

Attachment 4 - Frequently asked questions about Green Partners

Table of contents

Most frequently asked questions.....	4
How do I get help with the Supplier Portal?	4
Do you have any advice about planning our project or feedback on our project ideas?	4
Do you have sample applications that we can view?	4
Grant program questions.....	4
How often are the Green Partners grant opportunities offered?	4
How many grants or dollars will be issued this year?.....	4
How competitive has it been the past few years?.....	5
How many applications were received and how many awards were given in 2024?	5
Should we apply for a two-year grant?	5
Is it possible to extend the Green Partners grant deadline?.....	5
Can organizations submit more than one application?	5
Can organizations submit an application for their own organization, and apply on behalf of another organization as their fiscal agent?.....	6
When will applicants be notified if they are approved?	6
When do grant funds become available if we are awarded a grant?.....	6
What kind of reporting is required?.....	6
Application form questions.....	6
Do I need to answer the questions about activities in year two if I'm not applying for a two-year grant project? .	6
When I click on the gray box in the application it doesn't allow me to insert anything. Is it ok to delete the gray boxes?.....	6
The guidelines say we can eliminate text from the application to make our application fit on fewer pages. Is that correct?.....	6
Is there a limit on the number of supplemental documents we can submit?	6
I have not yet received Partnership Letters from our project partners, and I missed the deadline to submit these on the Supplier Portal, will you still accept them?	7
Applicant and project team questions	7
Is the Green Partner grant open to organizations that do not have Federal 501(c)3 designation?	7
We are an early child family education program in a public school. Do we qualify for the Environmental Action grant?.....	7
Are local governments eligible for the grant?	7
Do we qualify for a two-year grant? Is it determined by department or staff person, or by organizational entity?7	

2025 Green Partners

Can we apply without a specific partner in place and work over the next several months to establish that partnership?..... 8

Is it a conflict of interest for us to supply a Partnership Letter for an organization we are working with who is also applying for a grant, given that we are submitting our own application for the grant?..... 8

Should we have a criminal background check done by a third party or is checking references and conducting a background check ourselves sufficient? We work with youth..... 8

Project participant questions..... 8

 Does working with audiences of color align with the county’s disparity reduction goals, and are there other ways we can align with those goals? 8

 Some of our participants live outside of Hennepin County, is that ok? 8

Project questions..... 8

 Do you have particular topics that are of greater interest to the county to put forward? 8

 Our project isn't listed as a Green Partners project idea, will you fund those projects? 9

 Can you give me an idea of what you want us to submit as environmental education curriculum? Are lesson plans and workshop agendas sufficient? 9

 Can we apply this year with an updated version of the same project we have done before with Green Partners, or are you only looking for new and innovative projects to fund? 9

 We would like to recycle and reduce waste at our school and educate staff and students. Are these activities eligible for a Green Partners grant?..... 9

 Does the grant cover recycling signs, staff stipends to run educational events, books about recycling, and compostable supplies to get our school and community involved? 9

 Can you fund starter programs like establishing a community garden through the leasing program with the City of Minneapolis? 9

 Can we focus on water education and give away rain barrels and native plants? 10

 We want to focus on a variety of environmental practices during our project, like food waste, packaging waste, home energy audits, and sustainable landscaping. The grant description says Environmental Action projects should focus on one or two environmentally friendly actions. Does our project fit the criteria?..... 10

 Can we visit the Zoo or the Arboretum with our participants if our program focus is on recycling, waste reduction and less toxicity? 10

 Are grants available to build commercial EV (electric vehicle) charging stations? 10

 What type of commercial energy projects are eligible for this? 10

Budget questions..... 10

 Does Green Partners require a funding match? 10

 We would like to bring in a speaker for an event we are planning, are speaker fees considered an eligible expense? 11

 We need materials and gear for children's outdoor learning experiences. Do these expenses qualify for the grant?..... 11

 Can we pay for a bus for a field trip or transportation to project sites with our Green Partners grant? 11

 We want to install a greenhouse to support our garden projects. Would the \$500 per item limit apply to this? 11

Are indirect cost recovery or administrative overhead allowed expenses on the proposal? 11

Supplier Portal questions..... 11

 The Supplier Portal won't open, an error message keeps showing up..... 12

 I am unable to register for the Supplier Portal on the Hennepin County website. I've tried to reset the password, as well as to register using a different email address. 12

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Most frequently asked questions

How do I get help with the Supplier Portal?

