

Technical Memorandum



To: Linda Loomis, Administrator
Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD)

From: Suzy Lindberg, Communications Manager

Date: April 15, 2025

Re: Educator Mini-Grant Spring Recommendations—Fast-Track Application Approval

The Educator Mini-Grant program is a key component of the Education and Outreach (E&O) Program, focusing on educating school-aged students within and surrounding the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD). The program provides up to 10 grants per school year—with a maximum fund distribution of \$500 per recipient—to help offset the costs associated with water and natural resource educational materials or programming.

On behalf of the LMRWD, Young Environmental Consulting Group, LLC (Young Environmental) announced a new round of educator mini-grants with an April 6 deadline and received **four applications**. Young Environmental prescreened the applications for compliance and funding eligibility and created review packets for the Citizen Advisory Committee (CAC) to review at their May 2025 meeting. During the prescreening process, staff found that one applicant was seeking funding for a May 2 event, which would pre-date scoring and approval at both the May 6 CAC meeting and May 21 Board meeting.

To facilitate a fast-tracked application approval, Young Environmental requested that CAC members review and score the application before the April Board meeting to provide a recommendation. The CAC members who were able to respond ranked the application very highly and recommended approval by the Board at the April meeting. The remaining three applications will be reviewed on the original schedule with the remainder of the recommendations provided at the May Board meeting.

SUMMARY

Young Environmental and the CAC recommend authorizing funding for the fast-tracked educator mini-grant application to support May 2 programming, noting its alignment with the LMRWD's mission and goals for watershed-focused education. This recommendation, if approved, would authorize \$500 in funding to this applicant. The mini-grant application is provided as Attachment 1.

| Mini-Grant | Summary | Total Average Score | Recommended Board Action |
|--|--|---------------------|---|
| Mini-Grant for April Board Approval | | | |
| Mini-Grant 1: Hiawatha Academies | Funds will be used to visit Thomas Savage Visitor's Center at Fort Snelling State Trail, allowing 90 students to collect data about water pollution and research water ecosystems in partnership with River Watch. Funds will be used to pay for bus transportation. | 7.3 | Recommend approving the funding request for \$500. |
| TOTAL GRANT AMOUNT REQUESTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL (APRIL) | | | \$500 |
| Additional Mini-Grants to be Discussed at May Board Meeting | | | |
| Mini-Grant 2: Poplar Elementary | Funds would be used to transport 90 students to the Big River Journey, touring the Mississippi River on a boat ride. Funds would be used to lower the field trip costs per student. Funds requested: \$500 | TBD | No action requested at this time. |
| Mini-Grant 3: Integrated Arts Academy | Funds would be used to teach students about soil classification and how to test physical properties of soil to understand the impacts of pollutants and runoff on our water resources. Funds requested: \$340. | TBD | No action requested at this time. |
| Mini-Grant 4: Great River School | Funds would be used for a student-led experience to access water testing equipment and rental vans to understand water quality in the Root River. Funds requested: \$500 | TBD | No action requested at this time. |



Educator Mini-Grant Program Application

Name of School/Organization:

First Name:

Last Name:

Email:

Phone:

Describe your current role?



If you are a student, please provide the name and email of your supervising educator.

Address of School/Organization

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

Name and Address Where Activity Will Take Place (if Different from Above)

Street Address:

Address line 2:

City:

State:

Zip Code:

What age(s) are the participants?

K–5th grade

6–12th grade

18+ years

Senior

Estimated number of participants:

Describe your proposed activity or project and how it relates to water resources and wildlife habitat education. Include project goals and learning objectives for participants.

When is this activity/project scheduled to take place?


Total requested amount (maximum \$500):

\$

Specify how funds will be allocated (e.g. supplies, materials, and transportation):

I understand that if my funding request is approved, I must complete and submit the Program Project Reporting and Reimbursement form to receive payment. Any photos submitted may be used by the LMRWD in future communications.

Signature:



Date: