

Frequently Asked Questions

Fiscal year 2018-2019 Environmental Assistance Grant Round

1. What if I need more information about the Environmental Assistance (EA) Request for Proposals (RFP) and/or application process?

All questions of concern, information, clarification, etc., should be submitted directly to grants-loans.pca@state.mn.us using subject line: **EA Question**.

Questions and answers will be posted on the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) EA Grants Program webpage at <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mPCA/environmental-assistance-grants> under “Frequently Asked Questions” (FAQ) for this RFP. As questions are submitted, responses will be added periodically. Please check the FAQ regularly for responses and updates.

2. Will applications be accepted for projects not listed as “preferred projects?”

All submitted applications deemed eligible under the focus area will be reviewed. However, projects that reflect the “preferred projects” identified under each focus area will receive priority consideration during the application evaluation process. Other focus area eligible projects will be considered for funding only if funding remains available after consideration of all eligible preferred projects.

3. What are the chances of being funded if you are not a “preferred project”?

Due to limited program funding, projects that are not listed as preferred projects, but are focus area eligible projects, will be considered for funding only if funding remains available after consideration of all eligible preferred projects.

4. Am I still eligible for an EA Grant if I have received previous state funding for the proposed project?

Yes, you remain eligible. However, if the MPCA has previously funded the project, the applicant should clearly show how the new project differs from that of the previously MPCA-funded project(s).

5. May other State funds be combined with the EA Grant funds?

Applicants are not required to contribute their own funds and may use funds from other sources, including State sources, toward the total project cost. However, the required matching funds for an EA Grant may not be derived from the MPCA.

6. May the required match be in-kind instead of cash?

Matching funds may be either cash or in-kind. A reasonable dollar-value must be assigned to all in-kind matches.

7. If my project fits multiple focus areas, should I submit multiple applications?

Applicants must select the most appropriate focus area for their project and use the application form provided. Applicants may submit multiple applications to multiple focus areas; however, submittal of the same proposed project to multiple focus areas may be cause for rejection of all such submittals from that applicant.

8. If my project fits multiple preferred projects within a focus area, should I select all that apply?

Applicants should strive to select the most appropriate preferred project. If multiple preferred projects are marked under a focus area, the MPCA review team will make the decision of which preferred project the application will be reviewed under.

9. May I submit applications for more than one project in more than one focus area?

Applicants may submit multiple applications to multiple focus areas as long as there are no duplicative proposed projects being submitted by the applicant.

10. When do I have to submit documentation of matching funds?

The applicant must submit a complete application by the deadline. Matching funds must be identified and documented in writing as secured funding. Matching funds (cash and/or in-kind) are considered identified and documented as secured if the applicant is providing all matching funds, or the applicant submits written documentation (letters or resolutions) from those committed to provide the match.

11. What happens if I am not able to submit all necessary documentation (i.e., board resolution, letter from provider of matching funds) with my application?

The applicant must submit a complete application by the deadline. If the resolution/letter has not been finalized, the applicant should include a copy of the pending resolution/letter and indicate the dates that it will be finalized and submitted. Not providing the necessary documentation or being able to submit it in a timely manner may have a negative impact on the evaluation of the application.

12. Is community assistance eligible for funding in Focus Area 2: Environmental education?

The intent of the funding is to support learning, behavior change and/or civic engagement of the program participants. Where community assistance encompasses these goals, it would be eligible. If a program is designed to support community members (volunteers) in learning about an issue and then supporting them through the process of identifying and implementing a community solution (therefore building understanding and volunteerism and civic participation), then the work is eligible in this focus area. The application should discuss outcomes in terms of community benefit (knowledge, leadership, capacity building), as well as any anticipated environmental outcomes.

13. Will my application be accepted as long as it is submitted by close-of-business on the due date?

No, applications are due by **2:00 p.m.** Central Time in accordance to the deadlines as outlined in the RFP under Application submission instructions section. Applications must be electronically submitted to grants-loans.pca@state.mn.us using subject line: **EA Submittal**. As this is a competitive grant program, deadlines will be strictly adhered to. Please allow yourself ample time for email delivery. Also, please ensure that all applicable items of the application form are addressed and corresponding application documentation is correctly attached.

14. Is Minnesota State University eligible to apply for an EA grant?

Yes. Minnesota State Colleges and Universities are eligible to apply under the EA Grant Round.

15. Can an EA grant be used to support community planning to reduce flood or extreme weather impacts in our community, including completing a feasibility study to evaluate preparedness options?

Yes. EA grants can be used to support planning for increased community climate resilience. This may include a feasibility study to evaluate preparedness options.

16. We were interested in apply for an Environmental Assistance grant for climate change adaptation to install native vegetation to provide pollinator habitat, improved water quality, and carbon sequestration. Would maintenance of the vegetation following installation be considered an eligible expense under this grant?

Yes, that would be eligible, but just for expenses that occur within the time period of the grant work plan and grant agreement. Expenses that would occur after then would not be eligible.

17. We are currently working on adding additional dust collection through the purchase and installation of new dust collection equipment, ductwork, and shakeout hoods which would lower our emission levels of PM, PM10, and PM2.5. I believe this will also have some positive impacts on VOC emissions potentially but will need to do some more research on the filters being used. Would we be eligible for your 2018 -2019 EA Grant by chance?

Unfortunately, this would not be eligible for an Environmental Assistance Grant, but it may qualify for a Small Business Environmental Loan, provided other criteria are met. Please see <https://www.pca.state.mn.us/about-mpca/small-business-environmental-loan-program> for more information.

