

Alternative Landscaping Equipment Grant

Request for proposals (RFP)

FY 2020

This document describes the Alternative Landscape Equipment Grant, including information on who may apply for funding, match requirements, activities eligible for funding, and other information that will help applicants submit an application. Applications are due no later than **4:00 pm Central Time** on Friday, November 8, 2019.

The applicant should check the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) webpage for any updates, including questions, answers and addendums: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/voc>.

Sample Grant Agreement, Grant Application form, Affidavit of Noncollusion, and other documents can all be found at: <http://www.pca.state.mn.us/voc>.

1. Overview

The MPCA is offering grants to switch to battery/electric-powered equipment in an effort to reduce the emissions from these sources. Local governmental parks and public works departments, landscaping companies, tree care companies and others use a variety of 2-cycle gasoline engines. Examples include: string trimmers, leaf blowers, hedge trimmers, backpack blowers, chain saws and pole saws. These gasoline engines emit Volatile Organic Compounds (VOCs), Particulate Matter (PM), and other air pollutants which can be a concern for employees and nearby communities. These pollutants react with sunlight to form ground-level ozone, an ongoing air quality concern in Minnesota.

2. Funding

Approximately \$150,000.00 in funding is available. Additional funding may become available or MPCA may choose not to award all funding. MPCA has authority to administer this RFP pursuant to Minn. Stat. § 115D.04.

Maximum award: The maximum grant award is \$24,000 per application.

Match requirement: The match requirement is 50%, meaning grant recipient will match \$1 for every \$1 in grant funds for eligible project expenses. Matching funds must be cash.

Payment schedule

Reimbursements for eligible costs will be paid upon completion of the approved project with and MPCA approved invoices and documentation that shows the equipment replaced has been scrapped or otherwise rendered inoperable (when applicable).

3. Eligible and ineligible applicants

Eligible applicants

Eligible applicants include: businesses with under 500 employees, governmental agencies, educational institutions, or nongovernmental organizations (e.g., nonprofit or industry association).

Priority will be given to applicants whose primary location of operation is within an area of concern of higher vulnerability to negative health outcomes related to air pollution, an area of higher air pollution, and/or an area of concern for environmental justice.

Ineligible applicants

Individuals are ineligible. The MPCA may also deem an applicant ineligible because of, but not limited to, enforcement issues, labor standards, tax status, or other such issues.

Entities that are currently suspended or debarred by the State of Minnesota and/or the federal government are ineligible applicants.

4. Eligible and ineligible projects

Eligible projects

The intent of this program is to reduce emissions from 2-cycle gasoline engines used in landscaping by purchasing and using battery/electric-powered equipment. The MPCA is encouraging eligible organizations to scrap out their gasoline equipment and replace with equivalent battery- or electric-powered equipment. Equipment scrapped must be equivalent to the battery/electric-powered equipment purchased, must have remaining lifespan and cannot be end of life, and must be one piece for one piece. Additional batteries and chargers may be included as part of the grant proposal and must be listed out in the application. These accessories do not need to have equivalent equipment scrapped for the 50% grant funding.

Ineligible projects

Any project that does not fit the description above of an Eligible project.

5. Application submission instructions

All applicants must submit the Grant Application form and Affidavit of Noncollusion.

Applications must be received electronically by the MPCA **no later than 4:00 pm Central Time** on Friday, November 8, 2019. The email properties header will reflect the date and time submissions are received.

Application submissions received after the deadline will be considered ineligible. Email applications to grants.pca@state.mn.us with the subject line: **"FY20 Alternative Landscaping Equipment Grants."** The MPCA is not responsible for any errors or delays caused by technology-related issues.

6. Application questions

The MPCA is obligated to be transparent in all aspects surrounding grant work. To meet this obligation, all questions must be submitted in the same manner and answers are only provided via the [MPCA website](#). It is the applicant's responsibility to check the MPCA website for the most recent updates about an open RFP, including questions and answers and addendums.

