



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program Report

12/12/2025

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources
Office of the Commissioner
500 Lafayette Road
St. Paul, MN 55155

email: commissioner.dnr@state.mn.us

website: <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/>

As requested by [Minn. Statutes, section 3.197](#): This report and attachments cost approximately \$6,300 to prepare, including staff time, printing and mailing expenses. Upon request, the DNR will share this report, and this material will be made available in an alternative format such as large print, Braille, or audio recording. Printed on recycled paper.

Table of Contents

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program Report

Legislative Charge	4
Introduction: ENRTF Community Grant Program.....	4
Section 1: Recommendations to Ensure Alignment with the Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program....	6
Section 2: Details of Grant Program Implementation	8
Section 3: Recommendation on Organizational Structure and Membership of the Advisory Council	9
Appendix A: Implementation Plan.....	12–27
Appendix B: ENRTF Community Grant Program Draft Expedited Grant RFP.....	28–51
Appendix C: ENRTF Community Grant Program Draft Standard Grant RFP	52–76

Legislative Charge

[Minn. Laws 2025 First Special Session, chapter 1, article 3, section 3](#) states that:

By December 15, 2025, the commissioner of natural resources must submit a report to the chairs and ranking minority members of the house of representatives and senate committees and divisions with jurisdiction over environment and natural resources on plans to implement the environment and natural resources trust fund community grant program under Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.03. The report must include:

- (1) recommendations for the grant program to ensure that the program operates in a manner similar to the conservation partners legacy grant program established as required under Minnesota Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 3, including a draft of any request for proposals and the criteria that will be used to prioritize applications and allocate funding;
- (2) details of grant program implementation, including requests for proposals, awarded grants, and future implementation; and
- (3) the organizational structure and membership of the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Advisory Council required under Minnesota Statutes, section 116X.05.

Introduction: ENRTF Community Grant Program

The purpose of Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) is to provide a long-term, consistent, and stable source of funding for activities that protect and enhance Minnesota’s environment and natural resources for the benefit of current citizens and future generations.

The Minnesota State Legislature established the ENRTF Community Grant Program in Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X. The ENRTF Community Grant Program must “expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation.”

The statute further provides that up to five percent of the funding appropriated to the DNR for the ENRTF Community Grant Program may be used for administration, outreach, grant monitoring and advisory council operational support.

Eligible and ineligible project uses

[Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X.03 subd. 1](#) outlines the eligible and ineligible uses for the ENRTF Community Grant Program funds.

Eligible uses

- Helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns;
- Education and awareness related to stewardship of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources;
- Preserving or enhancing air, land, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state;
- Trail maintenance and improvement on state, regional, or local trails. No money allocated under this clause may be used to construct new trails or new trail segments; or
- Aquatic invasive species management.

Ineligible uses

The statute also prohibits the DNR from awarding ENRTF Community Grant Program funding:

- To a state agency;
- To the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota;
- To a for-profit business; or
- For a scientific research project.

Other requirements

In addition to ENRTF Community Grants statute and appropriation language, the program is subject to:

- State statutes governing grant making, accounting, and other fiscal controls.
- Department of Administration Office of Grants Management (OGM) policies.
- Federal and state statutes that govern certain eligible uses such as permitting, land acquisition, environmental review and other controls.

The DNR will administer the ENRTF Community Grant Program in alignment with these requirements.

Advisory council

[Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X.05](#) directs the DNR Commissioner to establish an ENRTF Community Grant Program Advisory Council. The statute also defines the advisory council membership structure and terms, outlines advisory council duties, addresses member per diem and declares that advisory council meetings must be open to the public.

Appropriation

During the 2025 session, the legislature appropriated \$28.28 million from the ENRTF to the DNR for the ENRTF Community Grant Program. That funding is available until June 30, 2029.

Section 1: Recommendations to Ensure Alignment with the Conservation Partners Legacy (CPL) Grant Program

This report section provides recommendations to ensure the ENRTF Community Grant Program will “operate in a manner similar to the conservation partners legacy grant program established under [Minn. Statutes, section 97A.056, subdivision 3.](#)”

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is charged with managing both the Outdoor Heritage Fund Conservation Partners Legacy Grant Program (CPL) and the ENRTF Community Grant Program. Unlike many other grant programs, both CPL and the Community Grant Program are tied to specific language in the Minnesota State Constitution regarding dedicated sources of program funding – respectively, the Outdoor Heritage Fund and the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund. ([Minn. Constit., art. XI, sec. 15](#), [Minn. Constit. art. XI, sec. 14](#))

Funding for CPL is provided through the Lessard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council (LSOHC) application process. The LSOHC annually evaluates proposals and provides Outdoor Heritage Fund recommendations to the Minnesota Legislature for consideration and approval. Every year since 2009, CPL has been funded through this process.

The legislative purposes for the CPL and the ENRTF Community Grant Program are similar – to increase capacity within Minnesota to address environmental and natural resource issues by enhancing access to state funding sources for natural resource projects. The ENRTF Community Grant Program is specifically directed to expand the number and diversity of recipients who use ENRTF to accomplish outcomes for Minnesotans.

Like CPL, this new program will increase the state’s investment in a broader array of innovative, community-based projects. Achieving this legislative intent requires a grant program structure that provides strategic support to potential applicants and awarded grantees, monitoring of grantee performance and sound fiscal controls.

Support and monitoring

Enhanced technical assistance and guidance

To support smaller, community-based grant applicants, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will provide enhanced technical assistance and guidance, similar to that which CPL provides. The ENRTF Community Grant Program will support applicants and grantees through significant outreach, training and resources. This will include:

- Conducting outreach to build awareness of this new opportunity and to encourage new applicants.
- Offering enhanced training to support the project development process.
- Coaching grantees on project outcomes.
- Connecting applicants and grantees to technical assistance within and outside the DNR.
- Soliciting questions from grantees and posting Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on the program webpage.

- Offering a pre-submission application review for completeness.
- Training and supporting grantees to understand and meet the requirements of state and DNR grant agreements.
- Monitoring grant projects for indicators that the grantee is in need of added support, coaching or other intervention from Community Grant Program staff.

As the ENRTF Community Grant Program matures, DNR grants staff will modify guidance documents, training and processes as needed to support the program's goals. This will mirror the CPL staff's process of reviewing and refining program guidance.

Use of technical experts

As with CPL, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will recruit technical experts to provide support, including:

- **Application review**

The application review panel will include experts in each of the eligible program uses and priority areas. This will be especially critical for the ENRTF Community Grant Program, given the multiple categories of eligible uses in statute and the statutory direction to "expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation."

- **Project consultation**

Similar to CPL, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will connect applicants and grantees with technical experts in each eligible use area, as needed, to assist with project design and to learn about processes such as permitting. To avoid conflicts of interest, technical experts who assist applicants directly with program development will not serve on the application review panel.

Most technical experts will be DNR employees in the first few grant rounds. An effort to recruit community-based experts will begin once the DNR selects and seats the advisory council through an open application process.

Funding models

CPL divides its grant funding structure into multiple categories, including (but not limited to) traditional, metro and expedited grants. A single Request for Proposals (RFP) is published annually and addresses the different eligibility, funding availability, priority focus, timeline and application requirements for each of the categories.

Similarly, the DNR intends to launch the ENRTF Community Grant Program with two grant models:

- Standard ENRTF Grant model.
- Expedited ENRTF Grant model.

Due to a broader purpose and larger amount of funding, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will publish separate RFPs for each model, and the application rounds will not launch at the same time. Splitting the

application rounds into two separate timelines will allow the review panel to focus on a reasonable number of applications, all of which will have the same requirements.

Given how broad the allowable ENRTF Community Grant Program uses are, geographical balance should be possible without a separate round for metro projects (such as CPL's metro grant category). The ENRTF Community Grant Program will assess this grant funding structure and, as needed, adjust the timing and funding available after initial rounds.

For more details about the two ENRTF Community Grant Program models, please refer to Appendix A. In addition, draft Requests for Proposals are attached to this report and include details about the Expedited and Standard ENRTF Community Grant models.

Structural differences

While CPL and the ENRTF Community Grant Program will share significant structural similarities, the DNR has made appropriate adjustments to the CPL model to account for program differences.

Matching funds and fiscal agents

To further reduce barriers of potential grantees, the ENRTF Community Grants Program will not require matching funds and will allow fiscal agents (an organization entering into an agreement with the grantee and the state to manage the grant's financial administration), unlike CPL.

Advisory council

Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 5 directs the DNR commissioner to appoint an ENRTF Community Grant Program Advisory Council to review program elements and make recommendations to the legislature and the DNR commissioner for improving management of the program. CPL does not have an advisory council.

Administrative expenses

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will have greater flexibility than CPL in allowable administrative expenses to support the projects. Securing funding to support the internal capacity required to appropriately administer and report on grants and install effective internal controls is a known barrier for smaller organizations, including non-profits and political subdivisions. Offering smaller entities with innovative ideas this foundational financial support will be a key factor in expanding the number and diversity of trust fund grant recipients.

Section 2: Details of Grant Program Implementation

For information on the DNR's plans for grant program implementation, please see Appendix A of this report, as well as the draft RPFs.

Section 3: Recommendation on Organizational Structure and Membership of the Advisory Council

Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 5 directs the DNR commissioner to establish an ENRTF Community Grant Advisory Council. The advisory council must:

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

The advisory council is charged with promoting transparency, accessibility and effective allocation of resources by the ENRTF Community Grant Program. As an advisory body, the council will recommend priorities and practices that help ensure benefits from the ENRTF are accessible to all Minnesotans, including communities adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation.

Membership and member selection process

The DNR commissioner will appoint at least 14 members and up to the statutory maximum of 19 members to the advisory council. The final number of members appointed will depend upon the number needed to satisfy the required qualifications and demographics. Before appointing members, the DNR will consult with the commissioners of Health and the Pollution Control Agency on proposed appointees.

The DNR will solicit applications from the public for advisory council membership through an open, competitive application process. The member selection process will include two phases, similar to processes used for other DNR advisory groups.

First, a review panel will evaluate applications based on a scoring rubric developed by the DNR that will detail rating criteria to facilitate consistent scoring. In the second phase, the DNR will interview selected finalist candidates.

For the first funding round, application review panel members will include DNR staff with experience in forming or facilitating advisory groups, specialized knowledge about the ENRTF Community Grant Program structure or subject matter, and expertise with inclusive processes. In future rounds, the DNR will recruit community-based reviewers with subject matter expertise.

Advisory council membership will align with the criteria established in Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 5 statute. According to statute, advisory council membership must include:

- Two enrolled members of an Ojibwe Tribal Nation that lies within Minnesota boundaries.

- Two enrolled members of a Dakota Tribal Nation that lies within Minnesota boundaries.
- Four members who identify as black or African American, Hispanic or Latino, Asian or Pacific Islander, or as members of a community of color.

Additional residents of Minnesota will be appointed to the advisory council to ensure that, at the commissioner's discretion, the advisory council is sufficiently representative of various Minnesota communities and geographies. The DNR will develop a communications and outreach plan to recruit a robust applicant pool representing the experience and demographics desired for this new advisory council.

Member experience

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

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

Registered lobbyists are not eligible to serve on the advisory council.

Member terms

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

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

Organizational structure

A charter approved by the DNR commissioner and agreed to by the advisory council will govern the body. The DNR will support meeting logistics, planning and facilitation. Specifics of the council's process for making recommendations, decisions or other forms of reporting out will be determined by the DNR in consultation with members, once appointed. Advisory council members will discuss and develop recommendations on topics within the scope defined in statute.

Meetings will be open to the public. This body will meet quarterly, unless specific circumstances require greater frequency. The advisory council, once appointed, will inform and confirm the meeting cadence, schedule and location(s).

