

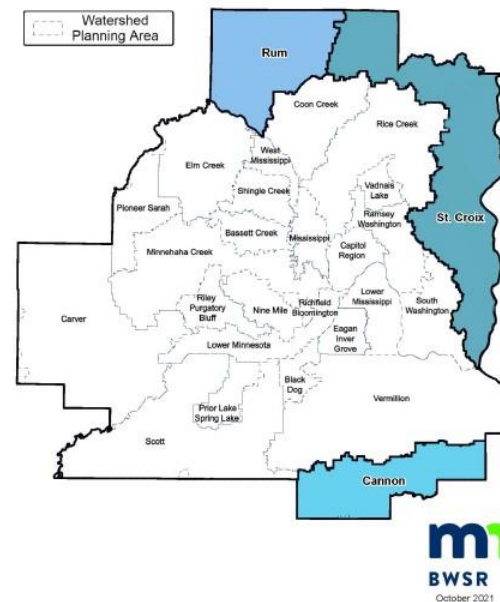
Metro Area Watershed-Based Implementation Funding (WBIF) Program FY22-23 Convene Process Guidance

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

In the seven-county Metropolitan Area (Metro), only activities identified in the *implementation section* of a state approved and locally adopted comprehensive watershed management plan developed under Minnesota statutes §103B.101, Subd. 14 or §103B.801, watershed management plan required under §103B.231, county groundwater plan authorized under §103B.255, or a Metro soil and water conservation district enhanced plan as described in the “Metro SWCD Enhanced Comprehensive Plan Options Guidance Document” (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/watershed-based-implementation-funding-program>) and authorized under §103C.331 are eligible to be funded. Activities must also have a primary benefit towards water quality.

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 partnership) and meetings will be referred to as convene meetings.

Twin Cities Metro Area Allocation Map for the Watershed-based Implementation Funding Program



Convene Meeting Process

The convene meeting process allows the partnership to jointly coordinate on the development of a WBIF budget request for submittal to BWSR that is prioritized, targeted and measurable. 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.

Prior to the initial meeting, individual organizations must select one decision-making representative to the partnership. Municipalities in each allocation area must coordinate prior to the start of the convene process 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 partnership can then either 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). The BWSR BC and Clean Water Specialist (CWS) must be invited to convene meetings. Meeting notes that document the general discussion, decisions, and attendees will be taken by the facilitating entity and shared with the partnership soon after each meeting and be made available upon request.

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

Recommended Convene Meeting Objectives:

1. Choose a decision-making process.
2. Decide how to select activities for funding. Note that partnerships may also want to choose funding targets for different categories (e.g., projects, studies, education).
Partnerships may select activities by:
 - 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 budget 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 of the 10% required match.

Eligibility

To better understand the eligibility of proposed activities, BWSR recommends that you first refer to the FY22-23 WBIF Policy at <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-program-policies>. If there are questions regarding eligibility, it is recommended that the BWSR BC be consulted as early as possible.

The partnership must send the BWSR BC a list of partnership-approved activities prior to submittal of an eLINK budget request when there will be multiple grantees per watershed allocation area to ensure funds are not being overextended. This list should include the project title and description, water resource(s), proposed measurable outcome(s), grant funds requested, plan reference(s), entity requesting funding (grantee), and fiscal agent (if different from grantee).

Even if your partnership will not have multiple grantees, it is still recommended that partnerships provide the BWSR BC this same list of project details prior to completion of a budget request in eLINK in order to accelerate the eligibility screening process. This step could reduce the need for additional meetings or the number of times an eLINK budget request is completed.

A template can be provided if requested. For plan references, please provide the title(s) to the eligible water management plan(s), page number where these are found in the *implementation section* of the

eligible plan(s), and weblink to the referenced plan(s).

Submittal of the Budget Request

Once the activities have been agreed upon by the partnership, each grantee will then be responsible for submitting an eLINK (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/elink>) budget request to BWSR. BWSR may deny the budget request for reasons such as activities are ineligible according to the WBIF Policy, activities are not identified in the implementation section of an eligible plan, requested amount is inaccurate, the request is incomplete, etc. Please save the budget request information outside of eLINK as this information is not retained in eLINK if a budget request is denied and a new budget request would need to be submitted.

Once the eLINK budget request is approved by BWSR, each grantee will be responsible for completing an eLINK work plan, which needs to be approved by BWSR **no later than March 30, 2023**. Note that if a work plan cannot be approved by this date, BWSR will reallocate these funds through the WBIF Program. Therefore, we highly recommend that eLINK budget requests are submitted no later than November 30, 2022 and the eLINK work plan is submitted by December 30, 2022. The work plan must be approved by BWSR prior to funds being distributed.

Guidance on the eLINK budget request and work plan can be found at <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/grant-profile-watershed-based-implementation-funding> under “Resources”.

Timeline (hard deadlines are in bold font)

- BWSR holds informational meeting(s) (Jan. – Feb. 2022)
- Organizations select decision-making representatives for convene meetings (Jan. – March 2022)
- Partnerships select meeting coordinator/facilitator (Spring 2022)
- 1-2 convene meetings held (Spring 2022)
- Funding available (**July 1, 2022**)
- Send list of partnership-approved activities to BWSR – this is required for areas with multiple grantees and recommended for other areas (prior to the submittal of the eLINK budget request)
- Submit eLINK budget requests (July 2022 – Nov. 2022)
- eLINK Work Plan submittal deadline (Aug. 2022 – Dec. 2022)
- eLINK Work Plan approval deadline (**March 30, 2023**). Note that if a work plan cannot be approved by this date, BWSR will reallocate these funds through the WBIF Program.
- Grant expiration date (**Dec. 31, 2025**)

Additional Information

- Please see the WBIF Policy, Allocation Table, FAQs and other guidance documents on our website at <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/watershed-based-implementation-funding-program>.
- More information about the terms “prioritize, target, and measure” can be found at https://bwsr.state.mn.us/sites/default/files/2021-11/WP_1W1P_guidebook.pdf.
- Partnerships should consider the high-level priorities of the Nonpoint Priority Funding Plan (<https://bwsr.state.mn.us/reports>).