



2025 PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION GRANTS HANDBOOK

The Postpartum Wellness Garden supports moms and kids. Photo courtesy Partum Garden, PIC Grantee.

East Multnomah Soil & Water Conservation District

Applications Due: Tuesday, December 17, 2024 at 4 p.m.

Submit your application via ZoomGrants - <https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/PIC2025>

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PARTNERS IN CONSERVATION GRANT GUIDELINES

The Partners in Conservation (PIC) Grants Program supports community projects that focus on soil health and water quality, reducing and addressing climate impacts, sustainable agriculture and community gardens, conservation education programs, and fish and wildlife habitat restoration. These grants also increase conservation benefits for communities experiencing disparities in environmental health, environmental education, and natural amenities. A variety of community-led projects serving diverse communities, youth and families will receive funding. The minimum grant award is \$5,000. The maximum is \$70,000 (approximately 10% of total funding available). Grants may take up to two years to complete.

Important Dates

October 15, 2024	Application opens
December 17, 2024	Applications are due at 4 p.m.
February/March 2025	Grant Review Committee meetings
April 2025	Awards announced
June 2025	Grant-funded activities may begin (with a signed funding agreement)
June 1, 2025	Upfront funding available

Staff Contact Information

Heather Nelson Kent at heather@emswcd.org 503-935-5370. Or visit emswcd.org/grants.

Who Can Apply

Note: Grant-funded activities must take place within the EMSWCD boundary. Link to map [here](#).

- Community-based organizations with non-profit status; 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations.
- Community groups without non-profit status may apply for an EMSWCD grant with a fiscal sponsor. A fiscal sponsor is an eligible non-profit organization that provides organizational infrastructure, insurance coverage and administrative support for managing a grant. If a group has neither federal tax exemption nor a fiscal sponsor, please contact us before applying.
- Government agencies or educational institutions
- Native American tribes.

Submit your application online starting October 15, 2024. [Submit your application via ZoomGrants.](#)
<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/PIC2025>

Non-discrimination Policy

For any work related to an EMSWCD-funded project, the grantee agrees to comply with EMSWCD's policy of prohibiting discrimination based on race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisals, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

Grant Requirements

- Must be located within EMSWCD's service area (Multnomah County lying east of the Willamette River centerline) or demonstrate direct benefit to EMSWCD residents. Click here for [more information about the district](#) and a map showing our district boundary.
- Grantees (and/or their fiscal sponsors) are required to carry insurance coverage and are responsible for the proper use, accounting, and reporting of grant funds. EMSWCD reports grant distributions to the IRS.
- Must advance the mission of the EMSWCD "To Help People Care for Land and Water."
- Must address one or more of the Grant Program Goals (p. 5).

Ineligible Entities and Project Types

- Private businesses and landowners (funding and technical assistance from the EMSWCD may be available for these entities under other EMSWCD programs).
- Rainwater harvesting systems or cisterns (unless those components are incidental and subordinate to a larger project).
- Buildings and capital projects (unless these components are incidental and secondary to a larger project).
- Capital campaigns.
- Political campaigns (EMSWCD is statutorily prohibited from supporting such activity.)
- Required mitigation projects.

PIC 2025 GRANT GOALS AND EXAMPLES

Since 2007, the district has awarded \$12 million to nearly 200 organizations through the Partners in Conservation grant program. Projects improve water quality, increase habitat for fish and wildlife, get kids outside to learn about and care for nature, give people opportunities to garden sustainably and grow healthy food close to home, and support stronger, more resilient communities.

2025 Partners in Conservation Grant Program Goals

1. Complement other EMSWCD program efforts in water quality, soil health, fish and wildlife habitat and sustainable agriculture.
2. Increase conservation benefits for communities and populations experiencing disparities in environmental health, environmental education, and natural amenities.
3. Build resilience to climate change in local communities, mitigate climate change impacts, and build momentum for climate change action.
4. Establish school and community gardens and support sustainable and culturally appropriate agriculture practices.
5. Prepare residents for careers or education in natural resources, agriculture, nature education, or other nature-related fields by supporting mentorship, youth programs, and job skill development.

In 2024, we awarded 26 organizations \$1,050,000 million in grants. A mix of community-led projects serving diverse communities, youth and families received funding – including several first-time applicants.

[Read about the grants the district funded last year.](#)



Student Crew Leaders from Rosemary Anderson High School planting trees in Montevilla. Participants receive job training through the Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center. Photo courtesy of PIC grantee POIC.

