# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program November Information Session Question and Answer

## Table of contents


Introduction....1

Part 1: FY2027 RFP 01 information session November 17, 2026, questions and answers....3

Part 2: FY2027 RFP 01 information session November 19, 2026, questions and answers.... 25

Part 3. FY2027 RFP 01 section/part reference crosswalk.... 35


## Introduction

This document provides questions and answers from November 17 and November 19, 2026, information sessions for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program, FY2027 RFP 01.

The questions have been organized and, where appropriate, reworded to address the underlying issue and provide guidance useful to a broad range of applicants. The DNR has made every effort to provide clear, accurate and consistent responses based on the published funding requirements.

### Scope and authority

All answers in this document apply only to FY2027 RFP 01. They should not be interpreted as guidance for other DNR grant programs or future Community Grant Program funding opportunities.

These answers clarify the RFP but do not change its requirements. The published RFP and any formal amendments remain the controlling documents. If an answer in this document differs from the RFP or a formal amendment, the RFP or amendment governs.

### Questions requiring additional review

Some questions require additional technical, administrative or legal review before the DNR can provide a complete answer. These questions are identified as under review.

The DNR will publish additional clarifications through the Community Grant Program's official website FAQ as answers become available.

**Applicants are encouraged to check the website FAQ for the most current information and subscribe to Community Grant Program email updates.** The DNR will notify subscribers when new answers and clarifications are published.

## Questions about specific projects

The DNR cannot determine the eligibility, competitiveness or funding outcome of an individual project before receiving and evaluating an application through the established process.

When information-session questions included specific projects, organizations or circumstances, the DNR has sought to identify and answer the underlying question about the funding opportunity. These responses provide general guidance and should not be interpreted as approval or denial of any particular project, activity or proposed expense.

## Submitting additional questions

If a response does not fully address your original question or if additional context would help the DNR provide a more useful answer, you are welcome to submit a revised or follow-up question through the official Community Grant Program question form, **Ask an ENRTF Community Grant Program Question**.

Please include the relevant context and identify the specific RFP requirement or issue you would like clarified. The DNR will respond in accordance with the question-and-answer process and deadlines established in FY2027 RFP 01.

## Upcoming December Information Sessions

The Community Grant Program will offer two additional information sessions to help applicants prepare their Stage 1 Concept Notes.

**Tuesday, December 8, 2026 | Noon–1 p.m. Central**

This session will focus on preparing a Stage 1 Concept Note. The Community Grant Team will walk through the application questions in Appendix F of the RFP; explain the information applicants are asked to provide and offer examples to help applicants understand how to describe their proposed projects.

**Tuesday, December 15, 2026 | Noon–1 p.m. Central**

This session will provide additional guidance on completing and submitting Concept Notes through the Foundant application system. The Community Grant Team will review the application process, discuss common questions and provide additional opportunities for clarification before the Stage 1 submission deadline.

Both sessions will include time for questions. The December sessions will place greater emphasis on completing the Concept Note and navigating the application process, while continuing to welcome questions about the RFP and program requirements.

The sessions are intended to help applicants understand the application process and prepare their submissions. They will not provide advanced determinations about the eligibility or competitiveness of individual projects.

Applicants are encouraged to review Appendix F and the available applicant resources before attending. Information about the December sessions and how to participate is available on the Community Grant Program website.

### Continuing applicant support

We appreciate the questions and perspectives shared during the information sessions. They help the Community Grant Program identify where additional clarification may be needed and improve the resources available to applicants.

The Community Grant Team is committed to providing clear information and helping applicants understand the funding opportunity and application process.

## Part 1: FY2027 RFP 01 information session November 17, 2026, questions and answers

### Question Nov.17.IS.01

Can an ineligible applicant such as state agencies, the University of Minnesota Board of Regents or for-profit businesses be eligible to be subcontractors or technical advisors on the project?

#### Nov.17.IS.01 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

### Question Nov.17.IS.02

Are incarcerated individuals, or groups of incarcerated people, eligible to apply?

#### Nov.17.IS.02 Response 11.25.2026

Individuals, whether incarcerated or not, are not eligible to apply directly for funding under FY2027 RFP 01. However, incarcerated individuals or groups of incarcerated people may participate in or lead an eligible project in partnership with an eligible legal applicant.

For example, an eligible nonprofit organization or local government entity could apply for a grant to support a project developed and led by a group of incarcerated individuals. The organization would serve as the legal applicant and, if awarded funding, would be responsible for managing the grant, including financial oversight, reporting and compliance with the grant agreement.

The individuals or group could serve as the substantive project lead or project partners, contributing to project design, implementation and the environmental or natural-resource outcomes.

If the proposed project involves activities within a correctional facility, applicants should identify any required permissions or institutional arrangements and explain how those requirements would affect project implementation.

For more information about these roles, see the definitions of *Eligible Legal Applicant* and *Substantive Project Lead* in the Community Grant Program Glossary.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7.3, 8.1 and 8.2.

## Question Nov.17.IS.03

Are individual applicants eligible for funding if they are applying with a fiscal agent?

### Nov.17.IS.03 Response 11.25.2026

Individuals cannot apply directly for funding under FY2027 RFP 01. However, an individual may serve as the substantive project lead or a project partner when an eligible organization applies for the grant.

The eligible organization must be identified as the legal applicant in the Stage 1 Concept Note. If awarded funding, that organization becomes the grantee and is legally and financially responsible for managing the grant, including reporting, financial oversight and compliance with the grant agreement.

A fiscal agent may provide additional financial or administrative support, but having a fiscal agent does not replace the requirement to identify an eligible legal applicant.

For example, an individual developing an environmental documentary could lead the project while an eligible nonprofit organization serves as the legal applicant. The Concept Note should explain who will lead the project, the roles of participating organizations and how the proposed documentary would meet the environmental education or other applicable activity area requirements.

Applicants should identify their eligible legal applicant and substantive project lead during Stage 1. Partnership and fiscal-agent arrangements may be developed further during Stage 2.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7.1, 7.3 and 8.1–8.3; Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.04

If a legal applicant, substantive project lead or a project partner have previously received ENRFT funding, are they still eligible to apply to the ENRTF Community Grant program?

### Nov.17.IS.04 Response 11.25.2026

Yes, if the organization meets the applicant requirements. The DNR may consider prior direct participation in the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund under the Stage 1 expanding-access criterion. Applicants can explain who would lead the proposed work and how the project would expand participation.

A new phase can build on earlier work if it meets the current RFP requirements and can be completed within the applicable work period. Describe what each award covers and which costs the new grant would pay. Each expense can be charged to only one funding source.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP01, Appendix F.1.

## Question Nov.17.IS.05

Can an organization that applies or receives a grant this round apply in a future round?

### Nov.17.IS.05 Response 11.25.2026

The published requirements for each future round will determine who can apply and whether funding can support another phase of a project. If an organization proposes a follow-on project, it can help to describe what the first award accomplished and what new work and results the next phase would deliver.

**Source**: FY2027 RFP 01, section 6.1, for the scope of the current solicitation

## Question Nov.17.IS.06

How can partnerships support a project, and how should partners decide who applies and who leads?