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

Members of the council will be entitled to per diem and reimbursement for expenses incurred in the service of the council, as provided in [Minn Statutes, section 15.059, subdivision 3](#).

Conflicts of interest

Council members will be required to disclose and appropriately manage actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest. An actual conflict of interest occurs when a member is in a position to influence a decision that could result in personal gain, relative, or organizational gain as a result of the council's recommendations. A potential or perceived conflict of interest occurs when a member either could be, or is perceived to be, in such a position. A conflict of interest exists even if no unethical, improper or illegal act results from it.

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

Appendix A: Implementation Plan

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program

12/12/2025

Table of Contents

Appendix A: Implementation Plan

Statutory requirements	15
Grant models	15
Strategies for Expanding Trust Fund Accessibility	19
Fiscal management support	19
Outreach	20
Application support	20
Technical assistance	20
Administrative expenses	21
Match requirement	21
Collaborative/partner grant projects	21
Online grant application and management system	21
Initial RFP Rounds	22
Estimated timelines	22
Application process and review criteria	22
Prioritization	23
Project evaluation.....	24
Measurable outcomes.....	24
Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Fiscal Controls.....	24
Pre-award risk assessment and financial review.....	24
Monitoring and progress reports	25
Fiscal agents.....	26

Advance payment option	26
Administrative Budget.....	26
Electronic grants management system	27
Continuous Improvement.....	27

Appendix A:

ENRTF Community Grant Program Implementation Plan

As directed by [Minn. Laws 2025 First Special Session, chapter 1, article 3, section 3](#), the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) has prepared this plan for implementing the new Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) Community Grant Program.

This plan includes statutory requirements, grant models, strategies to expand accessibility of ENRTF funding, structure of initial RFPs, and strategies to mitigate risk and ensure adequate fiscal controls. Administrative budget and continuous improvement considerations are also included. This plan also refers to draft RFPs for the two initial grants, as directed by Section 3.

Statutory requirements

[Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#) provides eligible uses for the ENRTF Community Grant Program. It dictates that the DNR may only award ENRTF Community Grant Program funds for:

- Helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns;
- Education and awareness related to stewardship of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources;
- Preserving or enhancing air, land, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state;
- Trail maintenance and improvement on state, regional, or local trails. No money allocated under this clause may be used to construct new trails or new trail segments; or
- Aquatic invasive species management.

Chapter 116X also prohibits the DNR from awarding ENRTF Community Grant Program funding:

- To a state agency;
- To the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota;
- To a for-profit business; or
- For a scientific research project.

Grant models

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will feature two types of grants:

- Expedited ENRTF Community Grants.
- Standard ENRTF Community Grants.

Separate RFPs will outline the distinct criteria of these two types of grants. Expedited and Standard ENRTF Community grants will have different open application periods, although the application and award timelines will often overlap.

Similarities between Expedited and Standard Grants

Expedited and Standard Grants will share the following features.

- ***Eligible project uses***

All five ENRTF Community Grant project funding uses listed in statute will be eligible uses for both grant types. These uses include: helping adversely impacted communities, education and awareness related to stewardship, preserving natural resources, trail maintenance and improvement, and AIS management. This will allow applicants to think creatively about how projects might address more than one eligible use. In addition, the DNR will not place minimum or maximum limits on the sum total of funding awarded for each eligible project use during a given grant round.

- ***Fiscal agents***

Applicants will be allowed to partner with a nonprofit, unit of local government, or Tribal government that will serve as the fiscal agent for the project. The fiscal agent will enter into an agreement with the grantee and the state to manage the grant's financial administration. More information about fiscal agents is in the "Expanding trust fund accessibility" and "Fiscal management support" sections of this document.

- ***Length of application period***

The application phase (from RFP publication to the application submission deadline) will be at least 45 days to allow applicants ample time to develop and submit a proposal.

- ***Match***

Matching funds will not be required.

- ***Balancing overall awards***

If necessary to ensure that funds are expended for benefit across all regions and residents of the state as required in statute, the award process may include an adjustment to balance projects geographically. Also, if initial funding rounds are imbalanced in terms of project type, applicant type, or other key element, the DNR may adjust priority score weighting in future funding rounds to adjust that imbalance. The advisory council will review and advise the DNR on potential adjustments.

Expedited Grants

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will launch with an Expedited Grant RFP as its first funding round. The DNR structured this grant to move legislatively appropriated funds efficiently into community-based projects that are ready to be launched, in order to get funding to communities quickly and start seeing an impact.

Here is a summary of Expedited Grant features.

- ***Project timeline and scope***

Expedited Grant rounds will fund projects that are in an advanced stage of development and can be completed within one year, so the scope of eligible projects cannot include processes that could delay or complicate that timeline.

This includes the following restrictions:

- No capital projects.
- No land acquisition.
- No work on state land.
- No ground disturbance.

- ***Advanced stage of development***

As previously noted, Expedited Grant projects must be in advanced planning stages and “ready to go,” meaning:

- No further design is needed (unless the application is solely to fund the design phase)
- The applicant is well prepared for any required permitting or review.
- Permissions have been granted or are on track to be granted early in the grant period.
- Outreach to the community members who will be most affected by the project has been initiated.
- A weather-ready plan is in place that considers likely/possible seasonal or weather conditions that may impact the project, with strategies to accommodate or adapt as needed to accomplish goal, if applicable.

- ***Design phase***

Expedited projects may be the design phase of a larger project. In that case, projects must have completed initial outreach to community members most affected and have clear project outcomes and timeline for the project.

- ***Collaboration***

Multi-agency applications where more than one entity applies for the grant and the workplan tasks are shared among those applicants will not be allowed for Expedited Grants. Fiscal agents will be allowed. Applications that include a fiscal agent are not considered multi-agency applications, because the fiscal agent only has an administrative/financial role.

- ***Frequency of grant rounds***

The DNR anticipates offering two Expedited Grant rounds per year once the ENRTF Community Grant Program is fully implemented.

- ***Funding available***

Funding available for the first two Expedited Grant RFPs will be between \$2 and \$3 million each round. The total funding available from round to round will fluctuate somewhat depending on future legislative appropriations and program capacity.

The \$3 million ceiling was chosen to avoid straining the ENRTF Community Grant Program's administration capacity with too many small grant awards at any one time; for that reason, the second round may be smaller depending on the number of grants awarded in the first.

- ***Award range***

The Expedited Grant award range is \$5,000 minimum to \$50,000 maximum. The \$50,000 ceiling for Expedited Grants will streamline the process for both grantees and the DNR; under the Department of Administration's Office of Grants Management (OGM) policy, grants \$50,000 and over require pre-award risk assessments (which may include financial reviews) as well as monitoring visits. Grants under \$50,000 will have risk assessment and monitoring protocols that are suitable to projects of that smaller size and scope, as discussed in the "Monitoring and progress reports" section of this plan.

- ***Award Notification Timeline***

Narrowing the project scope removes some complexity from the proposal evaluation process, allowing for funding to be available more rapidly. The DNR aims to condense the time from Expedited Grant RFP publication to award notification to approximately four months. The DNR has heard from stakeholders that shortening the timeline between RFP publication, grant award, and contract execution is key to attracting smaller organizations to apply for Community Grants.

Standard Grants

The DNR will publish the first Standard ENRTF Community Grant RFP approximately four to five months after the first Expedited Grant RFP and annually thereafter. Unlike the Expedited Grant, Standard Grant eligibility will include more complex workplan activities. Both a higher award limit and the longer project timeline accommodate for this.

Here is a summary of Standard Grant features.

- ***Project timeline and scope***

Grantees must complete Standard Grant projects within two years. The expanded list of allowable activities for Standard Grants includes:

- Land acquisition.
- Work on state land.
- Capital projects.
- Projects involving ground disturbance.

- ***Design phase***

Projects that include or are limited to pre-design and design for future phases will be eligible for Standard ENRTF Community Grants.

- ***Collaboration***

In addition to fiscal agents, multi-organization (partner) applications will be allowed for Standard ENRTF Community Grants.

- ***Frequency of grant rounds***

A Standard ENRTF Community Grant RFP will be published less often than the Expedited Grant RFP. The DNR anticipates publishing the Standard RFP annually in the first few years of the program.

- ***Funding available***

Total funding available in the first Standard Grant round will be an estimated \$24 million. The total funding available from round to round will fluctuate depending on future legislative appropriations and lessons learned as the program matures.

- ***Award Range***

Project awards will range from a minimum of \$5,000 to a maximum of \$750,000.

- ***Award notification timeline***

Because of the greater complexity of the Standard Grant projects and higher amount of total funding available, the application period, application review, project selection and award notification process will take approximately six months.

Strategies for Expanding Trust Fund Accessibility

According to Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3, a central goal of the ENRTF Community Grant Program is to “expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund.” The DNR will use several strategies to attract and support an expanded field of applicants capable of delivering on project outcomes. The DNR will refine these strategies based on input from legislative members, advisory council members and other stakeholders.

Fiscal management support

The ENRTF Community Grant Program structure will include two features that address fiscal management challenges often faced by smaller nonprofits and units of government.

Fiscal agent

First, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will allow grantees to designate a fiscal agent. A fiscal agent is a nonprofit or unit of government that manages the financial and related administrative grant duties on behalf of

the grantee. Fiscal agents relieve smaller organization grantees of the administrative complexities that they may not have the infrastructure to address while also delivering on their intended project outcomes.

Designating a fiscal agent also offers grantees an opportunity to learn through that partnership. As their understanding of grant fiscal management grows, the grantee can choose to build their internal capacity and apply for future grant rounds without a fiscal agent.

Advance payment

Second, the program will offer grantees the option to formally request structured advance payment rather than a reimbursement-based payment structure. Smaller units of government and nonprofits often face challenges with cash flow when grants are available on a reimbursement-only model. Reimbursement-based grants require organizations to have undesignated funding in their coffers to front grant expenses, then request payment from the grant.

The “Risk assessment, mitigation and fiscal controls” section of this report addresses how the program will structure the fiscal agent and advance payment options to reduce risk.

Outreach

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will engage potential applicants in all regions of the state through well-publicized virtual and in-person events and a robust communications campaign. Statewide outreach will be an ongoing, integral program element that connects applicants with ENRTF Community Grant Program technical support for further project development. Using funding appropriated for administration, the DNR anticipates partnering with contracted outreach specialists to spread awareness about this new funding opportunity.

Application support

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will host live webinars to guide applicants through the process of application development and submission. Program staff will provide one-on-one support and post guidance documents on the ENRTF Community Grants Program webpage, along with answers to frequently asked questions (FAQs).

Applicants with accessibility needs will be encouraged to request accommodation. The DNR will provide translation of the RFP into multiple languages as requested. A full list of available languages will be provided with the RFP announcement.

After each grant round, program staff will compile and share feedback about the strengths and weaknesses in the applications submitted. Applicants can use that feedback to improve future proposal submissions.

Technical assistance

Applicants will have access to DNR subject matter experts for project development. In addition, program staff will direct them to other resources such as DNR resource management plans, research, potential community partners and best practices on a variety of topics.

During a timeframe that will be published in the RFP, applicants will be encouraged to request a pre-submission application review by Community Grant staff. This pre-submission review will be strictly limited to checking whether all required documents are completed and properly attached.

After award notification, program staff will lead an interactive virtual session that grantees will be required to attend. Other grantee support and training webinars will be scheduled, both optional and required. Throughout the year, program staff will facilitate optional virtual open office hours, inviting grantees to ask questions or listen and learn from others.

Administrative expenses

Administrative expenses such as accounting and reporting costs, selected overhead, general supplies, and other expenses required in order to administer the grant will be allowable grant expenses. This ensures that grantees have the capacity to implement, monitor and report on their project. More information on these expenses is detailed in the draft RFPs for each grant.