Eligible Project Types

1. On-the-ground restoration or conservation project. Examples: stream bank revegetation, fish and wildlife habitat restoration and/or enhancement, weed control.
2. Sustainable agriculture or gardening project. Examples: establishing or maintaining school or community gardens and/or orchards, native gathering gardens, composting systems, irrigation systems, and farm intern programs.
3. Water quality project. Examples: parking lot bioswale, raingardens, tree planting, stream restoration and trash clean up.
4. Hands-on learning about healthy soil and water, wildlife, climate change for youth and/or adults. Examples: outdoor education, farm and garden education, workshops or classroom programs, training, signage.
5. Expanding equitable access to outdoor education, conservation, and sustainable ag/garden projects and programs. Examples: development of projects or programs designed for communities of color and/or other historically marginalized people, retaining and restoring cultural and community traditions related to land and water, partnership development, staff and board equity and inclusion (DEI) training.
6. Environmental health projects in Black, Indigenous, Latinx, and other underserved and/or environmentally impacted communities; low-income communities. Examples: increase access to fresh, healthy, and culturally relevant food and plants, toxics/pesticide reduction, tree planting and pavement removal to reduce temperatures in developed areas, workforce development in agriculture or environmental sector jobs.
7. Planning, design or engineering of a conservation project. Examples: engineering of a soil erosion control project, stream/fish passage restoration, and in-stream habitat improvements.
8. Monitoring project. Examples: tree canopy assessment, evaluation of weed treatment or sediment control methods, and water quality monitoring.

Priority populations for EMSWCD grants: We prioritize people with low incomes, communities of color, and other historically marginalized communities for EMSWCD grants. Historically, these populations have had less access to land and the benefits of conservation investments. At the same time, these communities are more vulnerable to extreme heat, wildfire smoke, vector-borne diseases, flooding, and other climate-related impacts.

APPLICATION REVIEW AND REQUIREMENTS

Grant Application Review Committee

A [Grant Review Committee](#) (appointed by the EMSWCD Board of Directors) reviews all Partners in Conservation (PIC) grant applications and recommends which project proposals to fund. This advisory group includes community members from diverse professional backgrounds with lived and relevant expertise in urban conservation, community organizing, farming, social justice, formal and informal learning, environmental and cultural programming. The review committee may also include up to two members of EMSWCD's board. The Board has final approval of all grant awards.

Learn more about the personal and professional backgrounds of last year's Grant Review Committee members [here](#).

Project Requirements and Limits

- 2025 PIC grants may be awarded for projects up to two years in duration.
- The minimum PIC grant award is \$5,000 and the maximum is \$70,000.
- Indirect/administrative costs may be included in the project budget, up to 15% of the total budget.
- Only one grant application may be submitted per organization. *The applicant may be a partner in more than one application.*
- If an organization applying for the 2025 grant cycle has an open/existing PIC grant, they must be in good standing (up to date with reports and reimbursement requests) to be eligible for a new PIC grant.

Match Funding

Match funding allows EMSWCD funds to go farther and demonstrates community support for organizations that are applying for these grants. EMSWCD also recognizes that requiring match funding places a burden on organizations which may limit their ability to implement projects. **EMSWCD provides flexible match funding requirements. See details in the table below.**

Match Not Required	Match Required	Match Exception/Waiver
Applications requesting \$10,000 or less.	Applications requesting \$10,000 or more. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applicants are expected to secure matching funds equal to the amount requested from EMSWCD. <i>Overmatching funds are not used in the evaluation of grant applications.</i> • This match may include cash, in-kind contributions, funding from other sources, or a combination thereof. The grantee will be required to document match funding and track expenditures. 	Applications requesting \$10,000 - \$30,000, AND the applicant meets one of the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization has been in operation for less than three years, OR • Organization has not received a PIC grant before, OR • The organization's annual operating budget is less than \$250,000.

Application Review and Award

- Once applications are received, EMSWCD Grants Program staff review all grant applications to confirm eligibility and alignment with EMSWCD grant program goals and criteria and check for completeness.
- A review committee made up of members of the EMSWCD Board and community representatives review and rank the 2025 PIC applications and recommend projects for funding to the EMSWCD Board.
- Applicant and project eligibility, approval or denial of applications, and dollar amounts awarded will be determined at the discretion of the EMSWCD Board of Directors. Decisions made by the Board of Directors are final.

