

GI Grant Program for the Combined Sewer Area

Application Scoring Criteria Guidelines

Application Deadline

Applications for the 2027 GI Grant Program funding round are due on Friday, September 4, 2026.

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, 2028.
- 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
Project Feasibility	28
Capacity to Maintain	21
Community Benefits	14

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	<p>Each section of the application is complete and concept design, budget, and site photos are provided.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property must be owned by applicant or co-applicant at time of application submittal. Worksheets and plan sheets must be understandable and correlate with the plan Private property owners have appropriate co-applicant. All required attachments are provided 	Y/N
Concept Design	The materials provided include an assessment of existing conditions and a proposed full concept design.	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	<p>The applicant must represent.</p> <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 (Before you Apply)

Before you start your Green Infrastructure Grant application, use this checklist to make sure you have everything you need. Working through these steps first will make the application process much easier. For more guidance, visit the [Green Infrastructure Grant Program website](#).

Put Your Project Team Together

- Most projects work best when you have:
 - The property owner
 - A stormwater management contractor or consultant
 - A project manager to keep things moving

Make Sure Your Project is Eligible

- Check that:
 - Your project is located in the Combined Sewer Service (CSS) area.
 - Stormwater from the site currently flows into the combined sewer system.
 - Your project fits the goals of the Green Infrastructure Grant Program.

Develop Your Project Idea

- Put together a basic concept plan showing what you want to build.
- Think about the benefits your project will provide.
- Schedule a pre-application meeting with the District to talk about your project and get feedback.

Review the Scoring Criteria

- Take a look at the scoring criteria before you apply. Understanding how applications are scored can help you put together a stronger proposal.

Complete and Submit Your Application Package

- Update your project based on any feedback you received.
- Gather all required attachments, such as maps, and budgets.
- Complete the application form online.

What Happens Next?

The District will review all eligible applications and score them using the program's evaluation criteria below. Applications will then be ranked and considered for funding.

For additional guidance and resources, visit the [Green Infrastructure Grant Program website](#).

EXPECTED BENEFITS (37 Points)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
<p>Composite Score - Volume Removed (gallons) & Impervious Acres Treated</p>	<p>Definition: Projects will be evaluated based on a combined score that considers: The estimated annual amount of stormwater runoff removed from the combined sewer system; and The amount of impervious area (IA) directed to and treated by Green Infrastructure Stormwater Control Measures (GI SCMs). The estimated annual stormwater runoff removed must be determined using the USEPA Stormwater Calculator model.</p> <p>How to Calculate Annual Runoff Removed If your project does not add new impervious area (such as replacing pavement with permeable pavement, installing a green roof, or directing runoff from existing impervious surfaces to a GI SCM): Annual Runoff Removed = Existing Conditions - Proposed Conditions with GI SCMs If your project adds new impervious area (such as new buildings, roofs, driveways, or parking lots): Annual Runoff Removed = Proposed Conditions without GI SCMs - Proposed Conditions with GI SCMs 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). Projects disturbing 0.50 acre or more must also comply with the District's Title IV Combined Sewer Code requiring member communities in the combined sewer area to have a plan for controlling and monitoring flow volumes and overflows in their system.</p> <p>Project Categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small Projects: maximum request of \$250,000. • Large Projects: maximum request of \$350,000. 	<p>31</p>		

EXPECTED BENEFITS (37 Points)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
	<p>Scoring Steps</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Calculate the total impervious area treated and annual runoff removed. 2. Use the scoring tables to determine your score. 3. Select the funding category that best fits your project. <p>Applicants may apply for either a Small Project or Large Project, regardless of the amount of impervious area treated.</p> <p>Example</p> <p>A project that treats 0.71 acres of impervious area and removes 260,000 gallons of runoff annually would score:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 points as a Large Project (maximum request: \$350,000) • 31 points as a Small Project (maximum request: \$250,000) 			

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

EXPECTED BENEFITS (37 Points)

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 (including design, construction and first-year maintenance costs), not necessarily the project’s total budget. We will use the results from the District’s verification of the USEPA Stormwater Calculator to determine gallons captured.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th></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>			≤\$0.50	6	≤\$0.80	5	≤\$1.10	4	≤\$1.40	3	≤\$1.70	2	>\$2.00	1	6		
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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 26, 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, and 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		

PROJECT FEASIBILITY (28 Points)

PROJECT TEAM (5 POINTS)

Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments														
Overall Experience with GI Projects	<p>Projects will be evaluated based on the cumulative experience of current team members in designing and implementing GI SCMs.</p> <p>Experience is measured by the total number of GI projects completed by all current team members. For example, if an owner and design engineer have completed five GI projects, the team has 10 cumulative projects of experience and would score 4 points.</p> <p>Eligible experience may include any completed GI project and is not limited to projects funded through NEORSR's GI Grant Program.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Description</th> <th>Points</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 12 GI projects.</td> <td>5</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 10 GI projects.</td> <td>4</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 8 GI projects.</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 6 GI projects.</td> <td>2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 4 GI projects.</td> <td>1</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The cumulative experience of the current team includes less than 4 GI projects.</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Description	Points	The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 12 GI projects.	5	The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 10 GI projects.	4	The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 8 GI projects.	3	The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 6 GI projects.	2	The cumulative experience of the current team includes at least 4 GI projects.	1	The cumulative experience of the current team includes less than 4 GI projects.	0	5		
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CAPACITY OF THE APPLICANT TO MAINTAIN THE PROJECT FOR DESIGN LIFE EXPECTANCY (21 Points)**OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE (O&M) (7 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.	1		
Labor Hours	An estimate of the annual labor hours required for first-year and long-term maintenance has been provided.	2		
Necessary Skills	The skills required to perform first-year and long-term maintenance have been described.	2		
Equipment Needed	A list of the equipment needed to maintain the project has been provided.	2		

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 based on the clarity and completeness of the first-year maintenance budget, how well it meets the minimum requirements, and whether it was prepared by a qualified professional.	1		
Long-Term Detailed Budget	Projects will be evaluated based on the clarity and completeness of the long-term maintenance budget, how well it meets the minimum requirements, and whether it was prepared 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 (14 Points)				
Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
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 may earn 1 point for each project phase in which the applicant actively engages community members, for a maximum of 3 points. 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 (14 Points)				
Category	Evaluation Criteria	Points	Review Score	Comments
Urban Heat Resilience	Urban Heat Resilience is a total of 3 points available. See below.			
	<p>Applicants seeking Urban Heat Resilience points for a net increase of at least three shade trees must use the Cleveland Metroparks Tree Selector Tool (TST) available in the NEORSD Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard. The TST is provided for tree selections only.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 Points: Net increase of at least three shade trees. • Applicants must provide: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tree species removed (from the TST full species list of 90); and ○ Tree species planted (from the District's filtered species list). 	3		
	<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 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 NEORSD Green Infrastructure Grant Program dashboard to determine your score for this category. One (1) additional point if the project is situated within a NEORSD priority sewershed as identified on the District's Priority Sewershed map. 	1		