



Lower Minnesota River Watershed District Water Resources Restoration Fund Application

Process

The LMRWD has up to \$100,000 per fiscal year as part of the Water Resources Restoration Fund as outlined in the LMRWD Water Management Plan Implementation Program Budget. Funds are awarded up to 25% of a project’s cost on a reimbursement basis for project implementation. Funds can be used for project materials, labor, engineering, and consulting fees. If the applicant wishes to use the grant funds for project construction, the LMRWD will award up to 25% of the lesser of the engineer’s cost estimate or bided construction cost of the project.

This is a summary of the review process for Water Restoration Fund applications:

1. Submitted applications are reviewed for completeness and eligibility.
2. Eligible/complete applications are reviewed by staff according to criteria and scoring metrics in Table 1. Staff will reach out requesting additional information or schedule meetings, as needed.
3. Staff notifies applicants whether their projects will be considered by the LMRWD Board of Managers for funding.
4. Staff provides a funding recommendation to the LMRWD Board of Managers in accordance with Table 2.
5. The LMRWD Board of Managers votes to approve or deny the funding recommendations. The LMRWD Board of Managers meets on the third Wednesday of each month. It is recommended that applicants attend the Board Meeting to answer Board Member questions about their project.
6. If a funding request is approved, the LMRWD and the LGU will execute a grant agreement.
7. After agreement has been signed by both parties, LMRWD will provide funding on a reimbursement basis when receipts and summaries are submitted, up to 25% of the total project cost (lesser of the engineer’s cost estimate or bided construction cost). The LMRWD will not reimburse funds that exceed the grant agreement amount. No invoices of work completed prior to an executed grant agreement may be submitted to the LMRWD for reimbursement.
8. The LMRWD will hold 10% of the funds until the project is successfully completed and a final report is submitted.

Table 1. Application Evaluation Scoring Metrics and Criteria

Scoring Metric	Definition	Max Points
1. Project Type	The Project Type Score considers whether a proposed project is a tributary to an impaired waterway, if it solves an issue previously identified by the community or LMRWD plans, and whether the project is explicitly included in the LGU or LMRWD plans.	24
2. Plan Goals Addressed	The Plan Goals Addressed Score gives credit depending on how well-aligned a proposed project is with the goals of the LMRWD Watershed Management Plan (Section 3.0). Projects are assigned a score of 0-9 based on how many of the LMRWD goals are addressed.	9
3. Stormwater Volume Control	The Stormwater Volume Control Score gives credit to projects that exceed the standards for stormwater runoff volume management. Projects are assigned a score of 0-7 based on the amount of volume reduction that the proposed project provides.	7

Scoring Metric	Definition	Max Points
4. Pollutant Management	The Pollutant Management Score gives credit to projects that exceed the amount of water quality treatment provided beyond what is required for regulatory purposes. Projects without a pollutant reduction component (beyond regulatory requirements) will receive a score of 0, whereas those reducing pollutant loading beyond regulatory requirements to downstream resources can receive a score of up to 7.	7
5. Habitat Restoration	The Habitat Restoration Score gives credit to projects that provide habitat benefits. Projects with no habitat benefit receive a score of 0. Projects that include habitat creation or enhancement as the primary purpose of the project receive a score of up to 7.	7
6. Streambank Stabilization	The Streambank Stabilization Score gives credit to projects that restore or stabilize degraded streambanks or shorelines. A project is assigned a bank stabilization score based on the length of the stream bank or shoreline restored or stabilized and the level of existing degradation. This metric is only applied to projects with a designed restoration component (versus indirect benefits). Projects without a designed streambank or shoreline restoration component are assigned a score of 0. Projects that stabilize more than 100 feet of streambank or shoreline restoration receive a score of up to 7.	7
7. Watershed Benefits	The Watershed Benefits Score gives credit to projects that provide benefits beyond the immediate site location. Scores are based on where the proposed project is located within the watershed, giving greater weight to those in the upstream reaches of the watershed.	7
8. Partnership Opportunities	The Partnership Opportunity Score gives credit to projects that allow the LMRWD to partner with other organizations. The LMRWD is interested in being a project partner with its member communities. A project receives the maximum score of 7 if one or more of the partners (including the applicant) is a financial contributor to the project.	7
9. Public Education	The Public Education Score gives credit to projects that spread awareness of the LMRWD's projects and their benefits to the public. The score is based on the accessibility of the final project, giving the greatest weight to those on public lands with public access and ability to spread public awareness and education.	7
Total Score		82

Table 2. LMRWD Funding Request Scoring Priority

Project Score	Priority	Recommended Action
0–19	Low	Do not recommend funding requests at this time; additional information may be needed to evaluate the potential project more fully.
20–40	Low-to-Moderate	Work with applicants to incorporate more LMRWD goals, policies, or strategies.
41–61	Moderate-to-High	Consider partial funding requests, with funding amount and design components that align with LMRWD priorities.
62–82	High	Recommend up to 25% of the funding request as presented.

Award Information

Grant Award

Applicants will be notified of the proposed recommendation via email 15 business days before the LMRWD Board meeting where funding recommendations will be presented. After the LMRWD Board meeting, the applicant will be notified of an approved or denied funding request. If a project is approved, the applicant will then enter into a grant agreement with the LMRWD. No invoices for work completed prior to an executed agreement may be submitted to the LMRWD for reimbursement.

Executing Grant and Maintenance Agreement

Each applicant selected is required to enter into a grant agreement with the LMRWD defining the obligations of the applicant and the LMRWD. Any amendment to the terms of the agreement will be through a mutual written agreement signed by all parties to update the original document.

The agreement includes, but is not limited to, items such as promoting and acknowledging LMRWD sponsorship, reporting, payment schedule, terms of the agreement and use of funds, cost overruns, and cancellation. The agreement also allows the LMRWD access to the project area for evaluation and promotion of the project.

Payments

Payments from the LMRWD to the grantee are reimbursement-based and require receipts or paid invoices as well as a summary of the work completed as part of the receipt/invoice. LMRWD can reimburse funds throughout the project as requested by the grantee, up to the final grant amount, as agreed upon in the grant agreement. The LMRWD will hold 10% of the funds until the project is successfully completed, and a final summary report is submitted and approved. If the grant money is being used for construction of a project, the LMRWD reserves the right to access the project area for inspection before releasing funds.

Grant Reporting Requirements

Grant Monitoring

The LMRWD will require a site visit (or virtual meeting if it is a program or study) during the project. The site visit will document project status and is intended to ensure that work is performed as part of the grant agreement.

Summary Reports

A narrative providing a summary of the work completed with each invoice is required. The summary may include work completed as part of the receipt/invoice, construction updates, photos, and project timelines.

Final Summary Report

Within 30 days after project completion, a final summary report must be submitted with receipts or paid invoices before final reimbursement can be dispersed. Grantees will be required to include original receipts of the expenses, and digital photos of project components. Additionally, electronic copies of all education materials produced shall be provided to the LMRWD when applicable.