



**2024**  
Due: May 15th



# Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program

Application Supplement to the Uniform Application for  
Montana Public Facility Projects





RENEWABLE  
RESOURCE  
GRANT  
PROGRAM

**Application Supplement**  
**Uniform Application for Public Facility  
Projects**

Application Deadline May 15, 2024  
[Grants.dnrc.mt.gov](https://grants.dnrc.mt.gov)

Department of Natural Resources and Conservation  
Resource Development Bureau

PO BOX 201601  
1539 Eleventh Avenue, Floor 2  
Helena, MT 59620-1601

Main Office: 406-444-6668  
Website: [www.dnrc.mt.gov](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov)

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# **Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program Instructions for Grant and Loan Applications**

## **General Information**

The Montana Legislature established the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan (RRGL) Program to enhance and develop Montana's renewable resources. The Resource Development Bureau of the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) administers the program. The RRGL Program is funded through earnings from certain natural resource-based taxes.

## **Public Facility Project Applications**

Applicants for Public Facility projects (drinking water, wastewater, stormwater and solid waste projects) **must submit the Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects and the RRGL Application Supplement to the Uniform Application.** Use this supplement application to apply for RRGL grant funding.

## **Submittal Information**

DNRC requires two (2) forms of the application to meet the needs of multiple reviewers during the evaluation, scoring and ranking process. All grant and loan applicants (public and non-public facility) must submit all required materials **(1. Submitted Online)** and **(2. Submitted by Mail)** by **May 15, 2024.**

### **1. Submitted Online:**

Online applications can be found online [www.dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd](http://www.dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd) and submitted at <http://grants.dnrc.mt.gov>

### **2. Submitted by Mail:**

- I. One (1) original Authorizing Statement.
- II. One (1) unbound original application and all supporting documentation. Public Facility Projects will include a copy of the signed Preliminary Engineering Report (PER).
- III. \$250.00 application fee (online or check by mail).

**Mail to: MT DNRC RRGL Program, PO BOX 201601, Helena MT 59620**

## Application Deadline

Application forms must be submitted online at <http://grants.dnrc.mt.gov> and additional documents must be postmarked to the DNRC office **no later than 5:00 p.m., May 15, 2024**. If you have questions, please contact our office at (406) 444-6668.

## Program Definitions

**Conserve** - efficient and/or sustainable use of a renewable resource.

**Manage** - improve the governing entities ability to control and administer a renewable resource.

**Develop** - new beneficial and sustainable use of a renewable resource.

**Preserve** - protect or repair a renewable resource.

**Program costs** - non-reimbursable costs not directly related to the project. Program costs include office rent that will be incurred regardless of the project is implemented, salaries of existing fully funded staff positions unless the work-hours associated with the project are accounted for, or any other costs that pay for ongoing or general services of the applicant.

**Project** - any activity or development that conserves, develops, or preserves a renewable resource and that does not result in a long-term adverse impact to land, air, water, fish, wildlife, or recreation opportunities.

**Project costs** - costs that will be incurred only by implementing the project described in the application and whose source is RRGL program funds, matching dollars or in-kind contributions.

**Public entity** - any department, agency, board, commission, or other division of state government, city, municipality, county, conservation district, water and sewer district, or other political subdivision or local government body of the state, or a tribal government.

**Public benefit or citizen benefit** - a benefit that accrues to the common well-being of the citizens of Montana from a renewable resource project including but not limited to the benefits that accrue to an applicant.

**Public resource** - land, air, water, fish, wildlife, and recreation opportunities.

**Renewable resource** - a sustainable natural resource including water, wind, renewable energy, soil, wetlands, fish and aquatic habitat, wildlife habitat, range land, crop land, and forests.

## Applicant Eligibility

### Grants and Loans for Government Entities

Eligible applicants include any division of state government, tribal government, or other county, city, or local political subdivision. These governmental entities have included cities, towns, counties, county

conservation districts, water and sewer districts, school districts, irrigation districts, joint boards of control, state agencies, and universities.

## **Project Eligibility**

Project types eligible for funding are specified in 85-1-602, Montana Code Annotated (MCA).

- [1] *Either grants or loans may be provided to fund the following types of projects:*
- (a) feasibility, design, research, and resource assessment studies;*
  - (b) preparation of construction, rehabilitation, or production plans; and*
  - (c) construction, rehabilitation, production, education, or other implementation efforts.*

Projects must enhance the common well-being of Montanans through the conservation, management, development, or preservation of a targeted renewable resource. Renewable resource projects, including water conservation, water for public, agricultural use or other beneficial uses, water quality, forestry, air quality, resource education, waste management, and other renewable resource-related projects are eligible to receive grant and loan funding.

