

GI Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area

Application Scoring Criteria Guidelines

Application Deadline

Applications for the 2026 application funding round are due on Friday, September 5, 2025

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](#)

Program Overall Eligibility

- The project must be located within the District's Combined Sewer System (CSS) area, and the stormwater must currently discharge to the CSS under existing conditions.
- 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 with the Cuyahoga County real property records, formally documenting the operations 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 to the CSS.

Design and/or Construction Projects

- Project must be completed by June 30, 2027.
- Size of projects that will be considered for award:
 - Small Project - **Maximum award not to exceed: \$250,000.**
 - Large Project - **Maximum award not to exceed: \$350,000.**

Category	Design and/or Construction (Max Of 100 Points)
Expected Benefits	37 (37%)
Project Feasibility	28 (28%)
Capacity to Maintain	18 (18%)
Education and Additional Community Benefits	17 (17%)

Application Screening Pre-evaluation Criteria

Category	Screening Pre-Evaluation Criteria	
Project Location	The proposed project site is within the Combined Sewer Area and stormwater discharges to the combined sewer system under existing conditions. CSO Map	Y/N
Application Completeness	Each section of the application is complete and concept design, budget, and site photos are provided.	Y/N
Concept Design	The materials provided include an assessment of existing conditions, a 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

Pre-application Checklist (Prepare before you apply)

Before submitting your Green Infrastructure Grant application, make sure you've completed all the required steps and gathered all necessary materials. For best results, complete the checklist in the order provided. For more guidance, visit the [Green Infrastructure Grant Program website](#).

☐ Your Project Team

Most projects benefit from a team that includes:

- The property owner
- A stormwater management vendor
- A designated Project Manager

☐ Confirm Project Eligibility

- Verifying the project location is within the Combined Sewer Service (CSS) area and stormwater discharges to the CSS under existing conditions.
- Select an appropriate project model based on site conditions and grant program goals.

☐ Develop Your Project Proposal

- Create a draft concept plan that outlines the project's key elements and intended outcomes.
- Schedule a pre-application meeting with the District to receive feedback and guidance.

☐ Complete Application Materials

- Finalize your application, incorporating any feedback from the District.
- Prepare all required exhibits, including maps, budgets, and letters of support.
- Complete the application form with accurate and up-to-date information.

☐ Submit Your Application

- Submit your application form and all exhibits by the specified deadline.

☐ Review Scoring Criteria

Application Scoring Criteria Guidelines below

- The District will evaluate and prioritize eligible proposals based on scoring criteria. Each application will be reviewed, scored, and ranked using the guidelines outlined in the program documentation.
- Applicants are encouraged to review these criteria carefully to strengthen their submissions.

EXPECTED BENEFITS (37 Points)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
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). The estimated annual amount of stormwater runoff removed must be determined using the USEPA Stormwater Calculator model.</p> <p>Projects with no net increase in impervious area shall calculate this estimate by subtracting “Proposed conditions with GI SCMs” model results from “Existing conditions” model results. This typically involves projects that are converting existing parking lots to permeable pavement, converting existing roofs to green roofs, and/or conveying existing impervious areas to a GI SCM.</p> <p>Projects with any net increase in impervious area* shall calculate this estimate by subtracting “Proposed conditions with GI SCMs” model results from “Proposed conditions without GI SCMs” model results. This typically involves projects that propose new parking areas and/or buildings. NOTE: projects also disturbing at least 0.50-acres must first comply with the District’s Title IV Code of Regulations.</p> <p>*New drives, parking lots and roofs are considered an increase in impervious area (i.e., without GI SCMs) even if they are proposed to be permeable or green (i.e., with 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> <p>Proposals will be identified as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Projects: maximum request of \$250,000. • Large Projects: maximum request of \$350,000. 	31		

EXPECTED BENEFITS (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 that treats 0.71-acres of IA and captures 260,000 gallons annually:
 - As a Large Project (max request \$350,000): Scores 6 points.
 - As a Small Project (max request \$250,000): Scores 31 points.

EXPECTED BENEFITS (37 Points)

TABLE: Funding Request by Project Size and IA Treated

Small Projects – 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 – 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	Review Score	Comments														
Cost-effectiveness (grant dollars requested for construction divided by gallons captured)	<p>This is based on the project’s budget related specifically to GSI SCMs, not necessarily the total project budget. Proposed costs associated with design and first-year maintenance will not be considered as part of this calculation, to the best of the District’s ability. We will use the results from the District’s verification of the USEPA Stormwater Calculator to determine gallons captured.</p> <table><tr><th>\$/gallon</th><th>Points</th></tr><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></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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≤\$1.40	3																	
≤\$1.70	2																	
>\$2.00	1																	

PROJECT FEASIBILITY (28 Points)**READINESS TO PROCEED & BUDGET (13 POINTS)**

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
Pre-Proposal Workshop	Projects will score 3 points if at least one representative of the project team <i>participated in the GI Grant Pre-Proposal Workshop on Friday, June 20, 2025.</i>	3		
Funding Sources	Projects will score 2 points upon providing verification that funding has been secured for 100% of project costs. Regardless of the dollar amount, verification is required for all sources of funding, beyond the GI Grant Program funding request, that it will be earmarked for the green infrastructure related expenses. Verification includes, but may not be limited to all contracts, bank statements (proof of existing equity), 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, if it meets maximum threshold line-item limitations (i.e., design, construction administration & general conditions), how well it addresses minimum expectations, and if it is developed by a qualified professional.	3		
Capital Cost	Projects will be evaluated based on whether the proposed construction project capital costs align with typical regional costs.	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	Review Score	Comments
Plan Submittal	For applications that submit a full concept plan, projects will be evaluated on whether minimum requirements are included. See checklist .	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. See checklist .	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		
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PROJECT FEASIBILITY (28 Points)

PROJECT TEAM (5 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments															
Overall Experience with GI Projects	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.	5																	
	<table><tr><th>Experience Level</th><th>Description</th><th>Points</th></tr><tr><td>Significant</td><td>At Least 1 Team Member Has Been Involved With 7+ Gi Projects</td><td>5</td></tr><tr><td>Some</td><td>At Least 1 Team Member Has Been Involved With 5+ Gi Projects</td><td>3</td></tr><tr><td>Minimal</td><td>At Least 1 Team Member Has Been Involved With 3+ Gi Projects</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>None</td><td>No Member Of The Team Has At Least 3 Gi Projects Of Experience</td><td>0</td></tr></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			
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 (18 Points)**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) (4 POINTS)**

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
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	Review Score	Comments
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	Review Score	Comments
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 was developed by a qualified professional.	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 was developed by a qualified professional.	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		

COMMUNITY BENEFITS (17 Points)				
Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
Environmental Justice Index (EJI)	Go to NEORS Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. Up to 5 Environmental Burden Points are available for the Environmental Burden score based on the EJI + Climate Burden Rank.	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 does not qualify as a public gathering space regardless of the number of community events that take place on or near it.	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		

COMMUNITY BENEFITS (17 Points)				
Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
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. Applicant must provide a list of tree species from the District's approved list that are removed, and tree species from the District's approved list that are proposed to be planted. 	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 NEORS Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. One (1) point if the project is in a high priority heat resilience area as identified on the Heat Resilience Priority 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 NEORS Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. One (1) additional point if the project is situated within an NEORS priority sewershed as identified on the District's Priority Sewershed map. 	1		