18. The project I am trying to fill out the grant for would fall under the Environmental Education section.

1. Is there a minimum/maximum amount of money we can request?
2. What are some of the other projects/ or educational items that have won a grant in the past?
3. In your opinion, would this even qualify as a good project idea? (An interactive Enviroscape to showcase water quality and erosion control options. There will be lessons that correspond with it, as well as other hands on activities.)

Per page 11 of the Request for Proposals, there is no minimum request and the maximum request is \$15,000. There is also a 10% match requirement.

This is the first time there has been an environmental education focus area, so there are unfortunately no examples to point to for this.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer opinions on project ideas, but encourage applicants to review the focus area description and scoring criteria provided in the Request for Proposals when developing project ideas.

19. Under the "Who can apply" eligibility, the phrase "political subdivisions of the state" is used. I am hoping to confirm that municipalities or counties are political subdivisions under your definition, and are eligible to apply?

Yes, municipalities and counties are eligible to apply.

20. I am wondering if our Community Health Board which represents [three named] Counties takes the lead and applies, would we be limited to the \$15,000 funding or could we request up to \$45,000.

Maximum grant awards are established on a per-project basis, not per-applicant basis, so the number of organizations involved in a project proposal does not change the maximum grant award.

21. I am seeking clarification regarding matching funds for the Environmental Assistance Grant Program. In the RFP it states a 25% minimum match amount is required, but under preferred project descriptions it states ranges of required match from 10-25%, for example under preferred projects section 2.2 a match requirement of 10% is stated. Which requirement should be met, the requirement under section 2. Funding in the RFP or under the preferred projects portion.

Where the match requirement associated with a specific preferred project differs from the general 25% match requirement, the match requirement indicated for that preferred project should be met. Therefore, for preferred projects section 2.2, the 10% match requirement is the one to follow.

22. [Our organization] looks forward to applying for Focus Area 6. If we determine that we will do all 3 (6.1, 6.2, 6.3) can we apply for funds for each category? For example, could we ask for \$50,000 for 6.1, \$35,000 for 6.2, and \$70,000 for 6.3? Or can we only apply for UP TO \$75,000 regardless of how many we do?

The maximum grant amount is the highest dollar amount that will be rewarded for that focus area. Preferred project areas that fall under one focus area will not be awarded more than the maximum grant amount.

23. What instances would require the applicant to provide letters of support, resolutions of matching funds and authorizing board resolutions? The environmental director can provide an authorizing board resolution, the Tribal Council can provide a resolution of matching funds (if these are required) but from whom would a letter of support need to come?

Per page 4 of the RFP, if an applicant is governed by a board, a resolution committing to the project and authorizing signature for acceptance/execution of the grant agreement is needed. Please see the answer to FAQ question 10 regarding resolutions of matching funds. Letters of support should come from any partners of the organization that is applying for the grant and should state their commitment to the proposed project.

24. We are interested in applying for about \$5,000 under 2b to hire translation services for 6 languages for at least 5 Outreach educational materials.

These materials are being developed under an MDH grant regarding Contaminants of Emerging Concern in urban stormwater. We are targeting people in Drinking Water Source Priority A that are within our jurisdiction, some of which are mapped as underserved populations in Coon Rapids. The materials are planned for broader, statewide use.

Please confirm:

1. Eligibility
2. No need for Affidavit of Collusion
3. No need for board resolution

The translation project is eligible

Per page 7 of the RFP: Application submittals should contain the following:

- Completed EA application form, including environmental outcomes:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-f2-27-2c-fy18.doc>
- Completed EA budget and expenditures form:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-f2-27h-fy18.xls>
- Completed project workplan including anticipated environmental outcomes table:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-f2-27i-fy18.doc>
- Signed and notarized affidavit of noncollusion:
<https://www.pca.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/p-f2-27j-fy18.doc>

Per page 4 of the RFP, if an applicant is governed by a board, a resolution committing to the project and authorizing signature for acceptance/execution of the grant agreement is needed.

25. I'm working at a small (~2000 students) higher ed institution where our main effort in sustainability in the coming years involves waste diversion, in three domains: food waste (we're trying to move from an organics diversion to a broader "real" program), dorm waste (we're planning a reuse program), and green chemistry curriculum designed to help replace our toxic waste flows (from labs and art facilities) with reusable materials.

These three areas correspond well to three focus areas (in food waste reduction, reuse/repair, and green chemistry curriculum). Is it possible to submit a single application, integrating all three areas (since they will reinforce each other through the curriculum)? Or, if separate applications would be required, is it appropriate to cross reference?

Finally, given the relatively small pool of funding available for the great number of focus areas in the call, is there any chance that the scope of our projects will have a high enough impact to be competitive? I would really like to build our relationship with the PCA - but am being coached that this may not be the place to start. Thanks for your thoughts on this!

Please see answers to FAQ questions 7, 8 and 9 regarding multiple focus areas and preferred projects.

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer opinions on project ideas, but encourage applicants to review the focus area description and scoring criteria provided in the Request for Proposals when developing project ideas.

26. We have been working in a community that is experiencing environmental degradation that results from the removal of many trees. The removal of trees will increase flooding and runoff. We have been working with public, private, and commercial property owners to install stormwater BMPs throughout the community. A component of this project has been development of a field training program that builds capacity to maintain these practices once installed.

Should we pursue category 1 or 2?

Unfortunately, we are unable to offer opinions on project ideas, but encourage applicants to review the focus area description and scoring criteria provided in the Request for Proposals when developing project ideas. Please see the answers to FAQ question 7 regarding proposals that may be eligible for multiple focus areas.