Appendix A. Helping Adversely Impacted Communities Respond to Environmental Degradation and Related Health Concerns

Name of Granting Agency: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources

Title of Grant Program/Opportunity: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program

November 5, 2026

Short reference: Adversely Impacted Communities

Use this appendix with the main Request for Proposals. The main RFP contains the rules that apply to all applicants and projects. This appendix explains the additional fit and project-specific information for projects whose primary statutory activity is helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns.

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A.1 Purpose and when to use Appendix A

Use Appendix A when the principal funded purpose of the project is to help an adversely impacted community respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns.

The legal applicant, substantive project lead and community expected to benefit may be different. When their roles differ, the Stage 1 Concept Note must identify them clearly, as required by Sections 7 and 8 of the main RFP.

A project may involve more than one Community Grant Program activity area. For Stage 1, choose the activity area that best reflects the project's principal funded purpose. You may also identify other activity areas that apply. You will not be required to complete multiple full Stage 1 activity-area question sets.

For this funding opportunity, grant requests must be from $20,000 to $150,000, and substantive project implementation must be completed within 12 months or less. Up to two additional months may be authorized for approved startup and close-out activities, but not to continue unfinished substantive project work. See Sections 4.2, 4.3 and 12 of the RFP.

A.2 What makes a project fit this activity area

A project in this activity area should show a reasonable connection among three elements:

1. A community that is adversely impacted
2. Environmental degradation affecting that community and, where relevant, related health concerns
3. A proposed project that helps the community respond to those conditions

The connection among the community, environmental condition and proposed response is central to this activity area. The project does not fit this activity area solely because it is located in a community experiencing social or economic disadvantage, serves an underserved population, provides a general community benefit or is proposed by an organization that works on environmental or public-health issues.

Applicants should describe, in their own terms and based on information available to them, the community, the environmental degradation or related concern, why it matters and how the proposed project responds. Applicants are not required to use a particular map or dataset, conduct a new technical analysis or demonstrate activity-area fit through a prescribed evidence source solely to submit a Stage 1 Concept Note.

The DNR may use appropriate information to verify statutory or program eligibility and to implement the published Stage 1 criteria. A map designation or dataset alone does not establish activity-area eligibility or determine a competitive score. The DNR will assess submitted information under the eligibility requirements and scoring criteria published in the main RFP.

A.3 Environmental degradation and related health concerns

Applicants should describe the environmental condition that is important to the project and explain how it affects the community or creates a concern for the community. Environmental degradation may include conditions involving air pollution, water degradation, soil or land degradation, biodiversity loss or another

relevant environmental condition. These categories are examples, not an exhaustive eligibility list. The description should be proportionate to what the applicant knows at the time of application. Applicants are not expected to conduct a new scientific study or health assessment solely to apply.

A related health concern may be described when it is connected to the environmental degradation addressed by the project. Applicants should not be expected to establish a medical diagnosis, prove individual health effects or conduct a health study unless a project-specific requirement expressly requires that information.

Applicants may rely on the information available to them, including community knowledge, local or Tribal governmental information when appropriate, existing plans or reports, public information or other relevant sources. The DNR may verify information used to determine statutory or program eligibility.

A.4 Projects that may fit

Projects may fit this activity area when their principal funded purpose is to help an adversely impacted community understand, address, reduce, mitigate or respond to environmental degradation or a related health concern. The specific activity must also comply with the main RFP and any project-specific legal or technical requirements.

Optional applicant resources may provide maps, datasets, government information, community-planning resources and explanatory examples that applicants may use if helpful in developing or supporting their project narratives. These resources are supplemental and do not create additional eligibility requirements, scoring expectations, or preferred evidence pathways.

