

# HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA

## Solicitation for Grant Applications

Green Partners grant program

Environmental action grants

Virtual information meetings: Register on [this form](#) or at [hennepin.us/greenpartners](https://hennepin.us/greenpartners), see Environmental Education Grants

- Tuesday, April 13, 2021, from 10 to 11 a.m.
- Monday, April 19, 2021, from 1 to 2 p.m.

Applications due by: Thursday, May 6, 2021 at 3:00 p.m.



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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Grant program overview

The County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota (“County”) is soliciting applications for a Green Partners Environmental Action Grant (the “Grant”). As used herein, the entity/individual responsible for any awarded Grant may be referred to as the “Applicant” and the Applicant’s response to this solicitation (the “Solicitation”) may be referred to as the “Application”.

Through the Green Partners environmental education grant program, Hennepin County supports organizations to actively educate, engage, and motivate residents to become environmental stewards and make positive behavior changes, such as taking action to prevent waste, recycle, reduce household hazardous waste, conserve energy, care for trees, protect pollinators, and improve our air and water quality.

### Environmental action projects: motivate action with adults

Environmental action projects must primarily engage adults. Applicants must be willing to identify and incorporate research-based behavior change strategies into project plans to motivate people to take one or two environmentally friendly actions. Support will be provided by county staff during the project period. Learn more about behavior change strategies at [Fostering Sustainable Behavior](#) and [The Psychology of Sustainable Behavior](#).

***Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact the county for feedback on project ideas before applying.*** For more information visit [hennepin.us/greenpartners](https://hennepin.us/greenpartners) or contact Patience Caso at [patience.caso@hennepin.us](mailto:patience.caso@hennepin.us) or 612-348-9352.

## 1.2 Application due date

Applications are **due by 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, 2021**. Submit your application through the Hennepin County [supplier portal](#). For instructions, please go to the [Supplier Portal Information Page](#). Find grant program information at [hennepin.us/greenpartners](https://hennepin.us/greenpartners).

Contact the Supplier Portal Help Desk for assistance with viewing the application materials, registering, and uploading your Application at 612-543-5412 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or [supplierportal@hennepin.us](mailto:supplierportal@hennepin.us).

## 1.3 Virtual information meetings

Register to attend a virtual information meeting on [this form](#) or at [hennepin.us/greenpartners](https://hennepin.us/greenpartners), see Environmental Education Grants

- Tuesday, April 13, 2021, from 10 to 11 a.m.
- Monday, April 19, 2021, from 1 to 2 p.m.

## 1.4 Scope of grant projects and eligibility

To be eligible for the Grant, the applicant must be one of the following:

- State registered nonprofits, such as community, youth, and faith groups
- Private and public school, including community education and early childhood family education programs
- Park district

### Which application should I use?

The Green Partners grants program has two options to apply for funding **based on your primary audience and the focus of your project.**

Application	Audience	Project focus
<b>Environmental action grant application</b>	Adults (18+)	Motivating individuals to make behavior changes at home, at work, or on-the-go.
<b>Youth environmental education grant application</b>	Youth of all ages	Developing awareness of environmental issues and interest in environmental stewardship.

- If you plan to engage mostly **adults**, complete the *environmental action grant application* and develop a project focused on motivating your audience to take one or two actions.
- If you plan to engage mostly **parents of youth**, complete the *environmental action grant application* and develop a project focused on motivating your audience to take one or two actions.
- If you plan to engage **high school, middle school, elementary, or preschool age youth**, complete the *youth environmental education grant application* and develop a project focused on developing an environmental ethic and interest in environmental stewardship.

### What grant amount am I eligible to receive?

- If you **have never received** a Hennepin County Green Partners grant before, you can apply for up to \$10,000 for a one-year project.
- If you **have received** a Hennepin County Green Partners grant before, you can apply for up to \$20,000 for a one-year project. If you indicate the project is viable for two years, it will be considered for a two-year grant.

### 1.5 Grant Application content and format

When submitting an Application, Applicants must follow the specific format and content requirements below and in the application document. Failure to do so will likely prolong the evaluation process and/or may be grounds for rejection of the Application.

Applicant shall describe, in detail, the proposed uses of the Grant funds for the project. Any other use of Grant funds is strictly prohibited. Applicant shall be solely responsible for securing all additional funds necessary for completion of the Project.