### Nov.17.IS.06 Response 11.25.2026

Partnerships are welcome. They can help carry out the work or bring community knowledge, relationships and technical expertise. Adding a partner does not automatically improve the score. Explain how partners helped shape the project and what each will contribute. Where relevant, describe how the partnership helps expand participation.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7.1, 8.1–8.2 and 18 and Appendix F

## Question Nov.17.IS.07

Who can serve as a fiscal agent for an advance payment, and can the grant cover the fiscal agent’s fee?

### Nov.17.IS.07 Response 11.25.2026

The Community Grant Program generally operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning grantees pay eligible project expenses before requesting reimbursement from the DNR. However, Minnesota law allows the

commissioner to approve advance payments when the grantee obtains an approved surety bond or uses a fiscal agent approved for that arrangement.

**During Stage 1**, applicants should identify any anticipated financial or administrative challenges in their Concept Note, including concerns about cash flow or the ability to pay project expenses before reimbursement.

Appendix F provides opportunities to identify financial management needs:

- **Question F9-02** allows applicants to indicate that fiscal-agent or financial-administration arrangements still need to be developed.
- **Question F9-03** provides an opportunity to explain anticipated cash-flow challenges and describe the financial arrangements or assistance needed to carry out the project.

Applicants do not need to have a complete fiscal-agent arrangement or advance payment approval before submitting their Concept Note.

**During Stage 2**, the Community Grant Team will work with invited applicants to develop their detailed budgets, identify financial management needs and explore available payment arrangements. This may include determining whether a fiscal agent or surety bond could support an approved advance payment arrangement.

A proposed fiscal agent must have the authority and financial or administrative capacity to fulfill its responsibilities. The DNR will review the proposed arrangement, including the fiscal agent's role, responsibilities, financial capacity, accountability and any associated fees.

Fiscal-agent fees may be considered for inclusion in the proposed grant budget when they support allowable grant administration activities. Applicants should confirm the allowability of these costs with the DNR during Stage 2 before relying on grant funding to pay them. Any approved fees must be included in the grant agreement and budget.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 8.3, 33.2–33.3 and 44; Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 4a; sections 16B.97–16B.991.

## Question Nov.17.IS.08

Can we flag a need for fiscal support or an advance at Stage 1? How will the DNR use that information?

### Nov.17.IS.08 Response 11.25.2026

At Stage 1, you may identify a need for financial or administrative support. You can do that before you have a completed fiscal-agent agreement. The DNR uses the published Stage 1 criteria, and having a fiscal agent does not increase a project’s score or competitive standing.

If invited to Stage 2, develop the arrangement further. Identify who would handle payments, financial records and reporting and describe any proposed fee. If reimbursement would make the project difficult to carry out, discuss payment options with the DNR during Stage 2 grant development.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 8.3, 18 and 33.2–33.3.

## Question Nov.17.IS.09

Can the grant pay for fiscal-agent services during application preparation or after an award?

### Nov.17.IS.09 Response 11.25.2026

Costs incurred to prepare or submit the application before the authorized grant period are ineligible and cannot be reimbursed. For services during the award, describe what the fiscal agent would do, when the work would happen and the proposed fee. The DNR reviews the arrangement before the grant agreement is signed. Any charge to the grant must be allowable and included in the approved budget.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.3, 33.2, 34 and 44.

## Question Nov.17.IS.10

Can an informal group lead a project if another organization applies for the grant?

### Nov.17.IS.10 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. The group can be the substantive project lead. The eligible organization must be named as the legal applicant in the Concept Note and remain the applicant throughout the competition. If selected, it completes the pre-award requirements and signs the grant agreement.

Describe how the two groups will share the work. For example, the informal group could guide the project and bring community relationships while the legal applicant manages grant funds, reporting and oversight.

For definitions and examples of these roles, see Eligible legal applicant and Substantive project lead in the Community Grant Program Glossary.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP01, sections 7.3, 8.1 and 8.2; Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.11

Can a nonprofit headquartered outside Minnesota apply for a project carried out by its Minnesota chapter?

### Nov.17.IS.11 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.17.IS.12

Can a service club apply, including a local chapter covered by a group tax exemption?

### Nov.17.IS.12 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.17.IS.13

Can we apply if our project needs less than $20,000 in grant funding?

### Nov.17.IS.13 Response 11.25.2026

No. The minimum grant request for FY2027 RFP 01 is $20,000 and the maximum is $150,000.

Applicants cannot request less than $20,000 in grant funding under the current RFP. A project with total costs below $20,000 would therefore not meet the minimum funding requirement for this round, even if its activities otherwise align with an eligible program area.

Applicants should not increase project costs solely to meet the minimum grant amount. However, they may consider whether additional eligible activities could form part of a larger, coherent project that meets the minimum funding requirement.

Future funding rounds may establish different award amounts, but applicants should rely on the requirements published for each individual funding opportunity.

**Source**: FY2027 RFP 01, section 4.2.

## Question Nov.17.IS.14

How will the Community Grant Program reach new recipients while supporting projects that build on earlier work?

### Nov.17.IS.14 Response 11.25.2026

The Community Grant Program was created to expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the ENRTF, especially in communities adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation. In this first round, the DNR considers expanded access at Stage 1. Applicants can explain who would lead the work, whose knowledge and priorities shaped the project, and how the work would expand participation. Organizations that have received trust fund funding before can still apply if they meet the eligibility requirements.

As the program develops, the DNR can use what it learns from applicants, funded projects and the advisory council to inform future rounds. One question is how to reach communities and organizations that have had fewer opportunities to participate while also supporting work that needs more than one phase to achieve lasting results. Each future solicitation will set its own requirements and review criteria.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(a). FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7 and 18.2 and Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.15

Can we propose a new phase of an existing project, and how would the DNR review it?

### Nov.17.IS.15 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. The grant can support a new project or a defined phase of a larger effort. The DNR uses the same published criteria to review both. In the Concept Note, explain the larger goal, the specific work you would do with this grant, what you would deliver and what change you expect that work to produce. The substantive work funded by this grant must fit within 12 months. If invited to Stage 2, you can develop those details into a work plan and budget with support from the Community Grant Team.

For example, a park district with a five-year restoration plan might propose removing invasive plants and establishing native vegetation in one defined area. The Concept Note could identify the area to be treated, what the project would accomplish there during the grant and how that phase contributes to the larger restoration goal. If another award supports related work, explain which costs each award would cover. The same expense cannot be charged to both.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 3, 4.3, 10, 18 and 44, Appendices F and G and the applicable activity-area appendix. Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(d).

## Question Nov.17.IS.16

Can a project include health, equity or other community benefits alongside its environmental work?

### Nov.17.IS.16 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Projects may incorporate broader community benefits, including public health, equity, education and community well-being. However, grant funding may only support activities that meet the eligible uses established in Minnesota law and RFP 01.

Environmental projects often provide multiple community benefits. For example, restoring a natural area may improve environmental conditions while creating opportunities for outdoor recreation, environmental education and community engagement. However, including broader community benefits does not automatically make all project activities eligible for funding.

