


2025



Central Shenandoah Watershed Wellness Grant Guide

Funding planning, design, and construction for nature-based projects improving water quality and reducing run-off in the Chesapeake Bay watershed





Watershed Wellness Grant Guide

Purpose and Guidelines

About the Program

The [Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission \(CSPDC\) Watershed Wellness Grant Program](#) is a reimbursement grant providing 100% non-match funding up to \$100,000 for planning, design, and construction of practical, cost-effective, and ready-to-go nature-based stormwater best management practice (BMP) projects that improve water quality and reduce runoff in the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Applications are accepted on a rolling basis in 2025 until all grant program funds are expended, and all projects must be complete by December 19, 2025. The program is funded by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and is part of [Virginia's Chesapeake Bay Watershed Implementation Plan \(WIP\)](#).

Goals

The program has three main goals:

- Assist planning, design, and construction of nature-based stormwater projects;
- Provide an accessible and straightforward BMP grant application process emphasizing project construction; and
- Support the State of Virginia's Chesapeake Bay pollution reduction goals for nitrogen phosphorous, and sediment outlined in the DEQ Statewide WIP.

Eligible Applicants

Applicants must be localities or non-profits 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, public 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 all projects for planning, design, and construction must be complete by December 19, 2025.

BMP Selection

In general, BMPs should incorporate [low impact development \(LID\) and green infrastructure principles¹](#), which are improvements based on mimicking natural processes that result in the infiltration, evapotranspiration, or use of stormwater 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 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. In 2025, up to \$100,000 is available for award. The grant request minimum is \$1,000. Reimbursement is applied after the completion of the project. Participants must complete the project no later than December 19, 2025 and submit a Project Completion Report by January 9, 2026 to receive reimbursement. 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 includes volunteer time or donated services and items.

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

Grant Process

Applicants with multiple project ideas are encouraged to contact CSPDC staff. Project construction must be final by December 19, 2025. Contact CSPDC WIP Coordinator Zach Beard at zach@cspdc.org with questions.

Timeline

Below are important application and project dates:

- **Monday, January 13, 2025.** Application available on the [CSPDC WIP website page](#).
- **Tuesday, December 19, 2025.** Project construction complete.
- **Wednesday, January 9, 2026.** 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. Applications will be evaluated 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 19, 2025.
- *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

The Recipient and the CSPDC have the following responsibilities after the project is complete.

Recipient

- Complete the project construction by December 19, 2025.
- Recognize DEQ's Chesapeake Bay WIP program and goals in any publicity materials.
- Submit a Project Completion Report, receipts for work completed, and images of the completed project by January 9, 2025.

CSPDC Responsibilities

- Provide a 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.



Watershed Wellness



2025 Application

2025 Central Shenandoah Watershed Wellness Grant applications are accepted on a rolling basis throughout 2025 until grant funds are expended. Submit the application to CSPDC Watershed Wellness Program Coordinator Zach Beard at zach@cspdc.org.

1. Application Type (select one)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Non-MS4 Locality | <input type="checkbox"/> Public education institution |
| <input type="checkbox"/> MS4 Locality | <input type="checkbox"/> Non-profit |

2. Project Sponsor

- a. Name:
- b. Address:

3. Project Manager

- a. Name, title:
- b. Phone number:
- c. Email:

4. Project Title



5. Site Conditions and Needs

- a. Is the project located on public property? Yes No
- b. Describe the existing site conditions (including soil infiltration characteristics, drainage patterns, topography) and stormwater needs (erosion, drainage, run-off, poor vegetation, etc.) (maximum 250 words).

- c. Identify any right-of-way, property boundary issues, or existing utilities. Note nearby waterways or stormwater systems. Attach an aerial image of the site and photos of the site (maximum 250 words).

6. Project Description

- a. Explain the proposed project improvements, any project partners, and how the project compliments any existing plans or initiatives. Attach a project sketch that illustrates the layout and project area (maximum 250 words).



7. Project Schedule and Readiness

- a. Provide an outline of project start date, milestones, and completion date. The project must be complete by December 19, 2025 to receive reimbursement (maximum 100 words).

- b. Is this project part of a larger multi-phased project? Yes No
- c. Has design work started? Yes No

8. Budget

- a. Outline the project budget in the table below.

| Description of Budget Items (List resources to complete the project) | Grant Funds (Amount of funding for this item) | Other Funds (Describe other cash funds for the project) | In-kind Funds (Value of donated goods, services, or volunteer labor) | Total |
|---|--|--|---|-------|
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9. Project Maintenance

- a. Describe how the project will be maintained after construction (maximum 100 words).

10. Additional Comments

- a. Provide any additional input on the project.

11. Attachments

- a. The following required attachments are included? Yes No
- ✓ Aerial site map
 - ✓ Pre-project images of the site
 - ✓ Project sketch illustrating improvements
- b. The following are optional attachments and are not required:
- Detailed design or construction plans
 - Cost estimates



Contact: Zach Beard
CSPDC Watershed Implementation Plan Coordinator
zach@cspdc.org



2025 Watershed Wellness Grant Project Completion Report

Submit by Friday, January 9, 2026 to CSPDC WIP Coordinator Zach Beard at zach@cspdc.org

1. **Project Title:**
2. **Project Completion Date:**
3. **Images of completed project are attached: Y/N**
4. **Receipts for each project expense are attached: Y/N**
5. **Explain any changes to the project scope since the original application if applicable.**

6. Final Budget

List the final project budget items below. Attach receipts for each item.

| Description of Budget Items | Receipt Attached Y/N | Total |
|------------------------------------|-------------------------|-------|
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| Total Reimbursement Request | | |

7. Match Funds

List any match funds for the project, which can include personnel, travel, supplies, contractual, in-kind services, or other match.

| Description of Match | Total |
|----------------------|-------|
| | |
| | |
| | |

8. **By signing, I agree that the above information is correct to the best of my knowledge.**

Project Manager Signature: _____

Date: _____