Match requirement

Matching funds will not be required. Smaller entities often indicate that securing match is a barrier to accessing grant funds. Removing that barrier will allow innovative, promising projects to move forward and potentially gain future funding support from other sources. Eliminating the need to track in-kind and cash match also greatly simplifies project fiscal management and reporting.

Collaborative/partner grant projects

The Standard ENRTF Community Grant allows partner projects where more than one agency serves as the applicant. Partners must clearly delineate the party responsible for each activity and outcome.

This structure strengthens program outcomes, with each partner contributing to an area of expertise. This may allow smaller organizations to become successful grant applicants because they will not be required to deliver on the entire project scope. Program staff and contracted outreach workers will coach entities interested in project partnership and suggest potential partner organizations.

Online grant application and management system

An online grant management system will streamline the application and reporting processes and centralize project information for easy access by grantees and program staff. The grant program webpage will house a step-by-step user guide for the online system. Program webinars will cover how to use the grant management system and one-on-one help will be readily available.

Initial RFP Rounds

Estimated timelines

The following timelines assume that the DNR can move forward with program implementation in January 2026.

Expedited ENRTF Community Grant Timeline Round 1

	Fiscal Year	Quarter
RFP published	FY27	1 st Quarter
Award notifications	FY27	2 nd Quarter
Grant agreements finalized	FY27	2 nd Quarter
Project completion	FY28	2 nd Quarter

Standard ENRTF Community Grant Timeline Round 1

	Fiscal Year	Quarter
RFP published	FY27	2 nd Quarter
Award notifications	FY27	3 rd Quarter
Grant agreements finalized	FY27	4 th Quarter
Project completion	FY29	4 th Quarter

Application process and review criteria

Applications will be submitted electronically through an online grants management system, once operational.

Application review panel

DNR experts in fields relevant to the grant program goals and eligible uses will serve on the application review panel. Each reviewer will receive a scoring rubric and attend a training on how to use the rubric.

Reviewers must declare all Conflicts of Interest (COI), including potential and/or perceived COI, and mitigate those conflicts. If a reviewer has a COI that is not fully mitigated, the DNR may remove that person from the review panel.

In addition, DNR staff with technical expertise will provide review panel members with training and group consultation on issues that might surface in project applications.

Community-based reviewers

After the initial round, the DNR plans to expand membership of the application review panel to individuals outside of the DNR. This will broaden the group's perspectives and expertise.

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will compensate community-based panel members whose employers do not compensate them for time spent on reviewing applications. Based on the DNR and other state agencies' past experiences, offering compensation is essential to recruiting reviewers who are not employees of the granting agency. The DNR is currently studying the most effective way to provide this compensation.

Prioritization

Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3 instructs the DNR Commissioner to provide ENRTF Community Grants "for purposes authorized under the [Minn. Const. art. XI, sec. 14](#) and expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation."

To meet these statutory requirements of expanding trust fund access and impacting adversely affected communities, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will apply priority scoring as outlined below and detailed in the attached draft RFPs.

Expanding trust fund access

To expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from ENRTF funding, the evaluation process will award points based on whether an applicant has received LCCMR funding in the past. Points will be scaled to prioritize applicants that have never received ENRTF funding, followed by applicants with a 10-year or more gap since their last ENRTF award, followed by those with a six- to nine-year gap. Entities who have received an LCCMR award in the last five years are still eligible to apply for ENRTF Community Grant funding; however, they will not receive priority points in this category. Prioritization criteria due to past LCCMR funding does not apply to Tribal Nations, in order to preserve access to ENRTF Community Grant funding on tribal lands.

Program staff will refer to the online LCCMR grantee list to determine whether an entity has received an LCCMR award, and if so, how many years since the most recent award. The evaluation process will not consider LCCMR subgrantees a past ENRTF award recipient.

Benefitting adversely affected communities

To ensure that communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation are especially served through this program, projects that are located partially, mostly or entirely within an Environmental Justice Area(s) will receive progressively higher priority scores as that proportionality increases. The scoring prioritization will also consider whether a project will impact a population living in an Environmental Justice Area.

[Minn. Statutes, section 116.065, subdivision 1](#) defines Environmental Justice Area as follows.

One or more census tracts in Minnesota:

1. in which, based on the most recent data published by the United States Census Bureau:
 - a. 40 percent or more of the population is nonwhite;
 - b. 35 percent or more of the households have an income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level; or
 - c. 40 percent or more of the population over the age of five has limited English proficiency; or
2. located within Indian Country.

For the initial funding rounds, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will use the current Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's Environmental Justice Area Map as the official resource for determining if a project is within and Environmental Justice Area. It's important to note that identified areas are located both in the metro area and greater Minnesota.

Projects that are not located in an Environmental Justice Area can receive priority consideration if the applicant can explain how community members in an Environmental Justice Area will benefit from the proposed work. Projects that are not located within or benefitting community members in an Environmental Justice Area are eligible for funding; however, such projects will not receive priority points in this category.

Project evaluation

Scoring criteria details are in the draft Standard and Expedited Grant RFPs attached to the report.

Measurable outcomes

Applicants must identify measurable outcomes, methods for gathering and assessing outcome data, and the project staff member(s) responsible for the outcome assessment process. Grant agreements will include a requirement that grantees report on specific project outcomes on pre-determined dates.

Risk Assessment, Mitigation and Fiscal Controls

The DNR will draw on current best practices in risk assessment and monitoring, including DNR experience administering ENRTF and Outdoor Heritage Fund pass-through grants and CPL. The DNR will also work with the Office of Grants Management (OGM) and Minnesota Management and Budget to implement emerging best practices in program oversight and compliance to prevent waste, fraud and abuse.

Pre-award risk assessment and financial review

In accordance with state statute and OGM policy, the DNR will not grant an award unless all three of the following conditions are satisfied:

- Grantees must certify that none of the principals of their organization have been convicted of felony financial crimes in the past 10 years. “Principals” is defined here as people who would be able to access grant funds and/or have authority to determine how grant funds are used.
- The DNR confirms that non-profit organizations are registered and in good standing with the Minnesota Secretary of State.
- The DNR confirms that the applicant is not on either the federal or state debarment lists.

The DNR will also review any past performance of the grantee before finalizing the award. This step will enable the DNR to identify any potential issues and develop possible mitigation strategies, in accordance with OGM policies.

Awards of \$50,000 or more

For all grants of \$50,000 or more, the DNR will follow OGM policy regarding pre-award risk assessments. These assessments may include a financial review, where agency staff will review the applicant’s financial statements and internal controls to determine grantee capacity, identify any potential risks, and develop mitigation strategies as needed.

Awards less than \$50,000

Because Expedited Grant awards will be less than \$50,000, awardees of these grants will not be subject to pre-award risk assessment statutory requirements ([Minn. Statutes, section 16B.981](#)). To ensure fiscal and performance compliance, the DNR will complete a shorter risk assessment to document that the grantee (and fiscal agent, if applicable) has the capacity to manage both a project of the size and scope proposed as well as the fiscal responsibilities of a state grant.

Monitoring and progress reports

Awards of \$50,000 or more

Grants over \$50,000 are required to complete at least one monitoring and financial reconciliation over the life of the grant. For any grants over \$250,000, annual monitoring is required. The DNR will provide technical support for any questions that grantees and applicants may have about these processes.

Awards less than \$50,000

Expedited Grants will not be subject to OGM’s monitoring requirements as they are under \$50,000. As with Standard Grants, the DNR will require backup documentation of payment requests and evaluate status updates for proof of performance to ensure compliance.

These grants are also subject to monitoring based upon any concerns uncovered while evaluating status updates and reimbursements. Monitoring may be required based on grantee performance, the grantee’s history of grants management, and whether the activity being funded requires additional on-site documentation for

appropriate performance management. In addition to monitoring based on performance, the DNR will also monitor a representative sample of grants each year.

Fiscal agents

The ENRTF Community Grant Program will allow grantees to designate a project fiscal agent for risk control purposes. Fiscal agency reduces the risk to the state by placing an experienced entity in the role of financial administration of the grant. Fiscal agent designation also allows grantees to focus more intently on executing their workplan and achieving the project's intended outcomes.

The grant agreement will detail the fiscal agent's role. Generally, that role includes receiving and disbursing grant funds, monitoring the project fiscal controls to ensure compliance, partnering with the grantee to request reimbursement or advance payment, and reporting on financial matters to the grantor; in this case, the DNR.

A fiscal agent must satisfy the same risk assessment and award conditions as a grantee. They are a party to the grant agreement, which details their responsibilities and obligations.

Advance payment option

Advance payments can help control risk for smaller organizations and local units of government that are challenged by the cash flow required to operate on a reimbursement basis. Providing advance payments, with appropriate controls, allows grantees the necessary time to verify performance of subcontractors and complete other compliance steps by reducing concerns about cash flow.

In accordance with OGM policy, advance payment requests will be evaluated by the DNR on a case-by-case basis, and not all grantees will be eligible. As part of the approval process, grantees must document why they could not deliver on their project workplan and meet all financial requirements if reimbursement were the only payment option. The DNR has experience in assessing grantee readiness and ability to manage advance payment, and in many ways the requirements for compliance and documentation are the same as reimbursement-based grants.

Advance payment agreements require grantees to report on spending throughout the life of the grant and reconcile the full payment within an amount of time set by the DNR. The grantee must return any unexpended funds to the DNR. All other compliance requirements that apply to reimbursement-based grants, such as documentation of work, proof of payment, and monitoring, are required. This includes the option to disallow and recover costs that are later found to be ineligible. To mitigate risk, the DNR schedules advance payment installments based on an assessment of the grantee's experience and past performance. The payment schedule can be modified at any time if monitoring indicates that to be necessary.

Administrative Budget

Minn. Stat. Chapter 116X reserves up to five percent of the funding appropriated to be used for administration, outreach, grant monitoring, technology needs and advisory council operational support. The DNR anticipates

using the full five percent to staff the new ENRTF Community Grant Program team, provide support for the advisory council, and build appropriate administrative capacity for the program.

Program staff will handle all aspects of the grant program process from RFP to award and active project administration, including extensive technical assistance to grantees. Staff will also handle program-level reporting and performance tracking. In the first year, the administrative budget will also include start-up costs such as an electronic grants management system for the program.

In addition, the DNR is reviewing outreach needs that may be better filled by contracted outreach specialists who have experience working with priority populations and communities. They would provide outreach and assistance beyond ENRTF Community Grant Program staff capacity.

The DNR believes that the allowable administrative funding is currently sufficient to fund the grant program administration. The administrative funding needs will evolve as the DNR implements the program. Many factors will inform costs such as the intensive nature of technical assistance, the large number of grants anticipated to be active at any time, the costs associated with advisory council and RFP review, and the technology solutions needed to promote program success. The DNR will monitor the administrative funding needs of the program and discuss potential changes with the legislature, if necessary, in the future.

Electronic grants management system

One of the key components in implementing this grant program will be data management. While the DNR does not have an agency-wide grant management system, several DNR grant programs have developed program-specific online grant administration systems. These systems create efficiencies for staff, applicants and grantees; enhance reporting and monitoring, and provide seamless communication.

Currently, the DNR is exploring an agency-wide online grant management tool while also participating in the state administration's exploration of an enterprise-wide tool. Since agency or enterprise-wide systems are still in the exploratory phase, any resulting implementation will not happen in time to support the ENRTF Community Grant Program's implementation timeline.

To ensure its ability to meet the administrative needs of the new program, the DNR will purchase commercial grant management software. Program staff, applicants and grantees will use this tool for application submission, application review, grant award notification, contract approval, contract amendments, financial and outcome reporting, and other program requirements. Using this online grant management system, the ENRTF Community Grants Program will access and share robust grant data and closely track program outcomes, while providing transparency and ease of access for applicants and grantees.

