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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED**
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION

STEWARDSHIP FUND PROGRAM

Action Grants

Stewardship Fund Grants assist public efforts to protect and improve shared water resources so everyone can have clean water.

The quality of water is affected by our everyday decisions. How we care for ourselves, our yards, our cars, and even our pets, can pollute water in the Mississippi River and other water bodies. Hard surfaces like our roofs, driveways, sidewalks, and pathways make it much easier for stormwater to enter storm drains if not managed properly. We can join others in taking action to reduce these harmful impacts on water quality.

Summary

Action Grants are available to complete a stewardship project, significant in scope and cost. The grant amount may not exceed \$50,000. Some matching funds required.

An application for an Action Grant should demonstrate that thorough planning for the proposed project has already taken place. It must include a realistic budget (including sources and amounts of required in-kind or cash match), secured permissions from landowners for project implementation, construction drawings, and plant lists (if applicable). If these steps are not already complete, consider applying for a [Planning Grant](#).

Project Examples

The following are examples of projects that have received an Action Grant. These examples are provided simply as general ideas and are not meant to limit the possibilities or creativity of applicants.

- Installation of erosion control practices, planting native plant buffers around water bodies, and ecological restoration (e.g., removal of invasive species and establishment of native species)

- Implementation of program designs that could result in positive, long-term changes in community behaviors, such as improved water conservation practices, reduction in use of polluting agents (e.g., road salt and lawn chemicals) and use of stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP's)
- Construction of stormwater BMP's to reduce pollution, combined with reporting on the effectiveness of new technologies and approaches
- Construction of impervious surfaces with high-capacity pervious materials, and documents created for site tours to demonstrate the BMP
- Implementation of an educational curriculum, creation of a communication or behavior change campaign, or other outreach/engagement projects.
- Implementation of water quality themed educational activities and workshops for an area.

It should be noted that soil contamination in urban areas is common and implementation of projects that infiltrate water will be contingent upon successful demonstration that there is no contamination of concern, remediation has occurred, or there is no potential for negative impact on surface or ground water resources.

Grant Purposes: What types of projects are funded by this grant?

Projects funded through the Stewardship Fund Grants should be aligned with the following purposes:

1. **Develop partnerships with community organizations.**
Projects create partnerships and build community understanding with organizations and people wanting to proactively engage in clean water issues, demonstrate new methods, and extend the MWMO's ability to protect clean water and improve water quality, and protect and restore habitat and natural resources through building community knowledge and stewardship.
2. **Protect or improve the quality of water, habitat, and natural resources.**
Projects reduce pollution entering our streams, wetlands, lakes, river and groundwater, and projects that prevent flooding, lessen the effects of drought, retain water on site and/or restore and maintain habitat.
3. **Build community understanding, knowledge, and initiative related to water, habitat, and natural resource issues and solutions.**
Projects engage and educate people in the community about water quality issues. These projects will result in awareness of water issues and changed behaviors that protect water.

Organizations receiving grants will increase their ability to lead and promote clean water efforts.

How to Apply for an Action Grant

Submit an Application to the MWMO. This Application should show the MWMO how a project meets our grant goals and can be realistically accomplished.

Applications will be reviewed by MWMO staff. The MWMO will invite selected applicants to complete the application process by submitting a revised application. **These applicants will be required to meet with MWMO staff to discuss the project in more detail.** Revised applications will be reviewed by MWMO staff and the MWMO Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC). Their recommendations for grant awards are reviewed and must be approved by the MWMO Board of Commissioners.

Eligible Applicants

- Non-profit community or faith-based organizations*
- Officially recognized neighborhood groups
- Business and professional associations
- Schools
- Local units of government

* Non-profit organizations must be registered with the State of Minnesota. If your organization is not registered, you are not an eligible applicant, you must partner with one to act as your fiscal sponsor.

Eligible applicants may not serve a dual role as project manager and project consultant.

Individuals, homeowner and condominium associations, and private businesses may partner with eligible applicants to apply.

Eligible Geographic Project Locations

All project types should benefit people who live, learn, and/or work in or near the MWMO watershed. Any physical projects must be located within [MWMO boundaries](#).

Applications that include improvements on private lands will be considered. These projects will be more competitive during review if they show ongoing benefits such as public access, public education and environmental improvement or protection.

Funding

Eligible organizations are required to provide a 25% match to the grant received. The match may be cash or in-kind support (e.g., volunteer time, donated materials or services, etc.).

Individuals, homeowner and condominium associations, private businesses or any other organization that must partner with an eligible organization to apply for an Action Grant are required to provide a 25% cash match.

A single property may be awarded the maximum amount of \$63,000.00 (the equivalent of one Mini, one Planning, and one Action Grant, but does not necessarily have to be that combination of grants and may be awarded in any order).

The MWMO Stewardship Fund Grants may not be used to fund projects installed only to meet regulatory requirements. Projects may be initiated due to a regulatory requirement; however, stewardship funds may only be used to fund portions of the project that implement water quality innovations above and beyond the regulatory requirements.

Contracting

Once a project is selected for funding, an Agreement will be prepared for signature by the MWMO and the grantee. Grantees must attend an Orientation Session to review and clarify the grant process, administrative procedures, technical assistance, and discuss other resources. MWMO staff will work with each grantee to finalize the Agreement. The Agreement will outline the obligations of the grant recipient and the MWMO. It will include project-specific details and requirements, including a timeline, budget, work tasks, deliverables, evaluation, and reporting procedures. *Note: MWMO retains ownership of all deliverables.*

25% of the grant dollar amount will be paid upon execution of an Agreement by both parties. 10% of the grant amount will be withheld until all final deliverables are accepted and approved by the MWMO. Grantees must submit requests for reimbursement along with a list of all expenses incurred and copies of all receipts and invoices related to the project.

Eligible Project Expenses

Project expenses will be discussed in detail at the orientation meeting and during contracting. The following project expenses may be eligible for reimbursement:

- Staff time
- Consultant costs (e.g., engineering, training) *Note: design work cannot be funded under the Action Grant*
- Contractor costs
- Materials and supplies
- Postage
- Printing
- Travel
- Facility rental
- Others as proposed and accepted

Expenses that are *not eligible*:

- Costs incurred before a funding Agreement is signed
- Any costs not directly related to the funded project
- Costs associated with activities that are a normal part of the organization's activities (for example, production of an organization's regular newsletter)
- General "overhead" or "administrative fees" that are not specific to this project
- Features that are deemed aesthetic only
- Regulatory requirements, such as sanitary sewer line disconnects (only stormwater best management practices that exceed regulatory requirements are eligible for funding)

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the MWMO to discuss ideas and ask questions in advance of submitting an application.

For questions or more information, please contact:

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