

ST. CROIX VALLEY ENVIRONMENTAL GRANT PROGRAM GUIDELINES

What is the background and focus of the St. Croix Valley Environmental Grant Program?

The St. Croix Valley Foundation's (SCVF's) **Environmental Fund** was established by a generous donor in 2021 to support projects and organizations engaged in environmental education and/or working to promote, protect, and restore the natural resources and character of the St. Croix Valley. As an endowed field of interest fund, the **Environmental Fund** is broad in scope yet targeted to meet the ever-changing needs of the region – forever. Since the initial gift, other donors have contributed to the fund, growing it to the point where the annual earnings are substantial enough to support a regional competitive grant program.

On **Earth Day, April 22, 2024**, SCVF launched a new **Environmental Grant Program**. Since 1970, April 22 has been observed as Earth Day, “an annual celebration that honors the achievements of the environmental movement and raises awareness of the need to protect Earth’s natural resources for future generations¹.” With similar intent, the **Environmental Grant Program** will support environmental organizations and programs that engage communities in environmental activities, thereby enhancing the quality of life in the St. Croix Valley.

How may the grant funding be used?

Funding Categories

- **General Operating Support:** Organizations with the **Environment** at the core of their mission and programs may apply for *General Operating Support* (grant range: \$5,000-\$25,000).
 - o Applicants must be located in the SCVF six-county service area (Chisago and Washington counties in MN and Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in WI).
 - o Applicants must specifically reference work that involves **one or more** of the following components:
 - **Experiential learning:** How is the organization providing hands-on environmental learning opportunities for individuals involved with their work?
 - **Access and Inclusion:** How is the organization actively removing barriers so that people of all backgrounds and abilities can participate in their work?
 - **Advocacy:** How is the organization working to shape or advance environmental policy?
- **Program Support:** Organizations (environmental and non-environmental) may apply for *Program Support* (grant range: \$500-\$10,000) to support hands-on environmental activities.
 - o Programming must be delivered in the SCVF six-county service area (Chisago and Washington counties in MN and Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in WI).
 - o Applicants must specifically address both:
 - Number of individuals benefitting from the experience and
 - Opportunities for partnerships and/or volunteerism.

What is the grant range?

- **General Operating Support:** for environmental organizations range from \$5,000 - \$25,000
- **Program Support:** for environmental or non-environmental organizations range from \$500-\$10,000
- An organization is limited to one application to the Environmental grant program.

What organizations are eligible to apply for funding?

- Applicant must provide programming/services within the six-county SCVF service area (Chisago and Washington counties in MN; Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in WI).
- Applicant must be a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; a governmental entity, tribal entity, educational or religious organization defined as tax exempt; or partner with an eligible fiscal agent.

¹ National Geographic Encyclopedic Entry – Earth Day: <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/earth-day/>.

What types of requests are ineligible?

- Requests from individuals.
- Requests from for-profit businesses.
- Requests for capital (i.e., equipment, buildings, etc.).
- Requests for endowment.
- Requests to fund science, research, and large-scale restoration projects.

What criteria are used to assess applications?

- For General Operating Support requests:
 - The environment is at the core of the mission of the applicant organization.
 - The organization is located in the six-county service area (Chisago and Washington counties in MN; Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in WI).
 - The applicant demonstrates a long-term organizational commitment to the environment.
 - The applicant demonstrates a compelling strategic vision in response to current and future needs.
 - The applicant demonstrates that they are actively working to do one or more of the following:
 - Engage individuals in experiential learning and/or environmental action.
 - Remove barriers so individuals of all backgrounds and abilities can participate.
 - Advance environmental advocacy.
 - The organizational need is compelling.
- For Program Support requests:
 - The organization is equipped to deliver environmental programming in the six-county service area (Chisago and Washington counties in MN; Burnett, Polk, St. Croix, and Pierce counties in WI).
 - The desired outcomes are defined and realistic (scope appropriate and details thorough).
 - The applicant presents a compelling case for how the proposed activities will benefit participants and produce intended outcomes.
 - The budget is realistic.

How does an organization apply?

- To access the application visit: [SCVF's Online Application Portal](#)
- Tips:
 - For editing ease, the narrative section *maximum character count* is substantial; however, the review panel appreciates **concise** applications.
 - Applicants may begin the application process, save their work, and login to their account at a later time to complete and submit the application.
 - Following submission, the applicant may download a copy of the completed application.

What is the application timeline?

- Application Live: **April 22 – Earth Day**
- Application Due: **Mid-June 20**
- Notifications: **July**
- Grant funds must be expended within one year from the date of the award

Who should we contact with additional questions?

- Please contact [Heidi Herron](#) with any questions about the St. Croix Valley Environmental grant program.