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**MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION**

## STEWARDSHIP FUND PROGRAM

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### Mini 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

Mini Grants are available for short-term or small-scale water quality projects. The grant amount may not exceed \$3,000. No matching funds required.

#### Project Examples

The following are examples of projects that have received a Mini Grant. The MWMO welcomes all creative project ideas that meet Stewardship Fund Grant goals.

- Community events, such as clean-ups, festivals, invasive plant removal/restoration
- Leadership programs for young people or underserved communities
- Educational and technical training (including workshops) for all ages
- Art or media projects depicting water and natural resource issues
- Installation of small Best Management Practices (BMP's) demonstrations (e.g., rainbarrels, raingardens, pervious pavers)
- Engagement processes that help identify water and natural resource issues of concern to a community
- Educational signs or brochures to explain water quality improvement projects

#### 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 a Mini Grant**

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

Pre-Applications will be reviewed by MWMO staff. The MWMO will invite selected Pre-Applicants to complete a Full Application. **These applicants will be required to meet with MWMO staff to discuss the project in more detail.**

Full Applications will be reviewed and grant recipients selected by MWMO staff.

## **Eligible Applicants**

- Non-profit 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.

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

## **Eligible 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**

No matching funds required.

Grant recipients will receive their payment in two installments. For projects up to \$500, 75% at the beginning of the Agreement and the remaining 25% upon submission and MWMO approval of completion. For projects \$500 and over, 50% at the beginning of the Agreement and the remaining 50% upon submission and MWMO approval of completion.

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.*

## **Eligible Project Expenses**

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

- Staff time
- Consultant costs (e.g., engineering, design, training)
- 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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