Continuous Improvement

This appendix outlines the initial program structure, which is guided by statute and the DNR's experience with existing grant programs. As a new program, ENRTF Community Grants will evolve. Each grant round will provide opportunities to examine the results of the last and adapt future rounds to best serve the goals of the program. Key to that learning will be the advisory council's analysis and recommendations, along with feedback from a wide range of stakeholders and the legislature.

Appendix B:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program DRAFT Expedited Grant Request for Proposal

Disclaimer

This DRAFT Request for Proposal (RFP) is an attachment to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) Community Grant Program Legislative Report, submitted on December 12, 2025. Content is subject to change before the official RFP is published.

Deadline for submission: [to be inserted]

Summary

This Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round will fund projects for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources.

Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round funding can only be awarded for the five uses identified in statute ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#)). Projects must be in an advanced state of planning. Please read this RFP for details.

Eligible applicants

Nonprofit organizations and government entities such as cities, counties, Tribal Nations, conservation districts, public universities and school districts

Award range

Minimum grant award: \$5,000. Maximum grant award: \$50,000

Funding available

\$3 million

Table of Contents

Appendix B: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program DRAFT Expedited Grant Request for Proposal

Section 1: Grant overview	32
Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round	32
Deadline for submission: [DATE AND TIME to be inserted]	32
Section 2: Grant program details.....	33
Funding available.....	33
Eligible and ineligible applicants.....	33
Applicant partnerships	33
Fiscal agents.....	33
Timeline	33
Project period	34
Project eligibility	34
Funding priorities.....	35
Matching funds.....	37
Eligible expenses.....	37
Ineligible expenses	38
Grant payments.....	39
Section 3: Proposal evaluation and grantee selection process.....	39
Stage I: Screening for basic eligibility	39
Stage II: Priority scoring and tier placement	39
Stage III: Technical review, scoring, and awarding.....	40
Notice of DNR Rights Reserved	40
Section 4: Grantee responsibilities.....	41

Reporting	41
Grant monitoring	41
Grantee duties	41
Grant provisions	41
Section 5: Applicant Assistance.....	42
ENRTF Community Grant Program contacts	42
ENRTF Community Grant Program website	42
Pre-submission review opportunity	42
In-person outreach events	42
Virtual open office hours	42
One-on-one project development guidance	43
Section 6: Application submission.....	43
General Instructions	43
Application content	43
Authorized representatives	43
Notices about the application process	44
Section 7: Evaluation criteria and scoring.....	44
Project overview and need - 30 points.....	44
Community engagement and impact - 20 points.....	45
Project workplan/timeline – 20 points.....	45
Project budget and budget explanation - 15 points.....	45
Outcomes - 15 points	46
RFP Appendix A: Grant provisions.....	47
Risk Assessment and Capacity Review Documentation	47
Conflict of Interest.....	47
Insurance Requirements.....	47
Contracting and Bidding Requirements	47

Prevailing Wage	48
Public Data.....	48
Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination.....	49
Voter Registration	49
Audits.....	49
Invasive Species Requirements	50
Use of Pesticides.....	50
Pollinator Habitat Enhancement	50
Revenues	50
Permitting and Environmental Compliance Requirements.....	50
Recognition of Funding Source.....	50
RFP Appendix B: Application forms and instructions.....	51
RFP Appendix C: Required attachments	51
RFP Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance.....	51
RFP Appendix E: Sample grant agreement.....	51

Appendix B:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program

DRAFT Expedited Grant Request for Proposal

Section 1: Grant overview

The ENRTF Community Grant Program supports projects for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources through an open, competitive grant process. Administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Community Grant Program is funded by the Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund ([Minn. Const. art. XI, sec. 14](#); [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X](#)).

The program is tasked with increasing the number and diversity of grant recipients who receive Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) funding, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X](#)). Funding will benefit communities and residents in all regions of the state.

During the 2025 Special Session, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$28,180,000 to the Minnesota DNR for the ENRTF Community Grant Program ([Minn. Laws 2025 1st Special Session, Chapter 1 Article 3, Section 4](#)). This Request for Proposal (RFP) is the first competitive grant round that will award funds from this appropriation.

Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round

Through an open, competitive grant process, the DNR will award grants for projects focused on any of the five project uses outlined in statute that are in an advanced stage of development and can be completed in the one-year grant timeline. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$50,000. See additional requirements in the sections below.

The DNR has compiled resources to assist in the development and submission of proposals. Applicants are encouraged to use the resources available in the Applicant Assistance section of this RFP to develop and submit their proposal.

Website: ENRTF Community Grant Program Website [to be inserted]

Deadline for submission: [DATE AND TIME to be inserted]

Section 2: Grant program details

Funding available

- Total funding available: \$3,000,000
- Minimum grant award: \$5,000
- Maximum grant award: \$50,000

The number of grants awarded will depend on the number and quality of applications submitted and funding amounts requested.

Eligible and ineligible applicants

Who can apply?

Nonprofit organizations and government entities such as cities, counties, Tribal Nations, conservation districts, public universities, and school districts are eligible applicants.

Who cannot apply?

State agencies, the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota, and for-profit businesses are not eligible applicants.

Applicant partnerships

Applicants must apply as a solo organization. Multi-organization applications are not allowed in this Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round.

Fiscal agents

Fiscal agents are allowed, and in some cases, will be encouraged. A fiscal agent is a nonprofit or governmental partner that provides administrative and financial support to help a grantee meet contract requirements.

Timeline

	Date
RFP published	TBD
Pre-submission staff review period	TBD
Applications due	TBD
Award notification (estimated)	TBD

Project period

Projects must be completed no later than one year after the date the grant agreement and other required documents are signed.

Project eligibility

Minnesota statute: eligible project uses

Expedited ENRTF Community Grant funding can only be awarded for the five uses identified in statute ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#)) as amended by MN Laws 2025 Special Session Chapter 1), which are listed below. Applicants must propose a project that includes one or more of these uses:

1. Helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns.
2. Education and awareness related to stewardship of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.
3. Preserving or enhancing air, land, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state.
4. Trail maintenance and improvement on existing state, regional, or local trails. No money allocated under this clause may be used to construct new trails or new trail segments.
5. Aquatic invasive species management.

Specific project use requirements

Applicants must review and follow all requirements in this RFP's Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance. Each eligible project use has a Guidance and Requirements section in Appendix D .

Minnesota State Constitution: eligible projects

The ENRTF Community Grant Program is funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), which was established in the Minnesota State Constitution. [Minn. Const. art. XI, sec. 14](#) includes the following project eligibility criteria that applies to this Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round and all future ENRTF Community Grant Program rounds:

Projects must be “for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.”

Projects in “advanced stage of development”

Expedited Community ENRTF Grant rounds will only fund projects that are at an advanced stage of development, meaning that the core grant activities can begin shortly after the grant agreement is signed.

Successful applicants will have completed or be well prepared to complete any time-consuming steps that would otherwise be a barrier to a quick project start or to completion within the one-year grant period. Applicants must demonstrate that they have met the following expectations as applicable to their specific project:

- Project design is complete (unless the application is solely to fund the design phase).
- Plans and specs are complete and ready for bid.
- Applicant accurately identifies required permits and demonstrates that the project is developed to the point where they can reasonably expect to obtain required permits without issue and complete the work within the grant period.
- Applicant has engaged with and involved the community members who will be most affected by the project.
- Applicant has obtained necessary permissions from other entities or will have those permissions shortly after the grant period begins.

Ineligible Expedited Grant activities

- No scientific research.
- No capital projects.
- No land acquisition.
- No ground disturbance.
- No work on state land.
- No activities related to the construction, repair, improvement, or operation of any facility or system that processes wastewater.

Prohibition on substituting traditional sources of funding

Funds awarded must supplement the traditional sources of funding for environment and natural resources activities and may not be used as a substitute (Minn Statutes, chapter 116X, subd.1).

Funding priorities

Statute priorities

Guided by [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#), two priority criteria will be scored in the first phase of application evaluation.

- 1. Does the proposed program expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund?**

Applicants who have not previously received ENRTF grant funding will be prioritized higher than applicants who have. For this priority criteria, applicants should refer to the [Minnesota Legacy Project Search](#) and/or the [LCCMR website](#) to verify whether their organization has been awarded ENRTF funding through the LCCMR, and if so, how many years since their last award.

Being a subgrantee of an LCCMR grant does not qualify as having received an ENRTF award. Prioritization criteria due to past LCCMR funding does not apply to Tribal Nations, in order to preserve access to ENRTF Community Grant funding on tribal lands.

2. Does the proposed program impact communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation?

For this priority, applicants should refer to the [Minnesota PCA Environmental Justice Map](#). Applicants must describe the project location(s) and the approximate overlap with identified Minnesota's Environmental Justice Area(s) in the project application and describe if and how the project will benefit community members in Environmental Justice Area(s).

Office of Grant Management (OGM) Policy 08.02 compliance

State of Minnesota policy aims to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. [Office of Grants Management \(OGM\) Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes that competitive grant programs must intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities that past grant funding has not adequately addressed. OGM's policy lists these specific diverse populations:

- Racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians.
- LGBTQI communities.
- Disability status.
- Veterans.
- Geographic diversity within and across Minnesota – including greater MN, urban/metro.

The Expedited ENRTF Community Grant funding awarded through this RFP will serve several of these populations, as described below.

Serving Environmental Justice Area populations

This Expedited ENRTF Community Grant round will serve populations who are experiencing inequities and/or disparities by prioritizing projects located in or directly impacting Environmental Justice Areas. [Minn Statutes, chapter 116.065, subd 1\(e\)](#) defines environmental justice areas as census tracts:

1. In which at least 40% of the population is people of color.
2. In which at least 35 percent of households have income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
3. In which at least 40 percent of the population has limited proficiency in English.
4. That are located within Indian Country, which is defined as federally recognized reservations and other Indigenous lands.

Census tracts need to meet only one of these criteria to be considered an environmental justice area.

Serving geographical diversity

Projects funded through this RFP will serve geographically diverse areas within and across Minnesota, including rural, urban and suburban areas.

Serving people with disabilities

Applications will be evaluated on how well accessibility for people with disabilities, including veterans, is addressed.

Matching funds

Matching funds are not required for ENRTF Community Grant Program projects, including this funding round. ENRTF Community Grant funding cannot be used as match for LCCMR project funding. Grantees must get prior approval from the program to use ENRTF Community Grant funding as a match for other grant programs.

Eligible expenses

The eligible expenses listed and described below apply to all project uses. Applicants should refer to [project use guidance](#) [link to be inserted] to help them apply these budget categories.

Eligible expense categories

Category	Description of eligible expenses
Personnel	• Salary/wages of personnel who work directly for the applicant for time spent on the funded project. • Employer's share of state and federal payroll taxes for employees working on the funded project. • Fringe benefit expenses for grantee employees, such as FICA/Medicare/Medicaid, retirement, and health insurance. Often expressed as a percentage of the staff salary charged to the grant.
Professional services and contracts	Services and contracts named in the approved project work plan that are provided by individuals or entities that are not a part of the applicant organization.
Supplies	Materials, tools, equipment, and supplies purchased specifically for the project, including shipping costs. State procurement requirements apply and may include targeted group purchasing provisions.
Capital expenditures	Equipment or tools that are: • valued at \$5,000 or more per unit, or • have a useful life longer than one year. Equipment and tools must be individually itemized in the project budget and approved by the DNR.
Travel	In-state transportation and travel expenses such as lodging, meals and mileage of personnel directly involved in the funded project and in no greater amount than provided in the current Commissioner's Plan as published by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget.