Applicants should identify the project's environmental goals, select one primary activity area and explain how the proposed work supports that area. During Stage 2, the DNR will work with invited applicants to develop a detailed grant work plan and budget. This process will identify:

- **Grant objectives:** What the project intends to accomplish during the grant period.
- **Activities:** The work needed to achieve those objectives.
- **Sub-activities:** The specific tasks that make up each activity.

- **Direct project expenditures:** The costs of carrying out eligible activities and sub-activities.
- **Outputs and outcomes:** What the project will produce and the results it expects to achieve.

The DNR will review proposed activities, sub-activities and expenditures to determine which can be included in the approved grant work plan and budget.

For example, a habitat restoration project may include removing invasive species, planting native vegetation and providing environmental education. These activities may qualify for funding when they meet the program's eligible uses. The project may also improve community well-being. Unrelated health services, social events or other activities that do not support an eligible statutory purpose cannot be funded simply because they are part of the broader initiative.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(b). FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10 and 44 and Appendices A–E.

## Question Nov.17.IS.17

What can we do if our project depends on seasonal work that needs to start before the grant can begin?

### Nov.17.IS.17 Response 11.25.2026

RFP 01 is the first funding opportunity offered through the Community Grant Program. It establishes specific requirements for project eligibility, funding amounts and timelines. The DNR recognizes that environmental projects vary considerably. Some can be completed within one year, while others, such as habitat restoration and invasive species management, may require multiple growing seasons or longer implementation periods.

Identify the seasonal timing in your Concept Note and explain how the proposed work would fit the authorized start date. Costs incurred before the authorized start date cannot be reimbursed. If your project depends on an earlier start or a longer work period, a future opportunity may be a better fit. Future funding opportunities may have different eligibility requirements, funding amounts, project durations and application timelines. The DNR will announce their requirements as they are developed.

As the Community Grant Program develops, the DNR will explore opportunities to gather structured feedback about community funding needs. This information can help inform future funding opportunities and discussions with the advisory council.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.3, 6.1 and 34 and Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.18

Can we apply for one phase of a habitat restoration or aquatic invasive species project that will take several years?

### Nov.17.IS.18 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Identify the parcel or project area, the work you would complete with this grant, and the results you expect from that phase. Then explain how follow-up treatment, monitoring or maintenance would build on that work.

For example, show what area you would treat or replant during the grant and how the site would be cared for in later years. This helps the DNR understand what the grant would accomplish and whether the funded phase is feasible.

Substantive grant-funded work must fit within 12 months. The authorized grant period may include up to two additional months for necessary startup and close-out. Questions about projects that need several growing seasons can help the DNR and the advisory council consider what timelines and project lengths would serve communities in future rounds.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.3 and 47.2, Appendix F and the applicable activity-area appendix.

## Question Nov.17.IS.19

Can a project bring participants from an urban community to a rural site?

### Nov.17.IS.19 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. A project can connect urban and rural communities. For example, an environmental education project could bring young people from a city to a rural learning site. Explain what participants there would do, how the activities advance the project's environmental or natural resource purpose, and how the project meets the selected activity area's requirements. Funded activities must take place in Minnesota and provide a meaningful environmental or natural resource benefit here.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10.1–10.2 and Appendix B for the education example.

## Question Nov.17.IS.20

Can a grant expand or strengthen an existing environmental program?

### Nov.17.IS.20 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. You can propose a defined project within an established program. For example, it could add prevention activities to an aquatic invasive species program or extend an environmental education program to reach additional learners. Explain what the grant would pay for, what you expect to accomplish during the work period and how the proposed activities meet the applicable appendix requirements.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.3 and 10 and Appendices B and E. Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(b) and (d).

## Question Nov.17.IS.21

How does the grant's funding restriction apply when a local funding source is reduced, ends or does not fund an applicant?

### Nov.17.IS.21 Response 11.25.2026

Organizations experiencing changes in other funding sources may still apply. However, applications are evaluated based on the proposed project and the criteria established in RFP 01, not an organization's need to replace lost funding.

State law requires these trust fund dollars to supplement traditional sources of funding for environmental and natural resource activities. To assess how that applies, identify what the proposed grant would pay for and what the other source covers or previously covered. Whether a specific arrangement meets that requirement needs further review.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(d). FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10 and 44 and Appendix E.

## Question Nov.17.IS.22

Can a project address more than one eligible activity area and does doing so provide an advantage during application evaluation?

### Nov.17.IS.22 Response 11.25.2026

Projects may address more than one eligible activity area. However, applicants must choose one primary activity area that best represents their project's purpose. This approach allows the DNR to evaluate projects consistently using the eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria relevant to each activity area.

Applicants are responsible for selecting the activity area that best fits their project. They can describe benefits related to other areas where those benefits help explain the project. Addressing multiple activity areas does not automatically provide an evaluation advantage.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10.1, 18 and 27 and Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.23

Can we submit separate Concept Notes for distinct projects in different activity areas?

### Nov.17.IS.23 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Each Concept Note must describe a distinct project and identify one primary activity area. A substantive project lead may submit up to two distinct Concept Notes, and only one may advance to Stage 2. Those limits follow the project lead across activity areas and legal applicants. An eligible legal applicant may be associated with more projects if they have different substantive project leads and otherwise meet the RFP requirements.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 9.1–9.2 and 10.1.

## Question Nov.17.IS.24

How can applicants determine whether their specific project ideas may be eligible for Community Grant funding?

## Nov.17.IS.24 Response 11.25.2026

The ENRTF Community Grant Program supports a broad range of environmental and natural-resource projects across five eligible activity areas. Whether a particular project is eligible depends on its purpose, proposed activities, expected results and alignment with the requirements of FY2027 RFP 01.

Applicants have asked about many types of projects, including community gardens, soil and water improvements, aquatic invasive species management, habitat restoration, invasive plant removal, tree planting and environmental education and youth stewardship programs.

These examples illustrate the range of project ideas applicants are considering. They do not mean that every project or activity within these categories is eligible for funding.

For example:

- **Community gardens and irrigation:** Explain how the proposed activities address an environmental or natural-resource need, such as improving soil health, conserving water or supporting other eligible environmental outcomes.
- **Water quality and pollution reduction:** Identify the environmental problem, explain the proposed approach and describe the expected improvements to water or soil conditions.
- **Habitat restoration and invasive species management:** Describe the natural-resource concern, the proposed restoration or management activities and how the project would produce and maintain environmental benefits.
- **Tree planting and urban environmental improvements:** Explain the environmental need, the proposed activities and the expected benefits to natural resources or communities.
- **Environmental education and youth stewardship:** Describe what participants will learn or accomplish and how the activities will support environmental education, conservation or natural-resource stewardship.

The DNR cannot make an advance determination about the eligibility or competitiveness of an individual project before it has been submitted and evaluated through the established application process. However, applicants can review the RFP to assess how their proposed activities align with the funding opportunity.

During Stage 1, applicants should focus on describing the environmental or natural-resource problem they want to address, their proposed activities, the communities or resources that would benefit and the results they expect to achieve. Applicants should review the requirements of the eligible activity area that best aligns with their project's primary purpose.

Applicants invited to Stage 2 will have opportunities to work with the Community Grant Team to further develop their project activities, work plans, budgets and expected results.

