

HENNEPIN COUNTY MINNESOTA

Solicitation for Grant Applications

2024 Green Partners guidelines for youth green jobs grants

Virtual information meetings:

Tuesday, April 2, 2024, from 11 a.m. to noon.

[Register here](#) to join the meeting

- Environmental action grants

Thursday, April 4, 2024, from 4 p.m. to 5 p.m.

[Register here](#) to join the meeting

- Youth environmental education grants
- **Youth green jobs grants**

Meetings will be recorded and posted at hennepin.us/greenpartners under Green Partners grants.

Applications due: Thursday, April 25, 2024 at 3:00 p.m.



1 Introduction

1.1 Project overview

The County of Hennepin, State of Minnesota (“County”) is soliciting applications for the Green Partners Youth Green Jobs Grant (the “Grant”). As used herein, the entity/individual responsible for any awarded Grant may be referred to as the “Applicant” and the Applicant’s response to this solicitation (the “Solicitation”) may be referred to as the “Application”.

Through the Green Partners grant program, Hennepin County supports organizations to actively educate, engage, and motivate residents to become environmental stewards and make positive behavior changes, such as taking action to prevent waste, separate organic waste and recycle, reduce household hazardous waste, combat climate change, care for trees, protect birds, bats, and pollinators, and improve air and water quality.

Which application should I use?

The Green Partners grants program has three options to apply for funding based on the primary audience and the focus of the project.

Application	Audience	Project focus	Who can apply?
Youth green jobs grant application	Individuals between the ages of 14 and 24	Supporting green jobs exploration and training for young people in Hennepin County, especially those who face disparities in accessing green jobs and associated training opportunities.	Non-profit organizations, park districts, and schools that have not received a Green Partners Youth Green Jobs grant before
Youth environmental education grant application	Youth of all ages	Developing awareness of environmental issues and interest in environmental stewardship with young adults, high school, middle school, elementary, or preschool age youth.	Non-profit organizations, park districts, and schools
Environmental action grant application	Adults (18+)	Motivating individuals to make specific environmental behavior changes at home, at work, as a parent, or on-the-go.	Non-profit organizations, park districts, and schools

What grant amount am I eligible to receive?

- **If you apply for a Youth Green Jobs grant**, you can request up to \$30,000 for a one-year project, whether you have received a Green Partners grant before or not.
- If you **have never received a Hennepin County Green Partners grant before**, you can apply for up to \$12,000 for a one-year Environmental Action or Youth Environmental Education grant.
- If you **have received a Hennepin County Green Partners grant before**, you can apply for up to \$25,000 for a one-year Environmental Action or Youth Environmental Education grant. If you are a returning Green Partners grantee, you can apply for a two-year, \$50,000 grant.

Applicants are encouraged to contact the County for feedback on project ideas before applying. For more information visit hennepin.us/greenpartners or contact Green Partners staff at 612-596-6856 or GreenPartners@hennepin.us. Assistance is available via phone with an appointment. Requests for appointments must be made by 5 p.m., April 23, 2024 to allow for accommodating all requests.

Contact the [Supplier Portal Help Desk](#) for assistance with viewing the application materials, registering, and uploading your Application at 612-543-5412 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or supplierportal@hennepin.us.

1.2 The Grant

This is year two of the Youth Green Jobs pilot. To be eligible for the Grant, the **applicant has not previously received a Green Partners Youth Green Jobs grant** and they identify as one of the following:

- A non-profit entity, such as a community, youth, or faith group;
- A public school district or private school, including community education and early childhood family education programs; or
- A park district.

Youth green jobs grants

Hennepin County is piloting a second year of a dedicated youth green jobs grant opportunity through the Green Partners grant program in 2024. The goal of this pilot is to invest in green jobs education and training programs for youth, especially those geared toward youth that face racial and other disparities. Hennepin County is interested in youth green jobs programming that supports youth in moving along effective pathways to achieve employment in green jobs. Youth green jobs grant projects will engage young people in activities, training, and paid opportunities to gain experience and receive support to secure green jobs.

What grant amount am I eligible to receive?

You can apply for up to \$30,000 for a one-year youth green jobs grant.

Grant agreement

Applicants that are awarded grants will enter into a grant agreement with Hennepin County. Grant projects will begin no earlier than September 1, 2024. One-year grant projects will end by September 1, 2025.

1.3 Grant Application

When submitting an Application, Applicants must follow the specific format and content requirements below and in **Attachment 1 – Green Partners youth green jobs application**. Failure to do so could prolong the evaluation process and may be grounds for rejection of the Application.

