

## 2026 Small Grants: STAR Application Questions and Answers

Minnesota Department of Natural Resources; Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program  
Notice of Grant Opportunity 2026 Small Grants: STAR  
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### Introduction

On June 8, 2026, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) published the Minnesota's Lake Superior Coastal Program "[Notice of Grant Opportunity 2026 Small Grants: STAR](#)". Program staff received several questions from potential applicants. We are sharing the answers, so all have the same information.

Please contact us if you have additional questions.

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### Questions and Answers

#### ***Can I use small grant funds to inventory infrastructure, such as culverts?***

Yes. The Coastal Program has a long history of supporting infrastructure inventories. You must comply with NOAA's Data Sharing Directive (all data collected or created must be made publicly available within two years and must contain compliant metadata).

#### ***Can I conduct activities outside the Minnesota coastal boundary with grant funds?***

If said activities compliment or supplement the actions that occur within the coastal area, they may be allowed. You should vet any activities outside the boundary with Coastal Program staff.

#### ***Can I plant seedlings in a greenhouse for research?***

Yes, you can plant in pots, in a greenhouse. However, you can only use source materials (e.g., seedlings, seeds, dirt, fungi) collected before the grant starts or purchased from a reputable vendor.

#### ***Can I apply for more than one project?***

Yes, you can. However, the projects must be distinct, with separate goals and activities.

If the Coastal Program has grant funds available and both your projects are selected for funding, the DNR will support both.

#### ***When can I start my project?***

You can pick a start date anytime between (60 days post application due date) and March 1, however projects should be complete in about six months. For a project next summer, we recommend you pick a start date of March 1. (You may apply in any round.)

#### ***Did you record the information session?***

We did not record the session. Please review the Notice of Grant Opportunity and these Questions/Answers. If you still have questions, reach out to Coastal Program staff.

***I could not attend the information session. What were the main takeaways?***

- Ensure your project is allowed (page 3 of the Notice lists allowed activities; eligibility requirements start on page 4)
- If you have questions about which outdoor activities are allowed, ask. Generally observational research and field trips are allowed. Anything that moves dirt, including planting/removing vegetation or pounding a stake/signpost in the ground is not allowed. You can install signage on existing infrastructure (e.g., fences, trees, kiosks).
- There are rules for grant making that apply to these federal (passthrough) funds: [State Grant Management Policies](#) and [2 CFR 200 Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards](#). You can find the Coastal Program's [standard terms and conditions](#) online, as well as travel, acknowledgement, and data management guidance.
- Something new this year: Minnesota Statute [16B.98, subd.5\(d\)](#) says “the grantee [must] clearly post on the grantee's website the names of, and contact information for, the organization's leadership and the employee or other person who directly manages and oversees the grant for the grantee.” If selected for funding, you must list grant personnel on your webpage. This may either be on a ‘contact us’ page or a page dedicated to projects and/or funding. You may need to provide proof (screenshots, links).
- Progress reports are due twice; financial reports once (or twice). Timing of the reports is influenced by state fiscal year requirements and due dates of federal award reports. If the pre-award risk assessment has findings, the State may require additional monitoring.
- The application form is a form fillable PDF, with required fields. If you print it out, you may miss the required ones (just a note). Both certifications are required (two signatures).
- There is budget guidance in the Notice (see appendix C).