Applicants are also welcome to submit questions about specific RFP requirements when additional clarification would help them understand the funding opportunity. The DNR will seek to answer the underlying program question without making an advance eligibility determination about an individual proposal.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7, 10–11 and 18; Appendices A–F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.25

Can Community Grant Program funds pay for acquiring property rights through eminent domain as part of an eligible trail improvement project?

### Nov.17.IS.25 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.17.IS.26

Must a trail improved with Community Grant Program funding be open and accessible to the public?

### Nov.17.IS.26 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.17.IS.27

Can an organization apply for an ENRTF Community Grant if it has also applied for funding through another DNR grant program? (re: 2027 Invasive Aquatic Plant Management Grant Program) Can an organization apply to both for the same project?

### Nov.17.IS.27 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Applying for funding through another DNR grant program does not, by itself, prevent an organization from applying to the ENRTF Community Grant Program.

Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements of FY2027 RFP 01 and propose activities that qualify under one of the five eligible activity areas, including aquatic invasive species management.

If the proposed project is also seeking or receiving funding from another source, applicants should identify the other funding and explain which activities and costs each source would support. ENRTF Community Grant funds must supplement traditional funding sources, and the same expenses cannot be charged to more than one grant.

Applicants should review the requirements of any other grant program separately to determine whether they may apply for or receive funding from that program.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10 and 44, Appendix E; Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(d).

## Question Nov.17.IS.28

Will the Community Grant Program offer future funding opportunities, and could they have different grant amounts or project durations?

### Nov.17.IS.28 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 is the first funding opportunity offered through the Community Grant Program. For this round, applicants may request $20,000 to $150,000. Substantive project work must fit within 12 months. The authorized grant period may include up to two additional months for necessary startup and close-out.

Future funding opportunities may have different grant amounts, project durations, eligible activities or application requirements. The DNR can use available appropriations, statutory requirements, program experience, community needs and input from the advisory council to inform future designs. Questions about larger trail projects help show where the current grant range or schedule may limit what communities can accomplish. Applicants should use the amounts, timelines and requirements published for each opportunity.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03. FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.2–4.3 and 6.1.

## Question Nov.17.IS.29

How many projects will advance to Stage 2, and how will the DNR decide?

### Nov.17.IS.29 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP does not establish a fixed number of applicants or a total dollar amount for projects invited to Stage 2.

This is the first funding opportunity under the Community Grant Program, so we do not yet have information about the number of Concept Notes applicants will submit. The number invited to Stage 2 will depend on the applications received, eligibility review, evaluation results, available funding, statutory requirements and the DNR's capacity to provide consistent applicant support and review.

The two-stage process is designed to reduce the initial application burden. Applicants first submit a Concept Note, which the DNR evaluates using the published Stage 1 criteria. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will receive instructions and additional technical assistance to develop a Full Application.

An invitation to Stage 2 does not guarantee a grant award.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 3, 5 and 20.

## Question Nov.17.IS.30

How much grant funding can be used to buy equipment? Are there dollar limits on equipment purchases?

### Nov.17.IS.30 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 does not establish a specific dollar limit or percentage cap on equipment purchases.

Equipment may be included in a proposed project when it is necessary to carry out eligible activities and meets the requirements of the selected activity area.

During Stage 1, applicants should explain how the proposed equipment supports their project objectives and expected environmental or natural-resource benefits. A detailed equipment budget is not required at this stage.

Applicants invited to Stage 2 will work with the Community Grant Team to develop a detailed project budget, including the costs and justification for proposed equipment purchases. All costs must be reasonable, allowable and included in the approved grant budget.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 10, applicable activity-area appendix and Appendix G, section G.8.

## Question Nov.17.IS.31

Can an environmental education grant pay for equipment or site improvements such as an outdoor classroom?

### Nov.17.IS.31 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Equipment and site improvements may be included in an environmental education project when they directly support eligible activities and meet the requirements of FY2027 RFP 01.

For example, a project could propose an outdoor classroom as part of an environmental education program. Applicants should explain how the proposed improvements and equipment would support learning activities, who would participate and what environmental or natural-resource knowledge or skills participants would gain.

During Stage 1, applicants should describe the overall project, including any equipment or site improvements needed to carry out the proposed activities. Detailed construction plans and equipment budgets are not required at this stage.

If invited to Stage 2, applicants will work with the Community Grant Team to develop a detailed work plan and budget. Depending on the project, this may include reviewing site permissions, construction requirements, accessibility, permits and ongoing maintenance responsibilities.

The proposed work must be achievable within the grant's implementation period, and all project costs must meet applicable funding requirements.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, Part 2, sections 10–11; Appendix B, sections B.4, B.6–B.8; Part 4, section 24; Appendix G.

## Question Nov.17.IS.32

How should we estimate our request, can it change and can we use other funding sources?

### Nov.17.IS.32 Response 11.25.2026

Applicants may request between $20,000 and $150,000. Provide a reasonable estimate of the funding needed to complete the proposed work. Requesting less does not automatically make an application more competitive.

Stage 1 focuses on the project concept. If invited to Stage 2, applicants can use technical assistance to further develop the scope, activities and budget. The request may increase or decrease within the published range if the project remains materially consistent with the Concept Note that advanced.

No matching funds are required. A project may use other compatible funding sources if the Community Grant Program funds supplement traditional funding and the same expenses are not charged to multiple sources. Applicants should plan around a feasible scope and budget.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 4, Stage 2 selection provisions, Appendix F question F10-01 and Appendix G. Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(d).

## Question Nov.17.IS.33

Can the DNR estimate how competitive this funding opportunity will be?

### Nov.17.IS.33 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR cannot reliably predict how competitive the first round will be before applications are received. The number of questions and people attending information sessions shows interest. It does not tell us how many eligible applications will be submitted or how they will score.

The DNR expects to award approximately $4 million through this opportunity. Stage 1 Concept Notes will be evaluated using the published eligibility and scoring criteria. Applicants who advance to Stage 2 will participate in a separate competitive review. Applicants should focus on presenting a clear, eligible and feasible project.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.1, 5, 18 and 27.

## Question Nov.17.IS.34

Will providing matching funds affect how our application is scored?

### Nov.17.IS.34 Response 11.25.2026

Matching funds are optional. The DNR evaluates each application using the published criteria. Providing a match does not automatically increase the score. Focus on explaining the project's environmental or natural resource benefits, feasibility and fit with the funding opportunity.

Applicants may use other compatible funding sources. During Stage 2, the Community Grant Team can help applicants identify which expenses each source would cover and check that the same expense is not charged twice.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 4, sections 18 and 27 and Appendix G.

## Question Nov.17.IS.35

Can the grant pay for equipment or materials that will continue to benefit the community after the grant ends?

### Nov.17.IS.35 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Equipment and materials purchased through the Community Grant Program may continue to be used after the grant period ends.

Equipment purchases must support eligible project activities, be included in the approved project budget and meet applicable grant requirements. For example, an aquatic invasive species prevention station could be purchased to support an eligible project and continue helping protect local waters after the grant ends.

During Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with applicants to identify how equipment will be used, maintained and managed. Equipment may remain with the grantee for continued use when consistent with the approved ownership and disposition requirements.

