

WATER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Rice Creek Watershed District actively engages and funds private water quality improvement projects through the Water Quality Grant Program. This program provides multiple benefits that reduce or reuse stormwater runoff, prevent erosion, and/or filter pollutants.

Water quality projects that may be eligible for this grant program include: wetland restorations; rain gardens; shoreline or streambank restorations; replacing impervious surfaces with pervious pavers; pet waste management stations; infiltration basins; green roofs; and critical area stabilizations. Projects to improve the function of an existing BMP (like installing a pre-treatment chamber) may be considered. Agricultural water quality projects may also be eligible upon review.

FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The 2026 Water Quality Grant Program has \$175,000 available for eligible projects within RCWD boundaries. Projects may be approved for funding of 25%, 50%, or 75% of the total eligible materials and contracted labor costs up to \$10,000. Funding levels are based on RCWD evaluated criteria including pollutant load reductions and the overall project benefit to water resources.

GETTING STARTED

The RCWD partners with the Anoka (ACD) and Washington Conservation Districts (WCD) and the Ramsey County Parks and Recreation, Soil and Water Conservation Division (Ramsey SWCD) and their conservation specialists to determine if potential projects are eligible for this program. The conservation specialists also provide technical assistance, site visits, and assistance completing the application for RCWD landowners (residents, businesses, cities, etc).

The first step in the Water Quality Grant application process is to schedule a site visit with your respective county conservation specialist. At the visit, the specialist will discuss and evaluate potential projects for program eligibility using the RCWD's screening form. Scoring is based on a project's proximity to priority and/or impaired water bodies; estimated water quality improvement; surface water rate and volume control; erosion and sediment control. Potential applicants that are not eligible for the Water Quality Grant program will be informed of eligibility for other RCWD grant programs.

Request a free site visit by contacting your county's conservation specialist:

Anoka County

Breanna Keith

Breanna.Keith@AnokaSWCD.org

Ramsey County

Tyler Keefer

tyler.keefe@co.ramsey.mn.us

Washington County

Urban Areas: Ashley Petel

apetel@mnwcd.org

Rural Areas: Angela Defenbaugh

adefenbaugh@mnwcd.org

WATER QUALITY GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND POLICIES

DEADLINES

The RCWD reviews proposals on a monthly basis.. Applications are presented to the RCWD Board of Managers for approval at the first meeting of the month (2nd Wednesday of every month). **Do not start a project before receiving Board approval or the project will no longer be eligible.** Applicants should supply information to the county conservation specialist well in advance of these dates to allow for adequate application review and processing.

GRANT PROGRAM AGREEMENT, AMENDMENTS, AND OPERATION & MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

The grant application form will also serve as the Grant Program Contract. It must be completed and signed by the landowner and the conservation specialist. The document will be signed by the RCWD after Board approval; the agreement term lasts for 18 months. **Changes to the project or amendments to the agreement may not be made without approval by RCWD.**

Project maintenance is the responsibility of the landowner (applicant). All landowners will be required to sign an Operation and Maintenance Agreement that provides details on expectations and time commitment. RCWD staff or the conservation specialist have the authority to inspect any projects during the agreement period.

GRANT COMPLETION AND PAYMENT

The assigned conservation specialist must inspect and certify that the project was completed according to the approved grant agreement, design standards, specifications, and pollution reduction values. All claimed expenses will be reviewed by RCWD staff. The RCWD Board reserves the right to adjust the costs submitted for reimbursement based on this review. Grant payment will be made after project completion and once RCWD has received all required documentation.

CONFORMANCE TO GUIDELINES

The District reserves the right to withdraw funding for any project not completed in accordance with these guidelines or the terms of its executed Grant Program Contract. It is the applicant's sole responsibility to acquire any/all required permits and approvals prior to commencement of their project. Any submitted information, including but not limited to applications, conceptual designs, contractor bids, cost estimates, final designs and specifications, copies of permits and proof of expenditures becomes part of the public record.

INFORMATIVE RESOURCES

For more information regarding RCWD's Water Quality Grant Program and a step-by-step breakdown of the application process, please visit <https://www.ricestream.org/grants/water-quality-grants/> OR contact RCWD Outreach and Grants Technician, Molly Nelson at mnelson@ricestream.org