Applicant shall describe, in detail, the proposed uses of the Grant funds for the Project. Any other use of Grant funds is strictly prohibited. Applicant shall be solely responsible for securing all additional funds necessary for completion of the Project.

Applicant agrees to only use the Grant funds for the uses indicated above. Use of Grant funds for any other purpose is strictly prohibited. If Applicant uses Grant funds for any other purpose, Applicant shall, upon County's written demand, repay all Grant funds awarded.

Application format requirements

- Follow the Application format and answer all questions.
- Submit the application in Word and budget in Excel or similar.
- Do not exceed 6 pages. Keep the font size readable. Do not include a cover sheet. You may delete the question text and instructions to fit the page limit.
- Supplemental materials are not required. Up to 4 pages of supplemental materials may be submitted with your application. Supplemental materials may include letters of support, past project results, photos, newsletters, etc. Please reference supplemental materials in the Application narrative.

2 Evaluation and selection

2.1 Applicant evaluation and recommendation for selection

County will consider the Application to determine whether it meets County's requirements and is otherwise eligible for a Grant award. Submission of an Application shall neither obligate nor entitle an Applicant to enter into a contract with the County or to receive a Grant.

2.2 Evaluation of responsiveness

The County will consider all the material submitted by the Applicant to determine whether the Applicant's offer is in compliance with the terms and conditions set forth in this Solicitation. Applications that do not comply with the provisions in this Solicitation may be considered nonresponsive and may be rejected. Notwithstanding the foregoing, County expressly reserves the right to reject any or all Applications with or without cause.

Applications will be evaluated during the review process using an adjectival rating for each section, as well as a summary rating for the overall proposal. Evaluation criteria includes the following:

Project focuses on one or more of the following environmental topics:

Natural resources

- Forestry
- Water protection
- Plants and animals (pollinators, birds, bats, native plants, sustainable landscaping, urban farming)

Waste and recycling

- Preventing waste
- Recycling
- Organics recycling
- Hazardous waste

Climate change

- Energy conservation
- Renewable energy
- Sustainable transportation
- Air quality

Section 1: Project goals and expected outcomes

- The proposed project will engage youth in one of two ways. Projects will:
 1. introduce youth to green job opportunities through education and experiences; and/or
 2. hire youth as interns or apprentices to train them for specific types of green jobs.
- The program fills a need in a qualifying green job field (see Green job topic areas, above) by,
 - increasing the number of qualified job seekers overall (if there is a lack of candidates in the field);
 - diversifying the make-up of those who are qualified for green jobs (virtually all green job categories lack diversity); or
- The program demonstrates a clear pathway that provides opportunities for participants to connect to educational or employment opportunities and/or qualifies participants for the green jobs they are being supported to attain.
- The project goals are clear and project activities will lead to positive outcomes such as youth being inspired to seek out information about green jobs, training to qualify youth for green jobs, or employment in a green jobs field, including internships
- The project does not need to have an immediate impact on the environment, but it may include environmental stewardship activities as part of the programming.
- A project evaluation plan is in place to track and measure project outcomes.
- Funding from Hennepin County Green Partners will provide clear benefits to the program.

Section 2: Green job activities and programming

- Project activities will increase knowledge, build skills, and/or provide meaningful experiences that influence youth to seek out green jobs.
- Project activities and/or educational curriculum are clearly articulated in the application and match closely with the abilities and education level of the youth participants. Education and activities align with youth interests.

- The project may incorporate community or place-based environmental education.
- Youth may have an opportunity to lead on a portion of the project.
- Youth programming model incorporates culturally appropriate approaches and support for youth facing [disparities](#).
- Timeline of activities is logical and realistic in regard to organizational capacity and programming.
- Youth work schedule is in-line with the project activities.
- Safety training and equipment is provided, including shade/warmth, access to water and food, breaks, and proper tools.

Section 3: Participant information

Youth participants

- Number of participants
 - It is clear how many youth participants will be engaged and/or hired during this project. There is no minimum number of youth/young people that must be engaged or hired during the project.
- Youth must live or go to school in Hennepin County.
- Disparities
 - Special consideration will be given to projects that engage participants who face one or more [disparities identified by Hennepin County](#). Disparities in employment, income, education, health, housing, transportation, and justice are indicated in various ways:
 - [Hennepin County Disparity Reduction Vision and Priorities](#)
 - [Hennepin County climate vulnerability assessment](#)
 - For schools, priority will be given where more than 50% of students are eligible for educational benefits, such as the former free or reduced lunch program.
- Age group
 - Participants must be between the ages of 14 and 24. Youth may be in school and/or post high school, up to 24 years old.

