



# Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

M.L. 2026 Draft Work Plan

## General Information

**ID Number:** 2026-544

**Staff Lead:** Noah Fribley

**Date this document submitted to LCCMR:** February 2, 2026

**Project Title:** Sustainable Food Security, Ecosystem Restoration, and Indigenous Empowerment

**Project Budget:** \$437,000

## Project Manager Information

**Name:** Wenqing Zhang

**Organization:** U of MN - Duluth

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## Project Reporting

**Reporting Schedule:** April 1 / October 1 of each year.

**Project Completion:** June 30, 2028

**Final Report Due Date:** August 14, 2028

## Legal Information

**Legal Citation:**

**Appropriation Language:**

**Appropriation End Date:** June 30, 2028

## Narrative

**Project Summary:** SFSEIIC combats Indigenous food insecurity through community-driven agriculture, ecosystem restoration, and improved local supply chains, empowering communities with culturally-tailored foods, capacity building, and a comprehensive directory of traditional food resources.

**Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.**

Indigenous communities in Minnesota face persistent and disproportionately high levels of food insecurity due to multifaceted, systemic challenges. Nearly 25% of Native American households struggle to access reliable, nutritious, and culturally appropriate food. This crisis is fueled by geographic isolation, entrenched economic barriers, infrastructure gaps that hinder local food production, and inefficient long-distance industrial supply chains. Moreover, the historical loss of Indigenous agricultural knowledge and food sovereignty has weakened these communities' ability to sustain traditional food systems and secure culturally relevant resources. Consequently, food insecurity results in poor health outcomes—such as elevated rates of diabetes and obesity—and undermines cultural identity and community resilience. Additionally, chronic underinvestment in local food infrastructure and limited market opportunities have further compounded these issues, leaving communities with few tools or resources to effectively address these challenges. The convergence of economic, environmental, and social factors calls for a comprehensive, culturally informed intervention that integrates community-driven agricultural solutions, ecosystem restoration, and local capacity building. By merging traditional practices with realigned supply chains, the proposed initiative aims to build on existing food sovereignty efforts and improve health outcomes.

**What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? Introduce us to the work you are seeking funding to do. You will be asked to expand on this proposed solution in Activities & Milestones.**

SFSEIIC proposes a comprehensive, community-driven solution to address food insecurity and ecosystem degradation affecting Minnesota's Indigenous communities. Our approach leverages three interrelated strategies designed to restore food sovereignty, improve health outcomes, and strengthen intergenerational knowledge sharing.

First, we will develop an integrated digital platform that enables Indigenous households to report food insecurity while also hosting a directory of Indigenous foods, local producers, and seed libraries—exclusively available to community members—to facilitate efficient food distribution and enhance community engagement.

Second, we will expand existing community gardens, such as those managed by AICHO and the Fond du Lac Band, to increase the capacity for sustainable, centralized food supply hubs. These gardens will incorporate traditional ecological practices, permaculture techniques, and green infrastructure (e.g., rain gardens, bioswales) to boost local food production and restore natural ecosystems.

Third, through established programming, we will deliver culturally tailored educational programs and training in sustainable agriculture, seed saving, and ecosystem restoration. Our intergenerational knowledge model will empower community members to lead these initiatives, ensuring long-term sustainability.

This integrated solution not only addresses immediate food insecurity but also contributes to building a resilient, community-led food system grounded in Indigenous traditions and environmental stewardship.

**What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?**

SFSEIIC's outcomes directly support the state's natural resource protection mission by integrating robust ecosystem restoration with sustainable agriculture. Employing sustainable practices, this project highlights the value of farmland, improves water quality, and enhances biodiversity. These measures help conserve and strengthen local ecosystems while reducing reliance on distant food supply chains. Furthermore, community-driven capacity building fosters long-

term stewardship through training in sustainable practices and traditional agricultural methods. By documenting replicable models and best practices, SFSEIIC ensures the enduring protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of Minnesota's natural resources for future generations.