Category	Description of eligible expenses
Other expenses	• Permit fees (as with all other expenses, only if the permit fee was incurred during the grant period) • Stipends for community members who volunteer to participate in workplan activities. Must be itemized in the budget and approved by the DNR. • Food and refreshments at community-based planning and input meetings • Additional insurance coverage purchased for this project • Other expenses necessary to the project that are itemized in the budget and approved by DNR
Administrative costs	Administrative costs are expenses incurred to support the management and the execution of the project workplan. If they are necessary to the work of the project, these may include general costs that support operation of the organization. Applicants can include administrative costs in their budget using one of two methods. 1. As direct expenses described and quantified in other budget categories. For example, listing a percentage of an office manager's salary and fringe for time spent on grant financials, reporting and payroll. 2. As an indirect cost rate expressed as a percentage of the total grant budget. Applicants must have a justifiable methodology for their indirect rate that produces accurate costs. The DNR will review that methodology during grant agreement negotiation and must approve the final indirect rate. The application budget form will provide guidance on administrative costs.

Ineligible expenses

These ineligible expenses apply to all project uses.

- Any expenses incurred before the grant agreement is signed.
- Payments to the principal or interest of any bonds.
- Fundraising.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Lobbyists or political contributions.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.
- Parking violations or traffic violations.
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- Organization-wide advertising and marketing expenses (not related to the funded project).
- Loans, grants, or subsidies to persons or entities for land development.
- Interest or investment management fees.
- Board of directors' or officers' salaries.

- Merit awards or bonuses.
- Memberships (including subscriptions and dues) unless newly required because of the funded project.
- Intoxicating beverages.
- Publications, periodicals or subscriptions.
- Employee workplace parking.

Grant payments

This grant program primarily uses a reimbursement-based payment structure. “Reimbursement-based” means that the grantee will pay project expenses, then request reimbursement from the DNR.

If requested by the grantee, an advance payment option will be available through a special approval process. That approval process will occur during grant agreement negotiations. In response to a grantee request for advance payment, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will ask the grantee to explain in writing why they cannot complete the project without advance payment. A risk assessment will also influence whether advance payment will be approved.

If the ENRTF Community Grant Program approves a grantee’s request, the DNR will provide advance funding to the grantee to pay for approved project expenses, on a schedule agreed upon by the DNR and the grantee. The DNR will require the grantee to submit thorough documentation to substantiate authorized use of these funds. Applicants should not assume that advance payment is available when applying.

Section 3: Proposal evaluation and grantee selection process

The proposal evaluation and grantee selection process will consist of three stages, as described in this section.

Stage I: Screening for basic eligibility

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will screen applications for completeness and applicant eligibility. Proposals that do not pass this screening will not move on to the next stage.

Stage II: Priority scoring and tier placement

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will evaluate and score applications based on two priority criteria.

Criterion A: Project expands the number and diversity of ENRTF award recipients.

Applicant has never received an ENRTF grant.	3 points
Applicant has not received an ENRTF grant in the past 10+ years or is a Tribal Nation that has received an ENRTF grant	2 points
Applicant has not received an ENRTF grant in the past 6-9 years.	1 point
Applicant has received an ENRTF grant within the past 5 years.	0 points
Applicant Criterion A Score	

Criterion B: Project serves communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation.

Project is entirely in Environmental Justice Area(s).	3 points
Majority of project is in Environmental Justice Area(s).	2 points
Less than a majority of the project is in Environmental Justice Area(s), but project will benefit an Environmental Justice Area(s).	1 point
Project is not in Environmental Justice Area(s) and does not benefit Environmental Justice Area(s).	0 points
Applicant Criterion B Score	

Applicant Total Score _____
(Criterion A score + Criterion B score)

Project priority tiers

Based on total score, applications will be placed in three priority project tiers.

- Tier A = Projects that score 5-6 points
- Tier B = Projects that score 3-4 points
- Tier C = Projects that score 0-2 points

Stage III: Technical review, scoring, and awarding

A Technical Review Committee of subject matter experts will score the applications based on the scoring criteria outlined in Section 7. Applications must score at least 70 points out of 100 possible points to be considered for funding.

Projects will be recommended for award in this order:

1. Tier A projects with a score of 70 or more
2. Tier B projects with a score of 70 or more
3. Tier C projects with a score of 70 or more

Award recommendations may be adjusted after review to ensure that the ENRTF Community Grants Program meets statutory requirements for geographic balance, past performance, and other required considerations.

Notice of DNR Rights Reserved

The DNR reserves the right to:

- Award less than the total amount available if not enough suitable project applications are submitted.
- Make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR priorities, if additional funding becomes available, a project comes in under or over budget, or if a grantee cannot carry out their project as planned.

- Award amounts less than requested if not enough funding is available for the entire request, or if doing so aligns with statutory and constitutional direction for the program and funding source.
- Award amounts less than that requested in an application should it be determined that aspects of a project are not cost-effective or eligible for funding.

Section 4: Grantee responsibilities

Reporting

Grantees must submit a short progress summary report six months into the grant period and a final report 45 days after the grant period ends. Grantees must report on the measurable results of their funded project (Minn Statutes, chapter 116X, subd.1).

Grant monitoring

All grant awards in this round will be less than \$50,000. Grants under \$50,000 are occasionally subject to monitoring, based upon grantee performance, history of grants management, and the activity funded.

Grantee duties

Grantees must be willing and able to perform all work required to complete the projects they are requesting funds for. This includes managing any bid, contract, or purchasing process necessary to complete work under the grant.

The grantee is also responsible for project oversight and management. Other organizations named as partners in the work plan may provide technical guidance or support to the grantee, but they are not responsible for the work. Grantees are also responsible for understanding and following all program requirements and procedures.

Grant provisions

This program is funded by state dollars and requires a significant amount of documentation and transparency. All expenditures and work completed with these funds must adhere to federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and codes, as applicable.

All applicants must review the grant provisions and specific eligible project use requirements found in the Appendix A of this RFP and on the ENRTF Community Grant Program website [link to be inserted].

Section 5: Applicant Assistance

ENRTF Community Grant Program contacts

Please contact the DNR staff members listed below with questions.

Staff Name

ENRTF Community Grant Program

firstname.lastname@state.mn.us

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXX

Staff Name

ENRTF Community Grant Program

firstname.lastname@state.mn.us

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXX

ENRTF Community Grant Program website

Please consult [website link](#) [link to be inserted] for further guidance. The website includes all official program documents, information about application supports available, answers to frequently asked questions and an opportunity to submit questions.

Pre-submission review opportunity

As noted on the grant timeline, applicants can request a pre-submission review of their application by ENRTF Community Grant Program staff. The review scope will be limited to checking whether all required application documents are completed. [DEADLINE to request pre-submission review and a link to the process for requesting review to be inserted.]

In-person outreach events

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will host in-person outreach events at various locations across the state. Please refer to the [website](#) [link to be inserted] for a full schedule.

Virtual open office hours

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will host virtual open office hours during the open application period. This time will be open for applicant questions. Please refer to [website](#) [link to be inserted] for a full schedule of open office hours and instructions on how to join the meeting.

One-on-one project development guidance

Applicants can contact ENRTF Community Grant Program staff for information about requirements, eligible uses, clarification of use guidelines, and other topics needed to fully understand the RFP. The DNR will post answers to these questions on the FAQ page for the RFP to ensure all applicants have access to this information.

Section 6: Application submission

General Instructions

Application Deadline: [to be inserted]

- All applications must be submitted through the ENRTF Community Grant Online Grant Management System [link to system to be inserted].
- All application information, including the required and optional forms, instructions, and the application system link are posted on the ENRTF Community Grant Program website [link to be inserted].
- Applicants must create an account and password the first time they access the online system. Instructions for completing this process are available on the How to Apply webpage [link to be inserted] of the ENRTF Community Grant Program website.
- Applicants can save their application and return to it as many times as needed before submitting. Once an application is submitted, only ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will be able to make changes.
- Organizations may submit multiple applications; however, it is helpful to indicate in the project summary which project is the highest priority.

Application content

A complete Expedited ENRTF Community Grant application will include the following:

- Organization and Applicant Information (includes fiscal agent information, if applicable).
- Project Summary.
- Project Narrative Questions.
- Work Plan and Program Outcomes.
- Budget.
- Required Attachments.

Application forms can be found in the Appendix of this RFP and on the program website for reference. Note that the application must be completed and submitted using the online grant management system.

Authorized representatives

All applicants must identify a project manager and a fiscal manager and provide their contact information in the application. Projects with a fiscal agent must identify the fiscal manager from that organization.

Notices about the application process

- The Minnesota DNR reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet requirements.
- By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.
- Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments.
- Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated.
- Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred in responding to this RFP.

Right of cancellation

The DNR reserves the right to:

- Cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The DNR will post notification and contact applicants if this RFP is changed or cancelled.
- Negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP.

The DNR does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this request or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Section 7: Evaluation criteria and scoring

Project overview and need - 30 points

- Identifies and aligns with at least one eligible ENRTF Community Grant use.
- Meets the requirements and intent of the eligible use(s) identified.
- Clearly describes the issue(s) to be addressed and summarizes project activities that relate to the issue(s).
- Demonstrates high need for the project and for state funding to accomplish the project (under-resourced need).
- Provides a logical, verifiable description of how much of the project lies within or affects Environmental Justice Area(s).
- Demonstrates applicant organization's readiness and ability to take on a project of the proposed scope and size.
- Demonstrates that the project will likely move through any permitting, certification, environmental review or other applicable statutory or legal requirements without issues that will delay the on-time project completion.

- Identifies comprehensively other entities that will need to be informed or involved to successfully complete the project. Demonstrates adequate planning for necessary collaboration.
- Identifies key personnel and project roles (project manager, fiscal contact, subject matter experts or consultants, key partners, etc.).
- Describes key personnel's expertise and demonstrates capacity of each to skillfully fulfill their assigned roles.

Community engagement and impact - 20 points

- Demonstrates engagement with affected community members and has incorporated their input in project application.
- Demonstrates awareness of potential participation barriers for some community members and names realistic strategies for outreach (including but not limited to having existing relationships in named communities).
- Describes project benefit to community members clearly.
- Addresses potential environmental impacts to community members and approach to mitigate any negative impacts. Meaningfully describes the current condition and the change that will be made.
- Explains the degree to which affected communities will be involved in project activities, ongoing input, decision making, leadership and evaluation/redirection of the project.
- Describes the degree to which the project focuses on priority areas and or within populations that include priority areas as shown on the Environmental Justice map.
- Demonstrates clear, comprehensive plans for accessibility as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II.

Project workplan/timeline – 20 points

- Identifies a comprehensive list of activities necessary to accomplish program outcomes.
- Establishes that applicant can realistically complete project by the deadline.
- Provides specific dates for all activities.
- Follows best management practice in seasonal work.
- Accounts for grant report deadlines and project end date.

Project budget and budget explanation - 15 points

- Resources requested align with proposed program activities.
- Budget items are clearly described, and specific dollar amounts are identified.
- Budget total equals project amount requested.
- Requested amounts are financially realistic.
- Budget is cost effective.
- Grant funds are only used for eligible expenses.

Outcomes - 15 points

- Proposed outcomes are clear.
- Proposed outcomes can be measured within the timeframe of the grant.
- Proposed outcomes are appropriate for the project activities and meaningful as a measure of project impact.
- Applicant has a clear and reasonable method for tracking and reporting outcomes, in line with accepted standards for the work if appropriate.

DRAFT

RFP Appendix A: Grant provisions

Applicants must review the requirements identified in this appendix.

Risk Assessment and Capacity Review Documentation

Grant applicants may be required to submit financial, capacity, and internal control documents prior to a grant award based on state or federal requirements.

