


2024



Central Shenandoah Watershed Wellness Mini-Grant Guide

Funding Best Management Practices to improve water quality and reduce run-off
in the Chesapeake Bay watershed





Watershed Wellness Mini-Grant

Purpose and Guidelines

About the Program

The [Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission \(CSPDC\) Watershed Wellness Mini-Grant Program](#) is a reimbursement grant that provides up to \$3,500 in non-match funding for implementing practical, cost-effective, and ready-to-go best management practice (BMP) projects that improve water quality and reduce runoff in the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

The program is funded by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), and is part of [Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan \(WIP\)](#), which prioritizes addressing stormwater runoff.

Goals

The program has three main goals:

- Install BMPs that improve water quality and reduce impervious surface run-off;
- Provide a simple, streamlined BMP grant application process;
- Support the State of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals for nitrogen phosphorous, and sediment outlined in the DEQ Statewide WIP plan.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be located within the five-county CSPDC region (Augusta, Bath, Highland, Rockbridge, and Rockingham Counties). The program focuses on BMPs in unregulated, non-municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) areas. MS4 areas are encouraged to apply; however, priority will be given to non-regulated areas.

Applicants must be one of the following:

- Municipalities (Counties, Cities, Towns)
- Non-profit organizations with tax-exempt 501c3 status (environmental organizations, community organizations, religious organizations, etc.)
- Public education institutions (high schools, middle schools, elementary schools, etc.)

Eligible Projects

Projects must be fully-constructed structural stormwater BMP improvements addressing a water quality need. Projects will address impervious surfaces, erosion, excess run-off, poor drainage, poor vegetation, and other problem areas. Projects must conduct a site evaluation to determine site characteristics such as slope, soil, drainage patterns, sunlight and shade, and site features such as property boundaries, right-of-way, topography, utilities, and stormwater conveyance.



Funding can be applied to project planning, design, and construction for new projects or projects that are currently in development. Funding can also be applied to improving an already completed BMP project. Work should begin within 60 days of award notification, and projects must be constructed and completed by December 20, 2024.

BMP Selection

In general, BMPs should incorporate [low impact development \(LID\) and green infrastructure principles](#)¹, which are improvements based on mimicking natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater in order to protect water quality through on-site natural features. Applicants should implement BMPs approved by [DEQ's BMP Clearinghouse](#), and reference the [Virginia Plant Atlas](#) for native plantings.

Projects on public property or property owned by a non-profit organization are preferred and prioritized; however, projects on private property will also be considered. Recognizing the value of installing multiple BMPs at the same site at the same time, applicants may apply for and be approved for multiple applications. Examples of eligible stormwater BMP project examples are listed below. This list is not comprehensive. Coordinate with CSPDC staff to determine if your project idea is eligible for the program.

- *Green Infrastructure.* Implementing green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, and permeable pavements and other improvements to capture and absorb stormwater, reducing runoff and filtering pollutants.
- *Riparian Buffers.* Establishing vegetated buffers along waterways to stabilize banks, reduce erosion, filter pollutants, and provide habitat.
- *Constructed Wetlands.* Creating or restoring wetlands to capture, store, and treat stormwater.
- *Pervious Surfaces.* Using porous materials for pavements, driveways, and sidewalks to allow water infiltration and reduce runoff.
- *Vegetated Swales.* Incorporating vegetated channels or ditches along roads or in developments to slow, capture, and filter stormwater runoff.
- *Stormwater Bioretention.* Constructing bioretention basins to temporarily store and slowly release stormwater, allowing sediment and pollutants to settle out before discharge.
- *Vegetated Conveyance.* Mimicking natural drainage patterns by creating shallow, vegetated channels to slow and treat stormwater runoff.
- *Water Harvesting and Reuse.* Collecting stormwater for irrigation, toilet flushing, or other non-potable uses, reducing demand on municipal water supplies.
- *Erosion Control Measures.* Implementing erosion control practices such as silt fences, straw wattles, and mulching to prevent sediment from entering waterways.
- *Urban Tree Canopy Expansion and Conservation Landscaping.* Increasing tree planting and native vegetative planting in to enhance stormwater infiltration and reduce runoff.

¹ The EPA defines Low-Impact Development, Green Infrastructure, and Sustainable Stormwater Development



Ineligible Projects

The program does not fund planning, technical assistance, or public education initiatives that do not directly lead to the physical construction of a BMP.

Funding and Match

The program provides 100% project funding and requires no match. Reimbursement is applied after the completion of the project. Participants must complete the project no later than December 20, 2024, have an in-field verification conducted by the CSPDC, and submit a Project Completion Report by January 8, 2025 to receive reimbursement. The grant request minimum is \$500, and the grant maximum is \$3,500. Funds may be combined with other grant or cost-share resources for a new or on-going project.

While a cash or non-cash match is not required for funding, preference will be given to applications that demonstrate an in-kind match, which may include volunteer time or donated services and items.

Eligible expenses during the grant period include: personnel and fringe, travel, supplies, contractual costs, labor, maintenance.

Application Process

Applicants with multiple project ideas are encouraged to contact CSPDC staff. Project construction must be final by December 20, 2024. Contact CSPDC WIP Coordinator Zach Beard at zach@cspdc.org with questions.

Timeline

Below are important application and project dates:

- **Wednesday, February 28, 2024.** Application available on the [CSPDC WIP website page](#).
- **Friday, March 29, 2024.** Application in-take period closes at 5:00 p.m.
- **Friday, April 12, 2024.** Projects are reviewed and selected. Awards announced.
- **Friday, April 19, 2024.** Project start date pending signed agreement.
- **Thursday, August 15, 2024.** Mid-point project status update.
- **Tuesday, December 20, 2024.** Project construction complete.
- **Wednesday, January 8, 2025.** Project Completion Report submission deadline.

Project Evaluation

CSPDC staff will pre-screen each application to ensure requirements are met, and work with the applicant if there are any questions. CSPDC staff will consult with regional Soil and Water Conservation District programs and DEQ staff if necessary, and will evaluate each project based on the following:



- *Project design.* BMP design is adequately documented.
- *Alignment with Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals.* Needs address the Virginia Chesapeake Bay WIP goals to reduce nutrient and sediment run-off.
- *Project readiness.* BMPs that are ready to be constructed and can be completed by December 20, 2024.
- *Non-MS4 status.* Priority will be given to non-regulated areas; however, MS4 areas are encouraged to apply.
- *On-going monitoring and maintenance.* Demonstrate that future maintenance of BMP facilities will be addressed.
- *In-kind match documentation.* While match is not required, projects that demonstrate community involvement and in-kind match will be prioritized.

Post-Project Completion

After the project is complete, the recipient and the CSPDC have the following responsibilities:

Recipient

- Complete the project construction by December 20, 2024.
- Recognize DEQ's Chesapeake Bay WIP program and goals in any publicity materials.
- Submit a Project Completion Report, receipts for work completed, and before and after images of the completed project by January 8, 2025.

CSPDC Responsibilities

- Provide progress report to DEQ for interim and final WIP reports.
- Ensure the completed project is entered into the VA BMP Warehouse and confirm the submission with DEQ.