## Project Location

**What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?**

Region(s): NE

**What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?**

Statewide

**When will the work impact occur?**

During the Project and In the Future

## Activities and Milestones

### Activity 1: Establish Community-Based Food Security Coordination System and Comprehensive Food Sovereignty Training Programs

**Activity Budget:** \$120,000

**Activity Description:**

The SFSEIIC project team will partner with AICHO, the Fond du Lac Band, and community leaders to create an integrated, Indigenous community members-only digital platform enabling Indigenous households to report food insecurity, coordinate food distribution, and connect with Indigenous foods, producers, and seed libraries.

The project team will develop culturally grounded educational programs, such as workshops, webinars, and digital resources, emphasizing traditional agricultural practices, sustainable food production, nutrition, and food sovereignty. Training materials will include videos, manuals, toolkits, and culturally relevant curricula co-created with Indigenous elders. Ongoing community meetings will gather feedback and encourage active participation.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Pilot digital food security reporting & coordination platform launched	November 30, 2026
Indigenous Foods & Seed Directory integrated into the platform	January 31, 2027
Culturally relevant training curricula and materials completed	February 28, 2027
First round of workshops/webinars held with 30+ participants	March 31, 2027

### Activity 2: Expand Indigenous Community Gardens as Local Food Supply Chain Hubs and Implement Ecosystem Restoration Initiatives

**Activity Budget:** \$130,000

**Activity Description:**

In collaboration with AICHO and Fond du Lac’s Gitigaan program, the project team will expand and enhance community garden sites by incorporating traditional ecological knowledge, permaculture methods, and innovative sustainable agriculture practices. Infrastructure improvements, including irrigation upgrades, soil enrichment, native pollinator habitat restoration, and the installation of culturally relevant crop systems, will be implemented concurrently. Native garden committee members and community volunteers will engage in hands-on training and implementation activities, ensuring long-term community stewardship and ecosystem sustainability.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Expansion & infrastructure upgrades completed at AICHO and Fond du Lac gardens	October 31, 2027
Hands-on garden training sessions engage 60+ participants	June 30, 2028

### Activity 3: Conduct Comprehensive Analysis and Implementation of Strategic Food Distribution and Supply Chain Models

**Activity Budget:** \$75,000

**Activity Description:**

The project team, in collaboration with AICHO, Fond du Lac, and local stakeholders, including Indigenous households, farmers, and community gardens, will conduct a detailed analysis of existing food distribution and supply chain models

affecting Indigenous communities. This analysis will identify inefficiencies, economic barriers, transportation challenges, and opportunities for improvement. Findings will directly inform the design of short-chain distribution networks that link local Indigenous producers and community garden resources with Indigenous households, reducing food miles, packaging waste, and pressure on Minnesota’s lands and waters. Educational workshops and cultural events highlighting traditional ecological knowledge, seasonal harvesting, and respectful relationships with plants and animals will be integrated into this work so that supply-chain changes are reinforced by community learning and behavior change. Together, these activities will promote climate-resilient local food systems, strengthen stewardship of soil, water, and native species, and increase the availability of culturally relevant foods. Regular stakeholder meetings and ongoing participant feedback will ensure that strategies remain community-driven and responsive to environmental outcomes.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Supply chain analysis completed; key barriers identified	December 31, 2027
Short-chain distribution network operational	March 31, 2028
Community feedback incorporated; replication guide drafted	June 30, 2028

**Activity 4: Implement Community-Based Monitoring, Evaluation, and Documentation of Project Impacts**

**Activity Budget:** \$70,000

**Activity Description:**

The SFSEIIC project will establish a community-led monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system with AICHO, Fond du Lac Band, and academic partners. We track metrics on food security, garden productivity, ecological health, and community well-being. Incorporate qualitative input from interviews and community forums. Findings will be shared through reports, infographics, digital storytelling, and public presentations to support replication in other Indigenous communities.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
M&E framework finalized and in use	December 31, 2027
Data collection & analysis completed	March 31, 2028
Final evaluation report published & shared through community forums	June 30, 2028

