

Metro Area Convene Process Guidance for the FY26-27 Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program

Introduction

The purpose of WBIF is to supplement existing funding to accelerate clean water activities toward advancing Minnesota's water resources goals through prioritized and targeted cost-effective actions with measurable water quality results.

All eligible activities must have a primary benefit towards water quality. Activities that result in multiple benefits are strongly encouraged. Eligible activities must be identified in the implementation section of a state approved, locally adopted comprehensive watershed management plan developed under Minnesota statutes §103B.801, watershed management plan required under §103B.231, county groundwater plan authorized under §103B.255, or a soil and water conservation district comprehensive plan approved by the BWSR board, as authorized under §103C.331.

Metro grantees must request state funds that equal or exceed \$30,000. Applications submitted that do not meet this minimum dollar amount will not be accepted.

For purposes of this document, the group of participants in each watershed allocation area (see map) will be called a partnership (e.g., Rice Creek partnership or Rum River partnership). WBIF is available to all eligible partners within each watershed allocation area.

Federally Recognized Minnesota Tribal Nations are eligible if they are implementing projects or programs for the purpose of this funding that are identified in eligible plans. BWSR encourages inviting Tribal representatives into the convene process.

Refer to the [WBIF Frequently Asked Questions](#) website for more information.

Metro WBIF Watershed Allocation Areas



August 2025

Convene Meetings

The convene process allows the partnership to jointly coordinate on the development of a funding request to BWSR that is prioritized, targeted and measurable. The partnership needs to select a local government entity (or entities) to coordinate and facilitate the convene meeting(s) or request assistance from BWSR by contacting the board conservationist (BC). Each partnership will include one decision-making representative (participant) from each watershed district and/or watershed management organization, soil and water conservation district, county with a current groundwater plan, and up to two decision-making representatives from municipalities within the allocation area.

Municipalities in each allocation area must coordinate to self-select up to two decision-making representatives. Municipal representatives are expected to communicate with other municipalities on the solicitation and selection of projects and activities during the process.

The BC and Clean Water Specialist (CWS) must be invited to convene meetings. The facilitating entity must: 1) take meeting notes that document the general discussion, decisions, and attendees, and 2) share the notes with the partnership soon after each meeting and be made available upon request.

Each partnership must meet at least one time prior to submitting a funding request. Ideally, partnerships will develop a shared understanding of proposed activities during the convene process. To improve the efficiency of the convene process, BWSR recommends the following meeting objectives:

1. Determine an overall decision-making process (e.g., majority rules, consensus, informed consent).
2. Pick one of the following methods for selecting activities:
 - Developing a list of potential activities from eligible plans,
 - Dividing funding among eligible entities in an equitable manner,
 - Selecting a few priority waterbodies (lake, streams) and/or groundwater areas to prioritize activities,
 - Using agreed upon criteria to select activities, or
 - Using a process approved by the BWSR Central Region Manager.
3. Select the highest priority, targeted, measurable, and eligible activities to be submitted to BWSR as a funding request (see submittal process below).
4. Confirm which entity will serve as grantee and/or fiscal agent for each selected activity and decide on the source(s) of the 10% required match.

Activity Eligibility

To ensure proposed activities are eligible, refer to the [WBIF Grant Program Requirements](#). If you have questions regarding eligibility, consult with the BC as early as possible.

Preparing the Funding Request

Refer to the [WBIF Funding Request and Work Plan Guidance](#) when preparing your funding request.

NEW in FY26-27: Changes to the Proposed Measurable Outcomes and Activity Descriptions.

- Use the following generic language for the **"Proposed Measurable Outcomes" field in the funding request:**

"Make measurable progress toward water quality goals using eligible

projects, practices, and programs as described in the {Plan Name(s)}"

- Grant-specific proposed outputs/outcomes will be recorded in the **activity descriptions** of the work plan.

The partnership **must send a list of partnership-approved activities* to the BC prior to submittal of an eLINK funding request.** This list must include:

- the entity requesting funding (grantee)
- fiscal agent (if different from grantee)
- activity title
- activity explanation
- water resource(s)
- activity outcome(s)
- match
- plan reference(s)
- grant funds requested

*An activity may be a project, a practice, or a program. A template activity spreadsheet is available on the [BWSR WBIF webpage](#) under the "FY26-27 Information" tab.

Submitting the Funding Request

Once the activities have been agreed upon by the partnership and approved by the BC, each grantee must submit an [eLINK funding request](#). Once the BC approves the eLINK funding request, each grantee is responsible for completing an eLINK work plan. See [WBIF funding request and work plan guidance](#) for:

- an overview of process steps
- more information about what must be included in work plan activity descriptions.

The BC must approve the work plan and execute the grant agreement prior to the funds being distributed.

Timeline

- BWSR will hold an informational meeting in early 2026. The recorded meeting will be available on the BWSR WBIF website
- Organizations identify a meeting coordinator/facilitator and select decision-making representatives for convene meetings
- Partnerships hold at least one convene meeting
- Partnerships send the list of partnership-approved activities to the BC (prior to the submittal of the eLINK funding request)
- Funding available on July 1, 2026
- Partnerships submit eLINK funding request between June 1, 2026 – April 30, 2027
- BWSR will process funding requests on a monthly basis
- All grant agreements must be executed by June 1, 2027
- Grant expiration date is Dec. 31, 2029