Youth support provided

Hennepin County is interested in youth green jobs programming that reduces disparities for youth and supports youth in moving along effective pathways to achieve employment in green jobs. Organizations can provide support for youth workers through operational practices and can provide pathways for youth to achieve more exposure, experience, and opportunities to be hired in green jobs.

For the purposes of this grant, Applicants are required to provide the following types of support to youth:

- Compensation for their time, including academic credit, financial income, and gift cards
- Peer networking opportunities
- Mentorship from professionals or community elders for youth interns, apprentices, and employees

Although not required, Applicants may also provide other types of support to youth. The types of support provided should be relevant to the audience and this context will be considered when reviewing project proposals. For more ideas and a description of the “pathways”, review **Attachment 3 – Youth support ideas** posted with this request for proposals.

- Opportunities for advancement

- Opportunities for pay increases
- Paid time off
- Flexible schedule
- Free programming
- Transportation support
- Meals or food support
- Health insurance
- Health and wellbeing support
- Childcare
- Cultural competency training for supervisors and staff
- Education and exposure to green job pathways
- Leadership skills development pathways
- Job training and job skills pathways
- Career development and job seeking support pathways
- Network building pathways
- Other types of support

Section 4: Applicant and project team

Organization and project team

- Applicant has not received a previous Green Partners Youth Green Jobs grant before.
- Applicant has a demonstrated understanding of the scope of services and the organization's mission make this project a good fit for the grant program.
- Applicant has a track record of successfully completing projects and reports for previous Hennepin County contracts or grants (if applicable).
- Applicant and project partners have the capacity to implement the project and meet grant obligations. Capacity may be indicated by:
 - Enough staffing for the project, including a project manager and back-up project manager.
 - Letters of support are submitted by significant project partners, if applicable.

Project team experience

- Applicant and project partners have the capacity to implement the project may be indicated by:
 - Experience conducting youth development, youth education, youth job training, and/or youth employment programs
 - Experience in the green jobs field or the specific green jobs that youth are being trained for or educated about.
- Mentors are provided for youth. Mentors are often professionals in the field, community elders, or other trusted adults.
- Applicant has policies and practices in place to prevent volunteers from working unsupervised with youth, unless background checks are completed.

Ability to engage youth

- The project team is able to engage youth participants throughout the project based on their experience working with this audience.
- Applicant utilizes effective channels to recruit and communicate with their audience.

- Applicant and partners have demonstrated efforts to increase cultural competency of project staff. For examples, see the list below. The list is not comprehensive, and Applicant does not need to achieve all of the possibilities listed to be considered.
 - The project team reflects the demographics of the youth to be engaged or hired. Special consideration will be given to organizations led by people who have experienced disparities similar to the audience they are engaging.
 - The project team has experience implementing culturally competent programming.
 - The project team has participated in trainings on diversity topics such as unconscious bias, equity and inclusion, cultural and identity awareness, and more.
 - The Applicant has updated hiring and/or operational practices to be more inclusive.
 - The Applicant and project partners have made public commitments to be more inclusive, understand and dismantle racism, etc.

Section 5: Budget

- The program is not entirely reliant on Hennepin County Green Partners grant funding.
- Budget includes eligible and applicable educational or green job-related supplies and/or staff time.
- Staff time and youth pay indicates estimated hours, hourly rates, or relevant pay details.
- Budget items align with project activities and it is clear how the items will be used for the project.
- Details about items to be purchased and cost per item are provided (estimates are acceptable).
- Project budgets shall be for one year.

Eligible expenses:

Funds may be used for youth pay, equipment and supplies, transportation, food, educational scholarships/support, and staffing to manage and supervise youth.

- Staff time: Only include personnel time that would be covered by this grant. We recommend planning for a minimum of 10 staff hours for grant related meetings and reporting. Pay and stipends for students, volunteers, interns, apprentices, and participants are allowed.
- Project supplies: Project and education materials and supplies are allowed. There is a limit of \$500 for individual items without pre-approval. See other restrictions below under "ineligible expenses".
- Transportation: Bicycles, transit cards, mileage, field trip buses, and fees related to car, kayak, bike, and scooter share programs are allowed.
- Communications: Printing, mailing, promotions, educational and informational materials
- Green events: Grantees must take steps to make events low waste. Use Hennepin County's [green events checklist](#), [recycling at events resources](#), and [lead by example resources](#).
- Food and beverage: Grantees must follow the County's healthy eating guidelines and minimize waste when purchasing food and beverage items. See Hennepin County's [event recycling and waste reduction guide](#) and offer healthy food options at meetings.

