

ENRTF Community Grant Program advisory council applicant guide

Recruitment for two Dakota Tribal member seats - Summer 2026

About this recruitment

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is continuing recruitment for two seats on the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program advisory council.

By statute, these two seats must be filled by enrolled members of a Dakota Tribal Nation located within Minnesota boundaries.

Important

Applying does not guarantee an interview or appointment. Applications will be reviewed through the established advisory council review process. The DNR commissioner will make final appointment decisions.

Application period and review process

[Application](#)

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the two Dakota Tribal member positions are filled.

DNR will review complete applications at regular intervals and may begin interviews before the recruitment closes. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

The application will remain open until both positions are filled or DNR closes the recruitment.

What is the advisory council?

The advisory council provides input and recommendations to the DNR commissioner and the Minnesota Legislature on the ENRTF Community Grant Program. The council helps review and improve:

- Grant application templates, forms and reporting requirements
- Program policies and guidelines
- Proposed budgets for upcoming funding rounds
- Recipient eligibility requirements for notices of funding opportunity
- Program structure, accessibility and applicant experience
- Recommendations for improving management of the ENRTF Community Grant Program

The council does not score grant applications, select grant recipients, award grants or administer grants.

Who may apply for these seats?

To be considered for one of the two Dakota member seats, an applicant must:

- Be a Minnesota resident
- Be an enrolled member of a Dakota Tribal Nation located within Minnesota boundaries
- Be willing to take part in public advisory council meetings
- Be willing to disclose and appropriately manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest
- Not be a registered lobbyist

Tribal enrollment verification

Applicants invited to interview will be asked to provide documentation verifying Tribal enrollment. Do not submit Tribal identification or other enrollment documentation with the initial application. The DNR will provide a secure submission method and will limit access to staff who need the information to confirm eligibility.

What experience is helpful?

Applicants are not required to have prior government, board or advisory council experience. Relevant experience may come from:

- Tribal community involvement
- Cultural or traditional knowledge
- Land-based knowledge or stewardship
- Environmental or natural resource work
- Education or academic study
- Community leadership
- Volunteer service
- Advocacy or policy work
- Grant writing, grant management, philanthropy or public funding
- Work with local, Tribal, state or federal government
- Collaboration across different communities, organizations or perspectives
- Lived experience with environmental harm, access barriers or public systems

The advisory council is intended to include people with different kinds of knowledge and experience. Applicants are not expected to have expertise in every area.

What will reviewers consider?

A panel will review applications using an established scoring framework. Reviewers will consider:

- Understanding of the advisory council's role

- Understanding of the ENRTF Community Grant Program’s purpose
- Relevant professional, cultural, community, educational, volunteer or lived experience
- Experience working with communities
- Understanding of barriers to public funding or participation
- Ability to collaborate across differences
- Ability to reflect on past experience and apply lessons learned
- Ability to communicate ideas clearly enough for reviewers to understand the applicant’s experience and potential contribution

Reviewers are instructed not to reward polished writing by itself. An applicant’s experience and perspective are more important than formal or technical language.

Final recommendations are not based on score alone. The DNR may also consider statutory membership requirements, the council’s collective experience and perspectives, and the overall ability of the council to carry out its duties.

Before you begin the application

Applicants are encouraged to:

1. Draft responses in a separate document, then enter into the application. The application form cannot be saved and completed at another time.
 2. Review all application questions, Advisory Council Overview and Member Expectations documents before starting. Go to the [Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program Advisory Council webpage](#) to find these resources.
- Contact DNR Community Grants staff with questions before submitting your application. Staff contact information is provided at the end of this document.

Writing your responses

You do not need to use government or technical language. Strong responses generally:

- Answer the question directly
- Provide one or more specific examples
- Explain the applicant’s role
- Describe what the applicant learned
- Explain how the experience would help the advisory council
- Identify relevant cultural, community, professional, educational, volunteer or lived experience

Applicants may enter “not applicable” where allowed if they do not have experience in a particular area.

Application sections

The application will include questions about:

- Contact information
- Minnesota residency
- Interest in serving
- Experience working in diverse or collaborative groups
- Lessons learned from collaboration
- Natural resource science or knowledge
- Policy or advocacy experience
- Natural resource practice or stewardship
- Experience with communities affected by pollution or environmental degradation
- Experience working with Tribal communities
- Grant or public funding experience
- Experience working with public officials
- Required demographic and eligibility information
- Applicant certification

Submitting your application

[Application](#)

Applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible and should submit early enough to address possible technical issues. DNR will review complete applications at regular intervals and may begin interviews while the recruitment remains open.

Applicants should receive an electronic confirmation after submitting the application. An applicant who does not receive confirmation should contact Community Grants staff promptly.

The DNR will review submitted applications for required responses and statutory eligibility. Community Grants staff may contact an applicant to clarify information or address missing information when permitted by the established review process. Applicants should not assume they will be allowed to revise responses after the submission.

What happens after submission?

