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**MISSISSIPPI
WATERSHED
MANAGEMENT
ORGANIZATION**

STEWARDSHIP FUND PROGRAM

MINI GRANTS

Please see www.mwmo.org/stewardshipfund.html for more information.

Water pollution comes from many different sources, including our everyday activities. How we care for our yards and grounds, wash and maintain our cars, and even dispose of pet waste can contribute to water pollution in the Mississippi River. The hard surfaces of our driveways, sidewalks, and pathways increase the amount of stormwater entering the stormdrains. There are many choices we can make to reduce these harmful impacts on water quality. Become a partner organization with the Mississippi Watershed Management Organization (MWMO) by applying for a Stewardship Fund grant to work together to improve water quality in the MWMO.

Overview

- Grants of up to \$2,000 are available for short-term or small water quality projects
- Apply by submitting a three-page Letter of Interest
- Letters of Interest will be reviewed by staff three times per year –Spring, Summer, and Fall
- See the [Mini Grant Timeline](#) on our website for deadlines

Program Goals

Mini Grants of up to \$2,000 are available for short-term projects or small projects completed by community groups. Projects funded through a Mini Grant should accomplish one, or, ideally both of these goals:

1) Improve water quality or improve water and natural resource management

Examples include projects that reduce pollution (both point and non-point source) entering surface and groundwater, and projects that prevent flooding, lessen the effects of drought, increase the capacity of the watershed to store water, and/or restore or maintain habitat and native plant communities.

2) Build community understanding, knowledge, and initiative related to water and natural resource issues and solutions

Projects should educate and engage people in the watershed regarding watershed issues, resulting in awareness and changed behaviors. Organizations receiving grants will increase their capacity to lead and promote water quality efforts.

Geographic Location of Projects

Projects should educate and engage people who live, learn, and/or work in or near the MWMO watershed. If physical improvements are planned as part of the project, the improvements must take place within the boundaries of the MWMO watershed (see [MWMO Watershed Map](#) on our website).

Project Examples

The following are examples of projects that could receive a Mini Grant. Additional projects that fit the goals of this program are also encouraged.

- 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 demonstrations (e.g., rainbarrels, raingardens, pervious pavers)
- Processes to identify water and natural resource issues of concern to a community
- Educational signs or brochures to explain water quality improvement projects

Eligible Applicants

The following groups are eligible to receive a grant:

- Non-profit organizations
- Officially recognized neighborhood groups
- Schools
- Local units of government
- Business associations and professional associations

Individuals, homeowners and condominium associations, and private businesses may partner with eligible applicants in order to apply.

Mini grants are not intended to provide permanent or on-going funding for projects. Please see Funding for Past Partners in the [Administrative Reference Information](#) document on our website for more information.

Available Funds and Selection Process

\$50,000 will be available annually to fund Mini Grant projects in three cycles – Spring, Summer, and Fall.

Mini Grant applications will be reviewed and selected by MWMO staff. The following criteria will be used to select projects for funding:

- Project purpose is clear and well aligned with program goals
- Project activities and work tasks are clearly stated and will lead to successful outcomes
- Project timeline and budget are reasonable and cost effective
- Project educates, engages and inspires people in the MWMO watershed
- The project could lead to lasting changes, actions or improvements

The MWMO is particularly interested in supporting projects that will reach underserved populations (neighborhoods or residents not previously involved in MWMO projects) and projects located in environmentally sensitive areas as defined by the MWMO Watershed Management Plan (see **MWMO Watershed Management Plan** on our website) or the MWMO Board.

Timeline

See the [Mini Grant Timeline](#) on our website for an up-to-date timeline of the Mini Grant program.

How to Apply for a Mini Grant

Submit a Letter of Interest on your organization or school letterhead, if possible. Please use a font size of at least 12-point and use at least one-inch margins. The letter should be no more than three pages. In addition to the Letter of Interest, submit a completed [Stewardship Fund Budget Form](#) (available for download on our website or contact Erica Sniegowski at (612) 465-8780, ext. 206, for a hard copy). If you have pertinent drawings, designs, or photographs of the project site, no more than two additional pages of these types of materials may be submitted. Any materials exceeding the page limits will be not be reviewed. Please submit the following:

1. Contact Information

- ✓ The primary applicant organization's name
- ✓ Project Manager's name and title, address, phone, fax, email
- ✓ Name of contract signatory and title and address (the person authorized to sign contracts on behalf of the organization or school)
- ✓ Primary applicant's website (if applicable)
- ✓ Names of additional partners, if applicable

2. Short description of the applicant organization (and any partners), and why they are interested in this project. If the project is to occur on property not owned by the applicant, please include a letter of support from the landowner. The letter should be on the landowner's letterhead and should be signed by the appropriate officer or other individual who has the power to grant permission for activities such as those that are proposed.

3. Description of the project, including:
 - ✓ who (who is involved, who is affected, and who is leading it)
 - ✓ what (what activities will take place)
 - ✓ where (list the specific geographic areas involved), and
 - ✓ when (provide a brief timeline)

4. How will this project improve water quality or improve water and natural resource management? Please quantify the benefit for water quality and describe how the project is appropriate in size and scale for the selected area. *Examples: How much impervious (hard) surface will be replaced by pervious materials (e.g., raingarden, pervious pavers)? How much impervious surface will drain to the project site (e.g., square footage of roof top, driveway, alley, or parking lot)? How many properties will be affected? How many raingardens or rainbarrels will be installed?*

5. How will this project build community understanding, knowledge, and initiative related to water and natural resource issues and solutions? *If the project is a professional development training, please address the following: Who is the target audience, and does it include MWMO constituents? What is the participant fee?*

6. How will you know if the project is successful? Describe your plans for evaluating the project.

7. How much are you requesting (up to \$2,000) and what will be purchased? Complete a [Stewardship Fund Budget Form](#) (available for download on our website or contact Erica Sniegowski at (612) 465-8780, ext. 206, for a hard copy) with as much detail as possible. Eligible Project Expenses may be reviewed in the [Administrative Reference Information](#) document on our website.

8. How did you learn about the Stewardship Fund Program (*e.g., email announcement, list serv, newspaper, or past Stewardship Fund grant recipient*)?

Email your Letter of Interest to Erica Sniegowski at esniegowski@mwmoo.org by the deadline (see [Mini Grant Timeline](#) on our website). You will receive an email confirmation that your Letter of Interest was received. If you do not receive a confirmation, please call (612) 465-8780, ext. 206. If you are unable to send your Letter of Interest by email, you may mail or submit it in person to:

Erica Sniegowski
 Mississippi Watershed Management Organization
 2522 Marshall Street NE
 Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418

Administrative Reference Information

Before submitting your letter of interest, please review the following essential information in the [Administrative Reference Information](#) document on our website:

- Eligible Project Expenses
- Meetings
- Project Evaluation and Reporting
- Other Expectations
- Contracting and Disbursement of Funds
- Funding for Past Partners
- Insurance Requirements

For Help or More Information

Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact Erica Sniegowski, Education & Outreach Specialist, to discuss ideas and ask questions in advance of submitting a Letter of Interest. Erica can be reached at esniegowski@mwmo.org or (612) 465-8780, ext. 206.