**Activity 5: Community Engagement, Outreach, and Capacity Building for Long-Term Sustainability**

**Activity Budget:** \$42,000

**Activity Description:**

SFSEIIC will ensure sustained project impact through intensive community engagement and outreach that directly supports Minnesota’s environment and natural resources. Activities will include ongoing volunteer opportunities, youth-focused programming, and intergenerational knowledge-sharing events that mobilize community members to restore and steward local lands and waters. Educational and cultural events, including harvest festivals, youth mentorship programs, elders’ teachings, and school-based engagement, will explicitly connect cultural practices to place-based environmental outcomes such as improved soil health, native plant establishment, pollinator habitat, and reduced erosion and nutrient runoff into streams and lakes. Events will include hands-on learning (e.g., seed collection and propagation, invasive species identification and removal, shoreline and wetland stewardship, and seasonal monitoring) so participants gain practical skills that translate into ongoing care of Minnesota’s ecosystems. By strengthening

community ties and building stewardship capacity, these activities increase long-term maintenance of restoration sites, expand local monitoring and reporting, and support climate resilience through healthier, more diverse habitats. Additionally, SFSEIC will maintain strong partnerships with academic institutions, local governments, nonprofits, and Indigenous-led organizations to sustain funding, share data and best practices, and ensure long-term project sustainability.

**Activity Milestones:**

Description	Approximate Completion Date
Youth leadership & elder mentorship program launched with 30+ participants	December 31, 2027
Annual cultural and educational events, aimed at 200 total attendees.	March 31, 2028
Sustainability plan & partnership agreements finalized.	June 30, 2028

## Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
LeAnn Littlewolf	American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO)	Provide expertise in community housing, Indigenous garden management, and local outreach. Lead implementation of sustainable agricultural initiatives; manage and expand established community gardens; coordinate local outreach and community engagement; facilitate formation and ongoing support of community garden committees.	Yes
Maria DeFoe	Agricultural Division of Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Facilitate the expansion of Fond du Lac growing spaces and seed-keeping efforts. Facilitate Community outreach through the Gitigaan Program. Provide specialized knowledge in ecosystem restoration and traditional Indigenous agricultural practices.	Yes
Pamela Standing	Independent Consultant	Facilitate community-led sustainable development planning and implementation. Provide technical assistance, training resources, and workshops focused on sustainability, food sovereignty, and environmental stewardship. Support integration and implementation of sustainable practices within community-driven initiatives.	Yes
Olaf Kuhlke	Minneapolis College of Art and Design	Offer technical guidance, research expertise, and strategic support in developing climate resilience and sustainability strategies. Collaborate on monitoring and evaluation of project impacts, contribute research capacity, and assist in synthesizing data and findings for reporting and dissemination.	Yes

## Dissemination

**Describe your plans for dissemination, presentation, documentation, or sharing of data, results, samples, physical collections, and other products and how they will follow ENRTF Acknowledgement Requirements and Guidelines.**

Plans for Dissemination, Presentation, Documentation, and Sharing of Results

SFSEIC will employ a multi-layered dissemination strategy to ensure that research findings, results, and products are accessible, actionable, and enduring. Our plan integrates community engagement, stakeholder collaboration, and public outreach, with a strong emphasis on protecting, conserving, and enhancing Minnesota’s natural resources.

### 1. Community-Based Sharing and Participation

All results will be shared first with participating Indigenous communities through forums, workshops, or culturally relevant gatherings. Garden committees, elders, youth leaders, and project participants will review findings, contribute feedback, and guide adaptation for local use. Our password-protected Indigenous Food Sovereignty Digital Platform will host data summaries, training materials, videos, and toolkits for exclusive use by Indigenous households and partners.

### 2. Stakeholder and Resource Management Outreach

Reports, infographics, and technical summaries will be shared with tribal governments, local nonprofits, state agencies, universities, or environmental organizations that can apply the findings to natural resource management.

### 3. Documentation and Longevity of Products

All training materials, curricula, seed directories, and ecological restoration guides will be archived digitally for long-term access. Physical assets (such as seed collections) will be stewarded by AICHO and/or the Fond du Lac Band to ensure continued community benefit. A replication guide will document methodologies, lessons learned, and adaptable models for use in other Minnesota communities.

