



# **Partners in Conservation (PIC) Grant Program**

## **Guidelines & Instructions Fiscal Year 2021-22**

**Applications due 4 pm, December 15, 2021**

Submit via ZoomGrants: <http://emswcd.org/pic>

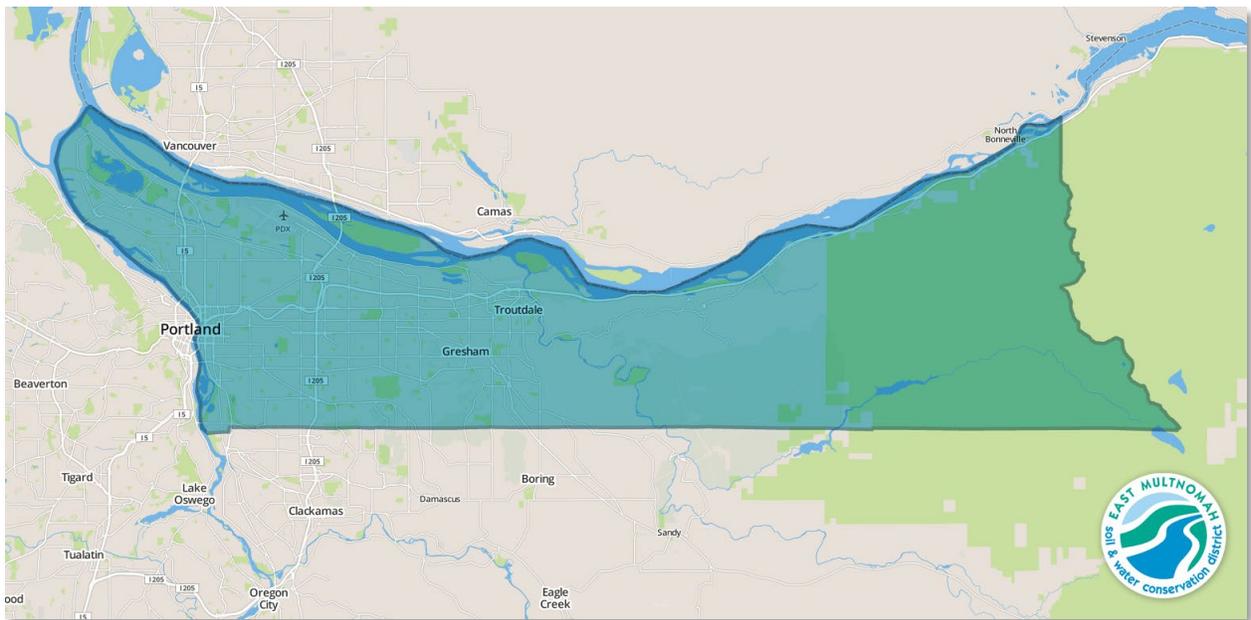


## About EMSWCD

**The East Multnomah Soil and Water Conservation District (EMSWCD)** is a unit of local government whose mission is to help people care for land and water. EMSWCD is led by an elected board of five directors and works entirely on a voluntary, non-regulatory basis east of the Willamette River centerline in Multnomah County. The EMSWCD fulfills its mission by providing technical, capacity, and financial assistance to organizations, landowners, land managers, and other residents to help establish and maintain healthy ecosystems, with a particular focus on soil, water, and natural habitats. With 22 full time staff and an annual operating and capital budget of \$16.1 million for FY21-22, the EMSWCD implements its activities through four organizational units: 1) Urban Lands; 2) Rural Lands; 3) Conservation Legacy; and 4) Finance and Operations.

Learn more about us at <http://emswcd.org>

For any questions about our Partners in Conservation (PIC) grants, or other grants programs, please contact [andrew@emswcd.org](mailto:andrew@emswcd.org) or (971) 867-0614.