- Nonprofits may be required to submit their most recent board reviewed financial statements, an IRS Form 990, or their most recent certified financial audit.
- All applicants may be required to submit additional documents, including descriptions of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds.

Conflict of Interest

[OGM Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#) also applies to grantees. Please review this policy to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. Applications may be rejected or grants cancelled if conflicts are found and not resolved to the State's satisfaction. Grantees will be required to sign a conflict-of-interest form as part of the grant agreement. Grantees will be required to report any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the DNR immediately to ensure that they are addressed appropriately.

Insurance Requirements

Grantees are required to carry insurance that meets or exceeds the requirements of the landowner whose land they will be working on. For all other lands, grantees should follow the eligible use guidance for specific requirements. Where applicable, proof of insurance will be required prior to a grant being executed. Applicants should investigate the cost of insurance before submitting an application.

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

Municipalities

Grantees that are municipalities or other political subdivisions of the state must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with [Minn. Statutes, section 471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#).
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41-177.50](#), as applicable.
- Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.

Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities must use these guidelines:

- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible: State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List; Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business Program; Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Directory.
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- Notwithstanding the above, the State may waive bidding process requirements when: vendors included in response to a competitive grant RFP process were incorporated in an approved work plan for the grant; or it is determined there is only one reasonable and available source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41 through 177.50](#), as applicable.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

Prevailing Wage

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on all projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply ([Minn. Statutes, sections 177.42 through 177.44](#)). Additional information is available on the [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry \(DOLI\) website](#). Questions should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091. The grant recipient is solely responsible for payment of all required prevailing wage rates.

Public Data

Per [Minn. Statutes, sec. 13.599](#):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants and amount requested will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Statutes, section 13.17](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by the DNR as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Statutes, section 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- Sensitive information, such as Natural Heritage Database review information, will remain nonpublic.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified per [Minn. Statutes, section 363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship, per Minnesota Rules, Part [5000.3500](#).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Statutes, section 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Audits

Per [Minn. Statutes, chapter 16B, section 98, subdivision 8](#), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from

the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Invasive Species Requirements

The DNR requires active steps to prevent or limit the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive species during all activities performed on all lands. Grantees must follow the procedures provided in [DNR Operational Order 113](#) (Invasive Species).

Use of Pesticides

[DNR Operational Order 59](#) (Pesticides and Pest Control) and other appropriate discipline guidelines must be followed when using pesticides on all lands and waters, regardless of ownership.

Pollinator Habitat Enhancement

Habitat restorations and enhancements conducted on DNR lands and prairie restorations on state lands or on any lands using state funds are subject to pollinator best management practices and habitat restoration guidelines pursuant to [Minn. Statutes, section 84.973](#). Practices and guidelines ensure an appropriate diversity of native species to provide habitat for pollinators through the growing season ([DNR Pollinator Best Management Practices and Habitat Restoration Guidelines](#)).

Revenues

Any revenues generated during the grant period from activities supported by ENRTF Community Grant Program funding must be disclosed to ENRTF Community Grant Program staff and used for grant-related purposes to be agreed upon.

Permitting and Environmental Compliance Requirements

The DNR, grantee and contractors must comply with permitting requirements and environmental laws. Such compliance requires the participation and cooperation of the DNR, the ENRTF Community Grant applicant, appropriate Land Manager, and/or Easement Holder. The grantee is responsible for understanding and following all these requirements. These requirements apply to all projects.

Recognition of Funding Source

Grantees will be required to acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as the source of project support. The ENRTF Community Grant Program logo can be downloaded from the ENRTF Community Grant webpage for publications, press releases or other printed documents. Only the approved logo may be used. All press releases, bid solicitations, statements or other documents issued describing the project should acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund primarily, and may secondarily acknowledge the Department of Natural Resources and ENRTF Community Grant Program.

RFP Appendix B: Application forms and instructions

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix C: Required attachments

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix E: Sample grant agreement

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

DRAFT

Appendix C:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program DRAFT Standard Grant Request for Proposal

Disclaimer

This DRAFT Request for Proposal (RFP) is an attachment to the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) Community Grant Program Legislative Report, submitted on December 12, 2025. Content is subject to change before the official RFP is published.

Deadline for submission: [to be inserted]

Summary

This ENRTF Community Grant Program Standard Grant RFP will fund projects for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources.

Standard ENRTF Community Grant funding can only be awarded for the five uses identified in statute ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#)).

Eligible applicants

Nonprofit organizations and government entities such as cities, counties, Tribal Nations, conservation districts, public universities and school districts.

Award range

Minimum grant award: \$5,000. Maximum grant award: \$750,000

Total funding available

\$23.7 million.

Table of Contents

Appendix C: Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program DRAFT Standard Grant Request for Proposal

Section 1: Grant overview	56
Standard ENRTF Community Grant round	56
Deadline for submission	57
Section 2: Grant program details.....	57
Funding available.....	57
Eligible and ineligible applicants.....	57
Applicant partnerships	57
Fiscal agents.....	58
Timeline	58
Project period	58
Project eligibility	58
Funding priorities.....	59
Matching funds.....	61
Eligible expenses.....	61
Ineligible expenses	62
Grant payments	63
Section 3: Proposal evaluation and grantee selection process.....	63
Stage I: Screening for basic eligibility	63
Stage II: Priority scoring and tier placement	63
Stage III: Technical review, scoring, and awarding.....	64
Notice of DNR rights reserved	65

Section 4: Grantee responsibilities	65
Reporting	65
Grant monitoring	65
Grantee duties	65
Grant provisions	66
Section 5: Applicant assistance	66
ENRTF Community Grant Program contacts	66
ENRTF Community Grant Program webpage	66
Pre-submission review opportunity	66
In-person outreach events	67
Virtual open office hours	67
One-on-one project development guidance	67
Section 6: Application submission	67
General instructions	67
Application content	67
Authorized representatives	68
Notices about the application process	68
Section 7: Evaluation criteria and scoring	68
Project overview and need - 30 points	68
Community engagement and impact - 20 points	69
Project workplan/timeline – 20 points	69
Project budget and budget explanation - 15 points	70
Outcomes - 15 points	70
RFP Appendix A: Grant provisions	71
Risk Assessment and Capacity Review Documentation	71
Conflict of Interest	71
Insurance Requirements	71

Contracting and Bidding Requirements	71
Prevailing Wage	72
Public Data	72
Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination.....	73
Voter Registration	73
Audits.....	74
Invasive Species Requirements	74
Use of Pesticides.....	74
Pollinator Habitat Enhancement	74
Prescribed burns.....	74
Revenues	74
Permitting and Environmental Compliance Requirements.....	75
Recognition of Funding Source.....	75
RFP Appendix B: Application forms and instructions.....	76
RFP Appendix C: Required attachments	76
RFP Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance.....	76
RFP Appendix E: Sample grant agreement.....	76

Appendix C:

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Community Grant Program

DRAFT Standard Grant Request for Proposal

Section 1: Grant overview

The ENRTF Community Grant Program supports projects for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources through an open, competitive grant process. Administered by the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Community Grant Program is funded by Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund ([Minn. Constit. art. XI, sec. 14](#); [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X](#)).

The program is tasked with increasing the number and diversity of grant recipients who receive Environmental and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF) funding, especially in communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X](#)). Funding will benefit communities and residents in all regions of the state.

During the 2025 Special Session, the Minnesota Legislature appropriated \$28,180,000 to the Minnesota DNR for the ENRTF Community Grant Program ([Minn. Laws 2025 1st Special Session, Chapter 1 Article 3, Section 4](#)). This Request for Proposal (RFP) is the first competitive grant round that will award funds from this initial appropriation.

Standard ENRTF Community Grant round

This Standard ENRTF Community Grant round will fund projects for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife and other natural resources. Awards will range from \$5,000 to \$750,000.

Through an open, competitive grant process, the DNR will award grants for projects that can be completed in two years and are focused on any of the five eligible project uses outlined in [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#), which include:

1. Helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns.
2. Education and awareness related to stewardship of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.

3. Preserving or enhancing air, land, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state.
4. Trail maintenance and improvement on existing state, regional, or local trails. No money allocated under this clause may be used to construct new trails or new trail segments.
5. Aquatic invasive species management.

Prospective applicants must read this RFP for details. The DNR has compiled resources to assist in the development and submission of proposals. Applicants are encouraged to use the resources described in Section 3 "Application assistance" of this RFP to develop and submit their proposal.

Website: ENRTF Community Grant Program Website [to be inserted]

Deadline for submission

[DATE AND TIME to be inserted]

Section 2: Grant program details

Funding available

- Total funding available: \$23.7 million
- Minimum grant award: \$5,000
- Maximum grant award: \$750,000

The number of grants awarded will depend on the number and quality of applications submitted and funding amounts requested.

Eligible and ineligible applicants

Who can apply?

Nonprofit organizations and government entities such as cities, counties, Tribal Nations, conservation districts, public universities and school districts are eligible applicants.

Who cannot apply?

State agencies, the Board of Regents of the University of Minnesota and for-profit businesses are not eligible applicants.

Applicant partnerships

Multi-organization applications are allowed in this Standard ENRTF Community Grant round. Proposals must identify the lead applicant and partner organization(s) and define the duties of each.

Fiscal agents

Fiscal agents are allowed, and in some cases, will be encouraged. A fiscal agent is a nonprofit or governmental partner that provides administrative and financial support to help a grantee meet contract requirements.

Timeline

	Date
RFP published	TBD
Pre-submission staff review period	TBD
Applications due	TBD
Award notification (estimated)	TBD

Project period

Projects must be completed no later than two years after the date the grant agreement and other required documents are signed.

Project eligibility

Minnesota statute: eligible project uses

Standard ENRTF Community Grant funding can only be awarded for the five uses identified in statute ([Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#)), which are listed below. Applicants must propose a project that includes one or more of these uses:

1. Helping adversely impacted communities respond to environmental degradation and related health concerns.
2. Education and awareness related to stewardship of air, land, water, forests, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.
3. Preserving or enhancing air, land, water, and other natural resources that otherwise may be substantially impaired or destroyed in any area of the state.
4. Trail maintenance and improvement on existing state, regional, or local trails. No money allocated under this clause may be used to construct new trails or new trail segments.
5. Aquatic invasive species management.

Specific project use requirements

Applicants must review and follow all requirements in this RFP's Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance. Each eligible project use has a Guidance and Requirements section in Appendix D [

Minnesota State Constitution: eligible projects

The ENRTF Community Grant Program is funded by the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund (ENRTF), which was established in the Minnesota State Constitution. [Minn. Const. art. XI, sec. 14](#) includes the following project eligibility criteria that applies to this Standard ENRTF Community Grant round and all future ENRTF Community Grant Program rounds:

Projects must be “for the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's air, water, land, fish, wildlife, and other natural resources.”

Expanded Standard Grant allowable activities

In addition to funding Standard Grants, the ENRTF Community Grant Program funds Expedited Grants through a separate RFP process. Unlike Expedited Grants, Standard Grants allow the following activities.

- Capital projects.
- Land acquisition.
- Ground disturbance.
- Work on state land.

Ineligible Standard Grant activities

- No scientific research.
- No activities related to the construction, repair, improvement, or operation of any facility or system that processes wastewater.

Prohibition on substituting traditional sources of funding

Funds awarded must supplement the traditional sources of funding for environment and natural resources activities and may not be used as a substitute (Minn Statutes, chapter 116X, subd.1).

Funding priorities

Statute priorities

Guided by [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#), two priority criteria will be scored in the first phase of application evaluation.

- 1. Does the proposed program expand the number and diversity of recipients who benefit from the environment and natural resources trust fund?**

Applicants who have not previously received ENRTF grant funding will be prioritized higher than applicants who have. For this priority criteria, applicants should refer to the [Minnesota Legacy Project Search](#) and/or the [LCCMR website](#) to verify whether their organization has been awarded ENRTF funding through the LCCMR, and if so, how many years since their last award.