#### 4. Public Awareness and Behavior Change

Public-facing versions of reports will be posted on an open-access section of the SFSEIIC website, with plain-language summaries to ensure accessibility for all Minnesotans. Visual storytelling, short videos, and social media posts will highlight how the project improves food sovereignty, restores ecosystems, and strengthens natural resource stewardship.

#### 5. Acknowledgment of ENRTF Support

The Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund logo and attribution language will be prominently displayed on all digital and print materials, reports, public presentations, signage at garden sites, and educational resources. Social media posts and online communications will tag the Trust Fund per the ENRTF Acknowledgment Guidelines.

By combining Indigenous-led knowledge sharing, scientific documentation, and accessible public outreach, these efforts will ensure that results are both deeply rooted in community priorities and broadly applicable to Minnesota's environmental and natural resource goals.

### Long-Term Implementation and Funding

**Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this work be funded?**

SFSEIIC embeds its outcomes within community-led structures. Local garden committees and community experts will ensure the ongoing management and ecological restoration of project sites. Findings and best practices will be disseminated through an accessible digital portal and community forums, fostering lasting impact. Ongoing funding will be secured through leveraged grants, state programs, philanthropic partnerships, and local economic initiatives, building on collaborations with AICHO, the Fond du Lac Band, and academic institutions. Additional work will be supported by further grant applications and public-private partnerships, ensuring statewide replication and the long-term sustainability of project successes.

## Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
<b>Personnel</b>								
Wenqing Zhang		Serve as the overall project manager, coordinate development and implementation of food insecurity coordination system, oversee community garden expansion, ecosystem restoration activities, educational and outreach programs, stakeholder engagement, project evaluation, and reporting.			27%	0.22		\$59,122
Undergraduate Research Assistant		Support fieldwork, community garden setup, data collection on food security, ecological monitoring, and assist with community workshops and outreach activities			0%	0.08		\$2,188
Undergraduate Research Assistant		Support fieldwork, community garden setup, data collection on food security, ecological monitoring, and assist with community workshops and outreach activities			0%	0.08		\$2,188
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$63,498</b>
<b>Contracts and Services</b>								
American Indian Community Housing Organization	Subaward	Lead community garden operations, local outreach coordination, volunteer recruitment, community engagement activities, and formation and training of garden committees. Garden Coordinator \$80080 Gardening Materials \$11,062 Administrative Costs \$9058  Total \$100,200				2		\$100,200
Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa	Subaward	Lead implementation of sustainable agriculture practices (Gitigaan program), oversee ecosystem restoration initiatives (bioswales, rain gardens), and provide training workshops on permaculture, traditional ecological knowledge, and water conservation methods. Farmer Staffing \$93,519 Materials and supplies \$21,305 Educational Materials \$11,510				2		\$155,109

		Community Engagement \$28,775 Total \$154,522						
Pamela Standing	Service Contract	Facilitate sustainable development planning and integration; conduct training workshops on sustainable practices, food sovereignty, and environmental stewardship; provide technical assistance to community-led sustainability initiatives. Personel \$19,246 Travel \$1000 to conduct field studies and restoration on both the FDL and AICHO sites.				0		\$20,246
TBD	Service Contract	Web portal development and management for community coordination and data sharing; Development and maintenance of community-based food security reporting and coordination platform Online Platform Service \$30,000				0		\$30,000
Minneapolis College of Art and Design	Subaward	Provide technical guidance and research support, manage development and operation of web-based data and project results portal, coordinate monitoring and evaluation, assist in data analysis and dissemination of project outcomes. Personel \$51,638 Travel \$1000 to conduct field studies and restoration on both the FDL and AICHO sites.				0.6		\$52,638
Web Hosting	Service Contract	Web hosting services for the digital platform, community coordination portal, data management, and dissemination Web Hosting Service \$3,782.00				8.38		\$3,782
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$361,975</b>
<b>Equipment, Tools, and Supplies</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Capital Equipment</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Acquisitions and Stewardship</b>								