Applicant agrees to only use the Grant funds for the uses indicated above. Use of Grant funds for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. If Applicant uses Grant funds for any other purpose, Applicant shall, upon County's written demand, repay all Grant funds awarded.

### **Application format requirements**

- Submit the application in Word and your budget in Excel or similar. Do not submit pdf versions of your application and budget.
- You must follow the Application format and answer all questions.
- Do not exceed 6 pages. Keep the font size readable. Do not include a cover sheet. You may delete the question text and instructions to fit the page limit.
- Supplemental materials are not required. Up to 4 pages of supplemental materials may be included as attachments and will not be counted toward the page limit; however, project recommendations will be based on information provided in the Application. Materials may include brochures, endorsement letters, staff and volunteer bios, pilot project results, newsletters, event fliers, etc. Please reference supplemental materials in the Application narrative.

## 2 Evaluation and selection

### **2.1 Applicant evaluation and recommendation for selection**

County will consider the Application to determine whether it meets County's requirements and is otherwise eligible for a Grant award. Submission of an Application shall neither obligate nor entitle an Applicant to enter into a contract with the County or to receive a Grant.

### **2.2 Evaluation of responsiveness**

The County will consider all the material submitted by the Applicant to determine whether the Applicant's offer is in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation. Applications that do not comply with the provisions in this Solicitation may be considered nonresponsive and may be rejected. Notwithstanding the foregoing, County expressly reserves the right to reject any or all Applications with or without cause. Applications must focus on the topic areas below in order to be considered as responsive:

#### **Project topic focus areas**

Project focuses on one or more of the following topics:

Protecting natural resources

- Caring for trees
- Protecting water

- Protecting pollinators

#### Preventing waste and recycling

- Recycling
- Preventing waste
- Organics recycling
- Backyard composting
- Reducing household hazardous waste

#### Taking action on climate change

- Conserving energy
- Improving air quality
- Using renewable energy
- Choosing sustainable transportation

## 2.3 Evaluation criteria

Points that will be used during the review process are indicated for each section of the Application. A qualitative assessment is also used in the evaluation of Applications. Evaluation criteria includes the following:

#### Project goals and activities

- Work primarily with adults.
- Focus on motivating participants to take one or two environmental actions during the project.
- Ability to research audience barriers to action and what their perceptions are of the benefits. ([Benefits and barriers discussion guide](#))
- Incorporate activities that enable participants to progress on their journey from awareness to action. Consider the barriers and motivations at each step. ([Journey map and planning worksheet](#))
- Incorporate research-based strategies and activities to motivate behavior changes. ([Motivating behavior change checklist](#))
- Ability to track project outcomes and collect evidence of behavior changes from participants. ([Behavior change outcomes report](#))
- Use hands-on activities and/or existing resources when appropriate, such as Hennepin County environmental education activity guides, factsheets, and education kits, (find these at [hennepin.us/environmentaleducation](http://hennepin.us/environmentaleducation)).
- Projects that qualify for two-year grants are successful, well-established programs that engage new participants. Only organizations that have received a Green Partners grant in the past qualify for a two-year grant.

#### Audience/participants

- Engage at least 150 participants during the project period.
- Participants must live, work, go to school, or recreate in Hennepin County.

- Most participants targeted for the project don't already take the actions identified and there is strong likelihood that they will adopt a new behavior because of their participation in this project.
- Organizations must be able to engage the audience throughout the project period.
- Hennepin County is interested in supporting projects that engage historically marginalized and underserved communities.

### Organizational experience and capacity

- Foster a partnership with Hennepin County.
- Use varied and effective channels to communicate with their audience.
- Conduct background checks on staff and volunteers working with youth.
- Show that the organization has the capacity to implement the project and meet grant obligations.
- Returning grantees must have a good track record of completing project activities and reports.

### Budget

- Budget includes educational supplies, incentives, and tools for participants to take action.
- Details are provided regarding number of items to be purchased and cost per item (or estimate).
- Budget items are described, and it is clear how the items will be used.
- Staff time listed includes estimated hours and hourly rates.
- Submit a one-year budget. If your project is viable for two years, briefly describe what a second-year budget would look like in the application narrative. We will work with you to develop the budget for year two if your organization is selected for a two-year grant.

#### Eligible expenses:

Funds may be used for materials, supplies, printing, communications, staff time, and outreach.

