

GI Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area

Application Scoring Criteria Guidelines

Introduction

The Northeast Ohio Regional Sewer District (the "District") set up the Green Infrastructure Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area (GI Grant Program). This program provides funding for green infrastructure projects in member communities within the combined sewer area. These projects aim to manage stormwater runoff effectively by implementing water resource solutions. They help reduce stress on the sewer system during heavy rain, promoting healthier environments and stronger communities. [GI Grant Program Website](#)

Application Deadline

Applications for the 2025 application funding round are due on Friday, September 6, 2024

Program Overall Eligibility

- The project must be located in the District's combined sewer area.
- The applicant must represent a District member community, governmental entity, or a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. Privately-owned businesses are eligible if partnered with one of these entities.
- The District will record an Affidavit of Facts Relating to Title on Cuyahoga County real property records, noting operation and maintenance responsibilities.
- The applicant and associated property must be current and in good standing with all District bills.
- The GI project must demonstrate on-site stormwater control using green infrastructure and quantifiably reduce stormwater runoff.

Types Of Projects

Design-Only Projects

- Projects must be completed by November 30, 2025.
- Must submit construction project proposal within 2 years.

Design and/or Construction Projects

- Project must be completed by May 31, 2026.
- Size of projects that will be considered for award:
 - Small Project
 - less than 0.60-acres of impervious area treated by GI stormwater control measures.
 - Maximum award not to exceed: \$250,000.
 - Large Project
 - at least 0.60-acres of impervious area treated by GI stormwater control measures.
 - Maximum award not to exceed: \$350,000.

Application Screening Pre-evaluation Criteria

Category	Screening Pre-Evaluation Criteria	
Project Location	The proposed project site is within the Combined Sewer Area. CSO Map	Y/N
Application Completeness	Each section of the application is complete, concept design, budget, and site photos are provided.	Y/N
Concept Design	The provided materials include an existing conditions assessment, proposed full concept design, and a Best Management Practice (BMP) performance table.	Y/N
Property Ownership/Partnership	Applicants must demonstrate ownership of the property where the project will be located. Additionally, if the long-term owner differs from the current owner, evidence of the long-term ownership arrangement must also be provided.	Y/N
Type of Entity Applying	The applicant must represent. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A District member community • Governmental entity, or a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization. • A privately-owned business may also be eligible, provided one of the previously referenced parties works in partnership with the applicant. 	Y/N
Schedule	The application includes a schedule that outlines key details such as the construction start date and other project-related information.	Y/N
Good Standing with Stormwater and Wastewater Billing	Both the applicant and the associated property must be current and in good standing with all District bills.	Y/N

Application Scoring Criteria Guidelines

The District will assess and prioritize proposed projects that fulfill the eligibility requirements. Applicants will undergo evaluation and ranking based on the Application Scoring Criteria provided below.

Summary Of Total Scoring		
Category	Design-Only (Max Of 76 Points)	Design and/or Construction (Max Of 100 Points)
Expected Benefits	31 (41%)	37 (37%)
Project Feasibility	16 (21%)	28 (28%)
Capacity to Maintain	14 (18%)	18 (18%)
Education and Additional Co-Benefits	15 (20%)	17 (17%)

EXPECTED BENEFITS

Design-Only (31 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.
Design and/or Construction (37 Points)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Composite Score - Volume Removed (gallons) & Impervious Acres Treated	<p>Definition: Projects will be evaluated based on a composite score that considers the estimated annual amount of stormwater runoff they are able to remove from the combined sewer system, and the amount of impervious area (IA) that is conveyed to and treated by Green Infrastructure Stormwater Control Measures (GI SCMs).</p> <p>Title IV-Combined Sewer Code requires member communities in the combined sewer area to have a plan for controlling and monitoring flow volumes and overflows in their system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• For projects that do not need to comply with the District’s Title IV requirements, this will be based on the estimated annual runoff differences between “existing conditions” and “proposed conditions with GI SCMs”.• For projects that must first comply with the District’s Title IV code, this will be based on the estimated annual runoff differences between “proposed conditions without GI SCMs” and “proposed conditions with GI SCMs”. The estimates must be determined using the USEPA Stormwater Calculator Model. Proposals will be identified as follows:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Small Projects: less than a total of 0.60-acres of IA treated by GI SCMs.○ Large Projects: at least a total of 0.60-acres treated by GI SCMs. IA that is routed through a treatment train can only be counted once (e.g., 0.50 acres of IA is conveyed to a cistern and then to a bioretention cell only counts as 0.50-acres of IA treated, not 1.0-acre of IA treated).	31