## **Funding Limitations**

### **Grants**

The Montana Legislature appropriates funds directly to each project, based on amounts recommended by DNRC. DNRC limits grant funding recommendations to a maximum of **\$125,000** for any one renewable resource project.

### **Loans**

DNRC does not have a standard limit on the recommended loan amount. The limit is based on the applicant's ability to repay the loan. Local governments enter into debt by issuing bonds. Drinking water and wastewater projects are encouraged to apply to the State's Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Programs. These SRF Loan Programs are specifically designed to provide below-market interest rates for these types of systems. However, some renewable resource projects are not eligible for funding under the SRF Programs.

For more information, see: <http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd/financial-bureau> .

## **Renewable Grant and Loan Application Ranking Criteria**

Projects funded under the Renewable Resource Grant and Loan (RRGL) Program must result in resource and citizen benefits, be financially feasible, have no significant environmental impacts, have an adequate project management plan, and be technically feasible.

DNRC reviews applications based on ranking criteria, compared with other applications, and ranked on how the project meets RRGL Program goals. A summary of the program's ranking criteria is below.

## Eligibility Criteria

An application is eligible if:

- The project results in benefits to at least one renewable resource and is technically and financially feasible.
- The application is complete, and
- The project has no long term adverse environmental impacts.

## Renewable Resource Benefits (60 percent of total score)

This scoring category is influenced by how likely the project will benefit renewable resources. Specifically, how the project will conserve, manage, develop, or preserve a renewable resource. Renewable Resource benefits will score higher in applications which **quantify predicted benefits**.

The renewable resource benefit score is based on the degree to which the project is predicted to:

- Have multiple benefits (conserve, manage, develop, and protect).
- Benefit multiple renewable resources (surface water, groundwater, land, energy, etc.).
- Benefit regional or statewide renewable resources.
- Benefit an important resource (such as a blue-ribbon trout stream), and
- Achieve an objective in a natural resource management plan (such as the State Water Plan).

**Additional tips for improving your score for resource and citizen benefits are listed at the end of Part 3 of this application.**

## Public or Citizen Benefits (15 percent of total score)

This scoring category is influenced by how likely the project will benefit the public economically or by improving public health and safety.

The citizen benefit score is based on the degree to which the project is predicted to:

- Benefit the local economy (e.g. increase the number of jobs, increase the local recreational use, increase the economic viability of a community).
- Benefit a regional or statewide economy, and
- Improve public health and safety.

Public benefits will score higher in applications that **quantify anticipated benefits**.

## Technical and Financial Feasibility and Project Management (20 percent of total score)

This scoring category evaluates the applicant's ability to complete the project as described in the application.

Project feasibility is evaluated based on the degree to which the proposed project meets the following criteria:

- The project solves or mitigates a renewable resource problem.
- Alternatives considered address the stated problem and are developed to the extent costs and benefits can be compared.
- Selection of the preferred alternative is justified.
- Selection of the preferred alternative considers renewable resource benefits.
- The preferred alternative is technically feasible.
- Costs are reasonable and within industry standards.
- The expected funding sources are supported with documentation.

- The applicant considers timing and cost of DNRC reporting, permitting, public input, procurement, and other contingencies.
- The project management plan demonstrates the applicant's ability to anticipate problems and successfully complete the project.

**Application Clarity and Project Value (5 percent of total score)**

Reviewers evaluate projects based solely on information provided in the application.

Applications with the following attributes will receive higher scores in this category:

- All requested information is provided as outlined in the application.
- Narratives are clearly written.
- Assertions are supported by documentation.
- The project has documented public or stakeholder support.
- The project is part of a natural resource management plan (e.g. the State Water Plan).

# **Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program Application Checklist**

**This application is composed of the following parts. Each part is required to submit a complete application.**

- 1. Part 2: Proposal Abstract**
- 2. Part 3: Resource and Citizen Benefits**
- 3. Part 5: Project Management**
- 4. Part 7: Environmental Evaluation**
- 5. Authorizing Statement submitted to DNRC with application materials and application fee.**
- 6. Public Facility Project Application must submit the Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects.**
- 5. One (1) Unbound Application (including supporting documentation) submitted by mail to DNRC by application deadline.**
- 6. Online application <http://grants.dnrc.mt.gov>**



## Part 2: Proposal Abstract

Prepare a brief project description that highlights the project's benefits supporting the RRGL Program purpose. The abstract and the project photograph will be used for legislative approval and purposes.

### Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program Purpose

Invest in projects that will enhance or develop Montana's renewable resources and that will preserve for the citizens of Montana the economic and other benefits of the state's natural heritage. Refer to the program guidelines for more background information: <https://dnrc.mt.gov/docs/conservation/RD-Bureau/RRGL/RRGL-Program-Guidelines-2025-Biennium.pdf>

The abstract should include the project background, primary purpose, and a summary description of the project. **Abstracts are required to be less than 350 words.** The abstract will be incorporated into the RRGL Program's report to the Montana Legislature and provide accurate information that best describes the project's renewable resource benefits and other merits. Legislative assessment of the benefits of each project will be based primarily on ranking recommendations and this abstract.