Plan ahead as the process to register and apply does take some time.

Find the step-by-step instructions on how to register and bid through the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal help website](#).

If you are having trouble, contact the Supplier Portal Help Desk while you are on the site.

[Supplier Portal help desk](#)

(612) 543-5412 or supplierportal@hennepin.us

Monday through Friday, 8:00am - 4:30pm Central Standard Time

Do you have any advice about planning our project or feedback on our project ideas?

Read the [best practices advice from project managers \(PDF\)](#) document we created from feedback and advice from past project leaders. Contact the Green Partners staff for assistance at GreenPartners@hennepin.us or 612-596-6856.

Do you have sample applications that we can view?

No, we do not have a sample applications available. You can visit hennepin.us/greenpartners to read about projects funded in the previous grant round.

Grant program questions

How often are the Green Partners grant opportunities offered?

Hennepin County releases the Request for Proposals (RFP) each spring for the Green Partners grant programs. Project funds become available the following September.

[Subscribe to the monthly email Environmental education news](#) to be notified of future grant opportunities and updates.

How many grants or dollars will be issued this year?

Around \$555,000 has been allocated for Green Partners grants in 2025, which could provide funding for approximately 20 grants overall.

- Approximately \$145,000 has been allocated to the Green Partners Environmental Action program for 2025.
- Approximately \$200,000 has been allocated to the Green Partners Youth Environmental Leadership program in 2025.
- Approximately \$210,000 has been allocated to the Green Partners Youth Environmental Education program for 2025.

2025 Green Partners

How competitive has it been the past few years?

Very competitive. In recent years, we have awarded approximately 40% of applicants.

How many applications were received and how many awards were given in 2024?

61 applications were received for all of the 2024 Green Partners programs. 27 projects were funded (44%). Eight 2-year requests were funded (28% of 2-year requests).

Applications received and grants awarded by grant program in 2024:

- 16 Environmental Action applications were received, and 6 Environmental Action projects were awarded funds
- 33 Youth Environmental Education applications were received, and 17 Youth Environmental Education projects were awarded funds
- 11 Youth Green Jobs applications were received, and 4 Youth Green Jobs projects were awarded funds

Should we apply for a two-year grant?

You may request a two-year award if you believe your project fits the criteria. The review team may decide to only fund one year of the project, even if you apply for a two-year project.

Returning Green Partners grantees are eligible for a two-year award after receiving at least one previous Green Partners award for a successful project. Additional criteria are considered for two-year grants. The additional criteria are listed below.

- Section 1: Applicant and project team
 - Applicant has been awarded a grant for at least one successful project through the Green Partners grant program.
 - Special consideration will be given to efforts led by people who experience disparities similar to the audience they are engaging.
- Section 2: Participant information
 - Special consideration will be given to projects that engage participants who face [disparities](#).
- Section 3: Project activities
 - Project activities in year two are a logical next step.
- Section 4: Budget
 - A detailed budget for year 2 was provided.

Is it possible to extend the Green Partners application deadline?

We cannot extend the application deadlines.

Can organizations submit more than one application?

You may submit one application to each grant program, but we will only award one Green Partners award per organization per application round.

Can organizations submit an application for their own organization, and apply on behalf of another organization as their fiscal agent?

If your organization is purely serving as a fiscal agent and not a major project partner, then you may. You should not be the primary community partner to help implement the project or recruit participants for their project.

