



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2023 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2023-073

Proposal Title: ML 2023 Contract Agreement Reimbursement

Project Manager Information

Name: Katherine Sherman-Hoehn

Organization: MN DNR - Grants Unit

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: Provide contract management to ENRTF pass-through appropriation recipients for approximately 115 open grants. Ensure funds are expended in compliance with appropriation law, state statute, grants policies, and approved work plans.

Funds Requested: \$224,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30, 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Administration (I)

Project Location

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

Statewide

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

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

During the Project

Narrative

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

Provide continued contract management services to pass-through recipients of Environment and Natural Resource Trust Fund (ENRTF) dollars appropriated to the commissioner of natural resources.

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.

This appropriation will be used to continue and enhance contract management services to pass-through recipients of ENRTF appropriations to the Commissioner of Natural Resources. The goal of contract management is to ensure that grantees are properly reimbursed and that organizations operate in compliance with ENRTF pass-through appropriation procedures, policies from the Department of Administration's Grants Management, ENRTF statute, and the recommendations of the Legislative Auditor. Contract management includes: grant agreements and amendments, training, technical assistance, reporting, fiscal monitoring, reimbursement request processing, and close-out of grants. In this appropriation, the DNR proposes adding an FTE to this work to: adjust contract management capacity to meet increasing grant numbers, enhance coordination of our monitoring and compliance activities, and enable the unit to meet increasing requests for technical assistance from LCCMR staff and individual grantees. The Grants Unit last added a staff member in FY19. That staff member now has a full caseload. The new FTE will also provide subject matter expertise in monitoring, audits, and compliance to provide timely, coordinated service internally, to LCCMR staff, and to grantees.

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?

The OMBS Grants Unit's goal is to provide pass-through recipients with the contract management, technical assistance, and grant monitoring they need to successfully complete their conservation work. The Grants Unit provides grantees with one consistent point of contact for their agreements and delivers timely, responsive, customer service. The Grants Unit also collaborates with LCCMR staff as necessary to ensure the appropriate administration of projects.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Contract Management

Activity Budget: \$224,000

Activity Description:

The Grants Unit manages grant agreements for special environment and natural resource projects recommended by LCCMR and appropriated by the legislature to ensure that all projects operate in compliance with state and LCCMR requirements. Services include:

Contract Management

- o Meeting statutory and Office of Grants Management (OGM) requirements for grant agreements, including contract creation, payment requests, monitoring, and closeout
- o Processing reimbursement requests promptly, in compliance with state and DNR policies and LCCMR-approved workplan
- o Working closely with and responding to requests from the Office of the Legislative Auditor
- o Developing and maintaining accurate reports on Trust fund and individual project status
- o Working cooperatively with LCCMR staff and recipients to resolve questions and make changes
- o Improving processes to increase efficiency and ease for recipients while ensuring fiscal integrity

Training and Ongoing Communication

- o Training recipients on state requirements to ensure they understand the state’s contract and reimbursement procedures and requirements
- o Providing ongoing technical assistance and one-on-one work with recipients where necessary
- o Responding to LCCMR requests for information or assistance

The Grants Unit uses a professional service rate to charge for work, with expenses charged only for actual hours worked and services delivered.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
Pass Through Grant Agreements Provided to Recipients	August 31, 2023
Contract Management for Pass Through Grant Recipients	June 30, 2025

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?

The Grants Unit will continue contract management through existing policies and procedures, including Office of Grants Management policies; procedures laid out in ENRTF statute, appropriation language, and workplans; and in Grants Unit policies and procedures laid out in attachments to grantee contracts.

The Grants Unit will continue to track contract management activities and metrics through its database and through state-mandated file retention procedures, and communicate any relevant findings to LCCMR staff. Additional work would be funded with future appropriations.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2014, Chp. 226, Sec. 2, Subd. 10a	\$135,000
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2015, Chp. 76, Sec. 2, Subd. 11b	\$135,000
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2016, Chp. 186, Sec. 2, Subd. 10a	\$135,000
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 10a	\$135,000
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 12	\$135,000
Contract Agreement Reimbursement	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 10a	\$135,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Katherine Sherman-Hoehn

Job Title: OMBS Grants Manager

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Ten years of professional full-time grant management experience with progressive levels of responsibility. Currently supervises the Grants Unit in the Office of Management and Budget Services at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources.