*Map of EMSWCD service area, which is all of Multnomah County East of the Willamette River.*



# Partners in Conservation (PIC) Grant Program

## Guidelines & Instructions

The East Multnomah SWCD Partners in Conservation grant program was established to advance the mission of EMSWCD by leveraging District funds through conservation-related work that is carried out by other organizations. This program provides funding to support conservation projects and conservation education in the EMSWCD service area. We specifically encourage projects that are led by, engage or benefit Black, Indigenous and other people of color, low-income communities, or other historically marginalized groups. In all cases, projects must show a clear public benefit in one or more of the following: *environmental education, habitat restoration, watershed health, soil erosion prevention/control, soil health, water quality, water conservation.*

### PIC Overview

- **Grant Size:** Minimum grant award is \$5,000 and the maximum is \$100,000. Larger grants (\$50,000+) are more likely to be awarded to longer-term projects.
- **Project Duration:** The timeframe for a project is up to 2 years.
- **Available funds:** A total of approximately \$600,000 will be available for PIC grants awarded in the 2021-2022 fiscal year.
- **Deadline:** Applications must be submitted by **4 pm on Wednesday, December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021.**
- **Apply Online:** EMSWCD uses an online application and grants management system, **ZoomGrants**. Applications must be submitted online through this system to be considered for funding. Access is available through the EMSWCD website as of **November 1, 2021:** <http://emswcd.org/pic>. Please let us know if you need assistance.

### Our Vision and Program Goals

The conservation of land and water resources in the EMSWCD service area involves the efforts of many organizations, public agencies and community groups. We recognize that conservation goals can best be achieved by helping to create a strong network of local organizations and concerned residents working together in common purpose. By providing grant support to organizations, schools and communities, we hope to enable each to become more effective contributors to conservation efforts. We believe that multiple and complementary strategies and approaches with diverse participation can strengthen outcomes on the ground. We also recognize that everyone deserves the benefits of healthy soil and water and environmental education, and we look for opportunities to broaden participation and expand the impact of our grants. The goals of the EMSWCD Grants Program reflect a commitment to cooperation and support that will produce lasting, deeply rooted efforts to protect our natural resources and sustain our communities.

EMSWCD has identified six goals for the Grants Program. The first goal addresses the intent to complement EMSWCD's core rural and urban program areas with external grant funding. (See the EMSWCD website, and/or recent EMSWCD annual work plans for more information on these EMSWCD program areas). The additional five program goals focus on areas specific to our grants program that contribute to fulfilling EMSWCD's mission to *help people care for land and water.*



***Goal 1: Complement other EMSWCD program efforts in water quality, soil health, habitat restoration and sustainable agriculture.***

EMSWCD's Urban Lands Program aims to foster a stewardship ethic in the urban landscape by encouraging practices that prevent pollution and promote resource conservation. The Urban Lands Program works with partners to achieve improvements in water quality and quantity adversely affected by urban landscapes. The Program also works to reduce seasonal increases in outdoor water usage and promote practices that increase and improve urban wildlife habitat. Increasing the urban tree canopy and improving green infrastructure in the urban landscape, particularly in underserved areas, will be a focus of EMSWCD grants in this area.

EMSWCD's Rural Lands Program works in the rural areas of the district to improve water quality, restore and revegetate riparian areas, and control invasive weeds. While the Rural Lands Program works mostly with private landowners, the PIC grant program can support the projects of non-profit organizations that work to support rural conservation and sustainable agriculture in the region.

***Goal 2: Increase environmental literacy of EMSWCD residents.***

The EMSWCD recognizes that environmental education is an essential tool for building a conservation ethic and culture of stewardship of our natural resources. For school age children, grants may support projects and programs that provide high quality outdoor experiences and classroom learning. Projects should help to build knowledge of ecology and natural resources within the EMSWCD service area, should address conservation issues that we face locally and globally, and should support students in becoming lifelong stewards of the environment. With significant disparities in exposure to quality environmental education among local populations, we look for opportunities to bring programs to those who do not have them and can most benefit.