When will applicants be notified if they are approved?

The application review takes several weeks. Applicants will be notified of the decision by the end of July.

When do grant funds become available if we are awarded a grant?

Project funds become available after September 1, once documents are submitted and the grant agreement is executed.

What kind of reporting is required?

See the Hennepin County [Green Partners website](#) for examples of reporting materials, which includes the annual report on activities and annual budget expense report.

Application form questions

Do I need to answer the questions about activities in year two if I'm not applying for a two-year grant project?

No

When I click on the gray box in the application it doesn't allow me to insert anything. Is it ok to delete the gray boxes?

The gray boxes indicate where responses are required. You may delete the gray boxes and insert your text directly into the document.

The guidelines say we can eliminate text from the application to make our application fit on fewer pages. Is that correct?

Yes, keep the headings and numbered questions for each section, but you may eliminate the extraneous text descriptions in the application to make your application fit onto fewer pages.

Is there a limit on the number of supplemental documents we can submit?

We prefer that you limit supplemental documents to 10 pages. Only submit the essential items requested in the Request for Applications (RFP).

I have not yet received Partnership Letters from our project partners, and I missed the deadline to submit these on the Supplier Portal, will you still accept them?

If you are unable to submit the letters with your application in the Supplier Portal, you may email your Partnership letter(s) directly to GreenPartners@hennepin.us. The letters will be considered if the review team receives them before they review project proposals.

Applicant and project team questions

Is the Green Partner grant open to organizations that do not have Federal 501(c)3 designation? Applicants do not need to be registered as a Federal 501(c)3 nonprofit but they do need to be registered with the [MN Secretary of State](#) as a nonprofit.

Organizations may partner on a grant project and have the registered nonprofit apply for the grant. Or you may find an organization to serve as a “fiscal agent,” which means they - the “fiscal agent” - would be the project Applicant. If awarded, the fiscal agent would sign and be responsible for the contract agreement with Hennepin County, and financial management of the funds.

We are an early child family education program in a public school. Do we qualify for the Environmental Action grant?

Yes, if you plan to engage adults in taking environmental actions, Early Childhood Family Education and Community Education programs with public school districts are welcome to apply.

Are local governments eligible for the grant?

Cities and municipalities are not eligible, but they can be an in-kind partner on an application. We have funded the West Metro Watershed Alliance in the past and will consider similar associations on a case-by-case basis. Contact the Green Partners program manager for more information.

Do we qualify for a two-year grant? Is it determined by department or staff person, or by organizational entity?

For most applicants, if the organization has received an award in the past, they are eligible for a two-year project.

For large school districts, we consider each school as an individual entity.

If you received an award from any of the following programs, you are eligible for a two-year project:

- Green Partners Branch
- Green Partners Root
- Green Partners Youth Environmental Education
- Green Partners Environmental Action
- Green Partners GROW (grants for residential organic waste)
- Green Partners Youth Green Jobs

Can we apply without a specific partner in place and work over the next several months to establish that partnership?

This is a very competitive program. Having partners in place makes for a stronger application. It is best to have at least some of your partners in place before you apply. If you do not yet have partners, tell us who your likely partners are and your plan to engage them.

Is it a conflict of interest for us to supply a Partnership Letter for an organization we are working with who is also applying for a grant, given that we are submitting our own application for the grant?

Partnering with other applicants is allowed. You may submit a Partnership Letter for another applicant, and it will not harm either of your chances for an award, unless they are for the same project and project expenses. You must provide context about whether your applications are related. And if they are related, what will happen if both projects are not funded.

Should we have a criminal background check done by a third party or is checking references and conducting a background check ourselves sufficient? We work with youth.