1. DNR staff will screen applications for completeness and eligibility and completeness as part of the recurring review cycles.
2. DNR reviewers will independently review and score eligible applications.
3. A review panel will discuss the applications and identify candidates to interview.
4. Applicants selected for interview will receive interview information and Tribal enrollment verification instructions.
5. Interviewed candidates may be asked to provide more information about their experience and qualifications.
6. Appointment recommendations will be forwarded for the DNR commissioner's consideration.
7. Applicants will receive a final status notification.

DNR may begin interviews and appointment consideration before the recruitment closes. The application will remain open until both Dakota Tribal member positions are filled or DNR closes the recruitment.

Anticipated recruitment process

Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the two Dakota Tribal member positions are filled. DNR will review complete applications in recurring review cycles.

The anticipated sequence is:

- Eligibility and completeness screening
- Independent application review
- Review-panel discussion
- Candidate interviews and Tribal enrollment verification
- Appointment recommendations
- DNR commissioner consideration
- Applicant notification
- Appointee onboarding

The timing of each stage will depend on when applications are received, the number of eligible applicants and the progress of the review process. Interviews may begin before the recruitment closes.

DNR will communicate directly with applicants who advance to an interview or require additional information.

Interview and enrollment verification

Applicants invited to interview must provide documentation verifying enrollment in a Dakota Tribal Nation located within Minnesota boundaries. Verification instructions, a secure submission method and a deadline will be provided with the interview invitation. Applicants should not send Tribal identification documents with the initial application.

Requesting an accommodation, interpretation or another participation support for an interview will not affect the applicant's consideration.

Meeting and service expectations

Advisory council members are expected to:

- Attend approximately four to six public meetings each year
- Participate in a mix of in-person, hybrid and virtual meetings
- Review materials and prepare before meetings
- Participate actively in discussion
- Provide input and recommendations
- Work respectfully and collaboratively
- Disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest

- Respect advisory council and DNR processes
- Check email regularly and use electronic meeting materials, with support or alternative arrangements available when needed

Members should expect to spend approximately 40 to 60 hours each year on advisory council responsibilities. This estimate includes meetings, preparation, onboarding and occasional authorized work between meetings. Travel time for in-person meetings is not included and will vary by member and meeting location. Meeting frequency and time commitments may vary depending on the council's work plan and program needs.

Compensation and expenses

Advisory council members are not DNR employees. Members may be eligible for per diem compensation and reimbursement of eligible travel and other approved expenses according to Minnesota law and state reimbursement requirements. The DNR will provide instructions and required forms during onboarding.

Public meetings, application information and public records

Advisory council meetings are open to the public. Official council materials, meeting notices, minutes, recommendations and other products may be made publicly available, subject to applicable data practices requirements.

Information submitted through the application will be collected and maintained by the DNR in accordance with the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act and applicable records requirements. The application will include a privacy notice explaining why the information is being collected, how it may be used, whether providing it is required and who may have access to it.

Applicants should not include Tribal enrollment documentation, government identification numbers or other sensitive identification documents unless the DNR specifically requests them through the verification process.

Conflicts of interest

Applicants may still be eligible to serve if they are affiliated with an organization that may apply for Community Grant Program funding. That affiliation does not automatically disqualify an applicant.

Membership in, citizenship in or a general affiliation with a Tribal Nation or community does not by itself establish a conflict of interest. Appointed members must disclose actual, potential or perceived conflicts and follow any recusal or conflict management requirements established by the DNR.

Accommodations, translation and alternative formats

Applicants may request reasonable accommodations, translation, interpretation or an alternative format. Requesting support will not affect how an application is reviewed.

If you are an individual with a disability who needs a reasonable accommodation(s) to apply for or participate in this advisory council, please contact Wendy Thompson at wendy.thompson@state.mn.us or 218-308-2076 for

assistance. Calls from Telecommunications Relay Service users are welcome. Any accessibility information you provide will only be used to facilitate reasonable accommodation.

It is the policy of the DNR to take reasonable steps to provide individuals with Limited English Proficiency timely and meaningful access to DNR information, programs and activities. To request translation of this application, please contact Wendy Thompson at wendy.thompson@state.mn.us or 218-308-2076.

You are not required to disclose your accessibility needs, and there are no consequences for choosing not to provide this information. Accessibility needs information will only be available to DNR staff with a business need to know and will be shared only as required or allowed by state or federal law or pursuant to a court order.

Application information and DNR contact

[Application](#)

Contact:

Gwendolyn Tweed, ENRTF Community Grants Supervisor

gwendolyn.tweed@state.mn.us

651-259-5225

Application period: Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis until the two Dakota Tribal member positions are filled. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply as soon as possible.

Document status

This guide describes the application and review process for the summer 2026 recruitment. The DNR may clarify or update this guide while the recruitment remains open. Any material change affecting applicants will be communicated through the Advisory Council webpage and, when appropriate, directly to applicants.

After the inaugural Advisory Council is fully seated, the DNR will work with the council during the first quarter of fiscal year 2027 to review and improve future recruitment, governance and operating resources. Changes developed through that process will generally apply to future recruitment or council operations unless the DNR clearly states otherwise.