EXPECTED BENEFITS

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Design and/or Construction (37 Points)

Steps for Applicants:

- **Determine Your IA and Gallons Captured:** Calculate the total impervious area treated and the annual gallons of stormwater captured by your project.
- **Review Scoring Tables:** Use the provided tables below to find your project's score based on IA and gallons captured.
- **Decide on Funding Request:** You have the flexibility to choose how to classify your project for funding purposes:
 - Projects with less than 0.60-acre IA can request funding as either a Small Project (max \$250,000) or a Large Project (max \$350,000).
 - Projects with at least 0.60-acre IA can also choose to request funding as a Small Project or a Large Project.
 - Consider how the funding request amount affects your score and choose the classification that best supports your funding goals.

Example:

- A project with 0.71-acres of IA that captures 260,000 gallons annually:
 - As a Large Project (max request \$350,000): Scores 4 points.
 - As a Small Project (max request \$250,000): Scores 31 points.
 - Note: The maximum score for a Small Project requesting \$350,000 is 16 points.

EXPECTED BENEFITS

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Design and/or Construction (37 Points)

Funding Request by Project Size and IA Treated

Small Projects (<0.60-acre IA Treated) – Maximum Request: \$250,000

Captured Annually							
IA Treated	<50,000 Gallons	<83,000 Gallons	<116,000 Gallons	<150,000 Gallons	<183,000 Gallons	<216,000 Gallons	<250,000 Gallons
< 0.2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16
< 0.27	6	8	10	12	14	16	18
<0.34	8	10	12	14	16	18	21
<0.41	10	12	14	16	18	21	23
<0.48	12	14	16	18	21	23	25
<0.55	14	16	18	21	23	25	28
<0.60	16	18	21	23	25	28	31

Large Projects (at least 0.60-acre IA Treated) – Maximum Request: \$350,000

Captured Annually							
IA Treated	<275,000 Gallons	<354,000 Gallons	<433,000 Gallons	<513,000 Gallons	<592,000 Gallons	<671,000 Gallons	<750,000 Gallons
≥0.6	4	6	8	10	12	14	16
< 0.90	6	8	10	12	14	16	18
<1.25	8	10	12	14	16	18	21
<1.60	10	12	14	16	18	21	23
<1.90	12	14	16	18	21	23	25
<2.20	14	16	18	21	23	25	28
<2.50	16	18	21	23	25	28	31

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points														
Cost-effectiveness (grant dollars requested/gallons captured)	<p>*This is based on the project’s budget related specifically to GSI SCMs, not necessarily the total project budget. We would also use the results from the USEPA Stormwater Calculator to determine gallons captured.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>\$/gallon</th> <th>Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>≤\$0.50</td> <td>6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤\$0.80</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤\$1.10</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤\$1.40</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>≤\$1.70</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>>\$2.00</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	\$/gallon	Points	≤\$0.50	6	≤\$0.80	5	≤\$1.10	4	≤\$1.40	3	≤\$1.70	2	>\$2.00	1	6
\$/gallon	Points															
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>\$2.00	1															

PROJECT FEASIBILITY

Design-Only (16 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.
 Design and/or Construction (28 Points)