We do not have specific requirements for background checks. Every organization has a different policy. If you don't do background checks, it is important for us to know what your policies are. Explain how you ensure that youth aren't alone with staff or volunteers if they have not had a background check, and how you ensure that staff and volunteers know the rules. It is advisable that the parent(s) or legal guardian(s) are in attendance or that teacher(s) who have had background checks are supervising classes/events if no background checks are done.

Project participant questions

Does working with audiences of color align with the county's disparity reduction goals, and are there other ways we can align with those goals?

Yes, many people of color face education, employment, income, health, housing, transportation, and justice disparities. [Learn more about the county's efforts to address disparities.](#)

Some of our participants live outside of Hennepin County, is that ok?

Yes, as long as a majority of your project participants live in, go to school, or recreate in Hennepin County, your project will qualify.

Project questions

Do you have particular topics that are of greater interest to the county to put forward?

Review the Green Partners project ideas list posted with the Request for Proposals (RFP). Thoroughly review the RFP guidelines to be sure your project ideas are a good fit for the program criteria.

2025 Green Partners

Our project isn't listed as a Green Partners project idea, will you fund those projects?

As long as the project fits the program criteria, it will be considered. The Green Partners project ideas list associated with the RFP for project ideas that align with county priorities. The list is not a comprehensive list of all possible projects we would fund.

Can you give me an idea of what you want us to submit as curriculum? Are lesson plans and workshop agendas sufficient?

Lesson plans and workshop agendas are appropriate. You may also submit links to sources you plan to draw your environmental curriculum from or provide an explanation of curriculum that you plan to develop and how it fills a gap in existing curriculum.

Can we apply this year with an updated version of the same project we have done before with Green Partners, or are you only looking for new and innovative projects to fund?

Yes, you may submit the same project if it was successful in the past and you are reaching a new audience. Be sure to mention the successes of the previous project and how you will overcome any challenges that were identified last time, if applicable.

We would like to recycle and reduce waste at our school and educate staff and students. Are these activities eligible for a Green Partners grant?

This sounds like a better fit for the [School Recycling grant program](#). Contact the school recycling coordinator to advise you on eligible expenses and advice for your project.

Does this grant cover recycling signs, staff stipends to run educational events, books about recycling, and compostable supplies to get our school and community involved?

The Green Partners program could potentially fund the environmental engagement and educational components of your project. However, Hennepin County's recycling team can help you get recycling service and infrastructure in place first. Hennepin County offers free [recycling signs](#), environmental education resources, and grants through the [School recycling](#), [Multifamily recycling](#), and [Business recycling](#) programs. In some cases, staff time and educational supplies are covered. Your project needs might be met through these programs. If not, you can apply to Green Partners to provide environmental education and engage people in environmental action.

Can you fund starter programs like establishing a community garden through the leasing program with the City of Minneapolis?

Green Partners does not fund garden start-ups. Green Partners has funded projects in established gardens related to trees, composting, pollinators, sustainability practices, food and food packaging waste, and other environmental education programming. Learn more about the county's work to support [establishment of community gardens](#).

For Environmental Action projects, you will have to be very specific about what the environmental behavior changes (actions) are that you want people to take during the project.

For Youth projects, you will have to be specific about what the environmental education components of your program are, including information about activities, curriculum, and/or lesson plans.

Can we focus on water education and give away rain barrels and native plants?

Rain barrels and native plants must be installed, planted, and maintained properly. We support projects that include deep engagement on the topic to ensure rain barrels installed and plants are planted and maintained properly. Thoughtful training and follow-up with participants should be in your project plan.

We advise that you identify the barriers keeping people from taking action and determine if a giveaway item is the best way to encourage action. You must make the case that a giveaway removes barriers and is a strong incentive for participants to take action. Sometimes people simply need a chance to practice, guidance and support, or encouragement and social influence instead of a giveaway.

We want to focus on a variety of environmental practices during our project, like food waste, packaging waste, home energy audits, and sustainable landscaping. The grant description says Environmental Action projects should focus on one or two environmentally friendly actions. Does our project fit the criteria?