Being a subgrantee of an LCCMR grant does not qualify as having received an ENRTF award. Prioritization criteria due to past LCCMR funding does not apply to Tribal Nations, in order to preserve access to ENRTF Community Grant funding on tribal lands.

2. Does the proposed program impact communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation?

For this priority, applicants must refer to the [Minnesota Pollution Control Agency's \(PCA\) Environmental Justice Map](#). Applicants must describe the proposed project's location(s) and the approximate overlap with Minnesota's identified Environmental Justice Area(s). They also must describe if and how the project will benefit community members in specified Environmental Justice Area(s).

Office of Grant Management (OGM) Policy 08-02 compliance

State of Minnesota policy aims to ensure fairness, precision, equity and consistency in competitive grant awards. [Office of Grants Management \(OGM\) Policy 08-02: Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes that competitive grant programs must intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities or disparities that past grant funding has not adequately addressed. OGM's policy lists these specific diverse populations:

- Racial and ethnic communities, including American Indians.
- LGBTQI communities.
- Disability status.
- Veterans.
- Geographic diversity within and across Minnesota – including greater MN, urban/metro.

The Standard ENRTF Community Grant funding awarded through this RFP will serve several of these populations, as described below.

Serving Environmental Justice Area populations

This Standard ENRTF Community Grant round will serve populations who are experiencing inequities and/or disparities by prioritizing projects located in or directly impacting Environmental Justice Areas. [Minn Statutes, chapter 116.065, subd 1\(e\)](#) defines environmental justice areas as census tracts:

1. In which at least 40% of the population is people of color.
2. In which at least 35 percent of households have income at or below 200 percent of the federal poverty level.
3. In which at least 40 percent of the population has limited proficiency in English.
4. That are located within Indian Country, which is defined as federally recognized reservations and other Indigenous lands.

Census tracts need to meet only one of these criteria to be considered an environmental justice area.

Serving geographical diversity

Projects funded through this RFP will serve geographically diverse areas within and across Minnesota, including rural, urban and suburban areas.

Serving people with disabilities

Applications will be evaluated on how well accessibility for people with disabilities, including veterans, is addressed.

Matching funds

Matching funds are not required for ENRTF Community Grant Program projects, including this funding round. ENRTF Community Grant Program funding cannot be used as match for LCCMR project funding. Grantees must get prior approval from the ENRTF Community Grant Program to use this funding as a match for other grant programs.

Eligible expenses

The eligible expenses listed and described below apply to all project uses outlined in [Minn. Statutes, chapter 116X, section 3](#). Applicants should refer to [project use guidance](#) [link to be inserted] to help them apply these budget categories.

Category	Description of Eligible Expenses
Personnel	• Salary/wages of personnel who work directly for the applicant for time spent on the funded project. • Employer's share of state and federal payroll taxes for employees working on the funded project. • Fringe benefit expenses for grantee employees, such as FICA/Medicare/Medicaid, retirement, and health insurance. Often expressed as a percentage of the staff salary charged to the grant.
Professional services and contracts	Services and contracts named in the approved project work plan that are provided by individuals or entities that are not a part of the applicant organization.
Supplies	Materials, tools, equipment, and supplies purchased specifically for the project, including shipping costs. State procurement requirements apply and may include targeted group purchasing provisions.
Capital expenditures	Equipment or tools that are: • valued at \$5,000 or more per unit, or • have a useful life longer than one year. Equipment and tools must be individually itemized in the project budget and approved by the DNR.

Category	Description of Eligible Expenses
Travel	In-state transportation and travel expenses such as lodging, meals and mileage of personnel directly involved in the funded project and in no greater amount than provided in the current Commissioner's Plan as published by the commissioner of the Minnesota Department of Management and Budget.
Other expenses	• Permit fees (as with all other expenses, only if the permit fee was incurred during the grant period). • Stipends for community members who volunteer to participate in workplan activities. Must be itemized in the budget and approved by the DNR. • Food and refreshments at community-based planning and input meetings • Additional insurance coverage that must be purchased for this project • Attorney fees for land acquisition. • Other expenses necessary to the project that are itemized in the budget and approved by DNR.
Administrative costs	Administrative costs are expenses incurred to support the management and the execution of the project workplan. If they are necessary to the work of the project, these may include general costs that support operation of the organization. Applicants can include administrative costs in their budget using one of two methods. 1. As direct expenses described and quantified in other budget categories. For example, listing a percentage of an office manager's salary and fringe for time spent on grant financials, reporting and payroll. 2. As an indirect cost rate expressed as a percentage of the total grant budget. Applicants must have a justifiable methodology for their indirect rate that produces accurate costs. The DNR will review that methodology during grant agreement negotiation and must approve the final indirect rate. The application budget form will provide further guidance on administrative costs.

Ineligible expenses

These ineligible expenses apply to all project uses:

- Any expenses incurred before the grant agreement is signed.
- Payments to the principal or interest of any bonds
- Fundraising.
- Taxes, except sales tax on goods and services and payroll taxes.
- Lobbyists or political contributions.

- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges, or contingency funds.
- Parking violations or traffic violations.
- Out-of-state transportation and travel expenses. Minnesota will be considered the home state for determining whether travel is out of state.
- Organization-wide advertising and marketing expenses (not related to the funded project).
- Loans, grants, or subsidies to persons or entities for land development.
- Interest or investment management fees.
- Board of directors' or officers' salaries.
- Merit awards or bonuses.
- Memberships (including subscriptions and dues) unless newly required because of this funded project.
- Intoxicating beverages.
- Publications, periodicals or subscriptions.
- Employee workplace parking.

Grant payments

This grant program primarily uses a reimbursement-based payment structure. “Reimbursement-based” means that the grantee will pay project expenses, then request reimbursement from the DNR.

If requested by the grantee, an advance payment option will be available through a special approval process. That approval process will occur during grant agreement negotiations. In response to a grantee request for advance payment, the ENRTF Community Grant Program will ask the grantee to explain in writing why they cannot complete the project without advance payment. A risk assessment will also influence whether advance payment will be approved.

If the ENRTF Community Grant Program approves a grantee’s request, the DNR will provide advance funding to the grantee to pay for approved project expenses, on a schedule agreed upon by the DNR and the grantee. The DNR will require the grantee to submit thorough documentation to substantiate authorized use of these funds. Applicants should not assume that advance payment is available when applying.

Section 3: Proposal evaluation and grantee selection process

The proposal evaluation and grantee selection process will consist of three stages, as described in this section.

Stage I: Screening for basic eligibility

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will screen applications for completeness and applicant eligibility. Proposals that do not pass this screening will not move on to the next stage.

Stage II: Priority scoring and tier placement

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will evaluate and score applications based on two priority criteria.

Criterion A: Project expands the number and diversity of ENRTF award recipients.

Applicant has never received an ENRTF grant.	3 points
Applicant has not received an ENRTF grant in the past 10+ years or is a Tribal Nation that has received an ENRTF grant.	2 points
Applicant has not received an ENRTF grant in the past 6-9 years.	1 point
Applicant has received an ENRTF grant within the past 5 years	0 points
Applicant Criterion A Score	

Criterion B: Project serves communities that have been adversely affected by pollution and environmental degradation.

Project is entirely in Environmental Justice Area(s).	3 points
Majority of project is in Environmental Justice Area(s).	2 points
Less than a majority of the project is in Environmental Justice Area(s), but project will benefit an Environmental Justice Area(s).	1 point
Project is not in Environmental Justice Area(s) and does not benefit Environmental Justice Area(s).	0 points
Applicant Criterion B Score	

Applicant Total Score _____
(Criterion A score + Criterion B score)

Project priority tiers

Based on total score, applications will be placed in three priority project tiers.

- Tier A = Projects that score 5-6 points
- Tier B = Projects that score 3-4 points
- Tier C = Projects that score 0-2 points

Stage III: Technical review, scoring, and awarding

A Technical Review Committee of subject matter experts will score the applications based on the scoring criteria outlined in Section 7. Applications must score at least 70 points out of 100 possible points to be considered for funding.

Projects will be recommended for award in this order:

1. Tier A projects with a score of 70 or more
2. Tier B projects with a score of 70 or more
3. Tier C projects with a score of 70 or more

Award recommendations may be adjusted after review to ensure that the ENRTF Community Grant Program meets statutory requirements for geographic balance, past performance, and other required considerations.

Notice of DNR rights reserved

The DNR reserves the right to:

- Award less than the total amount available if not enough suitable project applications are submitted.
- Make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with DNR priorities, if additional funding becomes available, a project comes in under or over budget, or if a grantee cannot carry out their project as planned.
- Award amounts less than requested if not enough funding is available for the entire request, or if doing so aligns with statutory and constitutional direction for the program and funding source.
- Award amounts less than that requested in an application should it be determined that aspects of a project are not cost-effective or eligible for funding.

Section 4: Grantee responsibilities

Reporting

Grantees must submit a progress summary report one year into the grant period and a final report 45 days after the grant period ends. Grantees must report on the measurable results of their funded project (Minn Statutes, chapter 116X, subd.1).

Grant monitoring

State Office of Grants Management Policy 08-10 requires state agencies to conduct at least one monitoring visit and financial reconciliation per grant period on all state grants over \$50,000 and to conduct at least annual monitoring visits on grants over \$250,000. Monitoring may be done in person or by telephone, at the discretion of ENRTF Community Grant Program staff.

Field reviews are intended to ensure that work was performed as described in the grant agreement. Financial audits ensure grant funds and any match funds are properly spent and accounted for. Grants under \$50,000 are occasionally subject to monitoring based upon grantee performance, history of grants management and the activity(ies) funded.

Grantee duties

Grantees must be willing and able to perform all work required to complete the projects they are requesting funds for. This includes managing any bid, contract, or purchasing process necessary to complete work under the grant. The grantee is also responsible for project oversight and management. Other organizations named as partners in the work plan may provide technical guidance or support to the grantee, but they are not

responsible for the work. Grantees are also responsible for understanding and following all program requirements and procedures.

Grant provisions

This program is funded by state dollars and requires a significant amount of documentation and transparency. All expenditures and work completed with these funds must adhere to federal, state, and local laws, regulations, policies, and codes, as applicable.

All applicants must review the grant provisions and specific eligible project use requirements found in the Appendix D of this RFP and on the ENRTF Community Grant Program website [link to be inserted].

Section 5: Applicant assistance

ENRTF Community Grant Program contacts

Please contact the DNR staff members listed below with questions.

Staff Name

ENRTF Community Grant Program

firstname.lastname@state.mn.us

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXX

Staff Name

ENRTF Community Grant Program

firstname.lastname@state.mn.us

Phone: (XXX) XXX-XXX

ENRTF Community Grant Program webpage

Please consult [website link](#) [link to be inserted] for further guidance. The website includes all official program documents, information about application supports available, answers to frequently asked questions and an opportunity to submit questions.

Pre-submission review opportunity

As noted on the grant timeline, applicants can request a pre-submission review of their application by ENRTF Community Grant Program staff. The review scope will be limited to checking whether all required application documents are completed. [DEADLINE to request pre-submission review and a link to the process for requesting review to be inserted.]

In-person outreach events

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will host in-person outreach events at various locations across the state. Please refer to the [website link](#) [link to be inserted] for a full schedule.

Virtual open office hours

ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will host virtual open office hours during the open application period. This time will be open for applicant questions. Please refer to [website link](#) [link to be inserted] for a full schedule of open office hours and instructions on how to join the meeting.