The Community Grant Program also recognizes the importance of lasting project benefits. The DNR intends to maintain relationships with grantees and learn how funded projects, equipment and partnerships continue contributing to environmental and natural-resource outcomes beyond the grant period.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 46.3 and 47.2; Appendix E.

## Question Nov.17.IS.36

Are environmental education projects expected to continue after the grant period ends?

### Nov.17.IS.36 Response 11.25.2026

Environmental education projects can produce lasting benefits without continuing indefinitely. The Community Grant Program recognizes that environmental education can build knowledge, skills and community connections that continue benefiting participants and communities long after funded activities are completed.

For example, a project might help participants develop new environmental stewardship skills, create educational materials that others can continue using, strengthen local partnerships or provide opportunities for participants to apply what they have learned in their communities.

Applicants should explain what their project will accomplish during the grant period and how its benefits may continue afterward. The substantive project activities must be completed within the RFP's 12-month implementation period.

During Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with invited applicants to develop their project work plans and identify meaningful ways to describe and measure expected results. This may include distinguishing between activities completed, people reached, changes in knowledge or skills and longer-term environmental or community benefits.

The DNR also intends to maintain relationships with grantees and learn how funded environmental education projects contribute to environmental stewardship over time. These connections can help the Community Grant Program understand its longer-term impact, share lessons learned and improve future funding opportunities.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4.3, 27, 46 and 47.2; Appendices B and G.

## Question Nov.17.IS.37

What does expanding access to ENRTF funding mean, and can organizations that already receive other funding apply?

### Nov.17.IS.37 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Organizations that receive funding from counties, local governments, foundations or other sources may still apply to the Community Grant Program if they meet the eligibility requirements of FY2027 RFP 01.

Minnesota law directs the Community Grant Program to expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), particularly in communities adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation.

Expanding access means creating opportunities for more organizations and communities to participate in ENRTF-funded activities. It does not mean that an applicant must be receiving grant funding for the first time, establish a new organization or increase the size of an existing program.

The law also requires ENRTF funding to supplement traditional funding sources for environmental and natural-resource activities rather than replace them.

For example, an organization receiving a small county grant may apply for Community Grant funding to support additional eligible activities, expand the environmental benefits of its work or address an environmental or natural-resource need that its existing funding does not cover.

Applicants should explain what they propose to accomplish with Community Grant funding and identify other funding sources supporting the proposed activities, as applicable. The same project expense cannot be paid for twice using different funding sources.

During Stage 1, applicants should focus on explaining the proposed project, its environmental or natural-resource benefits and how it aligns with the eligible activity area.

Applicants invited to Stage 2 will work with the Community Grant Team to develop detailed budgets and clarify how the proposed grant funding relates to other funding sources.

Receiving other funding does not prevent an organization from applying. Whether proposed expenses satisfy the applicable funding requirements will be determined through the grant review and development process.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(a) and (d); FY2027 RFP 01, section 18.2 and Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.38

Can we apply if a county or another source already helps fund our work?

### Nov.17.IS.38 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Receiving funding from a county or another source does not, by itself, prevent an organization from applying to the Community Grant Program.

For example, a nonprofit receiving a $2,000 to $5,000 county grant may also apply for Community Grant funding if the proposed project meets the RFP's eligibility requirements.

Minnesota law requires Community Grant funds to supplement traditional funding sources rather than replace them. Applicants should explain what their existing funding supports and what the proposed Community Grant would pay for. The same expense cannot be charged to more than one grant.

During Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with invited applicants to develop detailed project budgets, identify other funding sources and confirm that proposed costs meet the applicable requirements.

**Source:** Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 1(d); FY2027 RFP 01, sections 7, 18 and 44; Appendix G.

## Question Nov.17.IS.39

Will the DNR distribute funding equally among the five eligible activity areas?

### Nov.17.IS.39 Response 11.25.2026

No. FY2027 RFP 01 does not establish an equal distribution of funding among the five eligible activity areas.

Applications will be evaluated using the published eligibility requirements and evaluation criteria. Funding decisions will be based on the applications received, their competitive ranking, available funding and applicable statutory requirements.

The Community Grant Program supports projects across five eligible activity areas and applicants are encouraged to select the activity area that best reflects their project's primary environmental or natural-resource purpose.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 4, 10, 29 and 30; Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03.

## Question Nov.17.IS.40

Can the same organization submit more than one Stage 1 Concept Note?

### Nov.17.IS.40 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. The limit follows the substantive project lead. The project lead may submit up to two distinct Concept Notes, and only one may advance to Stage 2. An eligible legal applicant may submit more than two Concept Notes when the projects have different substantive project leads and each project meets the RFP requirements. See Nov.17.IS.23 for projects in different activity areas.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 9.1–9.2.

## Question Nov.17.IS.41

How much detail should we include in a Stage 1 Concept Note?

### Nov.17.IS.41 Response 11.25.2026

Use the response limits and instructions for each question in Appendix F. Give enough detail for the reviewer to understand the need, proposed work, who will lead it and what it will accomplish. Focus on answering each question clearly. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will develop a more detailed work plan and budget.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 17 and Appendix F.

## Question Nov.17.IS.42

Will I receive my Stage 1 scores or feedback to help me prepare for a future funding opportunity?

### Nov.17.IS.42 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR will send applicants a written decision on whether their Concept Note advances to Stage 2. The decision will not include scores. We'll provide feedback and learning resources to help applicants reflect on their proposals and use what they learn to prepare for future funding opportunities.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 22.

## Question Nov.17.IS.43

What feedback will applicants receive if they do not advance to Stage 2, and what will the DNR share publicly?

### Nov.17.IS.43 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR will send each applicant a written decision without scores. We'll provide feedback and learning resources to help applicants prepare for future funding opportunities. Individual feedback may be available as staff capacity permits. The DNR may share general learning resources publicly so all applicants can benefit.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 22.

## Question Nov.17.IS.44

Can we add a partner or fiscal agent at Stage 2 to help manage grant funds and reimbursement?

### Nov.17.IS.44 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. If invited to Stage 2, you may add a partner or fiscal agent to help manage grant funds, keep financial records or prepare reimbursement requests. Describe that organization's role in your Full Application. The legal applicant named in the Concept Note must remain the applicant and, if awarded, remains responsible for the grant. The proposed project must remain materially consistent with the Concept Note that advanced.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 3.2, 7.3, 8.2–8.3 and 33.2.

## Question Nov.17.IS.45

Will the DNR respond to my online question, and where will answers be shared?

### Nov.17.IS.45 Response 11.25.2026

If you submitted your question through the official form by December 18, 2026, at 4:30 p.m. Central, you'll receive a response by December 22, 2026. The DNR may respond directly and will share guidance that could benefit other applicants through the FAQ or another official program resource.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, cover sheet and sections 6.3 and 41.

## Question Nov.17.IS.46

Can I use the official question form to ask more than one question?

### Nov.17.IS.46 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. You can use the official form to ask more than one question about the funding opportunity. State each question clearly so the team can respond to each one.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 6.3 and 41.1, for the official question process.

## Question Nov.17.IS.47

Where can I find the information session slides?