For the Environmental Action program, we'd like you to focus on 1 or 2 actions. You may incorporate more actions into the overall project, but we expect that you would dig deeper to address the barriers and motivations of your participants for those 1 or 2 actions that are the focus of the grant. Consider how you will track participant outcomes on the various topics.

Can we visit the Zoo or the Arboretum with our participants if our program focus is on recycling, waste reduction and less toxicity?

Field trips to the zoo and arboretum would potentially qualify if there is a significant environmental education component. You must explain how the trips will add to the educational experience of participants and how it relates to your environmental curriculum.

Are grants available to build commercial EV (electric vehicle) charging stations?

No. The focus of the Green Partners program is to educate youth about environmental education and engage residents to take environmentally friendly actions.

What type of commercial energy projects are eligible for this?

Commercial energy projects are not eligible for a Green Partners grant. The focus of the Green Partners program is to educate youth about environmental education and engage residents to take environmentally friendly actions.

Budget questions

Does Green Partners require a funding match?

No. We do ask that you report any funding that has been secured or applied for to support the programming.

We would like to bring in a speaker for an event we are planning, are speaker fees considered an eligible expense?

Yes, the Green Partners program will cover speakers on environmental topics. Identify your speakers in the application if they are known.

We need materials and gear for children's outdoor learning experiences. Do these expenses qualify for the grant?

You should consider applying for a Green Partners youth grant if youth are a significant part of your audience. If you plan to engage families, and you need gear for participants (adults and youth) you must have environmental education curriculum and programming to support the use of the materials and gear that you plan to purchase.

Can we pay for a bus for a field trip or transportation to project sites with our Green Partners grant?

Yes, the Green Partners program will cover transportation for approved field trips and project related travel activities. The field trip or project sites should be related to your initiative to engage and motivate adults to make specific changes in their lifestyle to benefit the environment. If you only need a bus, see our free field trip bus program at [Environmental education | Hennepin County](#).

We encourage the use of buses, carpools, public transit, bicycles, and car/bike/scooter share options to reach your field trip or project site destinations.

We want to install a greenhouse to support our garden projects. Would the \$500 per item limit apply to this?

There is a limit of \$500 reimbursement limit for any one item. It will be up to the application review team to make a recommendation if they are interested in your project. Funding and cost-share decisions depend on the project and the need for the item to fulfill the project goals. All cost-share requests require approval by the Green Partners program manager.

Are indirect cost recovery or administrative overhead allowed expenses on the proposal?

If you are a University of Minnesota partner, we will honor the administrative and overhead expense rates set by the University. Please notify the Hennepin-University Partnership office about your project prior to applying: <https://hup.umn.edu/about-hup/contact-us> We have previously funded projects via the HUP with the Institute on the Environment, Hennepin County Extension office, and currently the UMN 4-H program.

If you are not a University of Minnesota partner, we will not fund most overhead expenses. See the RFP for a list of eligible and ineligible expenses.

Supplier Portal questions

2025 Green Partners

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Try a different browser like Chrome or Microsoft Edge. Some browsers, like Internet Explorer and some others aren't compatible with the county's systems.

Find the step-by-step instructions on how to register and bid through the Hennepin County Supplier Portal: <https://www.hennepin.us/business/work-with-henn-co/supplier-portal>

If you are still having trouble, contact the Supplier Portal Help Desk while you are on the site.

[Supplier Portal help desk](#)

(612) 543-5412 or supplierportal@hennepin.us

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I am unable to register for the Supplier Portal on the Hennepin County website. I've tried to reset the password, as well as to register using a different email address.

Try to log-in first to see if you already have an account registered. If you need to register, be sure you register with YOUR email address.

The training materials on the Supplier Portal Help site may provide an answer, see Registration.

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Contact the [Supplier Portal help desk](#). They will provide your Bidder ID.

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