Ineligible expenses:

- General operating expenses such as attorney fees, rent, insurance, phone, electricity, and internet are not eligible.

- Disposable items: Styrofoam™, bottled water and other disposable, single-use food service items, and disposable event decorations are not eligible expenses.
- Equipment valued more than \$500: Funds may not be used for computers, dishwashers, or other durable equipment valued over \$500.
- Recycling and organics bins and funding for additional recycling and organics infrastructure are available through the Hennepin County [business recycling](#), [multifamily buildings](#), and [school recycling](#) programs.
- Funding for larger natural resource projects, such as rain gardens, habitat restoration, and cisterns is available through [Hennepin County natural resources grants](#) or your watershed. A small proportion of Green Partners funds may be used to purchase plants.
- Field trips and overnight trips outside of Hennepin County, unless the site is listed on our [pre-approved list](#).
- Projects to engage businesses or schools in changing their green practices are not a good fit for this grant program. Examples of ineligible projects include projects to get businesses to recycle, recycle better, or provide low-waste alternatives and projects to get a school's administration and janitorial staff to implement better recycling.

The County reserves the right to determine whether any aspect of the Application satisfactorily meets the criteria, the right to seek clarification or additional information from any Applicant(s), and the right to waive any irregularities or informalities that the County deems is in its best interest.

2.3 Execution of Grant agreement

County may condition the Grant award upon Applicant's execution of a Grant agreement provided by County. As applicable, the Grant agreement shall define the legal relationship between County and Applicant.

Insurance requirements: Hennepin County requires insurance coverage for most Green Partners grantees in the following amounts: general liability insurance coverage of \$1 million in General Aggregate, \$1 million in products – Completed Operations Aggregate, \$1 million in Personal and Advertising Injury, \$1 million in Combined Bodily Injury and Property Damage – Each Occurrence, Employer's Liability insurance coverage of at least \$500,000 for Bodily injury by disease – Policy Limit, \$100,000 for Bodily injury by Disease – Each Employee, and \$100,000 for Bodily injury by accident – Each Accident. Workers' compensation coverage is required by state law unless a certification of exclusion from workers' compensation requirements can be provided. Automobile Liability is required when projects require driving between project sites or transporting participants. Such insurance shall cover liability for bodily injury and property damage arising from the use or operation of any auto, including those owned, hired or otherwise operated or used by or on behalf of the grantee.

Auto liability of \$500,000 is required if the grantee is driving between project sites, and \$2 million is required for projects that involve transporting people and staff. Some examples of driving include, driving between project sites, driving to an outreach event from your place of business (this does not include your home if you work from home), driving from one event/meeting to another, or driving clients or county residents to a project location. Your agent can advise you on what policy is best for your organization's situation.

If the grant owns automobiles, they must have "owned coverage". If the grantee leases automobiles, they must have "scheduled coverage". If the grantee does not own automobiles, but employees or volunteers are renting or using their own vehicles to drive, they must have "hired and non-owned coverage". An umbrella or excess policy is an acceptable method to provide the required auto insurance coverage

If applicants do not have the insurance coverage listed above, contact the program manager to discuss waiver options.

Payment schedule for one-year projects: Once a contract is executed, 60% of the award amount will be provided to the Applicant. The remaining 40% will be provided after successful completion of the project and approval of the final report.

3 General rules

3.1 Solicitation for Grant Applications and Grant overview

This Solicitation for Grant Applications is an invitation for Applicants to submit a Grant Application to the County. It is a means by which the County may facilitate the acquisition of information related to awarding the Grant and is **NOT A COMMITMENT OR OBLIGATION TO AWARD ANY AMOUNT.**

Nothing in this Application shall obligate County to: (i) award any amount; (ii) award any subsequent grants; or (iii) pay or otherwise make any additional distributions.

3.2 Estimated timeline and extension of time

- Suggested date to request appointments: Tuesday, April 23, 2024 by 5 p.m.
- **Applications due: Thursday, April 25, 2024 by 3 p.m.**
- Application review: May-June 2024
- Hennepin County approvals: July-August 2024
- Contracting: August 2024
- Projects begin & orientation meeting: September 2024
- One-year projects end: August 31, 2025
- Two-year projects end: August 31, 2026

These dates are subject to revision or cancellation by the County in its sole and absolute discretion.