A.5 Projects that do not fit this activity area

A project does not fit Appendix A merely because:

- The project is located in a community that has experienced social or economic disadvantage
- The applicant serves a population that has experienced barriers to funding or public programs
- An environmental activity will occur in the community but is not meaningfully connected to an environmental condition affecting that community
- The project provides a general community benefit without a sufficient connection to environmental degradation, or
- The applicant generally works on environmental, health, education or community issues

A project that does not fit Appendix A may still fit another Community Grant Program activity area. Applicants should select the activity area that best matches the project's principal funded purpose. The choice between Appendix A and another activity area is based on the project's principal funded purpose and the applicable activity-area requirements, not on whether a community appears in a particular map or dataset.

A.6 Activity-specific information required at stage 1

Applicants selecting Appendix A as the primary activity area will answer a small number of additional questions in the Stage 1 Concept Note. The questions will be limited to information needed to determine activity-area fit, route or verify the application or provide evidence relevant to the published Stage 1 criteria.

The Stage 1 questions will ask the applicant to identify or briefly describe:

- The community expected to benefit
- The environmental degradation or environmental condition important to the project
- How that condition affects or creates concerns for the community
- How the proposed project would help the community respond

A concise explanation is sufficient at Stage 1. Applicants should not be required at Stage 1 to submit a new environmental study, health study, detailed technical analysis or extensive documentation solely to establish this activity-area fit unless the RFP expressly requires it.

A.7 Additional activity-specific information that may be required at stage 2

Applicants invited to Stage 2 may be asked for additional information when it is necessary to evaluate the actual project. The information required will depend on the project and may include:

- Additional information supporting the environmental condition or community context
- A map, site description or project-area information
- The proposed technical approach or methods
- The substantive project lead's relationship to the affected community and, where relevant, the eligible legal applicant's relationship and how relevant community knowledge or priorities informed the project
- Known permits, approvals, site permissions or other authorizations
- Technical expertise or partners needed to carry out the work
- A practical approach for understanding or documenting project results, or
- Other project-specific information needed to evaluate design, feasibility, results, budget or value under the published Stage 2 criteria

Stage 2 readiness does not mean every permit, agreement, contractor, technical detail or site authorization must already be complete. When an item is not complete, applicants may explain the reasonable path for resolving it. Final compliance documentation may be required later in the grant process.

A.8 Technical, site, data or authorization issues that may apply

Some Appendix A projects may require additional technical review or authorization because of the project's methods, location, environmental condition, land or water involved or information the project uses. The need for technical review does not by itself make a project ineligible. Material unresolved implementation issues may be considered under the published Project Feasibility criterion when they raise reasonable concerns about completing the project within the available funding and implementation period.

Applicants should not submit protected, private, not-public, security-sensitive, culturally sensitive or other restricted information through an ordinary application field or email when special handling may be required. Contact the Community Grant Program for instructions if information necessary to the project may require protected handling.

Projects involving Tribal lands, waters, natural resources, jurisdiction, treaty-protected interests or other matters subject to Tribal governmental authority will require coordination, authorization or other action by the affected Tribal Nation, as provided in Section 11.2 of the main RFP. Project-specific DNR Tribal Relations, legal or technical review may also be required. Applicants should not submit protected cultural information, traditional knowledge, sacred information, precise sensitive-resource locations or other information that should not be publicly disclosed through ordinary application fields.

The DNR may request additional information after submission when necessary to verify eligibility, understand a project-specific requirement or complete an authorized technical review. Any clarification process will follow the main RFP and may not be used to create an undisclosed scoring requirement.

A.9 Where to get help and technical information

Applicants may use Community Grant Program applicant resources and technical assistance to understand this activity area and develop a project. Optional resources may include maps, environmental datasets, government information, community-planning resources, explanatory examples, planning questions and project-readiness guidance. Applicants may use these resources if they are helpful, but they are not required evidence and do not create additional eligibility requirements, scoring expectations or preferred evidence pathways. If a Concept Note advances, Stage 2 technical assistance may help the applicant refine the environmental problem statement, supporting information, project design and any technical documentation appropriate to the Full Application.

Questions about whether a project may fit this activity area may be submitted through the applicant-support process described in the main RFP.