READINESS TO PROCEED & BUDGET (13 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Pre-Proposal Meeting	Projects will score 3 points if the project team conducts a GI Grant Pre-proposal Meeting with NEORS staff by August 1st. It is highly recommended that the team have a general concept plan prepared for discussion during the pre-proposal meeting.	3
Funding Sources	*Projects will score 2 points upon providing verification that funding has been secured for 100% of project costs. Verification includes, but may not be limited to all contracts, bank statements, loans, grants, and letters of credit. Applications with 100% of their total project budgets covered solely by GI Grant Program funding will automatically earn these 2 points.	2
Detailed Budget	*Projects will be evaluated on how clearly and concisely their detailed budget is presented, how well it addresses minimum expectations, and if it is developed by a professional.	3
Capital Cost	*Projects will be evaluated based on whether the proposed construction project capital costs align with regional cost standards.	3
Eligible Expenses	*Projects will be evaluated to ensure that requested grant funding is used exclusively for eligible expenses, as per the defined guidelines/regulations	2

PROJECT DESIGN (10 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Plan Submittal	For applications that submit a full concept plan: projects will be evaluated on whether minimum requirements are included. See checklist (Add Link)	3
	*For applications that submit a full set of plan design drawings: projects will be evaluated on whether minimum requirements are included, and if the plans are stamped by a professional engineer.	5
Construction Schedule	Projects will be evaluated based on a proposed timeline that ensures projects can be completed within the grant program timeframe. Furthermore, consideration will be given to whether the schedule acknowledges foreseeable circumstances that could delay on-time completion of the project.	3
Zoning & Permitting	Projects will be evaluated on how well the applicant has already addressed applicable zoning and permitting requirements or has demonstrated the knowledge to do so prior to the commencement of construction.	2

PROJECT FEASIBILITY

Design-Only (16 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.
Design and/or Construction (28 Points)

PROJECT TEAM (5 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points															
Overall Experience with GI Projects	<p>Projects will be evaluated on the amount of experience current team members have with designing/implementing GI SCMs. **This accounts for cumulative projects per team member, not cumulative experience of the team. For example, if an owner/design engineer partnership has successfully completed 5 GI projects, they have 5 projects worth of experience, and would score 3 points (they do not have 10 projects of experience). Project experience can include any GI projects and are not limited to those funded by NEORSD’s GI Grant Program.</p> <p>Overall Experience with GI Projects</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="344 674 1300 1031"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="344 674 537 747">Experience Level</th> <th data-bbox="537 674 1159 747">Description</th> <th data-bbox="1159 674 1300 747">Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="344 747 537 821">SIGNIFICANT</td> <td data-bbox="537 747 1159 821">At least 1 team member has been involved with 7+ GI projects</td> <td data-bbox="1159 747 1300 821">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="344 821 537 894">SOME</td> <td data-bbox="537 821 1159 894">At least 1 team member has been involved with 5+ GI projects</td> <td data-bbox="1159 821 1300 894">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="344 894 537 968">MINIMAL</td> <td data-bbox="537 894 1159 968">At least 1 team member has been involved with 3+ GI projects</td> <td data-bbox="1159 894 1300 968">1</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="344 968 537 1031">NONE</td> <td data-bbox="537 968 1159 1031">No member of the team has at least 3 GI projects of experience</td> <td data-bbox="1159 968 1300 1031">0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Experience Level	Description	Points	SIGNIFICANT	At least 1 team member has been involved with 7+ GI projects	5	SOME	At least 1 team member has been involved with 5+ GI projects	3	MINIMAL	At least 1 team member has been involved with 3+ GI projects	1	NONE	No member of the team has at least 3 GI projects of experience	0	5
Experience Level	Description	Points															
SIGNIFICANT	At least 1 team member has been involved with 7+ GI projects	5															
SOME	At least 1 team member has been involved with 5+ GI projects	3															
MINIMAL	At least 1 team member has been involved with 3+ GI projects	1															
NONE	No member of the team has at least 3 GI projects of experience	0															

CAPACITY OF THE APPLICANT TO MAINTAIN THE PROJECT FOR DESIGN LIFE EXPECTANCY

Design-only (14 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.
 Design and/or Construction (18 Points)