3.3 Application submission

Applications will be received in the [Hennepin County Supplier Portal](#). In order to submit an Application, you must first register with the Supplier Portal. For more information on how to register, please go to the [Supplier Portal help page](#). Applicants are strongly encouraged to make their submissions well in advance of the Application due date as the process may take some time to complete.

Failure to submit an Application on time may be grounds for rejection of the Application; however, the County reserves the right, in its sole and absolute discretion, to accept Applications after the Application due date.

Applications are due by **3 p.m. on Thursday, April 25, 2024.**

3.4 Questions and Pre-application Assistance

Applicants are encouraged to contact the County **for feedback on project ideas** before applying. For more information visit hennepin.us/greenpartners or contact Green Partners staff at 612-596-6856 or GreenPartners@hennepin.us. Assistance is available via phone with an appointment. Requests for appointments should be made by 5 p.m., April 23, 2024 to allow for accommodating all requests.

Contact the Supplier Portal Help Desk **for assistance with viewing the application materials, registering, and uploading your Application** at 612-543-5412 (Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.) or supplierportal@hennepin.us.

3.5 Addenda

The County reserves the right to modify this Solicitation at any time prior to the Application due date. An addendum will be posted in the Supplier Portal if the Solicitation is modified. Addenda may be viewed by clicking on the 'View Documents' on the Event Details page. It is the responsibility of each prospective Applicant to assure receipt of all addenda.

The County will modify the Solicitation only by formal written addenda. Applications should be based on this Solicitation document and any formal written addenda. Applicants should not rely on oral statements, or site visits.

3.6 County's right to withdraw, cancel, suspend and/or modify the Solicitation

The County reserves the right to withdraw, cancel, suspend, and/or modify this Solicitation for any reason and at any time with no liability to any prospective Applicant for any costs or expenses incurred in connection with the Solicitation or otherwise.

3.7 Applicant's right to edit or cancel an Application

An Application may be edited or cancelled in the Supplier Portal prior to the Application due date. For instructions, view the [Supplier Portal help website](#).

3.8 Applications will not be returned

Upon submission, Applications will not be returned.

3.9 Public disclosure of Application documents

Under Minnesota law, applications are private or nonpublic until the proposals are opened on the proposal due date. Once the applications are opened, the name of the Applicant becomes public. All other data in the application is private/nonpublic data until completion of the evaluation process. The evaluation process is completed when the County enters into a contract with an Applicant. At that time, all remaining data submitted by all Applicants is public with the exception of data classified as private/non-public trade secret data under Minn. Stat. § 13.37 of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act.

Applicants must not submit trade secret material, as defined by Minn. Stat. § 13.37, as part of their application. The County does NOT consider cost or prices to be trade secret material, as defined by the statute. Applicants may present and discuss trade secret information during an interview or demonstration, if applicable.

The Applicant agrees, as a condition of submitting its Application, that the County will not, as between the parties, be liable or accountable for any loss or damage which may result from a breach of confidentiality related to the Application. The Applicant agrees to indemnify and hold the County, its officials, agents, and employees harmless from all claims arising out of, resulting from, or in any manner attributable to any violation of any provision of the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, including legal fees and disbursements paid or incurred to enforce this provision. This indemnification survives the County's award of a contract. In submitting an application in response to this Solicitation, the Applicant agrees that this indemnification survives as long as the Application is in the County's possession. The County is required to keep all the basic documents related to its contracts, including applications, for a minimum of seven years.

3.10 Applicant's costs

The County shall not be responsible for any costs incurred by Applicant in relation to this Solicitation. Applicant shall bear all costs of Application preparation, submission, and attendance at interviews, or any other activity associated with this Solicitation or otherwise.

3.11 Conflict of interest

The Applicant affirms that to the best of its knowledge the submission of its Application, or any resulting Grant award, does not present an actual or perceived conflict of interest. Strictly for illustration purposes, a personal relationship with a County employee directly or indirectly involved in the Grant process may be a conflict of interest.

The Applicant agrees that should any actual or perceived conflict of interest become known, it will immediately notify the County and will advise whether it will or will not avoid, mitigate, or neutralize the conflict of interest.

The County may make reasonable efforts to avoid, mitigate, or neutralize a conflict of interest by an Applicant. To avoid a conflict of interest by an Applicant, the County may utilize methods including disqualifying an Applicant from eligibility for the Grant or cancelling the Grant if the conflict is discovered

after the Grant has been issued. The County may, at its sole and absolute discretion, waive any conflict of interest.

4 Attachments

4.1 Attachment 1 – Green Partners youth green jobs application

4.2 Attachment 2 – Green Partners budget form

4.3 Attachment 3 – Youth support ideas