### Nov.17.IS.47 Response 11.25.2026

We'll post the slides on the Community Grant Program's Information Sessions page and share the link in a Community Grant Program email updates.

**Source:** Community Grant Program publication plan for the November 17 information session.

## Question Nov.17.IS.48

How often can we request reimbursement, and when can we expect payment?

### Nov.17.IS.48 Response 11.25.2026

During Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with each invited applicant to develop a reimbursement schedule alongside the project's deliverables, milestones and outputs. If funded, the grant agreement will set out when you can submit requests and what documentation to include.

You can request reimbursement after paying eligible expenses. Payment timing depends on when the DNR reviews and approves your request. The team will work with you to plan for that review in your reimbursement schedule, so the process is manageable for both your organization and the DNR.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 33.3 and Part 7 reimbursement provisions.

## Question Nov.17.IS.49

When and how should we raise the need for advance payment?

### Nov.17.IS.49 Response 11.25.2026

The Community Grant Program generally operates on a reimbursement basis, meaning grantees pay eligible project expenses before requesting reimbursement from the DNR. However, Minnesota law allows the commissioner to approve advance payments under certain conditions.

Applicants who anticipate difficulty paying project expenses before reimbursement are encouraged to identify this concern in their Stage 1 Concept Note.

Appendix F provides opportunities to identify financial management needs:

- **Question F9-02** allows applicants to indicate that fiscal-agent or financial-administration arrangements still need to be developed.
- **Question F9-03** provides an opportunity to explain anticipated cash-flow challenges and describe the financial arrangements or assistance needed to carry out the project.

Applicants do not need to have a complete fiscal-agent arrangement or advance payment approval before submitting their Concept Note.

If invited to Stage 2, applicants will work with the Community Grant Team to develop a detailed project budget, discuss cashflow needs and explore available financial-management arrangements. This process may include determining whether an advance payment could be appropriate and what documentation or approvals would be required.

Under Minnesota law, the commissioner may approve an advance payment when the grantee has an approved surety bond or a fiscal agent approved by the commissioner for the arrangement.

Advance payments are not automatic. Any proposed arrangement must meet applicable requirements and receive approval before the grant agreement is executed. The approved payment method will be documented in the grant agreement.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 8.3 and 33.3; Appendix F, Questions F9-02 and F9-03; Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 4a.

## Question Nov.17.IS.50

How will we know what surety bond amount and form we need for an advance payment?

### Nov.17.IS.50 Response 11.25.2026

A surety bond is one option that may allow the commissioner to approve an advance payment under Minnesota law. The commissioner must approve the bond's amount and form.

Applicants do not need to obtain a surety bond before submitting a Stage 1 Concept Note.

If paying project expenses before reimbursement would create financial challenges, applicants should identify those concerns in their Concept Note. Appendix F, Question F9-02, allows applicants to indicate that financial-administration arrangements need further development. Question F9-03 provides an opportunity to explain those needs and identify matters that would need to be addressed during Stage 2.

If invited to Stage 2, applicants can work with the Community Grant Team to discuss their anticipated cash flow, develop a detailed project budget and explore whether an advance payment arrangement could be appropriate.

If a surety bond is being considered, the DNR will work with the applicant to identify the information needed to evaluate the proposed arrangement and determine the applicable approval requirements, including the bond's amount and form.

A surety bond is not the only potential pathway to an advance payment. Minnesota law also allows the commissioner to approve an arrangement involving an approved fiscal agent.

Any advance-payment arrangement must receive the required approval before the grant agreement is executed. Neither identifying a financial need nor proposing a surety bond guarantees approval of an advance payment.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 8.3 and 33.3; Appendix F, Questions F9-02 and F9-03; Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03, subdivision 4a.

# Part 2: FY2027 RFP 01 information session November 19, 2026, questions and answers

## Question Nov.19.IS.01

Can one aquatic invasive species project include more than one type of activity?

### Nov.19.IS.01 Response 11.25.2026

A Concept Note may include related activities under one primary eligible activity area when they support one overall project goal. Describe the goal, the project objectives and how each activity serves those objectives. Explain how the activities and costs contribute to the project's environmental or natural-resource results. If invited to Stage 2, applicants will receive support with project design and work planning.

**Source:** RFP sections 2.2 and 10; Appendix E; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 1(b)(5).

## Question Nov.19.IS.02

Can a 501(c)(4) organization apply?

### Nov.19.IS.02 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.19.IS.03

Can a project receive Community Grant funding if another DNR grant supports related work?

### Nov.19.IS.03 Response 11.25.2026

A project may have more than one funding source if the sources are compatible and the Community Grant request pays for eligible costs that are not charged to another grant. Community Grant funding must supplement traditional funding sources, not replace them. Identify other funding that is confirmed, anticipated or being pursued and explain which costs each source would support. If invited to Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with the applicant to review the final application budget and avoid overlapping charges.

**Source:** RFP sections 14.2 and 15.1; Appendix F, Question F9-12; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 1(d).

## Question Nov.19.IS.04

Does a nonprofit need to meet a minimum budget or organization-size preference?

### Nov.19.IS.04 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 does not set a minimum annual operating budget or give preference based on nonprofit size. Applicants must meet the eligibility requirements and show that the proposed project is feasible. Review the RFP for the information required at each application stage. If reimbursement may create a cash-flow challenge, review the payment requirements and raise the concern if invited to Stage 2 so the team can discuss the project's needs and applicable options.

**Source:** RFP sections 7, 12 and 16; Appendix F, section F.1.

## Question Nov.19.IS.05

Can a grant support repair or replacement of an existing trail boardwalk?

### Nov.19.IS.05 Response 11.25.2026

A boardwalk project may be eligible if it maintains or improves an existing state, regional or local trail and meets the RFP's project requirements. The project must support the trail's function and fit the eligible activity area. Applicants should describe the work, site conditions, needed permissions and any environmental or engineering requirements. The RFP does not fund new trails or trail segments.

**Source:** RFP section 2.2; Appendix D, sections D.3–D.5 and D.8; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 1(b)(4).

## Question Nov.19.IS.06

Do trail projects need completed engineering, permits and environmental review at Stage 1 and can the work take longer than 12 months?

### Nov.19.IS.06 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP does not generally require all engineering, permits and environmental review to be complete at Stage 1. Applicants should identify major approvals, design work or other dependencies and explain how the substantive project work can be completed within 12 months after the authorized start. If a project cannot reasonably fit within that period, it may not be a good fit for FY2027 RFP 01. A future funding opportunity may be a better fit, but future requirements have not been set.

**Source:** RFP sections 11.3 and 12; Appendix D, sections D.7–D.9.

## Question Nov.19.IS.07

Why does the RFP include a voter-registration requirement and which grantees does it apply to?

### Nov.19.IS.07 Response 11.25.2026

The voter-registration provision is included because organizations receiving state funding may be subject to certain requirements established under Minnesota law.

Minnesota Statutes, section 201.162, establishes voter-registration responsibilities for state agencies and certain organizations carrying out state-agency obligations. Although state agencies are not eligible applicants under this funding opportunity, some requirements that apply to state agencies may also apply to organizations receiving state grants.

Section 45.7 of the RFP states that grantees must comply with the voter-registration requirements **"as applicable."** This means the requirement will depend on whether the law applies to the organization and its grant-funded activities.