This goal also includes environmental education for older youth, adults and the general public. As we face serious environmental challenges, from climate change on a global scale to houselessness in our local natural areas, it is important to help foster a well-informed citizenry. Environmental education enables us all to participate more fully and work more effectively to address these issues. In addition, the PIC grant program continues its interest in broadening inclusion in conservation work and the emerging green economy. Project elements in these areas could include:

- Speaker series on current conservation issues.
- Engaging diverse audiences in dialogue on conservation issues.
- Internships designed to expose diverse youth to conservation.
- Initiatives to support training in conservation related employment.

***Goal 3: Increase capacity and strengthen organizational structures needed to advance equitable conservation outcomes.***

We consider environmental education to also include providing educational opportunities for staff, boards and partners to build and enhance an organization's role in conservation and community engagement. We are especially looking for the types of capacity building that can strengthen the ability of organizations to work collaboratively and across traditional interest areas. The following are examples of activities that we will consider supporting in this category:

- Conservation-based technical assistance and training
- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training.



- Project-related conference/workshop attendance.
- Developing and facilitating partnerships, collaborations and cross-sector connections.
- Stakeholder involvement to address cross-sector issues, e.g., access to nature and housing development, environmental education and cultural relevancy, green jobs and workforce development, environmental impacts and houselessness.

***Goal 4: Establish and support sustainable school and community gardens throughout the urban areas of the EMSWCD service area.***

The Portland metro area is fortunate to have a culture of promoting community and school gardens. However, many areas and schools within the EMSWCD service area have not benefited from this resource that is widely available in more affluent areas. The EMSWCD Grants Program is focused on filling these gaps by helping to establish gardens where they are most needed and supporting educational programs associated with edible gardening. Organic methods in edible gardening showcase important conservation concepts including soil health, water use, and composting, along with providing the opportunity to learn about the impacts associated with the use of synthetic fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides. Gardening and local food production can also be an important way of connecting communities and children to nature.

***Goal 5: Increase the urban tree canopy and support a sustainable urban forest.***

Urban tree cover provides many well-established benefits, from improved stormwater management and wildlife habitat to reducing the urban heat island effect and improving air quality. Tree planting, particularly on a large scale, is an important part of addressing the climate crisis. While the development of robust urban forestry programs to conserve, maintain and increase tree cover is becoming a growing priority for cities and regional governments, economic, social and institutional barriers present significant challenges to timely and equitable implementation.

The EMSWCD Grants Program is seeking to make strategic investments in urban forestry that mitigate for looming climate change-related public health and environmental challenges as well as existing disparities in tree cover between neighborhoods. The following are examples of activities that we will consider supporting in this category:

- Increasing the quality and quantity of appropriate trees, especially large canopy trees in low canopy areas.
- Preserving and maintaining the existing urban forest and urban trees.
- Enabling participation of low-income communities, communities of color, and youth in urban forestry programs.
- Coordination of roles, responsibilities, policies and projects of agencies and non-profit partners.
- Monitoring or documentation of the health, condition, and other characteristics of the existing urban forest in the EMSWCD service area.

***Goal 6: Increase conservation benefits for communities and populations experiencing disparities in environmental health, environmental education, and natural amenities.***

Low income populations and communities of color have been disproportionately impacted by unhealthy environmental conditions and must often reside in areas comparatively lacking in natural amenities such as parks and tree cover. EMSWCD aims to respond more effectively to this historic and current reality. We value the diversity of all our residents as an integral part of the future success of our programs and organization, and of conservation efforts in the region. Moreover, we are committed to establishing



meaningful and productive relationships with communities to learn how best to ensure equitable conservation outcomes and benefits. Through our Grants Program, we look to support projects that further the opportunities for our region's diverse populations to participate and help shape conservation efforts.

