



Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration & Enhancement Grant Program

Program Information Packet

Since 2006, the Metro Council has awarded nearly \$1.5 million through the Nature in Neighborhoods Restoration and Enhancement Grant Program to projects that actively engage people in the restoration of watershed health. In this fifth year of the program Metro will award up to a total of \$130,000 in grants.

The restoration enhancement grant program supports individual, nonprofit and government sponsored restoration, enhancement and education efforts that strive to activate participants in their watershed and build strong community support for watershed health. Projects can include invasive species removal and site restoration, clean-up and restoration of areas subject to illegal dumping, education programming with on-the-ground restoration activities, education materials and activities specific to the neighborhood and its watershed, and planting efforts (native or other approved species) that will improve or enhance water quality. Projects that utilize “untapped” resources and foster innovative public/partner relationships are encouraged. This year, projects that bring in new partners and/or new locations will be given priority for funding.

Funding requests can range from \$5,000 to \$25,000 and project duration can range 12 to 24 months. Each project will require a 1:1 match and at least three active partners

Project funding objectives

Projects should meet one or more of the following objectives:

1. Restoration projects which link participants to their watershed and/or work towards educating participants about watershed health.
2. Educational programs that teach ecological concepts and build awareness about the connections between our actions and how they affect our watersheds.
3. Conservation, restoration and/or enhancement projects that have been identified in a master plan, watershed plan or other similar document where the need for the project has been demonstrated.
4. Projects that can serve as models for new, innovative ideas that benefit watershed health.
5. Projects or programs that support other restoration efforts by offering technical resources, materials and/or supplies.
6. Projects that clean up illegal dumps and restore the site to deter or prevent further illegal dumping.
7. Projects or programs that build upon existing activities and benefit watershed health and environmental awareness.

Program eligibility and guidelines

Who is eligible to apply

- Individuals, citizen groups, businesses, neighborhoods, non-profits, 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. At the pre-application stage completed fiscal agent arrangements are not required but potential agreements must be notated in the application. 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.
- Projects cannot take place on Metro property.
- Projects on private land must be able to show a clear public and environmental benefit to watershed health. 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 and shall be comprised of other funds and/or in-kind contribution 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% of the total grant award and as match up to 10% of total project cost. Overhead costs must be 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 improve watershed function and health.
- Funding requests to increase capacity of established programs are eligible but must be able to illustrate program results to date and those expected with continued funding.
- 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

- 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. Reimbursements may take up to 60 days.
- Applicant must be making reasonable progress towards the project goals and objectives within the first six months of award.
- All funded projects will require the grant recipient to provide Metro with twice yearly reports. These reports will include a summary of activities, actual budget expenditures, request for reimbursement and project evaluation to date.
- Grantees must submit at least two requests for reimbursement annually included with reports but may submit as many as they deem necessary throughout grant period.
- Two hard copies 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 and progressive steps about 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, during and after shall be included.
 - 5) An outline of a maintenance plan or follow-up activities needed to ensure success, if applicable.
- Metro and its 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 their request.
- All selected projects are required to input their project information into REIN (<http://www.rein.org/>). Successful applicants will receive training for this input process.
- Grant projects are subject to Metro audits and reviews.

Selection process

A team of Metro staff and community members with professional backgrounds in restoration, environmental education, grant management, finance, volunteer coordination and partnerships will review pre-applications and final applications. Projects will be evaluated based on the information submitted; responsiveness to the grant programs funding objectives and stated criteria, and the review committee's professional and collective judgment. Following the review of pre-applications Metro will invite selected projects to submit a full application. Recommendations for projects to be funded will be presented to the Metro Council for final approval.

Criteria for ranking

Applications will be evaluated using these criteria and the responsiveness of the applicant to each of the major areas in their project proposal.

- **Project Quality**
 - Projects responsiveness to the programs funding objectives.
 - Projects use of effective restoration practices and techniques (best management practices).
 - Project is adequately detailed to form judgment of soundness of proposal.
 - Timeline is reasonable and activities are likely to be implemented in the granting period and expected benefits and outcomes are likely to be achieved.
 - Educational or programming reaches new and/or underserved communities.
 - Project or program has objectives with measurable outcomes.
 - Project has secured involvement from the solid waste community and/or has a solid waste element.
 - Project involves new partners and/or new locations for sites.
 - Project or program has innovative partnerships and/or relationships.
 - Project is sustainable after completion of the project and outlines ongoing maintenance plan.

- **Quality of application**
 - Completeness and use of forms

- **Capability of applicant**
 - Qualifications of applicant
 - Past successes
 - Partner and financial support and discussion of partner roles and responsibilities.

- **Cost effectiveness**
 - Project is cost-effective relative to expected outcomes
 - Project has required, secured match.