of interest

All council members have an obligation to disclose and appropriately manage actual, potential, or perceived conflicts of interest. An actual conflict of interest occurs when a member is in a position to influence a decision that could result in personal gain, gain for a relative, or organizational gain as a result of the council's recommendations. A

potential or perceived conflict of interest occurs when a member either could be, or is perceived to be, in such a position.

A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical, improper, or illegal act results from it.

Members must disclose any conflicts of interest whether actual, potential, or perceived. In response, DNR legal or other staff will consult with the member and/or the council as a whole on any implications or next steps.

Decision process

How the council will decide on making recommendations, decisions, or other forms of reporting out information

Specifics of the council's process for making recommendations, decisions, or other forms of reporting out will be determined in consultation with members, once appointed.

Maintenance

Charter maintenance schedule

The DNR may amend this charter further as needed. The advisory council will review the charter upon its initial establishment and annually thereafter. The advisory council may suggest charter revisions to the DNR.

Relationships

Relationships with other councils, teams or committees, internal and external (if any)

To be determined.

Standing subteams (if any)

The advisory council will set up standing subteams as necessary for its work.