One-on-one project development guidance

Applicants can contact ENRTF Community Grant Program staff for information about requirements, eligible uses, clarification of use guidelines, and other topics needed to fully understand the RFP. The DNR will post answers to these questions on the FAQ page for the RFP to ensure all applicants have access to this information.

Section 6: Application submission

General instructions

Application Deadline: [to be inserted]

- All applications must be submitted through the ENRTF Community Grant Program Online Grant Management System [link to system to be inserted].
- All application information, including the required and optional forms, instructions and the application system link are posted on the ENRTF Community Grant Program website [link to be inserted].
- Applicants must create an account and password the first time they access the online system. Instructions for completing this process are available on the [How to Apply](#) webpage [link to be inserted] of the ENRTF Community Grant Program website.
- Applicants can save their application and return to it as many times as needed before submitting. Once an application is submitted, only ENRTF Community Grant Program staff will be able to make changes.
- Organizations may submit multiple applications; however, it is helpful to indicate in the project summary which project is the highest priority.

Application content

A complete Standard ENRTF Community Grant application will include the following:

- Organization and Applicant Information (includes partner organization and fiscal agent information)
- Project Summary.
- Project Narrative Questions.

- Work Plan and Program Outcomes.
- Budget.
- Required Attachments.

Application forms can be found in the [Appendix](#) of this RFP and on the program website for reference. Note that the application must be completed and submitted using the online grant management system.

Authorized representatives

All applicants must identify a project manager and a fiscal manager and provide their contact information in the application. Projects with a fiscal agent must identify the fiscal manager from that organization.

Notices about the application process

- The Minnesota DNR reserves the right to reject any application that does not meet requirements.
- By submitting an application, each applicant warrants that the information provided is true, correct, and reliable for purposes of evaluation for potential grant award. The submission of inaccurate or misleading information may be grounds for disqualification from the award, as well as subject the applicant to suspension or debarment proceedings and other remedies available by law.
- Incomplete applications will be rejected and not evaluated. Applications must include all required application materials, including attachments.
- Do not provide any materials that are not requested in this RFP, as such materials will not be considered nor evaluated.
- Applicants are responsible for all costs incurred in responding to this RFP.

Right of cancellation

The DNR reserves the right to:

- Cancel this solicitation if it is considered to be in its best interest. The DNR will post notification and contact applicants if this RFP is changed or cancelled.
- Negotiate modifications to the application or to reject any and all applications received as a result of this RFP.

The DNR does not intend to award a grant contract agreement solely on the basis of any response made to this request, or pay for information solicited or obtained.

Section 7: Evaluation criteria and scoring

Project overview and need - 30 points

- Identifies and aligns with at least one eligible ENRTF Community Grant Program use.
- Meets the requirements and intent of the eligible use(s) identified.

- Clearly describes the issue(s) to be addressed and summarizes project activities that relate to the issue(s).
- Demonstrates high need for the project and state funding to accomplish the project (under-resourced need).
- Provides a logical, verifiable description of how much of the project lies within or affects Environmental Justice Area(s).
- Demonstrates applicant organization's readiness and ability to take on a project of the proposed scope and size.
- Demonstrates that the project will likely move through any permitting, certification, environmental review or other applicable statutory or legal requirements without issues that will delay the on-time project completion.
- Identifies comprehensively other entities that will need to be informed or involved to successfully complete the project. Demonstrates adequate planning for necessary collaboration.
- Identifies key personnel and project roles (project manager, fiscal contact, subject matter experts or consultants, key partners, etc.).
- Describes key personnel's expertise and demonstrates capacity of each to skillfully fulfill their assigned roles.

Community engagement and impact - 20 points

- Demonstrates engagement with affected community members and has incorporated their input in project application.
- Demonstrates awareness of potential participation barriers for some community members and names realistic strategies for outreach (including but not limited to having existing relationships in named communities).
- Describes project benefit to community members clearly.
- Addresses potential environmental impacts to community members and approach to mitigate any negative impacts. Meaningfully describes the current condition and the change that will be made.
- Explains the degree to which affected communities will be involved in project activities, ongoing input, decision making, leadership and evaluation/redirection of the project.
- Describes the degree to which the project focuses on priority areas and or within populations that include priority areas as shown on the Environmental Justice map.
- Demonstrates clear, comprehensive plans for accessibility as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act Title II.

Project workplan/timeline – 20 points

- Identifies a comprehensive list of activities necessary to accomplish program outcomes.
- Establishes that applicant can realistically complete project by the deadline.
- Provides specific dates for all activities.
- Follows best management practice in seasonal work.
- Accounts for grant report deadlines and project end date.

Project budget and budget explanation - 15 points

- Resources requested align with proposed program activities.
- Budget items are clearly described, and specific dollar amounts are identified.
- Budget total equals project amount requested.
- Requested amounts are financially realistic.
- Budget is cost effective.
- Grant funds are only used for eligible expenses.

Outcomes - 15 points

- Proposed outcomes are clear.
- Proposed outcomes can be measured within the timeframe of the grant.
- Proposed outcomes are appropriate for the project activities and meaningful as a measure of project impact.
- Applicant has a clear and reasonable method for tracking and reporting outcomes, in line with accepted standards for the work if appropriate.

DRAFT

RFP Appendix A: Grant provisions

Applicants must review the requirements identified in this appendix.

Risk Assessment and Capacity Review Documentation

Grant applicants may be required to submit financial, capacity, and internal control documents prior to a grant award based on state or federal requirements.

- Nonprofits may be required to submit their most recent board reviewed financial statements, an IRS Form 990, or their most recent certified financial audit.
- All applicants may be required to submit additional documents, including descriptions of internal controls over business expenditures and outcomes of grant funds.

Conflict of Interest

[OGM Policy 08-01 Conflict of Interest in State Grant-Making Policy](#) also applies to grantees. Please review this policy to ensure there are no conflicts of interest. Applications may be rejected or grants cancelled if conflicts are found and not resolved to the State's satisfaction. Grantees will be required to sign a conflict-of-interest form as part of the grant agreement. Grantees will be required to report any actual or potential conflicts of interest to the DNR immediately to ensure that they are addressed appropriately."

Insurance Requirements

Grantees are required to carry insurance that meets or exceeds the requirements of the landowner whose land they will be working on. Insurance requirements for working on state lands are available on the ENRTF Community Grant Program website. For all other lands, grantees should follow the eligible use guidance for specific requirements. Where applicable, proof of insurance will be required prior to a grant being executed. Applicants should investigate the cost of insurance before submitting an application.

Contracting and Bidding Requirements

Municipalities

Grantees that are municipalities or other political subdivisions of the state must use these guidelines:

- Municipalities are required to comply with [Minn. Statutes, section 471.345, Uniform Municipal Contracting Law](#)
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41-177.50](#), as applicable.
- Municipalities and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award, and administration of contracts.

Nongovernmental entities

Grantees that are nongovernmental entities must use these guidelines:

- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$25,000 and \$99,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of three (3) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- Services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.
- The grantee must take all necessary affirmative steps to assure that targeted vendors from businesses with active certifications through these entities are used when possible: State Department of Administration's Certified Targeted Group, Economically Disadvantaged and Veteran-Owned Vendor List; Metropolitan Council Underutilized Business Program; Small Business Certification Program through Hennepin County, Ramsey County, and City of St. Paul: Central Certification Directory.
- The grantee must maintain written standards of conduct covering conflicts of interest and governing the actions of its employees engaged in the selection, award and administration of contracts.
- The grantee must maintain support documentation of the purchasing or bidding process used to contract services in their financial records, including support documentation justifying a single source bid, if applicable.
- Notwithstanding the above, the State may waive bidding process requirements when: vendors included in response to a competitive grant RFP process were incorporated in an approved work plan for the grant; or it is determined there is only one reasonable and available source for such materials or services and that grantee has established a fair and reasonable price.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must comply with prevailing wage rules per [Minn. Statutes, sections 177.41 through 177.50](#), as applicable.
- The grantee and any subrecipients must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota or the federal government: [Suspended and Debarred Vendors, Minnesota Office of State Procurement](#).

Prevailing Wage

It is the responsibility of the grant recipient or contractor to pay prevailing wages on all projects to which state prevailing wage laws apply ([Minn. Statutes, sections 177.42 through 177.44](#)). Additional information is available on the [Minnesota Department of Labor and Industry \(DOLI\) website](#). Questions should be directed to DOLI at 651-284-5091. The grant recipient is solely responsible for payment of all required prevailing wage rates.

Public Data

Per [Minn. Statutes, section 13.599](#):

- Names and addresses of grant applicants and amount requested will be public data once proposal responses are opened.
- All remaining data in proposal responses (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Statutes, section 13.17](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed. For the purposes of this grant, data will be considered public when all the grant contract agreements have been fully executed.
- All data created or maintained by the DNR as part of the evaluation process (except trade secret data as defined and classified in [Minn. Statutes, section 13.37](#)) will be public data after the evaluation process is completed.
- Sensitive information, such as Natural Heritage Database review information, will remain nonpublic.
- [Minn Statutes, sec. 13.44](#) categorizes estimated or appraised value of real property prior to purchase and sale as confidential data on individuals, or protected nonpublic data. Once property transactions are completed, the location and landowner information will become public information. See the Minnesota Government Data Privacy Act for more information.

Affirmative Action and Nondiscrimination

The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified per [Minn. Statutes, section 363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.

The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship, per Minnesota Rules, Part [5000.3500](#).

The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter Registration

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Statutes, section 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

Audits

Per [Minn. Statutes, chapter 16B, section 98, subdivision 8](#), the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the Commissioner of Administration, the state granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant contract agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Invasive Species Requirements

The DNR requires active steps to prevent or limit the introduction, establishment, and spread of invasive species during all activities performed on all lands. Grantees must follow the procedures provided in [DNR Operational Order 113](#) (Invasive Species).

Use of Pesticides

[DNR Operational Order 59](#) (Pesticides and Pest Control) and other appropriate discipline guidelines must be followed when using pesticides on all lands and waters, regardless of ownership.

Pollinator Habitat Enhancement

Habitat restorations and enhancements conducted on DNR lands and prairie restorations on state lands or on any lands using state funds are subject to pollinator best management practices and habitat restoration guidelines pursuant to [Minn. Statutes, section 84.973](#). Practices and guidelines ensure an appropriate diversity of native species to provide habitat for pollinators through the growing season ([DNR Pollinator Best Management Practices and Habitat Restoration Guidelines](#)).

Prescribed burns

For prescribed burns on state lands, contractors must meet the equipment and personnel requirements (including training and experience) called for in the prescribed burn plan provided by the State. Additional requirements are described in the MN DNR Prescribed Burn Handbook.

Revenues

Any revenues generated during the grant period from activities supported by ENRTF Community Grant Program funding must be disclosed to ENRTF Community Grant Program staff and used for grant-related purposes to be agreed upon.

Permitting and Environmental Compliance Requirements

The DNR, grantee and contractors must comply with permitting requirements and environmental laws. Such compliance requires the participation and cooperation of the DNR, the ENRTF Community Grant Program applicant, appropriate Land Manager, and/or Easement Holder. The grantee is responsible for understanding and following all these requirements. These requirements apply to all projects.

Recognition of Funding Source

Grantees will be required to acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund as the source of project support. The ENRTF Community Grant Program logo can be downloaded from the DNR's ENRTF Community Grant Program website for publications, press releases or other printed documents. Only the approved logo may be used. All press releases, bid solicitations, statements or other documents issued describing the project should acknowledge the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund primarily, and may secondarily acknowledge the Department of Natural Resources and ENRTF Community Grant Program.

DRAFT

RFP Appendix B: Application forms and instructions

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix C: Required attachments

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix D: Specific eligible use requirements and guidance

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

RFP Appendix E: Sample grant agreement

To be attached in final RFP and accessible on website.

DRAFT