



2522 Marshall Street NE  
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55418-3329

612-746-4970  
contacts@mwwmo.org

mwwmo.org

MISSISSIPPI  
WATERSHED  
MANAGEMENT  
ORGANIZATION

# CAPITAL PROJECT GRANTS PROGRAM

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## Application Guidance

This applicant guidance document is designed to assist potential applicants in understanding the intent of the MWWMO's Capital Projects Grant program, eligibility, the key elements of a strong proposal, and grantee expectations.

## Program Overview

MWWMO capital funding is available for large projects (greater than \$50,000) that help further the MWWMO's mission: to lead, and to foster stewardship of the watershed with actions that promote civic ownership and responsibility and through measures that achieve diverse and functional ecosystems. Examples include water quality improvements, innovative stormwater management, flood mitigation, habitat enhancement, and riverbank stabilization.

## Proposal Assistance

Applicants are encouraged to reach out to the MWWMO contact listed on the Capital Project Grants webpage to discuss their project idea and ask questions in advance of the application deadline.

## Eligible Applicants

Projects must be located within the MWWMO's boundaries and can be on public or private land. Eligible applicants include local, state, or regional government units; non-profit organizations; businesses; or landowners. The project must have consent from all landowners.

## Eligible Project Elements

To be eligible for funding, project elements must go above and beyond the MWWMO's Stormwater Management Standards as outlined in the [Watershed Management Plan](#) or demonstrate use of a

new, innovative approach or technology with potential to be replicated in other areas. The MWMO does not cover the costs of meeting the MWMO's standards, although partial funding for project elements may be considered if exceeding MWMO standards (e.g. the cost of enlarging an infiltration basin beyond MWMO's standards if enhanced water quality benefits can be demonstrated). Other examples that may go above and beyond the MWMO's standards include: treating mill and overlay areas, treating the stormwater from rooftops of existing buildings, directing water from nearby stormsewers to the property in order to treat off-site water, and using extra measures to protect groundwater (e.g., soil remediation and restoration). Project elements that exceed regulatory rate control requirements and help alleviate offsite flooding may also be eligible.

Project elements that improve habitat (such as expanding habitat corridors or developing large pollinator patches) or enhance biodiversity are also eligible for funding, as long as the elements go beyond regulatory requirements for the site.

Eligible expenses include final design costs, equipment, materials and labor that are related to the stormwater management practices and restoration work. The MWMO may require a feasibility study, including design alternatives, cost estimates, and pollution reduction estimates. If a feasibility study has not yet been completed, contact the MWMO to discuss your project idea before applying.

Interpretive elements providing an educational benefit are also eligible for funding, although are secondary to the stormwater management or habitat improvement project itself. Examples of interpretive elements include educational signage or art to help the public learn about and engage with the project. The MWMO may be able to assist with design, review, and fabrication of signage and other educational materials in cases where there is a clear public benefit.

## **Budget Development**

Costs included in the budget should be strictly for project elements falling under MWMO's funding priorities, i.e., helping achieve the organization's goals of water quality, quantity, and habitat improvement. The overall cost of a redevelopment project (e.g., building upgrades to increase energy efficiency) does not need to be included in the budget, although it can be noted in the application narrative. Final budget numbers are not required at the time of application, but will be required before contracts are finalized if the project is awarded grant funding.

Applicant matching funds are not required but are encouraged. For funds to be considered a match, they must be applied to project elements that are also eligible for grant funds. The match may be cash, or the value of equipment, materials, and professional services directly attributed to grant-eligible items.

## **Funding Cycle and Timeline**

Applications must be submitted by 4:30 p.m. on the deadline listed on the webpage. MWMO staff will confirm receipt of capital project grant applications and begin the review process. If staff have questions, they may reach out to grant applicants individually, and the applicants will be provided an opportunity to respond with further information, if needed. Following application review, applicants will be contacted within two months of the application deadline. If selected for funding, requests for approval are submitted to the MWMO Board of Commissioners. Depending on project readiness, applications may be submitted to the board as soon as the next scheduled MWMO Board of Commissioners meeting.

## **Permitting**

The grantee is responsible for obtaining all necessary federal, state, and local permits and ensuring the project meets all water quality rules. Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the appropriate regulatory agencies early in the application development process to ensure potential projects can meet all applicable regulatory requirements.

## **Grant Period and Payments**

Funding cannot pay for work completed before having a signed grant agreement. Any work that occurs before a grant agreement is fully executed is not eligible for grant reimbursement but may be considered as match and should be included in the application budget. All grant projects must be completed by the date identified in the grant agreement, typically two to three years after the grant is awarded. Final payments will be provided after all project deliverables are received and approved. Interim payments can be made on a project by project basis as documented in the project agreement. Interim payments will be based on documentation of expenditures and project stage of completion. The MWMO will hold the last 10 percent until verification of completion of all project components.

## **Grantee Expectations**

Each grant recipient must formally enter into a grant agreement with the MWMO. The agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation of the project and submittal of final project deliverables. The agreement is a legal, binding document developed by the MWMO. Project recipients are expected to keep accurate financial records of the project which includes documentation of all expenses.

Awarded projects are expected to report the following to the MWMO:

- Work plan and final budget
- Project design and specifications
- All invoices for consultant and/or contractor work
- Certification that the project was installed according to the approved plans and specifications
- Operations and maintenance plan covering the life of the practice
- Calculations and results summary including items such as square feet/size of stormwater practices or habitat improvements, drainage area details, and water quality benefits (e.g. reductions in volume, TP, and TSS)
- Final deliverables: copies of site investigative reports, final construction documents, stormwater models, bid comparison, photos, and as-built drawings
- Any other deliverables as outlined in the approved project agreement

The MWMO expects the grantee to include the MWMO in key planning meetings and provide periodic updates during the design and construction process. Updates shall provide information on project status, draft and final deliverables, project meeting summaries, and other relevant work products for the project. The grantee should also obtain written approval from the MWMO that the final plans and specifications meet the intent of the grant program prior to construction. Grant recipients shall recognize the MWMO as a project partner on any public promotion including but not limited to press releases, pamphlets, websites, and permanent signage, and provide the MWMO an opportunity to review prior to finalizing materials. Grantees will in turn be asked to provide information for and review key project content developed by the MWMO such as web pages, fact sheets, or newsletter content. Grantees are also expected to provide access to the site for periodic site visits, inspections, photography opportunities, and tours. In some cases, the MWMO may also be able to participate in short- or long-term monitoring of installed practices.

## **Long-Term Maintenance**

To ensure that the expected operational life of a grant funded project is achieved, an Operation and Maintenance Plan is required to be developed as part of the project. Project maintenance is the sole responsibility of the applicant. The MWMO may conduct periodic inspections of the final project to ensure responsibilities are met for the effective life of the project. The “effective life” is the minimum number of years (e.g., 20 years) the grantee will be required to maintain the project per the executed grant agreement and in accordance with the Watershed Management Plan.