- Project supplies: We encourage groups to purchase supplies that will enable participants to have experiences and take action. Educator and take-home supplies are allowed.
- Staff time: Unless staff time is funded through other means, Applications should include funding for staff to complete grant management activities and reporting. We suggest including a minimum of 10 staff hours for grant related meetings and reporting. Stipends for interns or apprentices are allowed.
- Transportation: Nice Ride, transit, mileage, buses
- Communications: Printing, mailing, promotions, materials
- Green events: Grantees must take steps to make events low waste. Use Hennepin County's [green events checklist](#), [recycling at events resources](#), and [lead by example resources](#).
- Food and beverage: Grantees must follow the county's healthy eating guidelines and minimize waste when purchasing food and beverage items. See Hennepin County's [event recycling and waste reduction guide](#) and [guidelines for offering healthy foods at meetings](#).

#### Ineligible expenses:

- Disposable items: Styrofoam™, bottled water and other disposable, single-use food service items, and disposable event decorations are not eligible expenses.

- Equipment valued more than \$500: Funds may not be used for computers, dishwashers, or other durable equipment valued over \$500.
- General operating expenses such as attorney fees, rent, and electricity are not eligible.
- Recycling and organics bins and funding for additional recycling and organics infrastructure are available through the [business recycling](#) and [school recycling](#) grant programs.
- Rain garden and native garden funding for design and installation is available through the [natural resources grant program](#) or your watershed.

All projects should follow COVID-19 guidance on social distancing, mask wearing, and gatherings: [health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus](https://health.state.mn.us/diseases/coronavirus)

See the application for how the criteria is weighted. A combination of quantitative and qualitative criteria are used in the project selection process.

The County reserves the right to determine whether any aspect of the Application satisfactorily meets the criteria, the right to seek clarification or additional information from any Applicant(s), and the right to waive any irregularities or informalities that the County deems is in its best interest.

## 2.4 Execution of Grant agreement

County may condition the Grant award upon Applicant's execution of a Grant agreement provided by County. As applicable, the Grant agreement shall define the legal relationship between County and Applicant.

The Grant agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation of the project and required reports. The Grant agreement is a legal, binding document. Project recipients are expected to keep accurate financial records of the project including proof and documentation of all expenses.

**Insurance requirements:** Hennepin County requires insurance coverage for most Green Partners grantees in the following amounts: general liability insurance coverage of \$1 million in general aggregate, \$1 million in products – completed operations aggregate, \$1 million in personal and advertising injury, \$1 million in combined bodily injury and property damage – each occurrence, professional liability insurance coverage of \$1 million, employer's liability insurance coverage of at least \$500,000 for disease – policy limit, \$100,000 for disease – each employee, and \$100,000 for accident – each accident. Workers' compensation coverage is required by state law unless a certification of exclusion from workers' compensation requirements can be provided. Auto liability of \$1 million is required for projects that involve transporting project staff or participants. If applicants do not have the insurance coverage listed above, contact the program manager to discuss waiver options.

**One-year projects:** Once a contract is executed, 60% of the award amount will be provided to the applicant. The remaining 40% will be provided after approval of the final report.

**Two-year projects:** Once a contract is executed, 50% of the award amount will be provided to the applicant. A second payment of 20% of the grant will be released once the project is approved to continue for the second year. The remaining 30% will be provided after approval of the final report, which requires documentation of expenditures, project activities, and behavior change outcomes.



## 3 General rules

### 3.1 Solicitation for Grant Applications

This Solicitation for Grant Applications is an invitation for Applicants to submit a Grant Application to the County. It is a means by which the County may facilitate the acquisition of information related to awarding the Grant and is **NOT A COMMITMENT OR OBLIGATION TO AWARD ANY AMOUNT.**

Nothing in this Solicitation shall obligate County to (i) award any amount; (ii) award any subsequent grants; or (iii) pay or otherwise make any additional distributions.

### 3.2 Estimated timeline and extension of time

- **Application due: Thursday, May 6, 2021, by 3 p.m.**
- Application review: June 2021
- Hennepin County Board approval: August 2021
- Projects begin & orientation meeting: September 2021
- Audience research/discussion report due: November 2021
- End of project: August 31, 2022

These dates are subject to revision or cancellation by the County in its sole and absolute discretion.

