

Answers to Questions About PWSA's Green Infrastructure Grant Program

Updated February 12, 2016

Eligibility

Q: Where is the area of eligibility?

A: Projects must be located in the City of Pittsburgh (PWSA's sewer service area). PWSA is happy to talk with staff of other municipalities interested in creating a similar program.

Q: Are already-completed green infrastructure projects eligible?

A: No, applications must be for new projects. An extension of an existing project will be considered by the review committee.

Q: Could this grant be used for a single rain barrel? Or a homeowner's small backyard rain garden?

A: This program is meant to support larger scale projects and projects that will engage significant numbers of people. Projects for single-family homes are not eligible.

Q: Can the educational mini grant be used for signage?

A: Yes, especially if the signage will be in a high-visibility area and will reach many people.

Q: Could anti-litter education be a focus of the education mini-grant and spur conversation about trash and its detrimental effects on water quality?

A: Yes. Priority will be given to projects with the greatest potential to make a direct impact on water quality. All projects should have an educational component.

Q: Does the organization applying for a mini-grant have to have 501c3 status?

A: No. PWSA will look for evidence that the organization is well established to ensure there is a long-term focus for this project.

Q: Can an organization submit more than one grant application?

A: Yes.

Q: What counts as green infrastructure?

A: Any plan that manages stormwater and improves water quality will be considered.

Q: What kinds of property owners are eligible for the Matching Grant?

A: Funding can be awarded to public/government agencies, private property owners, or non-profits/non-governmental organizations. Applications must be made by property owners or those legally authorized to act on a property owner's behalf. Projects for single-family homes are not eligible.

Application Requirements

Q: Do plans need to be approved/permitted at the time of application submission?

A: No. Awardees are responsible for obtaining all necessary permits.

Q: Do applicants need to hire an engineer for the project?

A: Not necessarily, depending on the project and its scale. Note: green roof applicants must submit proof of adequate structural load-bearing capacity for proposed roof, signed or stamped by a professional engineer.

Q: Does PWSA have a list of green infrastructure engineers?

A: PWSA does not currently have a list of engineers who can provide green infrastructure support. See Resources below.

Q: Will PWSA help me design a project?

A: PWSA is not able to provide design assistance. See Resources below.

Q: How does the funding work for design/planning?

A: For the Matching Grant program, up to 20% of the grant request can be used for design and planning. As with other aspects of the project, design costs will be reimbursed after the project is complete and receipts are submitted.

Q: If I have a design already, should I include it with my application?

A: Yes. A basic design plan is required for all green infrastructure applications. More detailed plans will help PWSA to better evaluate the application.

Q: When must receipts be submitted for Matching Grants?

A: For the Matching Grant program, receipts must be submitted at the completion of the project in order to receive match funding. Projects awarded in 2016 must be complete by November 1, 2017.

Monitoring

Q: What are the expectations for monitoring the projects?

A: PWSA needs to be able to document the impact of green infrastructure on sewer overflows, and is also interested in collecting data regarding other benefits of green infrastructure. All Matching Grant recipients are expected to conduct monitoring and impact evaluation in the way that best fits the project. Mini-Grant recipients are strongly encouraged to propose monitoring and impact evaluation plans. PWSA is developing a Monitoring Protocol, which will be made available at the Information Sessions and on the application page on PWSA's website. All monitoring data must be shared with PWSA.

Q: Who has the responsibility of documenting and monitoring the project?

A: The applicant holds responsibility for documentation and monitoring. Data must be shared with PWSA as outlined in the Grant Agreement.

Q: Will PWSA pay for monitoring?

A: Monitoring costs will be treated no differently than other green infrastructure costs for this program. Applicants should include monitoring costs in their project budgets.

Grant Timing

Q: How is the reimbursement for the Matching Grant distributed?

A: After the project is installed, PWSA will reimburse up to 50% of the green infrastructure project cost, based on receipts submitted to PWSA. The percentage reimbursement will vary based on the project budget.

Q: What is the project planning time for this round of matching grants?

A: Preference will be given to projects that will be complete in 2016. Projects awarded in this grant cycle must be complete by November 1, 2017. Projects not completed by that date will forfeit awarded funds.

Q: Will there be another round of grants?

A: PWSA hopes to offer these grants again.

Grant Program Goals

Q: What is the primary purpose of this grant program?

A: The primary purpose of the Green Infrastructure Grant Program is to encourage the development of more green infrastructure in the City of Pittsburgh. PWSA seeks to inspire projects that improve water quality by managing stormwater in greener ways, and help those projects move from concept to construction. Some of the program's additional benefits will be to strengthen the market for green infrastructure services, stimulate economic development, increase public awareness of green infrastructure, help PWSA document the impact of green infrastructure through monitoring, generate data on costs of green infrastructure, and incentivize owners of large impervious surfaces to reduce their stormwater runoff.

This program aligns with PWSA's Wet Weather Feasibility Study and Adaptive Management Plan, which states: "Recognizing that certain types of green infrastructure solutions are best implemented and maintained at the community scale, PWSA will develop a standardized program or means to support [non-profit organizations or community groups] in their efforts to implement and maintain green infrastructure practices. This process will include a determination of cost-effectiveness and long-term assurances." This program also supports the Adaptive Management Plan goal of implementing GI demonstration projects.

Q: What are the criteria for evaluating applications?

A: Criteria and priorities are listed in the grant description and application.

Q: Will there be more weight given to projects that address chronic issues like flooding in certain regions?

A: Not necessarily, but projects that address flooding issues are encouraged to apply.

Q: How does this grant program align with PWSA's Integrated Watershed Planning effort in the Saw Mill Run Watershed?

A: These are parallel and complementary efforts. Projects in Saw Mill Run Watershed within the City of Pittsburgh are encouraged to apply.

Q: Who will be deciding how grants are awarded?

A: The review committee will include PWSA staff and members of PWSA's Green Infrastructure Technical Advisory Committee. Final decisions will be made by PWSA.

Grant Funds

Q: What is the funding source of this grant program?

A: PWSA is the funding source.

Q: How much money is granted total to the grant program this year?

A: \$250,000 has been allocated for the 2016 round of grant funding.

Q: Is the 50% match guaranteed for Matching Grant awards?

A: Matching reimbursement grants may be awarded for up to 50% of green infrastructure costs. The percentage match awarded may be 50% or lower, depending on the project.

Stormwater Management Resources

3 Rivers Wet Weather:

<http://www.3riverswetweather.org/>

Homeowner's Guide to Stormwater:

http://apps.pittsburghpa.gov/pwsa/Homeowner_Stormwater_Guide.pdf

National Stormwater Management Calculator:

<http://greenvalues.cnt.org/national/calculator.php>