



### PROGRAM INFORMATION PACKET

**One hundred projects + one hundred partners = 100,000 hours on the ground**

For nearly two decades, Metro has provided grants for habitat restoration, conservation education and other projects that connect people to nature close to home. From 2006 to 2011, the Metro Council awarded nearly 100 Nature in Neighborhood Restoration and Enhancement grants for a total of \$1.725 million. This money leveraged \$8 million of additional investments, engaged more than a hundred partner organizations and generated 100,000 volunteer hours to restore local rivers and streams, fight invasive weeds, provide trips into nature for children and service learning opportunities for all ages.

This year the Metro Council offers \$200,000 in funding for Restoration and Enhancement Grants to support habitat restoration, stream and floodplain enhancement and conservation education efforts that strive to engage people and build strong community support for watershed health. Projects or programs that foster innovative public/private relationships and that serve low-income communities and communities of color are encouraged.

#### PROGRAM AND PROJECT GRANTS

Grants can include on-the-ground restoration activities such as invasive species removal, site restoration, and native planting efforts that will improve or enhance water quality as well as outreach and education programming, hands-on conservation education programs or the production of education materials and activities specific to a neighborhood and its watershed. Projects that foster innovative public/private relationships and that serve low-income communities and communities of color are encouraged. **Funding requests can range from \$10,000 to \$30,000 and project duration can range 12 to 24 months. Each project requires a 1:1 match and at least three active partners.**

#### PLANNING AND PROJECT DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Planning grants are offered again this year in response to needs identified in the community for financial and institutional support in convening and developing partnerships for new projects. These grants typically help provide the financial and technical resources needed to develop detailed proposals beyond the conceptual or master plan phase. Projects that foster innovative public/private relationships and that serve low-income communities and communities of color are encouraged. Successful projects demonstrate their ability to meet the overall funding objectives of the grant program and act as a catalyst to a community-identified priority. **Planning and project development requests can range from \$5,000 to \$15,000. Up to \$30,000 will be awarded for these proposals. Project duration can range 12 to 24 months. Planning grants require a 1:1 match and at least three active partners.**

## **PROGRAM PURPOSE AND GOALS**

Proposals will be evaluated based on their ability to meet the purpose and goals of the Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement grant program.

**Program purpose** – To support and create partnerships in local communities that connect people with nature and improve watershed health.

**Program goals** (project proposals can address only one or many of these to be successful)

- create new or expand existing relationships between partners and/or organizations
- connect people to their watershed and/or teach people about watershed health
- preserve and restore fish and wildlife habitat in local communities; connect to larger conservation initiatives
- support nature-education and field trips for school-aged children
- improve the ability of underserved communities – particularly low-income people and communities of color – to experience and access nature.

## **PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY AND GUIDELINES**

### **Who is eligible to apply?**

- Individuals, community groups, businesses, neighborhoods, nonprofits, schools and school groups, government agencies, faith groups and service groups.
- Applicants must have nonprofit, tax-exempt status and hold insurance. Fiscal agents can be used to manage financial aspects of the project if applicant does meet this requirement. Completed fiscal agent arrangements are not required for the pre-application but potential agreements must be noted. Completed fiscal agent agreements are required as part of the submittal of all final applications.

### **Eligible locations**

- Projects must take place within Metro’s jurisdictional boundary or the Metro urban growth boundary or serve Metro area residents.
- Projects cannot take place on Metro property. Programming, such as field trips and education programs, may be conducted on Metro property by other eligible organizations or individuals NOT including Metro.
- Projects on private land must be able to show a clear public and environmental benefit. Ideally, these projects would be accessible by the public.
- All projects must have landowner permission at the time of full application.

### **Project eligibility**

- Projects must address at least one of the funding objectives.
- Projects require at least three partners.
- Projects must be completed within 12 to 24 months of being awarded the grant.

### **Financial/budget requirements for eligibility**

- Projects require a 1:1 match. The match should come from other funds and/or in-kind contribution(s) of materials, services or volunteer assistance.
- Match must be secured at time of final application.
- Funding from other grants managed through Metro cannot be applied towards match.
- Overhead costs are reimbursable up to 10 percent of the total grant award and as match up to 10 percent of total project cost. Overhead costs must be detailed and justified.