Contract and Payment

- If your proposal is funded, the decision will be formalized with a written agreement that will include EMSWCD and grantee responsibilities, a description of reporting and monitoring requirements, procedures for requesting payments, etc. **No project expenses will be paid or reimbursed by EMSWCD before the funding agreement is in place (signed by both parties).**
- EMSWCD funds may be awarded upfront or on a reimbursement basis. Documentation of expenditures for any upfront payment will be required before any subsequent request for funding. If the grantee selects to be paid on a reimbursement basis, expenses must also be documented. This may consist of payroll documentation for staff time or copies of bills and/or receipts.
- Once the grant agreement is signed by both parties, **grantees can request an upfront payment of up to 50% of the total grant amount.** Grantees will be required to submit documentation of all expenditures from any upfront payments, with copies of bills and/or receipts before further payments against the grant award are made.
- **Grantees must confirm and report their match funding sources up to the 1:1 requirement but do not need to submit documentation from match funding sources.** However, grantees must retain copies of all bills and/or receipts for match funding expenditures and make these available to EMSWCD upon request for review or audit purposes.
- EMSWCD may hold back payment of 10% of the dollar amount awarded until the required project completion report has been received and accepted by EMSWCD.
- Payments totaling \$600 or more in a calendar year may be considered by the IRS to be reportable income. Applicants who receive EMSWCD funding will be required to complete an IRS W-9 form. If applicable, EMSWCD will report the income to the IRS and to the Applicant on a 1099-MISC form. The Applicant should consult a tax advisor regarding income reporting requirements and whether project-related expenses may be included as deductions on the Applicant's tax returns to offset this income.

Insurance Coverage

EMSWCD requires that grantees provide proof of insurance coverage for the duration of their grant-funded activities. If you or your fiscal sponsor do not have insurance, grant money can be used to purchase coverage and should be included in your application's proposed budget.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS & SUPPORT

Application Assistance

Do you need help writing a grant application or putting together a budget? We are here to help! Staff do not participate in the application ranking process with the Grant Review Committee. It's our job to help you make your application as strong as possible.

We hold online information sessions each year. [Check the program webpage for details](#) and to find recordings of these sessions. Contact EMSWCD staff to discuss your ideas – **especially if you are a first-time applicant.**

Language Translation

EMSWCD accepts applications in languages other than English. To request materials in a different language or individual assistance with the help of an interpreter, please contact Heather Nelson Kent at heather@emswcd.org.

Online Application

- Applicants will need to create a login at zoomgrants.com.
- The 2025 grant application will be open between October 15 and December 14 (4 p.m.) 2024.
- An email will be sent within 24 hours from EMSWCD staff via ZoomGrants confirming your application was received. Make sure you receive notices from ZoomGrants by adding notices@zoomgrants.com to your safe senders list.

[Submit your application via ZoomGrants.](#)

<https://www.zoomgrants.com/zgf/PIC2025>

Need assistance?

*Contact our Grant
Program Manager,
Heather Nelson Kent at
heather@emswcd.org.
Call 503-935-5370.*

Working In ZoomGrants

- The person starting an application in ZoomGrants, the “Primary Applicant,” can invite others to contribute to the application by inviting them to be “collaborators” in ZoomGrants.
- Only the “Primary Applicant” can submit this application; the submit button does not appear for those working as collaborators.
- Responses are saved automatically in ZoomGrants when you click outside the response field (look for a pop-up that says “saving”).
- Character limits include spaces. We limit the number of characters to reduce the time required from our Grant Review Committee members.
- If you cut and paste answers into ZoomGrants from another program such as Word, be sure to remove all formatting (e.g., bullets, superscript, etc.) by pasting text only. If not, you may receive an error message when attempting to submit your application, and you will have to locate and remove the formatting to submit successfully.
- There is a Help button at the top of each ZoomGrants page. You can also contact their tech support at questions@zoomgrants.com.



Volunteers showing off the harvest. Photo courtesy of Kindness Farm, PIC Grantee.

FUNDING SCHEDULE AND DUE DATES

Important Dates

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Interns from Wisdom of the Elders, photo courtesy of Confluence Project, PIC Grantee

Staff Contact Information

For more information, please visit emswcd.org/grants or contact Grant Program Manager Heather Nelson Kent at heather@emswcd.org. Call Heather at 503-935-5370.