

**GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM
FOR
THE COMBINED SEWER AREA**

**POLICY, PROCESS, AND PROCEDURES
JUNE 2023**

PROGRAM POLICY

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (the District) supports the strategic implementation and long-term maintenance of green infrastructure that protects, preserves, enhances, and restores natural hydrologic function. The focus of the Green Infrastructure Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area (the Program) is the funding of green infrastructure projects to remove stormwater runoff from the combined sewer collection system within the District's combined sewer service area. Furthermore, the Program seeks to promote a variety of social and environmental co-benefits. Green infrastructure (GI) refers to stormwater source control measures, or water resource projects, that store, filter, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater runoff to increase resiliency of infrastructure by reducing stress on wet-weather drainage and collection systems, thereby supporting healthy environments and strong communities.

The Program is open to member communities, governmental entities, non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations, or businesses working in partnership with their community in the combined sewer area, who are interested in implementing water resource projects that remove stormwater runoff from the combined sewer system, and who are willing to ensure the long-term maintenance of the green infrastructure practices. Program funding is awarded through a competitive funding process with final recommendations approved by the District Board of Trustees. The availability of Program funds in any calendar year is at the discretion of the District Board of Trustees.

The District recognizes that construction can cause an increase in impervious surface at the site. For grant consideration, applicants must demonstrate compliance with Title IV (Combined Sewer Code) of the District's Code of Regulations as outlined in the *Submittal Requirements for Connections to the Combined Sewer System*. Applicants are responsible for funding the portions of a project that are necessary to meet the minimum requirements of Title IV. The District will consider project funding above Title IV requirements, provided the following conditions are met to the satisfaction of the District:

- Project meets all grant eligibility requirements, as will be set forth in a Request for Proposal document issued by the District.
- Applicant provides cost details for compliance with Title IV.
- Applicant provides cost details for the water resource project components that exceed Title IV compliance.

All entities awarded Program grant funds will enter into a Green Infrastructure Grant Program Agreement (the Agreement) for the design and/or implementation and long-term maintenance of the GI project. Program funds will be provided by the District on a reimbursement basis for project costs, including design, construction, and the first-year maintenance expenses, in accordance with the District's Program Reimbursement Process and Procedures (see below). The Grantee may use 100% of the District's grant funds for activities and/or expenses related to the green infrastructure components of the project (i.e., design, construction, materials, first-year maintenance (including self-performed), and signage specifically related to the green infrastructure components), as approved by the District. Funds must be used in accordance with the Agreement. Any funds not expended for the purposes contained in the applicable Agreement and approved by the District shall remain with the District.

A Program project must be maintained for the design life expectancy of the green infrastructure components of the project, as determined by the District. The Grantees are required to attend a mandatory Operation and Maintenance Workshop provided by the District. If the GI project fails to be maintained by the Grantee in accordance with the Green Infrastructure Grant Program Agreement executed with the District, the full amount of awarded Program funds expended for the water resource project shall be returned to the District.

PROGRAM SITE CONTROL

At the time the application is submitted for Program funds, the applicant must be able to demonstrate permanent control of the entire site where the GI project is located.

REIMBURSEMENT PROCESS AND PROCEDURE

The District established the Green Infrastructure Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area to provide funds, on a reimbursement basis, for green infrastructure projects, conditioned on the District's prior approval of the design, construction, and first-year maintenance budget of the project. Requests for reimbursement related to the project's first-year maintenance costs must be submitted no later than one (1) year after the date the GI project is deemed substantially complete, as determined by the District and provided to the Grantee in writing. Under no circumstance shall grant funds be used for

compliance under Title IV of the District's Code of Regulations. District staff members, selected by the District, shall perform design reviews, construction inspections, and first-year maintenance oversight throughout the duration of the project. Funds must be used in accordance with the authorized amount indicated. Any funds not expended for the purposes agreed to by the Grantee and the District shall remain with the District.

The District agrees to reimburse the Grantee for eligible GI project expenses based on paid invoices, prepared, and submitted by the Grantee to the District, in the form prescribed by the District, and including supporting information as required by the Agreement.

- a) All requests for reimbursement of grant funds for design services shall be documented to the District in reasonable satisfaction based on the agreed upon scope and fee for the design services.
- b) All requests for reimbursement of grant funds for construction shall be documented to the District in reasonable satisfaction. All requests shall be submitted in a form sufficient to allow the District to review, inspect and approve materials, labor, and quantities installed for the project.
- c) All requests for reimbursement of grant funds for first-year maintenance expenses shall be documented to the District in reasonable satisfaction based on the agreed scope and fee for the maintenance services.
- d) The Grantee shall keep all records and documents relevant to the Agreement, including but not limited to, an accurate, current, and complete accounting of all financial transactions for the project. Such records and documents shall be available at reasonable times and places for inspection and copying by the District or any authorized representative thereof and will be submitted upon request together with any other compliance information which may be reasonably required.
- e) The Grantee shall bear the risk and remain solely responsible for any payments made by the Grantee to third parties for work not approved by the District.

For reimbursement, 100% of the project funds must be used for activities and/or expenses related to the GI components of the project, as approved by the District. These activities and expenses may include design, construction, first-year maintenance, and signage specifically related to the GI components of the project. Only

project components described in the grantee’s grant application, as approved by the District, and/or approved modifications will be eligible for reimbursement. Any modifications must be approved in writing by the District. A reimbursement requires the following to occur:

- a) The Reimbursement Request Process requires a GI Grant Expense Tracking Form and the GI Grant Reimbursement Cover Sheet, with all necessary supporting documentation to complete the reimbursement process. These forms can be found here: “OPTION 1 Reimbursement Request”:
<https://www.neorsd.org/stormwater-2/green-infrastructure-grant-program/#reimbursementOptions>.
- b) Supporting documentation includes the relevant procurement documentation, such as an itemized bill, receipt, invoice, timecard along with proof of payment, such as a credit card receipt, canceled check, and/or other documentation to substantiate purchase and payment deemed acceptable by the District and a current Progress Report.

All submissions will include:

- GI Grant Expense Tracking Form
- GI Grant Reimbursement Cover Sheet
- Supporting Documentation

- c) The Reimbursement Request is submitted to the District and reviewed for completeness. Submissions are sent to: cottonj@neorsd.org.
- d) Upon successful review of the submission, the District’s Director of Watershed Programs will have the final review of the Reimbursement Request for disbursement to occur.
- e) Upon the final approval by the Director of Watershed Programs, the Reimbursement Request will be processed for disbursement.

Upon final approval by the District of the reimbursement request, the Grantee can anticipate reimbursement within 30 days. Prior to approving reimbursement requests, grantees may be required to provide additional supporting documentation, which could potentially result in delays in the distribution of reimbursement.