Applicants do not need to determine how this requirement applies to their organization when submitting a Stage 1 Concept Note. If invited to Stage 2, the Community Grant Team will work with applicants to review applicable grant requirements, including whether voter-registration services must be provided to employees or members of the public served by the grantee.

Any applicable responsibilities will be addressed during grant development and reflected in the grant agreement.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, section 45.7; Minnesota Statutes, section 201.162.

## Question Nov.19.IS.08

Are nonprofits with different federal or state legal classifications eligible to apply?

### Nov.19.IS.08 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.19.IS.09

Where can applicants find examples of a Stage 1 Concept Note?

### Nov.19.IS.09 Response 11.25.2026

Appendix F provides the official Stage 1 Concept Note questions and instructions. We anticipate providing Concept Note examples during the December 8 and December 15 information sessions and using those sessions to walk through Appendix F and the Foundant application system. Applicants can use Appendix F now to begin preparing their responses.

**Source:** RFP Appendix F; DNR planning for the December 8 and December 15 information sessions.

## Question Nov.19.IS.10

When will Stage 2 applicants receive their application schedule?

### Nov.19.IS.10 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP anticipates Stage 2 invitations in February 2027 and a Stage 2 application period from February through April 2027. These dates are estimates. The DNR will be able to confirm the schedule after Stage 1 closes and the number of Concept Notes and review workload are known. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will receive the confirmed deadlines and instructions.

**Source:** RFP cover sheet; sections 3.2 and 24.

## Question Nov.19.IS.11

How will the DNR handle tied Stage 1 scores?

### Nov.19.IS.11 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP sets out how the DNR will resolve ties when they affect which Concept Notes advance to Stage 2. The DNR will apply the tie-breaking steps in the order described in the RFP, including review of the specified criteria and, if needed, an additional reviewer.

**Source:** RFP sections 20.2–20.3.

## Question Nov.19.IS.12

Can a project remove dead ash trees affected by emerald ash borers, and is replacement planting required?

### Nov.19.IS.12 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.19.IS.13

When will future Community Grant funding opportunities be available?

### Nov.19.IS.13 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 does not set dates or funding amounts for future opportunities. The DNR will work with the program's advisory council on expectations and strategy for future funding, including the statutory direction to expand ENRTF funding participation. Future opportunities will depend on available funding, applicable law and program planning. The DNR has not established a schedule in this RFP.

**Source:** RFP sections 1.2 and 4; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03.

## Question Nov.19.IS.14

How many applicants may be invited to Stage 2?

### Nov.19.IS.14 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP does not set a fixed number of Stage 2 invitations. This is the first funding opportunity under the new Community Grant Program, so there is no prior Concept Note volume to use for an estimate. The number received will be known after the Stage 1 deadline, and the number invited will be determined after eligibility review and scoring, taking available funding, statutory requirements, and review capacity into account. An invitation to Stage 2 does not guarantee an award.

**Source:** RFP sections 3.1 and 20.1.

## Question Nov.19.IS.15

Can a small organization apply if reimbursement would be difficult, and when can an advance payment be approved?

### Nov.19.IS.15 Response 11.25.2026

Reimbursement is the standard payment method. A grantee generally pays eligible costs first and then requests reimbursement under the grant agreement. An advance may be approved only when statutory conditions are met, including an approved surety bond or an approved fiscal agent. A small operating budget alone does not make an organization ineligible. If invited to Stage 2, the applicant and Community Grant Team can discuss cashflow needs and whether the applicant can obtain an approved fiscal agent or surety bond. If the project cannot be implemented under reimbursement and the advance payment requirements cannot be met, this opportunity may not be a practical fit. The DNR cannot determine an individual project's fit before review.

**Source:** RFP sections 2.1, 8.3, and 33.3; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 4a.

## Question Nov.19.IS.16

Can one project lead submit more than one Stage 1 Concept Note?

### Nov.19.IS.16 Response 11.25.2026

A substantive project lead may submit up to two distinct Stage 1 Concept Notes, but no more than one may advance to Stage 2. An eligible legal applicant may submit more than two Concept Notes if different substantive project leads are responsible for them and the applications otherwise meet the RFP requirements.

**Source:** RFP section 9.

## Question Nov.19.IS.17

Are Community Grants paid by reimbursement?

### Nov.19.IS.17 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Reimbursement is the standard payment method. Grantees generally pay eligible expenses first and then request reimbursement under the grant agreement. An advance may be approved only when statutory conditions are met, including an approved surety bond or an approved fiscal agent. Applicants invited to Stage 2 can discuss project cash-flow needs and applicable payment requirements with the Community Grant Team.

**Source:** RFP sections 33.1–33.3; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 4a.

## Question Nov.19.IS.18

Can one organization submit more than one Concept Note?

### Nov.19.IS.18 Response 11.25.2026

The limit follows the substantive project lead, not only the legal applicant. A substantive project lead may submit up to two distinct Stage 1 Concept Notes, and only one may advance to Stage 2. An eligible legal applicant may submit more than two if different substantive project leads are responsible for them and the applications meet the RFP requirements.

**Source:** RFP section 9.

## Question Nov.19.IS.19

How does the DNR evaluate Results and Performance before a project begins?

### Nov.19.IS.19 Response 11.25.2026

In FY2027 RFP 01, Results and Performance is worth 20 points. Reviewers assess whether the proposed results fit the project and whether the applicant has a practical, proportionate way to document the work and near-term results. They evaluate the proposed plan, not results that have already occurred. During the Stage 2 process, the Community Grant Team anticipates holding information sessions for invited applicants on results and performance before the Full Application is finalized. The current applicant resources focus on Stage 1.

**Source:** RFP sections 27.1 and 27.4.

## Question Nov.19.IS.20

How do applicants access the Foundant application system?

### Nov.19.IS.20 Response 11.25.2026

Applicants will need to create a Foundant account to submit a Stage 1 Concept Note. The application system opens December 1, 2026. Follow the account-registration and access instructions on the portal login page when it opens.

**Source:** RFP sections 17.2 and 37; RFP cover sheet.

## Question Nov.19.IS.21

Can an organization submit more than one Concept Note for different projects?

### Nov.19.IS.21 Response 11.25.2026

This is the first funding opportunity under the new Community Grant Program, and the RFP's application limits apply to this opportunity. A substantive project lead may submit up to two distinct Concept Notes, but only one may advance to Stage 2. An eligible legal applicant may submit more than two if different substantive project leads are responsible for them and each application meets the RFP requirements.

**Source:** RFP section 9.

## Question Nov.19.IS.22

Can an applicant purchase items before the grant is awarded and charge the cost to the grant?

### Nov.19.IS.22 Response 11.25.2026

Grant-funded work and costs must not begin before the grant agreement is fully executed and the DNR authorizes the start date. Costs incurred before that date cannot be reimbursed. An applicant may purchase an item earlier using other funds but may not later charge that same cost to the Community Grant.

**Source:** RFP sections 31.1 and 33; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03.

## Question Nov.19.IS.23

When are funding decisions and project start dates expected, and how should applicants address seasonal work?