Organization: MN DNR - Grants Unit

Organization Description:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (DNR) works to integrate and sustain the interdependent values of a healthy environment, a sustainable economy, and livable communities. DNR's integrated resource management strategy shares stewardship responsibility with citizens and partners to manage for multiple interests. The mission of the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, to provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and to provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
							Sub Total	-
Contracts and Services								
OMBS Grants Unit	Internal services or fees (uncommon)	The Grants Unit manages grant agreements for special environment and natural resource projects recommended by LCCMR and appropriated by the legislature to ensure that all projects operate in compliance with state and LCCMR requirements. FTE represents total team dedicated; only actual hours are billed.		X		8.86		\$224,000
							Sub Total	\$224,000
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-

Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
							Sub Total	-
							Grand Total	\$224,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
<p>Contracts and Services - OMBS Grants Unit</p>	<p>Internal services or fees (uncommon)</p>	<p>The Grants Unit manages grant agreements for special environment and natural resource projects recommended by LCCMR and appropriated by the legislature to ensure that all projects operate in compliance with state and LCCMR requirements. FTE represents total team dedicated; only actual hours are billed.</p>	<p>Per agreement with LCCMR.</p>

Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
			State Sub Total	-
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	-

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [6d430e77-8ed.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

Single page showing Contract Management Measures from 2017 to 2020
Two charts, one showing Open Grants per Fiscal Year with a fairly even caseload between 2017-2020, and a sharp upward trend in 2021. Payments by Fiscal Year showing payments from 2017- 2020. Trend stable, departing down in 2020 then up....

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

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

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?

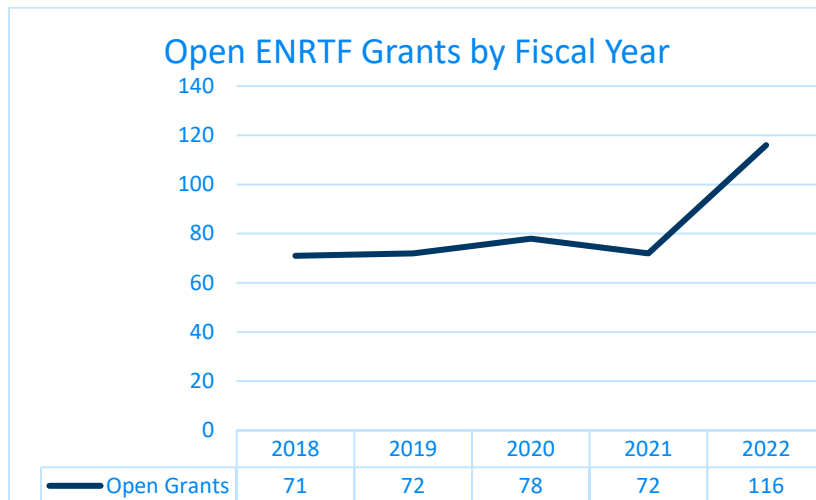
No

Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund Contract Management Measures

The OMBS Grants Unit tracks several basic metrics to judge trends in contract management work and set strategic and staffing goals for the year.

Open Grants Per Year

The number of open Environment and Natural Resources Grants per year held fairly steady from FY18-FY21. While there were no new grants in FY21, COVID extensions meant active grants dropped only slightly. The passage of two years of grants in FY22 greatly increased the number of open grants. Grants last an average of 2.8 years.



Payments to Grantees

Grant Specialists process 162 payments a year on average. Payments had remained overall steady with minor fluctuations until FY21, despite the beginnings of COVID in FY2020. While payments dropped in FY21 given a lack of new grants, they are on a pace to rebound in FY22.