#### Example:

The Town of West Yellowstone is served by lagoon system for wastewater treatment. The facility was constructed in 1993, and modifications to the treatment system have been implemented over the last 25 years. Due to continued growth and tourism in the community, the treatment capacity of the current system exceeds the demand and inadequately treated wastewater is threatening groundwater quality.

The town's proposed solution is to construct a mechanical WWTP that will effectively treat for wastewater constituents to protect the groundwater against increased nutrient loadings. The mechanical WWTP will be sized to treat the increasing flows due to tourism and the reasonably anticipated population growth. The provision of safe wastewater treatment is essential to support the tourism which the town depends on for its economic health.



## Part 3: Resource and Citizen Benefits

Describe how and to what extent your project would benefit a renewable resource. Projects with the greatest benefits to renewable resources tend to rank the highest. Provide a narrative addressing the following questions.

### Resource and Citizen Benefits Narrative

#### 1. Describe the primary purpose of your project?

Describe the primary project purpose even if it may not benefit renewable resources. The RRGL Program is in place not to only encourage projects designed exclusively to benefit or develop renewable resources. It also encourages communities to include resource benefit activities in their larger projects.

#### 2. Describe the project's renewable resource benefit?

##### A. Identify the renewable resource(s) that will benefit from or be used by your project.

- Eligible renewable resources are surface water, groundwater, arable land, wetlands, riparian areas, fish, habitat, rangeland, renewable energy sources, and forests.
- Use the specific name and location of the resource(s).
- Is the resource important or highlighted (e.g. a blue-ribbon trout stream or an aquifer that is a drinking water source)?

##### B. How will the renewable resource benefit or be used by your project?

- Describe the problem with the renewable resource that your project will address.
- In what way will your project conserve, manage, develop, or preserve the renewable resource? Under what time frame and for how long?
- Will the benefits or increase in sustainable use be measurable? If so, provide an estimate and a description of how you quantified the benefit.
- If your project is part of a natural resource plan, describe the plan and include a letter of support.

#### 3. Describe your project's citizen benefits?

Identify the citizen benefits that will result from your project.

- Identify the resource problem your project will address.
- What is the economic benefit of the project? Will it be measurable? If so, provide an estimate. (e.g. Number of jobs created over a given period). Is the economic benefit local or region-wide?
- Does the project improve resource-based recreation? Is there a local or region-wide benefit?
- Describe how the project will improve health and safety. Is the benefit region-wide, community-wide, or does it primarily benefit a specific business such as an irrigation district?

#### 4. What is the project's renewable resource benefit?

Describe the extent of the resource benefits? Acres, miles, etc...

- Example: Preserve 2.5 miles of streambank habitat OR conserve 23,000 kW of energy.

#### Tips for Improving the Resource and Citizen's Benefits Score

How the project is predicted to benefit renewable resources and Montana citizens comprises 75% of scoring criteria.

- Quantify predicted benefits.
- Projects with multiple benefits or that improve or develop multiple resources score higher.
- Projects without predictable impacts to renewable resources (e.g. research or education) may improve their score by describing how a similar project benefited renewable resources elsewhere.
- If your project is part of a resource management plan, cite the location in the plan that recommends the project and include a support letter from the organization that implements the plan.

## Part 5: Project Management

Describe the project management plan. Applications which do not address the project management components listed below will be ineligible for funding consideration.

### Project Management Narrative

Briefly discuss how you will implement this project from funding through project completion in **500 words or less**. Use the outline below to organize your presentation. This outline is not all-inclusive; you may address other topics.

1. Identify staff requirements needed for successful project management. Discuss how you plan to meet those requirements. If possible, identify the individual members of your project management team, including any already properly procured consultants who will provide project management services. Include the project grant management plan <https://dnrc.mt.gov/docs/conservation/RD-Bureau/RRGL/Grant-Management-Plan-Instructions.docx>
2. Summarize the procurement procedures and requirements related to your project.
3. Discuss coordination activities with other local, state, or federal agencies needed to implement the project and if the plan is part of another on-going or planned action.
4. Discuss your public involvement plans during the planning and implementation of your project through completion and closeout.
5. Describe how you will manage consultants responsible for completing major project tasks. Discuss how you will remain current on the status of consultant and contractor activities as project tasks are completed.
6. All projects must follow applicable state, federal and local laws.

If you are developing a new water appropriation that is water storage, water conservation, water salvage or water reuse project, or changing an existing water right with the project, contact your local DNRC Regional Office and have your project reviewed.