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) (4 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Responsible Party	The party (or parties) responsible for first-year and long-term maintenance have been identified and confirmed.	1
Labor Hours	An estimate of annual labor hours for first-year and long-term maintenance has been provided.	1
Necessary Skills	The necessary skills required of the party (or parties) that will provide maintenance have been summarized.	1
Equipment Needed	A list of the equipment the party (or parties) will need to maintain the project has been provided.	1

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE PLAN (10 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Design Features	The O&M Plan includes a comprehensive list of design features that are applicable to proposed SCMs.	3
What to Look For	The O&M Plan includes a description of what an inspector would look for while conducting a routine inspection, per design feature.	4
Inspection Frequencies	The O&M Plan summarizes how frequently each design feature should be inspected/maintained.	3

OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET (4 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
First-year Detailed Budget	*Projects will be evaluated on how clearly and concisely the detailed first-year maintenance budget is presented, how well it addresses minimum expectations, and if it is stamped by a professional engineer.	1
Long-Term Detailed Budget	*Projects will be evaluated on how clearly and concisely the detailed long-term maintenance budget is presented, how well it addresses minimum expectations, and if it is stamped by a professional engineer.	1
Maintenance Costs	*Projects will be evaluated on whether proposed maintenance costs reflect typical regional costs.	1
Eligible Expenses	*Projects will be evaluated on whether requested grant funding will be used exclusively for eligible maintenance expenses.	1

CO-BENEFITS

Design-only (15 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.
 Design and/or Construction (17 Points)

COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL CO-BENEFITS (11 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Climate & Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)	Go to NEORS Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. There are 8 burden categories considered as part of this tool: climate change, energy, health, housing, legacy pollution, transportation, water/wastewater, and workforce development. The tool uses this information to identify communities (by census tract) that are experiencing these burdens. Projects located in census tracts with at least 7 burden categories (BCs) identified will score 5 points; 6 BCs scores 4 pts; 5 BCs scores 3 pts; 4 BCs scores 2 pts; 3 BCs scores 1 pt; less than 3 BCs scores no points	5
Public Access, Open Space, Recreation	Projects can earn 1 point if the property (public or private) is accessible to the public for a minimum of 7 hours per weekend day or 3 hours per weekday. Projects can earn 2 additional points for creating a public gathering space that incorporates GI SCMs (i.e., an outdoor space specifically designed to serve as a venue for people to congregate, celebrate, socialize and/or enjoy recreational activities). Note: a parking lot with GI SCMs that serves a public gathering space does not qualify for these points.	3
Community Engagement, Collaboration	Projects can earn 1 point for each project phase in which the applicant actively engages with community members. A total of 3 points are available. See below.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Design phase (e.g., organize a public design charette or conduct surveys to generate ideas in the early stages of design) NOTE: Projects can earn this point for applicable activities that occur before or after the date of the GI Grant Program application. 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Construction phase (e.g., sell engraved paver bricks, organize a planting party, etc.) 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Maintenance phase (e.g., partner with an established garden club to maintain the landscaping of a bioretention cell) 	1

CO-BENEFITS

Design-only (15 Points) *Indicates this Evaluation Criteria is not considered for Design-only proposals.

Design and/or Construction (17 Points)

ENVIRONMENTAL CO-BENEFITS (6 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points
Urban Heat Resilience	Urban Heat Resilience is a total of 3 points available. See below.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 point for a net increase of three shade trees from the District's approved list. 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 point for reducing impervious area cover by at least 10% (from existing compared to proposed conditions (Note: green roof and permeable pavement footprints are considered pervious). 	1
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to NEORSD Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. One (1) point if the project is located in a high priority heat resilience area as identified on the Priority Area Map. 	1
Urban Flooding Resilience	Urban Flooding Resilience is a total of 3 points available. See below.	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2 points if the project prevents the post-development average annual runoff from exceeding the pre-development (i.e., undeveloped) average annual runoff, as determined by the USEPA Stormwater Calculator. To mimic an undeveloped pre-development condition, all existing impervious areas must be accounted for as "lawn". 	2
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Go to NEORSD Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. One (1) additional point if the project is in a high priority flood resilience area as identified on the District's Priority Sewershed map. 	1