### Nov.19.IS.23 Response 11.25.2026

Funding selections are anticipated in spring 2027, with grant starts anticipated in summer 2027. These dates are estimates. Applicants should describe seasonal constraints and show how substantive work could be completed within 12 months after the authorized project start date. Grant-funded work cannot begin until the grant agreement is executed and the DNR authorizes the start date.

**Source:** RFP cover sheet; sections 4.3 and 31.1.

## Question Nov.19.IS.24

Is available funding divided equally among the eligible activity areas?

### Nov.19.IS.24 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 does not set an equal dollar amount for each activity area. Applications are evaluated under the published criteria, and funding decisions follow the RFP's competitive process and applicable statutory requirements. Minnesota law requires awards for more than one statutory purpose, but it does not require equal funding amounts across those purposes.

**Source:** RFP sections 4 and 29; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 1a(b).

## Question Nov.19.IS.25

Can a project run from June 2027 through June 2028?

### Nov.19.IS.25 Response 11.25.2026

A June 2027 to June 2028 schedule can fit the 12-month limit if the exact dates in the grant agreement allow no more than 12 months for substantive project work. The DNR will set the authorized start and end dates through the grant process.

**Source:** RFP sections 4.3 and 31.1; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03.

## Question Nov.19.IS.26

Could future funding opportunities allow a longer project period?

### Nov.19.IS.26 Response 11.25.2026

FY2027 RFP 01 sets a 12-month limit for substantive project work. It does not set project periods for future opportunities. The DNR will work with the program's advisory council on expectations and strategy for future funding, including the statutory direction to expand the number and diversity of organizations that benefit from ENRTF funding. Future opportunities will have their own published requirements based on available funding, applicable law, and program planning.

**Source:** RFP sections 1.2 and 4.3; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03.

## Question Nov.19.IS.27

Will a grant require a recorded property restriction?

### Nov.19.IS.27 Response 11.25.2026

The DNR is reviewing this question internally. We will post an answer on the public FAQ website when we have finalized the answer prior to December 22, 2026. We will update the FAQ website with this question and answer and notify the ENRTF Community Grant Program email subscription list.

## Question Nov.19.IS.28

Can a grant pay for planning or pre-development work?

### Nov.19.IS.28 Response 11.25.2026

Yes. Certain planning and pre-development activities may be eligible for Community Grant funding when they directly support an eligible environmental or natural-resource project.

Examples of potentially eligible activities include project-specific site assessments, environmental evaluations, technical planning, preliminary design, and other preparatory work necessary to carry out an eligible project. These activities must support the project's objectives, meet the requirements of the selected activity area, and produce results that contribute to the proposed environmental or natural-resource benefits.

General organizational planning or activities unrelated to an eligible environmental or natural-resource purpose would not qualify simply because they are included in a project proposal.

**Only costs incurred after the grant agreement has been fully executed and the DNR has authorized work to begin may be charged to the grant.** Planning, design, assessments or other pre-development costs incurred before the authorized start date are not eligible for reimbursement, even if the project is subsequently selected for funding.

During Stage 1, applicants should describe the planning or pre-development activities they propose to complete using grant funds. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will work with the Community Grant Team to develop the detailed work plan and budget and determine which proposed costs meet the RFP requirements.

**Source:** FY2027 RFP 01, sections 10, 13.4, and 31.1; applicable statutory activity-area appendix.

## Question Nov.19.IS.29

Will the Stage 2 budget template be available before applicants are invited?

### Nov.19.IS.29 Response 11.25.2026

Stage 1 asks for a preliminary funding request, not a detailed budget. The Stage 2 budget template has not been finalized because the current focus is on Stage 1 resources. Applicants invited to Stage 2 will receive the finalized Full Application instructions, budget tools, and schedule. The budget request may be refined within the RFP's funding range if the project remains materially consistent with the Concept Note that advanced.

**Source:** RFP sections 3.2, 4.2, and 24; Appendix F, Question F10-01; Appendix G.

## Question Nov.19.IS.30

What makes an answer an official DNR clarification?

### Nov.19.IS.30 Response 11.25.2026

For FY2027 RFP 01, the RFP and any formal amendments control. The DNR's published FAQs and public answer documents provide official clarifications and identify the sources used to answer questions. If a published clarification conflicts with the RFP or a formal amendment, the RFP or amendment controls.

**Source:** RFP sections 6, 35, and 41; DNR information-session resources.

## Question Nov.19.IS.31

What is the minimum grant request?

### Nov.19.IS.31 Response 11.25.2026

The minimum request for FY2027 RFP 01 is $20,000. Applicants may request up to $150,000 and should request the amount reasonably needed for the proposed project.

**Source:** RFP section 4.2; Minnesota Statutes §116X.03, subd. 1a.

## Question Nov.19.IS.32

What is the anticipated Stage 2 timeline?

### Nov.19.IS.32 Response 11.25.2026

The RFP anticipates Stage 2 invitations in February/March 2027 and a Stage 2 application period from March through April 2027. These dates are estimates and may change based on the number of Concept Notes received and the time needed for eligibility review and scoring. The DNR will publish confirmed dates and instructions for invited applicants after Stage 1 review is complete.

**Source:** RFP cover sheet; sections 3.2 and 24.

## Part 3. FY2027 RFP 01 section/part reference crosswalk

The tables identify where the RFP sections cited in Parts 1 and 2 of this question-and-answer document appear in FY2027 RFP 01. The section numbers refer to the RFP sections they fall within. Consult the RFP and any formal amendments for the controlling requirements.

### RFP sections referenced in the answers

| RFP part | RFP part title | Section numbers referenced |
|---|---|---|
| Part 1 | Funding opportunity overview and process | 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 |
| Part 2 | Applicant and project eligibility | 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 |
| Part 3 | Stage 1 Concept Note competitive process | 15, 16, 17, 18, 20, 22 |
| Part 4 | Stage 2 Full Application competitive process | 24, 27, 29, 30 |
| Part 5 | Selection, pre-award and grant agreement | 31, 33, 34 |
| Part 6 | Application submission and application support | 35, 37, 41 |
| Part 7 | Grant administration and closeout | 44, 45, 46, 47 |

To locate a citation, find its section number in the right-hand column, then navigate to the corresponding RFP part. For example, section 33.3 is in Part 5; section 45.7 is in Part 7.

### RFP appendices referenced in the answers

| Appendix | RFP appendix title |
|---|---|
| Appendix A | Helping Adversely Impacted Communities Respond to Environmental Degradation and Related Health Concerns |
| Appendix B | Environmental and Natural-Resource Education and Awareness |
| Appendix C | Preserving or Enhancing Natural Resources Substantially Impaired or Destroyed |

| | |
|---|---|
| Appendix D | Maintaining or Improving Existing State, Regional or Local Trails |
| Appendix E | Aquatic Invasive Species Management |
| Appendix F | Stage 1 Concept Note Form and Instructions |
| Appendix G | Stage 2 Full Application Form and Instructions |

References such as Appendix F, Question F9-02 or Appendix D, section D.8, refer to subsections within the named appendix. The RFP cover sheet and Minnesota Statutes are separate from the numbered RFP sections and are not assigned to a numbered part in this table.