							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Travel In Minnesota</b>								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging	Mileage (~2,789 miles at \$0.70/mile, \$1,952), lodging (\$160/night, ~18 nights, \$2880), Per Diem (\$69/day, ~60 days, \$4140)	Project team travels to conduct community outreach, training sessions, stakeholder meetings, and field visits across Northeastern Minnesota					\$8,972
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$8,972</b>
<b>Travel Outside Minnesota</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Printing and Publication</b>								
	Printing	Outreach and educational materials (fact sheets, flyers, posters, manuals, infographics, final project reports)	Disseminate information, support community education, promote project outcomes, and ensure broad community engagement					\$2,555
							<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>\$2,555</b>
<b>Other Expenses</b>								
							<b>Sub Total</b>	-
							<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>\$437,000</b>

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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## Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	\$ Amount
<b>State</b>				
			<b>State Sub Total</b>	-
<b>Non-State</b>				
In-Kind	UMN unrecovered indirect costs are calculated at the UMN negotiated rate for research of 37% modified total direct costs.	Indirect costs are those costs incurred for common or joint objectives that cannot be readily identified with a specific sponsored program or institutional activity. Examples include utilities, building maintenance, clerical salaries, and general supplies. ( <a href="https://research.umn.edu/units/oca/fa-costs/direct-indirect-costs">https://research.umn.edu/units/oca/fa-costs/direct-indirect-costs</a> )	Secured	\$76,305
			<b>Non State Sub Total</b>	<b>\$76,305</b>
			<b>Funds Total</b>	<b>\$76,305</b>

**Total Project Cost: \$513,305**

**This amount accurately reflects total project cost?**

Yes

## Acquisition and Restoration

### Parcel List

Name	County	Site Significance	Activity	Acres	Miles	Estimated Cost	Type of Landowner	Easement or Title Holder	Status of Work
AICHO Gardens	St. Louis	The site is important not only as a model of urban conservation and ecological restoration but also as a community-led demonstration of sovereignty and resilience. In this way, the gardens provide conservation value by enhancing biodiversity in a dense urban setting, and public benefits by offering fresh food access, cultural education, and an inclusive space for community gathering and intergenerational learning.	Restoration	0.5	-	-	Private		
FDL's Gitigaan Program Gardens	St. Louis	The site is important as a tribally owned and managed hub for food sovereignty, where community members gather for training, workshops, and harvest feasts. Its conservation value lies in the integration of culturally important crops, orchards, and seed-saving initiatives that sustain both biodiversity and cultural heritage. Public benefits include improved household access to fresh, locally grown foods, intergenerational education in traditional foodways, hands-on learning opportunities for youth and producers, and the strengthening of community resilience through the sharing of seeds, plants, and agricultural knowledge.	Restoration	1	-	-	Private		
<b>Totals</b>				<b>1.5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>-</b>			

## Restoration

### **1. Provide a statement confirming that all restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land permanently protected by a conservation easement or public ownership.**

All restoration activities completed with these funds will occur on land that is permanently owned and stewarded by the American Indian Community Housing Organization (AICHO) or the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa. Both entities hold clear, long-term title to their respective garden sites, ensuring that the investments in restoration and food sovereignty are protected for public benefit in perpetuity.

### **2. Summarize the components and expected outcomes of restoration and management plans for the parcels to be restored by your organization, how these plans are kept on file by your organization, and overall strategies for long-term plan implementation.**

Restoration and management plans will focus on enhancing soil health, integrating culturally important crops, establishing pollinator habitat, and increasing biodiversity within the garden parcels. Expected outcomes include improved ecological function (healthy soils, resilient plantings), strengthened food security for Indigenous households, and expanded community education opportunities. Each partner organization keeps its management plans on file in both digital and physical form, reviewed annually by staff and advisory committees. Long-term strategies include regular soil amendments, crop rotation, seed saving, and adaptive management informed by both Indigenous knowledge and best ecological practices.

### **3. Describe how restoration efforts will utilize and follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines” in order to ensure ecological integrity and pollinator enhancement.**

Restoration efforts will follow the Board of Soil and Water Resources “Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines.” Native plant species will be selected and established wherever feasible to maintain ecological integrity, protect against invasive species, and provide pollinator habitat. Enhancements such as pollinator strips, diverse perennial plantings, and integrated pest management will be incorporated to maximize ecological resilience and habitat value.