Applicants who have any questions regarding this RFP must email questions to grants.pca@state.mn.us, subject line: "Alternative Landscaping Equipment Grant Question". Answers to questions will be posted frequently on the [MPCA website](#).

7. Application review process

Applications received by the grant deadline will be reviewed by MPCA staff and community-based reviewer(s) based upon the Application Evaluation Score Sheet in Exhibit A. Late applications will not be considered for review.

All applicants will be notified by MPCA staff within approximately 60 days of application due date. Applicants selected for funding will be contacted concerning the next steps in the award process, including execution of the appropriate agreements and workplan submissions.

8. Eligible and ineligible costs

Eligible costs

Any cost that is directly related to the project and not deemed ineligible below or by MPCA staff.

Ineligible costs

Ineligible costs include costs that are not directly related to the project. The following costs, including but not limited to, even if they are directly related to the project, are ineligible.

- Any expenses incurred before the contract is fully executed including applicant's expense for preparing the eligibility and cost applications or any expenses incurred during work plan application and final work plan development.
- Bad debts, late payment fees, finance charges or contingency funds, interest, and investment management fees.
- Attorney fees.
- Employee worksite parking.
- Lobbying, lobbyists and political contributions.
- Mark-up on purchases and/or subcontracts.
- Taxes, except sales tax on eligible equipment and expenses.
- Activities associated with permit fees.
- Activities addressing enforcement actions or that involve a financial penalty.
- Memberships (including subscriptions and dues).
- Food (other than staff per diem), alcoholic refreshments.
- Entertainment, gifts, prizes and decorations.
- Merit awards and bonuses.
- Donations and fundraising.
- Computer(s), tablets, and software, unless unique to the project and specifically approved by the MPCA as a direct expense.
- Purchase or rental of mobile communication devices such as cell phones, unless unique to the project and specifically approved by the MPCA as a direct expense.

9. Grantee responsibilities

Awardees are required to be a registered vendor in SWIFT and will sign the grant agreement using SWIFT. To register, go to the Supplier Portal webpage [SWIFT](#) and click on the Vendor Registration Link.

Grant agreement

Each awardee must enter into a grant agreement. The agreement will address the conditions of the award, including implementation of the project. Once the agreement is signed, the recipient is expected to read and comply with all conditions of the agreement.

Reporting requirements

Grantees are required to submit invoices after project completion. It is the preference of the MPCA for grantees to allow MPCA staff to view the grant-supported improvements in person and potentially work with awardees to educate others.

Public data

Applications are private or nonpublic until opened. Once the applications are opened, the name and address of the applicant and the amount requested is public. All other data in an application is private or nonpublic data until all agreements are fully executed. After all agreements are fully executed, all remaining data in the

applications is public with the exception of trade secret data as defined and classified in Minn. Stat. § 13.37. A statement by a grantee that the application is copyrighted or otherwise protected does not prevent public access to the application (Minn. Stat. § 13.599, subd. 3).

Conflict of interest

We will take steps to prevent individual and organizational conflicts of interest, both in reference to applicants and reviewers per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#) and [Conflict of Interest Policy for State Grant-Making](#).

Organizational conflicts of interest occur when:

- A grantee or applicant is unable or potentially unable to render impartial assistance or advice to the department due to competing duties or loyalties.
- A grantee's or applicant's objectivity in carrying out the grant is or might be otherwise impaired due to competing duties or loyalties.

In cases where a conflict of interest is suspected, disclosed, or discovered, the applicants or grantees will be notified and actions may be pursued, including but not limited to disqualification from eligibility for the grant award or termination of the grant agreement.

Grantee bidding requirements

Any grant-funded services and/or materials that are expected to cost between \$10,000 and \$24,999 must be competitively awarded based on a minimum of two (2) verbal quotes or bids or awarded to a targeted vendor.

If a project is awarded a grant, grantee will be required to comply with bidding and other requirements for any grant funded services and/or materials. These requirements will be incorporated in the grant agreement.

The grantee must not contract with vendors who are suspended or debarred in Minnesota:

<http://www.mmd.admin.state.mn.us/debarredreport.asp>.

