

Frequently Asked Questions

This document is intended as a guide only and should not be considered a substitute for the information contained in the official Watershed Stewardship Grant (WSG) Program documents. If you have additional questions about the WSG program that are not addressed with these FAQs, or if you are still uncertain whether your group or project is eligible for funding under the WSG Program, please contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator at grant@landstewardship.org or 1-877-727-5276 before filling out and submitting a WSG application form.

1. Who is eligible to apply for a Watershed Stewardship Grant?

Only Alberta-based stewardship groups are eligible to apply for and receive WSG funding. Stewardship groups take community-level action to safeguard our water sources. These groups are community-oriented, volunteer-based partnerships that actively engage in environmental stewardship of their watershed. They set common goals to achieve shared outcomes and they actively engage individuals, organizations, agriculture, industry, municipalities and other forms of local government in their efforts.

Stewardship groups may apply for funding under this program as either an:

- A. *Unincorporated group: a group applying in partnership with an eligible legal entity*** – the applicant is a group, organization or community-based partnership that supports environmental stewardship of the local watershed, but is NOT a legal entity (i.e. is NOT a registered society or non-profit organization). The partnering legal entity is prepared to accept all financial and legal responsibility for this project and manage the grant funds on behalf of the group.
- B. *Incorporated group: a group applying as a legal entity*** – the applicant is a legal entity (i.e. registered society or non-profit organization) whose purpose, mandate and activities support environmental stewardship of the local watershed. The applicant is prepared to accept all financial and legal responsibility for the project.

Individuals, for-profit businesses and corporations, educational institutions or previous grant recipients with outstanding reporting obligations are NOT eligible to receive funding under this grant program.

Municipal governments, provincial and national non-profit corporate entities, and other *Water for Life* partners (e.g. Watershed Planning and Advisory Councils – WPACs) are NOT eligible to apply directly for this grant. They may, however, serve as the partnering legal entity for a group that does not have legal status.

2. How does my group or organization apply for a Watershed Stewardship Grant?

Step 1: Ensure your group or organization is eligible to receive WSG funding. Only Alberta-based stewardship groups are eligible to receive WSG funding.

Step 2: Ensure your project is eligible. Proposed projects must meet the requirements outlined in the WSG application form. If you are uncertain if either your group or your project is eligible for funding under the WSG Program, please contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator at grant@landstewardship.org or 1-877-727-5276 before filling out and submitting a WSG application form.

Step 3: Complete and sign the WSG application form. Make sure you complete the entire application form, providing all information as requested. Ensure the completed application form is dated and signed.

Step 4: Submit your completed application. Send your completed application to Land Stewardship Centre on or before the application deadline.

3. Should we contact someone before submitting an application?

You are strongly encouraged to contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator to discuss your application prior to completing and submitting the application form. Contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator at 1-877-727-5276 or grant@landstewardship.org.

4. How can we verify that our group and our project meet the eligibility criteria?

Detailed eligibility criteria for groups and projects are outlined in the Application Process and Application Form documents. Review these documents carefully prior to submitting an application to ensure your group is eligible and your proposal aligns with the WSG funding criteria. You can also contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator to discuss your group's and project's eligibility for funding.

5. My group is not formally registered as a non-profit organization, a society or a charity. Can we still apply for a Watershed Stewardship Grant?

Yes, provided you partner with another legal entity such as another local registered society, non-profit organization, municipality, summer village council, or other legally recognized organization (with the exception of for-profit businesses or corporations).

In this case, applications should be completed as an **unincorporated group** as outlined above. The Signing Authority in this case should be aware that as they sign the Grant Agreement they will be assuming the banking role for the project and legal responsibility for the project.

In these instances, it is very important that regular and consistent communication occur between the Primary Project Contact and the person designated as Signing Authority. This is particularly important when two different organizations are involved in the project.

6. Our group is planning to undertake activities on public land. How do we get permission and how we find out about any permits we may need?

Performing work on public land requires the permission of the agency responsible for managing the property. Contact your local Alberta Environment and Sustainable Resource Development office for information about and requirements for accessing and working on and with provincial public land and water bodies (refer to the Blue Pages in your phone book or visit <http://alberta.ca/home/government.cfm>).

Fisheries and Oceans Canada (Blue Pages - Federal Government or <http://www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/index-eng.htm>) and your local municipality should be consulted prior to planning any projects involving work in a fish-bearing water body or waterway.

7. What are considered eligible project expenses?

Materials and supplies (i.e. office supplies, food for events, machinery and equipment rentals, and hall rentals), salaries and wages, contract services, travel, honorariums, and certain capital expenses

are considered eligible project expenses.

Capital expenses are generally ineligible except where they can be proven to be essential to the success of the project. In this case, use of the item by the group during and once the project is completed should be submitted as part of final reporting on the project. Eligible capital expenses may include items such as off-site watering systems, bridges on trails, laptops, data projectors, scientific equipment or other technical devices. Up to 100% of the total WSG funding received can be used to cover the cost of eligible capital purchases.

To be considered eligible for reimbursement, all expenses (with the exception of mileage and travel meals) **MUST** be accompanied by receipts.

The Goods and Services Tax (GST) is **NOT an eligible expense** and will not be covered by WSG funds.

Project expenses incurred before notification of approval of a Watershed Stewardship Grant are **NOT** eligible.