### **4. Describe how the long-term maintenance and management needs of the parcel being restored with these funds will be met and financed into the future.**

Long-term maintenance will be supported through a combination of tribal government program funding, philanthropic support, earned income from agricultural products, and ongoing community partnerships. Both AICHO and the Fond du Lac Band have established food sovereignty programs that provide stable staffing, infrastructure, and budget support to sustain these gardens over time.

### **5. Describe how consideration will be given to contracting with Conservation Corps of Minnesota for any restoration activities.**

Consideration will be given to contracting with the Conservation Corps of Minnesota for eligible restoration activities. Where appropriate, Conservation Corps crews may be engaged for tasks such as soil preparation, native vegetation planting, pollinator habitat establishment, and invasive species control. This will ensure quality, cost-effective outcomes while also supporting youth training and workforce development in conservation.

### **6. Provide a statement indicating that evaluations will be completed on parcels where activities were implemented both 1) initially after activity completion and 2) three years later as a follow-up. Evaluations should analyze improvements to the parcel and whether goals have been met, identify any problems with the implementation, and identify any findings that can be used to improve implementation of future restoration efforts at the site or elsewhere.**

Evaluations will be completed on all parcels where activities are implemented: (1) immediately after completion to assess establishment success and compliance with restoration plans, and (2) three years later as a follow-up. These evaluations will document improvements to soil health, vegetation establishment, pollinator activity, and food production, while also measuring progress toward food security goals. Any challenges or problems identified will be

used to refine adaptive management and improve implementation of future restoration efforts both at these sites and elsewhere.

## Attachments

### Required Attachments

#### *Map*

File: [a802090f-a35.pdf](#)

#### *Alternate Text for Map*

This document contains the Conceptual Overview Diagram and the Project Timeline....

### Supplemental Attachments

#### *Capital Project Questionnaire, Budget Supplements, Support Letter, Photos, Media, Other*

Title	File
Support Letter from Cooperative Development Foundation	<a href="#">f493acd2-5c0.pdf</a>
Support Letter from Fond du Lac Band	<a href="#">b5241d9f-130.pdf</a>
Support Letter from MNIBA	<a href="#">8fcd2fa5-fcb.pdf</a>
Support Letter from True North Goodwill	<a href="#">c17167a4-519.pdf</a>
UMD Authorization Letter	<a href="#">114a7be8-835.pdf</a>
Support Letter from Dream of Wild Health	<a href="#">fba337e-bec.pdf</a>
Native Agriculture Financial Services	<a href="#">56e9e57b-c86.pdf</a>

## Difference between Proposal and Work Plan

### *Describe changes from Proposal to Work Plan Stage*

Update (Jan 21, 2026):

Below is the new revision suggested by Noah.

13 01/21/2026 Budget Please remove the budget item for out of state travel. That budget amount can be spent somewhere else. Thank you!

My responses:

I have addressed this in the Budget section. Specifically, I removed the Out-of-State Travel line item and reallocated those funds to Travel in Minnesota, keeping the total budget unchanged. (This reverses the out-of-state travel item I added on December 22, 2025.)

Update (Dec 22, 2025):

Thank you, Noah, for your revision suggestions. I have addressed the issues you noted, specifically:

- 8 12/18/2025 Narrative Please delete "By merging supply chain" at the end of the proposed solution or modify your response so there is a complete sentence.
- 9 12/18/2025 Activities and Milestones For activity five, please make the connection between the educational and cultural events and the impact on Minnesota's environment and natural resources more explicit.
- 10 12/18/2025 Budget Services and Subawards: The subaward descriptions should also include a breakdown of what the general costs are for (e.g. "personnel \$x, supplies \$y, travel \$z to conduct restoration on ~100 sites.") You should specifically identify any generally ineligible or capital expenses with \$ amounts and justification in the

description. The project manager will be responsible for ensuring subaward funds are used according to the Allowable Expense Guidelines.