Audits

Per [Minn. Stat. § 16B.98](#), subd. 8, the grantee's books, records, documents, and accounting procedures and practices of the grantee or other party that are relevant to the grant or transaction are subject to examination by the granting agency and either the legislative auditor or the state auditor, as appropriate. This requirement will last for a minimum of six years from the grant agreement end date, receipt, and approval of all final reports, or the required period of time to satisfy all state and program retention requirements, whichever is later.

Affirmative action and non-discrimination requirements for all grantees

- A. The grantee agrees not to discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of race, color, creed, religion, national origin, sex, marital status, status in regard to public assistance, membership or activity in a local commission, disability, sexual orientation, or age in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. [Minn. Stat. § 363A.02](#). The grantee agrees to take affirmative steps to employ, advance in employment, upgrade, train, and recruit minority persons, women, and persons with disabilities.
- B. The grantee must not discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because of physical or mental disability in regard to any position for which the employee or applicant for employment is qualified. The grantee agrees to take affirmative action to employ, advance in employment, and otherwise treat qualified disabled persons without discrimination based upon their physical or mental disability in all employment practices such as the following: employment, upgrading, demotion or transfer, recruitment, advertising, layoff or termination, rates of pay or other forms of compensation, and selection for training, including apprenticeship. [Minn. R. 5000.3500](#).
- C. The grantee agrees to comply with the rules and relevant orders of the Minnesota Department of Human Rights issued pursuant to the Minnesota Human Rights Act.

Voter registration requirement

The grantee will comply with [Minn. Stat. § 201.162](#) by providing voter registration services for its employees and for the public served by the grantee.

10. Priorities

It is the policy of the State of Minnesota to ensure fairness, precision, equity, and consistency in competitive grant awards. This includes implementing diversity and inclusion in grant-making. [The Policy on Rating Criteria for Competitive Grant Review](#) establishes the expectation that grant programs intentionally identify how the grant serves diverse populations, especially populations experiencing inequities and/or disparities.

This grant prioritizes:

- Communities with higher concentrations of low-income residents and people of color, including tribal communities.
- Diverse populations including but not limited to small businesses that are certified as veteran-owned, economically disadvantaged, or targeted group businesses in Minnesota based on the business's ownership by a woman, a minority, a person with a substantial physical disability, or by its location in an economically disadvantaged area. Please reference additional information here: <https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/sbcp/>

Exhibit A: Application evaluation score sheet

Evaluation factors

A 100 – point scale will be used to evaluate eligible applications and develop final recommendations.

Applications will be evaluated and ranked according to the following criteria:

<p>1. Environmental Justice: (30 points maximum) Points will be assigned based on the primary zip code where the majority of landscaping work is done.</p>	30
<p>2. Operation in areas of higher vulnerability to negative health outcomes related to air pollution: Points will be assigned based on the primary zip code where the majority of landscaping is done.</p>	15
<p>3. Operation in areas of higher pollution: Points will be assigned based on the primary zip code where the majority of landscaping work is done.</p>	15
<p>4. Cost-effectiveness: Grant dollars requested divided by the annual VOC lbs. reduced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$0 – \$2.99/lb. (\$0- \$3,999k/ton) – 15 points • \$3 – \$5.99/lb. (\$8k - \$11,999k/ton) – 10 points • \$6 – \$8.99/lb. (\$16k - \$19,999k/ton) – 5 points • More than \$9/lb. (\$20k/ton) – 0 points 	15
<p>5. Organization size: Based on number of employees (including parent companies and all business operations)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Under 100 employees --- 15 points • 100 – 299 employees --- 10 points • 300 – 499 employees --- 5 points • 500 employees --- 0 points 	15
<p>6. Organization type Small businesses that can show proof of being veteran-owned, economically disadvantaged, or a targeted group business in Minnesota based on the business's ownership by a woman, a minority, a person with a substantial physical disability, or by its location in an economically disadvantaged area will be awarded 10 points. Please reference additional information here: https://mn.gov/admin/business/vendor-info/oep/sbcp/</p>	10
<p>Total</p>	100