8. Are we required to have matching funding in order to be eligible for the grant?

No, but it will strengthen your application to include an estimate of in-kind support and/or committed funding from your group and/or other partners.

9. How does having partnerships and collaborating with others on our project help? Why is it important to show this in our application?

There are many great reasons to look for opportunities to collaborate with others on your project. For example, partnerships and collaborations can help you:

- Access additional funding support or sponsorships to cover the cost of your project;
- Avoid duplication and deliver stronger projects;
- Obtain in-kind support for your project such as technical expertise, reduced rates for services provided or even free materials;
- Take advantage of established and proven services or resources so you are not spending time and money developing them yourself; and
- Help ensure local and regional needs and considerations are taken into account by networking with your watershed planning and advisory council (WPAC).
- Connect with local businesses that are willing to lend a venue or provide part of catering needs for free or at a discounted price.
- Provide university or college students with an opportunity to participate in your project as a practical learning opportunity in their field of study. Whether they are science, communications or business students, they can assist your group with numerous activities like designing brochures, setting up websites or helping you do a business plan.
- Your watershed planning and advisory council (WPAC) may be able to provide technical expertise on your project.

You are encouraged to contact the Watershed Planning and Advisory Council (WPAC) for your area to discuss your project. Communicating about your project with your WPAC is your opportunity to provide input into regional watershed planning and ensures local needs are taken into account.

When considering who your potential partners could be, think about:

- a) Your group's need for expertise, materials or services for the project;
- b) What individuals, businesses or organizations in your area could help fulfill these needs;
- c) What benefit will those individuals, businesses or organizations receive in return for supporting your group's activities?

10. How do I determine reasonable costs for project expenses?

Get price quotes for all the goods and/or services needed for your project before submitting an application. Where possible, a good practice is to get quotes for an item or service from three different sources and then choosing the most appropriate quote to include in your application.

11. How much funding should we apply for?

Begin by preparing a budget for your project. You should only apply for amounts necessary to complete your project. Any unspent grant funds remaining at the end of the grant agreement term must be repaid to LSC.

12. What are in-kind contributions?

In-kind contributions are services or items which ordinarily would be paid for by your organization but which are being voluntarily contributed to help carry out your activities. These can include use of equipment, supplies, materials, the donation of facilities or rent, as well as volunteer services provided by individuals.

The test for in-kind contributions is this: if the service or item was not being donated at no-charge, would your organization pay for that service or item? If the answer is yes, then it is a valid in-kind contribution that you may claim.

13. Do we need to include letters of support for with our application?

Include any relevant supporting documents (i.e. photographs, maps, drawings, letters of support, etc.) you feel will add value to your application. Please limit these to no more than two additional pages of attachments.

14. Should we confirm that our application has been received?

Yes, it is recommended that you contact the Stewardship Program Coordinator at 1-877-727-5276 or grant@landstewardship.org to ensure that your application has been received. As the applicant, it is your responsibility to ensure that mailed or faxed applications arrive on or before the deadline.

15. Does the program fund ongoing activities?

Yes, provided there is a demonstrated need for the ongoing activity. We encourage groups to evaluate their projects to determine needs based on lessons learned and the results of previous projects.

16. When will we know if our application has been approved?

All grant applicants will be notified of the status of their application by the week of May 18.

17. Our group has been approved for funding. Now what?

Once approved, successful grant recipients will receive an information package which includes the Grant Agreement, reporting requirements and reporting forms. This package will be mailed to the organization and primary project contact at the address indicated on the original application form. It

is the responsibility of the primary project contact to liaise with the signing authority to ensure quick completion and return of the grant agreement such that the project start is not delayed.

Once the signed grant agreement (signed by the appropriate Signing Authority) is received, the grant cheque will be sent out. Note: applicants should double check that the address and other contact details provided on the application form are correct before submission.

18. How should we acknowledge receipt of WSG funding for our project?

Grant recipients should acknowledge LSC and the Watershed Stewardship Grant Program, as well as Alberta Environment & Sustainable Resource Development in any promotion/invitation or materials produced in or for the Project. Please refer to the WSG Funder Recognition document for details regarding funder acknowledgement requirements.

19. What are the reporting requirements for the grant?

Reporting is a very important component of the Watershed Stewardship Grant (WSG) Program. Grant recipient reports provide the information necessary for Land Stewardship Centre to report on and demonstrate responsibility, accountability and transparency for the WSG funds received from the Government of Alberta through the Water for Life Strategy. Reporting also provides valuable information for the development of public relations and outreach activities which support and raise awareness of the WSG program and grant recipients' achievements.

All successful grant recipients are required to complete and submit an Interim Report and a Final Report. Please refer to the WSG Interim Report form, the Final Report form and the Reporting Requirements document for details regarding reporting requirements.

20. How is the grant funding distributed?

Grant funds are distributed in two phases:

1. 75% of approved grant funding will be issued to recipients upon returning a signed Grant Agreement.
2. The balance of approved grant funding (25%) will be issued to recipients upon submission of completed interim report. Deadline for submission of interim reports is September 30. Grant recipients may receive the balance of approved grant funding (25%) at any time prior to September 30 if the interim report is submitted earlier than the report deadline date.

21. Can our group apply for another grant if we received a grant in the previous year?

Yes, you may apply for new WSG funding only if you have no outstanding final reports due for previous WSG funds received.