### 3.3 Application submission

Applications will be received in the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). In order to submit an Application, you must first register with the Supplier Portal. For more information on how to register, please go to the [Supplier Portal Information Page](#). Applicants are strongly encouraged to make their submissions well in advance of the Application due date as the process may take some time to complete.

Failure to submit an Application on time may be grounds for rejection of the Application; however, the County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to accept Applications after the Application due date.

Applications are due by **3 p.m. on Thursday, May 6, 2021**. Late submittals will not be accepted.

Find additional grant program information at [hennepin.us/greenpartners](http://hennepin.us/greenpartners).

### Application submission checklist

Steps to submit an Application:

- Review the Green Partners grant guidelines.
- Determine if you should submit a *youth environmental education grant application* or an *environmental action grant application*. (See page 3 of this document.)
- Register an individual account with [Hennepin County's online services](#), if you are not already registered.

- Go to the [Supplier Portal](#), log-in with your organization's information or register your organization as a new user. [Learn more and get instructions](#).
- Fill out and submit your project Application and budget through the [Supplier Portal](#). You must use the application format provided.
- Submit links to or copies of curriculum that will be used (if applicable).
- Submit letters of support from significant project partners listed in your Application (if applicable).

### **3.4 Questions and pre-application assistance**

Applicants are encouraged to contact the county for feedback on project ideas before applying. For more information visit [hennepin.us/greenpartners](http://hennepin.us/greenpartners) or contact Patience Caso at [patience.caso@hennepin.us](mailto:patience.caso@hennepin.us) or 612-348-9352.

### **3.5 Addenda**

The County reserves the right to modify this Solicitation at any time prior to the Application due date. An addendum will be posted in the Supplier Portal if the Solicitation is modified. Addenda may be viewed by clicking on the 'View Event Package' on the Event Details page. It is the responsibility of each prospective Applicant to assure receipt of all addenda.

The County will modify the Solicitation only by formal written addenda. Applications should be based on this Solicitation document and any formal written addenda. Applicants should not rely on oral statements, or site visits.

### **3.6 County's right to withdraw, cancel, suspend and/or modify the Solicitation**

The County reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend, and/or modify this Solicitation for any reason and at any time with no liability to any prospective Applicant for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the Solicitation or otherwise.

### **3.7 Applicant's right to edit or cancel an Application**

An Application may be edited or cancelled in the Supplier Portal prior to the Application due date. For instructions, view the Edit or Cancel a Response section of the [How to Respond to an Event Guide](#).

### **3.8 Applications will not be returned**

Upon submission, Applications will not be returned.

### **3.9 Public disclosure of Application documents**

This Solicitation and any data or information submitted to County in response are subject to applicable law, including but not limited to the provisions of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act Minnesota Statutes, chapter 13 ("MGDPA").

If the Applicant believes private/non-public data is included in its Application, Applicant shall clearly identify the data and provide the specific rationale in support of the asserted classification. Applicant must type in bold red letters the term "CONFIDENTIAL" on that specific part or page of the Application which Applicant believes to be confidential. Classification of data as trade secret data will be determined pursuant to applicable law, and, accordingly, merely labeling data as "trade secret", "confidential" or the like does not necessarily make the data protected under any applicable law.

The Applicant agrees, as a condition of submitting its Application, that the County will not be liable or accountable for any loss or damage which may result from a breach of confidentiality related to the Application.

### **3.10 Applicant's costs**

The County shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in relation to this Solicitation. Applicant shall bear all costs of Application preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this Solicitation or otherwise.

### **3.11 Conflict of interest**

The Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge the submission of its Application, or any resulting Grant award, does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Strictly for illustration purposes, a personal relationship with a County employee directly or indirectly involved in the Grant process may be a conflict of interest.

The Applicant agrees that should any actual or perceived conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify the County and will advise whether it will or will not avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the conflict of interest.

The County may make reasonable efforts to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize a conflict of interest by an Applicant. To avoid a conflict of interest by an Applicant, the County may utilize methods including disqualifying an Applicant from eligibility for the Grant or cancelling the Grant if the conflict is discovered after the Grant has been issued. The County may, at its sole and absolute discretion, waive any conflict of interest.

## **4 Attachments**

### **4.1 Attachment 1 – Environmental action grant application**

### **4.2 Attachment 2 – Grant budget form**

### **4.3 Attachment 3 – Environmental action projects of interest**