

VLAWMO LANDSCAPE LEVEL 1 GRANT GUIDANCE

This program exists to provide assistance to public and private landowners for implementing projects that support one or more of the following:

- Prevention of flooding or mitigation of drought
- Water quality improvement or increase in watershed storage capacity
- Preservation, protection, and restoration of native plant and wildlife communities, especially along lakes, rivers, and wetlands
- Protection and preservation of groundwater quality and quantity

This is a REIMBURSEMENT grant program. Your grant award will be dispersed once a project is fully completed and is inspected by VLAWMO staff. Available funds will vary each year. Grants are available to those who are property owners within the VLAWMO area. Once the annual funds are depleted, applicants will be advised to reapply the following year. VLAWMO may offer to fund **up to 75% of the cost of materials and contracted labor; (\$2000 maximum).**

Applicable Targeted Priority Zone funding:

For proposed cost share projects located in VLAWMO select Targeted Volume Reduction Zones (TVRZs), applicants may apply for **up to \$4,000.00 for infiltration projects that have a modeled site reduction of 40% or more for annual runoff volume.** For native restoration and pollinator habitats in Targeted Habitat Priority Zones (THPZs), **as low as a 10% fund match** by the applicant may be required, for **up to \$750** in grant funding. These targeted priority strategies support & strengthen the 2017-2026 VLAWMO Water Management Plan strategies 2-1-1, 6-1-4, and 6-1-5.

Applications will be evaluated and considered at the monthly Technical Commission meetings. VLAWMO may elect to offer a full grant or may offer a partial grant, based on the evaluation process. Items that are taken into consideration include: connectivity to a water body, the amount of runoff capture, the estimated pollutant reduction, wildlife habitat improvement, and others.

Examples of eligible projects include:

- Raingardens
- Restoration along shorelines of lakes, ponds, wetlands, and streams
- Volume reduction and runoff treatment projects (infiltration basins and trenches, cisterns, green roofs, filtration)
- Deep-rooted plantings and other erosion control measures to secure land that is currently eroding
- Native habitat restoration with priority given to waterways, lakes, ponds, buffers, and wetlands
- Pervious asphalt and pavers

GRANT PROGRAM DETAILS

- Eligible materials are those which stay on the property such as plants, erosion control blanket, mulch, and top soil. Ineligible materials would include work gloves, shovels, tools and equipment used to implement the project but may be used again for future projects (rented equipment IS an eligible expense).
- Eligible labor costs must be those expenses associated with a qualified landscaper/contractor and are subject to approval by VLAWMO staff. Ineligible labor would include the use of friends or a volunteer group helping to implement the project.
- For native plant restoration projects, **ALL** plants must be native. For all other projects, at least 50% of the plants used must be native to this ecoregion. Hybrids of native plants are not counted as native. You must provide a list of plants that will be used to allow for review and comment by VLAWMO staff.
- Projects completed or in progress are not eligible for funding. A grant agreement must be signed by the applicant and VLAWMO prior to the commencement of work.

- **Exceptions:** Invasive species, vegetation removal, or excavation work may occur prior to application approval, due to seasonal constraints. However, none of these costs incurred prior to application approval are eligible for grant reimbursement funding. These prior activities in the project area should be specified in the grant application, and should be noted they are not eligible for grant funds.

- Projects that are installed to meet the requirements of a development permit do not qualify for grants. Only projects that go above and beyond minimum standards will be considered.
- A site visit by VLAWMO staff is required once the project is complete before a reimbursement check is released to the Grantee.
- Grantee must complete project and submit reimbursement request within one (1) year from date of grant approval.
- **Grantee must agree to maintain the project area for a minimum of 5 years.** Maintenance includes weeding, watering, removal of invasive species, replacement of plants, repair of inlets/outlets, and other duties to ensure that the project is providing the intended water quality benefit. The site may be inspected by VLAWMO staff on an annual basis to ensure compliance.
- Property owners may receive one Landscape Grant (Level 1 or Level 2) per year. If wanting to apply over the course of multiple years to complete projects in phases, your current project must be complete prior to the approval of a subsequent grant.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Projects will be rated on the following:

- Are the activities and goals of the project clearly stated and support one or more of the Landscape Grant Program purposes?
- Has the applicant provided enough detail to determine measurable results (see the project specifications section on the application)? What are the estimated pollutant reductions?
- Has a reasonable budget, work plan, and time line been submitted?
- Will the project have a direct effect on water resources (lakes, streams, wetlands)? What water resources border the property?
- How much runoff and pollutants (nutrients, sediment, volume of water) will this project capture?
- Other benefits, such as wildlife habitat improvement are considered as well.

SELECTION PROCESS

The VLAWMO Technical Commission (TEC) will consider Landscape Level 1 grant applications at their monthly meetings, held on the 2nd Friday each month. Applications must be received at least 2 weeks before the next TEC meeting date to allow for ample review time. This is a competitive grant program and proposals that are incomplete will not be referred to the TEC for consideration.

FUNDING AGREEMENT

Each project selected will enter into an agreement with VLAWMO defining the obligations of the applicant and VLAWMO. This includes, but is not limited to, such items as terms of the agreement, use of funds, cost overruns, and cancellation. The agreement also allows VLAWMO access to the project area for evaluation and promotion of the project. Applicant is responsible for securing any and all permits for the work. This agreement must be signed by both parties prior to commencement of work on the project; funding will only cover work done after the agreement has been signed. **Questions regarding the grant program and completed applications can be sent to:**

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