



eLINK Guidance Document

Completing a Grant Application

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Purpose: This document provides basic guidance on how to complete a grant application in eLINK. Applicants should keep in mind that each grant program may have unique requirements, and be sure to review the individual grant program policies and the Request for Proposal (RFP) prior to applying for grant funds in eLINK. All applicants must have an eLINK user account to apply for funds; see the *eLINK Guidance Document Setting up an Account* for more information.

Completing a Grant Application

To start or create a new grant application, take the following steps. To access an application that has been started, find the grant on your **Home** page and click the edit icon  to continue editing.

1. In the main menu at the top of the screen, click **Apply**.
2. Type the name of the applicant Organization. This field will auto-complete with only those organizations that are eligible to apply for available funds, and to which you the user are associated with. If the organization you are looking for does not appear, send an email specifying the missing organization connection to elinksupport@state.mn.us with the subject line of "Account Assistance".
3. Click **Search** to generate a list of available grant funds.
4. Select the fund to which you are going to apply by clicking the start application action icon . This will create a unique grant application identification number.
5. Enter a **Grant Title** (required) and **Abstract** (can be filled in later in the application process) and click **Save**. To complete the application, enter information in the following tabs.
 - a. **Grant** tab: the grant tab contains questions unique to the grant program being applied to. In general, all questions in this tab are required for a complete and competitive application. See the RFP guidance on the [Apply for Grants](#) page of the BWSR website for specific information on completing the questions.
 - i. **Day-to-Day Contact:** Enter the name of the person who will be the primary contact responsible for the day-to-day operations of the proposed project. This person must have a recognized eLINK association with the applicant organization. The day-to-day contact, in addition to the application submitter, will receive automated messages about the application from the system until after submittal. If the application is granted funding, automated messages will only be sent to the day-to-day contact.
 - ii. **County:** Select a county, or hold down the Control key to select multiple counties, in which the proposed activities will occur. This field is used to provide information to the [Legislative Coordinating Commission](#).
 - iii. **Project Abstract:** Succinctly describe what you are trying to achieve and how you intend to achieve those results. Many, but not all, applications will also have a series of questions to answer after the abstract.

- iv. Be sure to click **Save** at the bottom of the screen after entering information and before leaving this tab.
 - b. **Grant Map** tab: the grant map tab allows the user to select the primary project area. The result is a generalized map used to provide consistent context to reviewers of the grant application.
 - i. **Zoom** in and **Pan** to the area of the state where the activities will occur. **Deactivate** will switch off the tool last selected.
 - ii. Click **Select HUC12 by Box** to draw a box in the general area the activities will occur. The map will highlight the selected HUC12s and show the centroid of the selected area. You can also use **Start Editing HUC12** to select or deselect a singular HUC12 by clicking within that HUC12. The HUC12s will be displayed to the right and recorded with your application to allow for statewide geographic summaries of fund requests.
 - iii. If the HUC 12 selection appears incorrect, repeat steps i and ii.
 - iv. After you have finished selecting, click **Save** to add the map to your application. Wait for the confirmation message that the map has been saved and added to the application before moving to the next tab.
 - c. **Application Budget** tab: this tab is where the details of the application are built. Required activity information includes a description, a budget, indicators, and a few additional questions depending on the grant program. The sum of the activity budgets is displayed and match amount is entered in the fund summary.
 - i. To add a new activity, click **Add New Activity**. This will open a window. Enter information in all appropriate fields. See *eLINK Guidance Document Activity Categories* for definitions of Activity Categories. Click **Save**, then click **Close**. The new activity will appear in the grid. Click the edit icon  to edit or change previously entered information. Review the individual program RFP to make sure only allowable activities are entered.
 - ii. After saving and closing each activity, click the  icon for each activity in the grid to open the window for entering **Proposed Activity Indicators**. Activity categories such as Administration, Planning, and Technical Engineering do not require indicators. Activity categories such as Forestry, Urban Stormwater Practices, Agricultural Practices, etc. must have indicators to be considered complete applications. See the *eLINK Guidance Document Lumping and Splitting Activities* for assistance.
 - iii. After entering all activities for the application, enter the amount of match and other funds intended to be used on the application in the fields to the right of the total BWSR amount requested in the **Fund Summary** box. Be sure that the match meets minimum requirements for the grant. After entering, click **Save**.
 - d. **Team Selection** tab: This tab is optional; it allows the submitter to select team members from other organizations as partners on the grant application and to set permissions of team members to either read-only or edit. Team members must have registered eLINK user accounts. Members assigned read-only privileges will be able to access and view the application. Note: members of the submitter's organization are default team members with view permissions, these can be updated to edit as needed.
 - e. **Attachments** tab: this tab is for submitting a photo with the application. Read the RFP carefully for instructions regarding attachments; in general only one attachment is allowed per grant application even though the system allows a variety of attachments. The image must be submitted in a common raster image file type, e.g. *.jpeg, *.gif, *.bmp, or *.png, which can be loaded into the application document. Uploading your image as a Word or PDF document will cause an error in rendering the application.

6. To review the application before submitting, go to [Home](#) and type the title of the grant into the [Quick Reports](#). Select “Grant Application Report” from the dropdown and click **Go**.
7. To submit the application, select **Submitted** from the status dropdown in the header of the Grant Screen. Click **Go**.

- a. To edit an application at any time prior to the application deadline, select **Application in Process** from the dropdown in the banner, click **Go**. Note: submitting an application creates a snapshot (PDF for review) of the application information; however, the application fields do not lock until after the RFP deadline. Changes to fields will not be reflected in the PDF for review unless the application has been resubmitted.
- b. To withdraw a submitted application at any time prior to the application deadline, select **Application in Process** from the dropdown in the banner, click **Go**. The application will remain available for possible resubmittal until after the RFP deadline at which time non-submitted applications will be closed and removed from the system.
- c. Applications not in the status of **Submitted** at the time of the application deadline will not be considered.

To access a grant that has been started, find the grant application on your home page and click the edit icon  to continue editing the application.

Applications have multiple statuses:

- **Application - In Process:** active application that can be edited by grant applicants up to the submittal deadline. Must be submitted (see #6 above) to be considered.
- **Application – Submitted:** active application that has been submitted and can be withdrawn and/or updated and resubmitted up to the application deadline.
- **Application – Closed:** an application that was not in **Submitted** status at the time of the application deadline. Closed applications will not appear on the [Home](#) Page and will be removed from the system.
- **Application – In Review:** Application was submitted prior to the deadline and the application is in the review process. To withdraw an application at this stage, contact your Board Conservationist. Applications withdrawn after the deadline has passed cannot be resubmitted.
- **Application – Eligible:** Application has been reviewed for eligibility (as defined in policies and/or RFP) and is moving on to further review and scoring. Ineligible applications will not appear on the [Home](#) Page.