In our grant application review and decision-making process, EMSWCD is committed to the following:

- Ensuring that our PIC Review Committee includes representatives of diverse communities.
- Prioritizing projects in our ranking criteria that are led by, involve or benefit low income communities and communities of color in all areas of funding.
- Working to address inequities in the local conservation sector through systemic change.
- Working to remove barriers to successful participation in grant projects.
- Continuing to engage our grantees, partners and communities to better understand how we can improve our grantmaking process to address bias, institutional racism and cultural relevancy.

## Program Eligibility and Requirements

### Eligible applicants for the PIC Grant Program:

1. Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations
2. Non-profit entities without 501(c)(3) status that retain a qualified fiscal agent
3. Educational institutions
4. Government agencies
5. Native American tribes

### Non-discrimination policy:

For work related to an EMSWCD funded project, the grantee agrees to comply with EMSWCD's policy of prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, age, disability, sex, marital status, familial status, parental status, religion, sexual orientation, genetic information, political beliefs, reprisals, or because all or part of an individual's income is derived from any public assistance program.

### Projects must meet these criteria to receive PIC funding:

1. Must advance the mission of the EMSWCD "To Help People Care for Land and Water."
2. Must address one or more of the following: environmental education, soil erosion prevention/control, soil health, water quality, water conservation, watershed health, habitat restoration.
3. Must be located within EMSWCD's service area (Multnomah County lying east of the Willamette River centerline) or demonstrate direct benefit to EMSWCD residents.
4. Must provide a clear public benefit.

### Eligible project types:

1. On-the-ground restoration or conservation project. Examples: invasive weed control, stream bank re-vegetation, habitat restoration/enhancement.
2. Sustainable agriculture or gardening project. Examples: establishing new gardens/orchards, garden education, composting systems, irrigation systems, farm intern programs.



3. Pollution prevention project. Examples: trash cleanup along a stream, toxics/pesticide reduction program.
4. Sustainable stormwater management project. Examples: parking lot bioswale, raingarden, tree planting, pavement removal.
5. Engineering of a conservation project. Examples: engineering of a soil erosion control project, stream/fish passage restoration, in-stream habitat improvements.
6. Monitoring project. Examples: evaluation of weed control or sediment control methods, water quality monitoring.
7. Environmental education of youth and/or adults. Examples: implementation of classroom or outdoor education program, workshops, training, signage.
8. Capacity building for conservation and related diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) efforts. Examples: training to build conservation and/or DEI knowledge and technical skills, partnership development, participation of communities of color and other historically marginalized groups.

### **In-eligible entities and project types:**

1. Private businesses and landowners (funding and technical assistance from the EMSWCD may be available for these entities under other EMSWCD programs).
2. Rainwater harvesting systems or cisterns unless those components are incidental and subordinate to a larger project.
3. Buildings and capital projects unless these components are incidental and subordinate to a larger project.
4. Capital campaigns.
5. Political campaigns (EMSWCD is statutorily prohibited from supporting such activity).
6. Required mitigation projects.

### **Project Requirements and Limits:**

1. 2022 PIC grants may be awarded for projects up to two years in duration.
2. The minimum PIC grant award is \$5,000 and the maximum is \$100,000.
3. Indirect/administrative costs may be included in the project budget, up to 15% of the total budget.
4. Only one grant application may be submitted per organization. If the applicant is a government organization, only one application may be submitted per bureau or department. *The applicant may be a partner in more than one application.*
5. An organization that has been awarded a grant for three consecutive years is eligible to re-apply, but the application will be less competitive, all other factors being equal.
6. If an organization currently has a multi-year active PIC grant, they are eligible to apply for a new grant for a distinct project, but the application will be less competitive, all other factors being equal.

### **Match Funding:**

Match funding from other funding sources is also a way to leverage EMSWCD funds for greater conservation and community benefits. It also reduces dependency on any single funding source and is a way to diversify the funding streams that support organizations and their projects. EMSWCD also recognizes that securing match funding for projects places a burden on organizations that may



limit their ability to implement good conversation projects, particularly for small emerging organizations. EMSWCD has the following match funding requirements for 2022 PIC applications.