11 12/18/2025 Budget Travel costs in the "travel in Minnesota" section should only be for UMN members of the project team. If you have included costs associated with subawardees, please include those costs in their subaward. If the travel is only be for UMN members of the project team, no changes are needed.

12 12/18/2025 Budget Your budget includes funds for shipping and delivery, including garden and restoration supplies. The budget does not include an line-items for supplies. Are these being purchased through one of the subawards? If so, will you be shipping them after the subawardee purchases them? If not, are there other funds that should be included in the non-ENRTF portion of the budget - or are you missing a supply line-item in the budget?

My responses:

8: I deleted the incomplete sentence (it was cut off due to the word limit).

9: I strengthened the connection between the educational/cultural events and their impact on Minnesota's environment and natural resources in the Activity 5 description.

10: I added a breakdown of costs for each service and subaward. The only potentially ineligible expense I can think of is conference attendance. I also left you a voicemail—if conference attendance can be funded by LCCMR, I'd like to include it in the budget. If not, I will remove it and reallocate those funds to fieldwork (Travel in Minnesota).

11: Confirmed—this travel is only for UMN members of the project team.

12: I removed the shipping/delivery item from this section and moved the shipping and delivery costs for garden/restoration supplies into the subawards, since the subawardees will be responsible for those supplies as well as shipping and delivery.

Previous Updates:

In our original proposal we requested \$620,000 to fully implement the project as envisioned; with a recommended award of \$437,000, we have adjusted our work plan to emphasize the most critical components while scaling back others. The development of an integrated digital platform remains the central focus, ensuring that Indigenous households can report food insecurity and access a secure community directory of Indigenous foods, local producers, and seed libraries. To accommodate the reduced budget, outreach and training in traditional and sustainable agricultural practices will proceed at a smaller scale, prioritizing depth and quality of engagement over the number of households reached. Other elements such as larger community events, broader distribution of gardening materials, and expanded staffing have been reduced, while the core functions of food security data collection and platform development remain intact. In addition to these budget-driven adjustments, we have incorporated changes based on the excellent Revision Requested and Comments provided by LCCMR staff, strengthening our project design and ensuring that restoration practices, evaluation protocols, and long-term maintenance strategies are aligned with state standards and best practices. Together, these refinements preserve the project's most impactful outcomes while responding constructively to both funding realities and staff guidance.

## Additional Acknowledgements and Conditions:

The following are acknowledgements and conditions beyond those already included in the above workplan:

**Do you understand and acknowledge the ENRTF repayment requirements if the use of capital equipment changes?**

N/A

**Do you understand that travel expenses are only approved if they follow the "Commissioner's Plan" promulgated by the Commissioner of Management of Budget or, for University of Minnesota projects, the University of Minnesota plan?**

Yes, I understand the UMN Policy on travel applies.

**Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, sale of products and assets, or revenue generation?**

No

**Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?**

N/A

**Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?**

N/A

**Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?**

No

**Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?**

No

**Does your project include the pre-design, design, construction, or renovation of a building, trail, campground, or other fixed capital asset costing \$10,000 or more or large-scale stream or wetland restoration?**

No

**Do you propose using an appropriation from the Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund to conduct a project that provides children's services (as defined in Minnesota Statutes section 299C.61 Subd.7 as "the provision of care, treatment, education, training, instruction, or recreation to children")?**

Yes

**Do you certify that background checks are performed for background check crimes, as defined in Minnesota Statutes, section 299C.61, Subd. 2, on all employees, contractors, and volunteers who have or may have access to a child to whom children's services are provided by your organization?**

Yes

**Provide the name(s) and organization(s) of additional individuals assisting in the completion of this project:**

N/A

**Do you understand that a named service contract does not constitute a funder-designated subrecipient or approval of a sole-source contract? In other words, a service contract entity is only approved if it has been selected according to the contracting rules identified in state law and policy for organizations that receive ENRTF funds through direct appropriations, or in the DNR's reimbursement manual for non-state organizations. These rules may include competitive bidding and prevailing wage requirements**

Yes, I understand