### **Other project guidelines**

- Projects cannot take the place of required mitigation or penalty payments.
- Projects cannot result in direct profit or proprietary resources.
- The construction of new buildings or related infrastructure is not eligible for funding. Deconstruction of buildings is generally not eligible unless it is for restoration purposes where removing structures improves watershed function and health.
- Applicable permits and legal requirements for the project are the sole responsibility of the applicant. Projects requiring permits shall demonstrate that the permitting process will not significantly impact project timeline. Applicant shall discuss in their application where they are in the permitting process.

### **CONTRACT REQUIREMENTS**

Applicants who receive funding shall enter into a contractual agreement with Metro that specifies legal and contractual obligations, including insurance requirements and the use of a fiscal agent. A boilerplate contract is available for review on Metro's website. Funds may not be pre-committed prior to a completed and signed contractual agreement.

### **REPORTING AND REIMBURSEMENT REQUIREMENTS OF SELECTED PROJECTS**

- New grant recipients are required to attend the Metro-sponsored "contracting basics" meeting prior to executing the contract.
- Funding is available on a reimbursement basis only. Once a request is complete, Metro will reimburse within 30 days.
- Applicant must be making reasonable progress towards the project goals and objectives within the first six months of award.
- Grantees must submit at least two requests for reimbursement annually along with a brief progress report including a summary of activities and program evaluation to date.
- Grantees may submit as many requests for reimbursement as deemed necessary throughout grant period but not more than one per month.
- One hard copy and one electronic copy of a final report will be due upon project completion. The final report shall include:
  - 1) A written summary of grant activities describing how the project was completed.
  - 2) An evaluation of reported outcomes predetermined with Metro in contracting phase.

- 3) The actual total budget for the project with grant-funded items and in-kind matching contributions identified – including the total of volunteer hours, the number of participants and a list of partners involved.
  - 4) Photos of the project and/or activities. If the project involves restoration, photos of before and after shall be included.
  - 5) An outline of a maintenance plan or follow-up activities, if applicable.
- Metro and the Nature in Neighborhoods program shall be acknowledged as grant sponsors on any written or published material, grant product and/or project signage.
  - Metro shall receive any grant products including but not limited to curriculum, videos, guides and brochures upon request.
  - Grant projects are subject to Metro audits and reviews.

### **SELECTION PROCESS**

A team of Metro staff and other professionals with backgrounds in restoration, environmental education, grant management, finance, volunteer coordination, project planning and partnership development will review pre-applications and final applications. Proposals will be evaluated based on the information submitted, responsiveness to funding objectives and stated criteria, and the review committee’s professional and collective judgment.

In this funding cycle, grant applicants are encouraged to submit proposals that engage underserved, low-income and communities of color in project implementation, program delivery and outreach activities. Following the review of pre-applications, Metro will invite selected projects to submit a full application. The Metro Council will review and approve the final list of projects recommended for funding.

#### **Evaluation criteria**

Grant proposals will be ranked according to how well they meet the following evaluation criteria.

1. Proposal meets all program requirements: e.g. three partnerships, 1:1 match, project or programs located within Metro’s boundary or the Metro UGB (or primarily serve residents within Metro’s boundary).
2. Proposal is responsive to program goals – all project proposals must meet the overall program purpose. Applicants can address only one or many of the program goals to be successful.
3. Proposal has a well-crafted scope of work
  - Effective techniques and practices
  - Involves communities that have been traditionally underserved or underrepresented
  - Shows clear public benefit if private land
  - Roles and responsibilities of partners is clear
  - Sustainable after completion; includes maintenance plan.

4. Proposal has a well-designed, inclusive community engagement strategy
  - Improves the ability of underserved or underrepresented communities to experience and access nature; participate in activities that improve watershed health
  - Supports new and/or innovative partnerships in the project or planning effort
  - Engages people in on-the-ground habitat restoration activities and/or
  - Provides hands-on environmental education programming.
  
5. Proposal has clear deliverables and measurable outcomes.

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