- Attach a letter to this application that indicates if a permit, change authorization or no action is required.
- If the DNRC determines the proposed project to be developing state water through the application evaluation it may affect your ability to receive funding through the RRGL program.

Activities that occur in designated Sage Grouse habitat are subject to Executive Order 12-2015. Consult with the Sage Grouse Habitat Conservation Program prior to submitting a grant or loan application.

- See the program webpage for more information: <https://sagegrouse.mt.gov>



## Part 7: Environmental Evaluation

All applicants must consider the potential environmental impacts of their projects. Consideration of these impacts on the location, design, or construction actions may help avoid expensive mitigation or construction costs. A project will not be eligible for funding if it results in significant adverse impact after mitigation.

Please complete the Environmental Checklist below as the information provided will be subject to a MEPA assessment by DNRC. If an Environmental Assessment has already been completed for the proposed project, please attach it to the application in place of this evaluation.

### [Environmental Checklist](#)

- ✓ For additional instructions on how to fill out the environmental checklist, please see our [Resources and Training](#) page.

## Authorizing Statement

### A. Grant Authorization

I certify that the information and the statements in this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I certify that the project or activity as described in this application complies with all applicable state, local and federal laws and regulations. By my signature below, I certify that I have knowledge of and understand the content of this application and that I am fully authorized to apply to the Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (DNRC) for the grant specified in the submitted materials.

I further declare that, for \_\_\_\_\_ (Entity Name), I am legally authorized to enter into a binding contract with the DNRC to obtain funding if this application, \_\_\_\_\_ (Title), is approved. I understand that all funds must be both authorized by the Montana Legislature and available in the natural resources project account before grants are available.

A facsimile, photocopy or electronic copy of the signature below shall have the same force and effect as an original signature and an electronic signature shall be regarded as an original signature. 30-18-102, MCA.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Title of Authorized Representative                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title of Representative                                      Entity Name \_\_\_\_\_

### B. Loan Authorization

I certify that the information and the statements in this application are true, complete, and accurate to the best of my knowledge. I certify that the project or activity as described in this application complies with all applicable state, local and federal laws and regulations. By my signature below, I certify that I have knowledge of and understand the content of this application and that I am fully authorized to apply to DNRC for the loan specified in the submitted materials.

I understand that all funds must be authorized by the Montana Legislature, that loan funds will become available after the sale of state bonds, and that I will be expected to enter into a loan agreement when funding is available and according to my construction schedule.

I further declare that, for \_\_\_\_\_ (Entity Name), I am legally authorized to enter into a binding contract with the DNRC to obtain loan financing if this application is approved.

A facsimile, photocopy or electronic copy of the signature below shall have the same force and effect as an original signature and an electronic signature shall be regarded as an original signature. 30-18-102, MCA.

/s/ \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature and Title of Authorized Representative                      Date \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name and Title of Representative



## Uniform Application for Public Facility Projects

In 1995, the state and federal funding agencies that are members of the Water, Wastewater, and Solid Waste Action Coordinating Team (W2ASACT) adopted a common preliminary engineering report format that would be acceptable to each of the agencies that fund water, wastewater, and solid waste projects in Montana. Due to the success of developing the common engineering format, and in response to recommendations made by local communities and technical assistance providers, some of the state agencies also adopted a common application summary form and environmental checklist that same year. In 1997, many of the state and federal funding agencies involved in W2ASACT worked together to complete the task by agreeing to use a uniform publication that contains a common infrastructure application form, environmental checklist, and preliminary engineering report.

The [Uniform Application for Montana Public Facility Projects](#) contains the common forms, requirements, and checklists that must be submitted when applying for financial assistance to any of the six funding programs listed below. This application was developed to reduce the time, effort, and expense that local governments incur when applying to multiple agencies for financial assistance. Once completed, the forms and checklists in this application can be copied and submitted to any of the six programs.

The following programs have adopted the application materials contained in this publication:

- Montana Board of Investments/INTERCAP Program
- Montana Department of Commerce/Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program [Community Development Block Grant \(CDBG\) Program - Community Development Division \(mt.gov\)](#)
- Montana Department of Commerce/Montana Coal Endowment Program (MCEP) [Montana Coal Endowment Program - Community Development Division \(mt.gov\)](#)
- Montana Department of Environmental Quality/State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Programs
- Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation/Renewable Resource Grant and Loan (RRGL) Program and State Revolving Fund (SRF) Loan Programs
- U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development Programs







The Montana Department of  
**Natural Resources  
& Conservation**

**Renewable Resource Grant and Loan Program**

1539 11th Avenue P.O. Box 201601 Helena, MT 59620-1601

<http://dnrc.mt.gov/divisions/cardd>



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