1. For grant applications of \$10,000 or less, no match funding is required.
2. For grants over \$10,000, applicants are expected to secure matching funds to support the project, in an amount equal to or exceeding the amount requested from EMSWCD. This match may include cash, in-kind contributions, funding from other sources, or a combination thereof. The grantee will be required to document match funding and track expenditures.
3. The one-to-one match funding requirement can be waived for projects where:
  - a) The grant request is less than \$30,000, AND
  - b) The grant applicant meets one of the following criteria:
    - The organization has been in operation for less than three years, OR
    - The organization has not received a PIC grant before, OR
    - The organization's annual operating budget is less than \$250,000

### **Application Review and Award:**

1. EMSWCD will determine how much to allocate for PIC 2021/22 awards based on the quality of the applicant projects and availability of funds. It is anticipated that approximately \$600,000 will be available to award for the current grant cycle.
2. Once applications are received, EMSWCD Grants Program staff conduct due diligence on all grant applications, including eligibility, consistency with PIC program goals and criteria, and completeness.
3. **PIC Review Committee:** A review committee made up of members of the EMSWCD Board and community representatives will participate in reviewing and ranking the 2022 PIC applications and providing recommendations for funding awards to the EMSWCD Board of Directors.
4. Applicant and project eligibility, approval or denial of applications, and dollar amounts awarded (for individual projects or organizations, as well as for the funding cycle/fiscal year) will be determined at the discretion of the EMSWCD Board of Directors. The decisions of the Board of Directors are final.

### **Contract and Payment:**

1. If your proposal is funded, the decision will be formalized with a written agreement that will include EMSWCD and grantee responsibilities, a description of reporting and monitoring requirements, procedures for requesting payments, etc. No project expenses incurred before the funding agreement is in place (signed by both parties) will be reimbursed by EMSWCD.
2. Payment will be made on a reimbursement basis, up to the amount awarded by EMSWCD. The project budget should be seen as an estimate of anticipated expenses. EMSWCD will reimburse approved actual expenses, which must be documented with copies of bills and/or receipts. Payments may be requested as project tasks are completed.
3. Grantees can request an **upfront payment** of up to 30% of the total grant amount, before work on the project has taken place. Grantees will be required to submit documentation of all expenditures from any upfront payments, with copies of bills and/or receipts, before further payments against the grant award are made.
4. Grantees are not required to submit bills and/or receipts to support project expenditures supported by match funding sources. However, grantees must retain copies of all



documentation for match funding expenditures and make these available to EMSWCD review or audit purposes.

5. EMSWCD will hold back payment of 10% of the dollar amount awarded until the required project completion report has been received and accepted by EMSWCD.
6. Payments totaling \$600 or more in a calendar year may be considered by the IRS to be reportable income. Applicants who receive EMSWCD funding will be required to complete an IRS W-9 form. If applicable, EMSWCD will report the income to the IRS and to the Applicant on a 1099-MISC form. The Applicant should consult a tax advisor regarding income reporting requirements and whether project-related expenses may be included as deductions on the Applicant's tax returns to offset this income.

### Funding Schedule and Deadlines:

1. **Deadline for submission** for this 2022 PIC funding cycle (Fiscal Year 2021-22) is **at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, December 15, 2021**. Applications must be submitted online via **ZoomGrants**.
2. The PIC Review Committee meetings will take place in late February/early March of 2022.
3. It is anticipated that 2022 PIC funding recommendations will be **considered and final award decisions made at the EMSWCD Board meeting in April 2022**.
4. Applicants should not plan to commence work on projects for which EMSWCD funds may be used until after June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022. (Some exceptions may be made where there is sufficient advance notice.)

**Applicants are encouraged to call with any questions** about the application process, EMSWCD expectations, terms of the agreement, payments, reporting requirements, etc.

**Contact:** Andrew Brown (Grants Program supervisor)  
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