Solicitation for Grant Applications

Green Partners Grant Program

Youth Environmental Education grants

Applications due by: May 28, 2020 at 3:00 p.m.
1 Introduction

1.1 Project overview

The County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota ("County") is soliciting applications for a Green Partners Youth Environmental Education 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 air and water quality.

Youth environmental education projects: encourage environmental stewardship

Projects must incorporate best practices for youth environmental education:

- Encourage youth leadership
- Promote community partnerships
- Develop awareness and increase knowledge of environmental issues
- Engage critical thinking skills by being inquiry-driven and interdisciplinary
- Incorporate outdoor, experiential, service learning, or place-based education
- Promote environmental stewardship through hands-on, skill-building activities
- Provide a physically and emotionally safe and inclusive environment for learning

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

Application due date

Applications are due by 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, 2020. 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.

Contact the Supplier Portal Help Desk for assistance with viewing the application materials, registering, and uploading your Application at 612-543-5412 (M-F, 8-4:30 p.m.) or supplierportal@hennepin.us.

Information meetings

Access the webinar link at hennepin.us/greenpartners, see Environmental Education Grants

- May 6, 2020, 10 a.m.
- May 14, 2020, 1 p.m.
1.2 The Grant

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 schools, including community education and early childhood family education programs
- Park districts

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.

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

- If you plan to engage mostly 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.
- 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 mostly adults, complete the environmental action grant application and develop a project focused on motivating your audience to take one or two actions.

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.

Projects of interest
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.
Hennepin County is seeking youth projects that includes activities like those described below. Other projects that fit the program criteria will also be accepted. For additional project ideas, refer to Hennepin County’s environmental education resources at hennepin.us/environmentaleducation.

- **Cross-curricular projects**: Pair environmental science with other subjects like art, music, or creative writing.
- **Environment-based education**: Use environmental issues as a context for learning in various subject matters.
- **Outdoor education**: Engage youth through service-learning projects or outdoor field experiences to study waste issues, learn about water resources, or protect pollinators.
- **Field trips**: When appropriate, take a trip to any of Hennepin County’s recommended sites and use classroom curriculum, workshops, or take-home lessons to reinforce what youth learn.
- **Environmental action planning**: Identify and pursue solutions to environmental problems. Examine the issues, understand differing viewpoints and points of conflict, consider benefits and consequences of various actions, and create a youth-led action plan to address the issue. Learn about the root causes of an environmental issue and engage youth in civic action.
- **Place-based learning**: Immerse students in their local environment, history, and culture, and encourage action in community initiatives. Explore biodiversity and environmental quality of natural areas near where youth live, explore local green infrastructure, conduct citizen science or field studies, or develop community-based projects.
- **Citizen science and service learning**: Involve youth in collecting scientific data and carrying out hands-on restoration or stewardship projects that benefit the environment.

**Youth environmental education projects encourage environmental stewardship**

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**1.3 Grant Application**

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.

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

- Protecting water
- Protecting pollinators
- Learning about habitats
- Caring for trees

Preventing waste and recycling

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

Taking action on climate change

- Conserving energy
- Using renewable energy
- Choosing sustainable transportation
- Improving air quality
Evaluation criteria shall include the following:

**Project goals and activities**
- Engage preschool, elementary, middle, and/or high school aged youth to become environmental stewards.
- Integrate environmental education best practices:
  - Encourage youth leadership
  - Promote community partnerships
  - Develop awareness and increase knowledge of environmental issues
  - Engage critical thinking skills by being inquiry-driven and interdisciplinary
  - Incorporate outdoor, experiential, service learning, or place-based education
  - Promote environmental stewardship through hands-on, skill-building activities
  - Provide a physically and emotionally safe and inclusive environment for learning
- Use hands-on activities and/or existing resources such as Hennepin County environmental education activity guides, factsheets, and education kits, when appropriate (find these at hennepin.us/environmentaleducation).
- Projects that qualify for two-year grants must be a successful, well-established program that engages new participants. Only organizations that have received a Green Partners environmental education grant in the past qualify for a two-year grant.

**Audience/participants**
- Engage at least 150 youth during the project period.
- Organizations must be able to engage the audience throughout the project period.
- Participants must live, work, go to school, or recreate in Hennepin County.
- Participants are empowered to influence project plans and activities once the project begins (optional, but Applications that incorporate participant decision-making will score higher).
- Able to engage historically marginalized and underserved communities.

**Organizational experience and capacity**
- Foster a partnership with Hennepin County.
- Have past experience in conducting youth education.
- 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.

**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 tips and guidelines for offering healthy foods at meetings.

**Ineligible expenses:**

- **Disposable items:** Styrofoam, bottled water and other disposable, single 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.

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.

### 2.3 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.

**Insurance requirements:** Each project recipient must formally enter into a contract agreement with the county. The agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation of the project and required reports. The 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.
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. You may submit your organization’s “Certificate of Insurance” with your Application for review.

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 and Grant overview

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

- Applications due: Thursday, May 28, 2020, by 3 p.m.
- Application review: June 2020
- Hennepin County Board approval: August 2020
- Projects begin & orientation meeting: September 2020
- Audience research/discussion report due: November 2020
- End of project and project report due: August 31, 2021
- Project celebration: September 2021

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.

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 or contact Patience Caso at 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 – Grant Program Description
The Hennepin County Green Partners environmental education grant program 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.

4.2 Attachment 2 – Application Format and Content

Application due date

Applications are due by 3 p.m. on Thursday, May 28, 2020. Late submittals will not be accepted.

Submit your Application through the Hennepin County Supplier Portal. You must register with the Supplier Portal before you can submit an Application. For instructions, please go to the Supplier Portal Information Page. Find grant program information at hennepin.us/greenpartners.

Format requirements

- You must follow this format. Applications in other formats will not be accepted.
- Do not exceed 6 pages. Keep the font size readable. Do not include a cover sheet. You may delete questions and instructions to fit the page limit.
- Points are indicated for each section and will be used during the review process. A qualitative assessment is also used in the evaluation of the project Applications.
- Up to 5 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 any supplemental materials in the Application narrative. Documents will be briefly reviewed by the grant program manager and shared with the review committee.
- Find the program guidelines, application, and budget form at 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 on-line 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).