



Request for Proposals to Prevent and Manage Aquatic Invasive Species in 2026

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1. General Information

- A. Purpose: Meeker County is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) to disburse funds from the state of Minnesota's Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) prevention aid of approximately \$ 78,000
- B. Eligibility: Those eligible to propose projects and compete for available funds include community organizations, townships, watershed organizations, lake associations, consultants' firms, and county departments. End-of-year reporting is required to remain eligible. Failure to disclose the use of funds from another grantor in a reimbursement request or end-of-year report may result in loss of eligibility. Novel Projects may be eligible for funding upon submission of proposal and evidence of long-term impact and supporting community and agency partnerships.
- C. Partnerships: A project proposer may want to partner with another; Meeker County accepts and encourages proposals with multiple entities. Additionally, it is encouraged to seek letters of support from communities impacted by the project and partner with your watershed.
- D. Limits: Long-term control projects have a preliminary limit of \$16,000, Limits are set at \$10,000 for Seasonal Eurasian Milfoil Control and \$8,000 for Seasonal Curly Leaf Pondweed. Educational Grants have a limit of \$4,000.00. The lifetime limit for the funding of machinery is \$36,000. Novel AIS Projects have a preliminary limit of \$5,000.
- E. Deadlines
 - **Initial Applications & RFP open**
November 14th 2025
 - **Initial Applications due**
December 15th, 2025
 - **Final Applications open**
February 10th, 2026
 - **Final Applications due**
March 10th, 2026
 - **Notice of use Deadline for CLP Treatments**
June 5th, 2026
 - **Notice of use Deadline for EWM Treatments**
August 15th, 2026
 - **Deadline for CLP Fulfillment Requests**
June 30th, 2026

- **Deadline for EWM Fulfillment Requests**

October 9th, 2026

- **Deadline for 2026 End-of-Year report**

November 25th, 2026

- F. Proposers Transparency and experience: If Meeker County requests, the proposer shall produce current information and data regarding its financial resources and organization within five (5) days before grant fulfillment. To remain eligible, a proposer needs to provide the requested information. Meeker County reserves the right to reject a proposal if it is not confident in the proposer's ability to carry out the said project or grant agreement terms.
- G. Amendments: Meeker County reserves the right to amend this RFP anytime.

2. Project Eligibility: Collaborative proposals strengthen the county AIS program's overall outcomes and are encouraged.

- A. Educational grants must be highly complex projects focusing on training or community-based social marketing to address AIS Clean Drain Dry Dispose (CDDD) behavior change. In-kind eligible would be identification/ monitoring materials. Passive efforts, such as the cost of publications and association meetings, are not eligible for reimbursement.
- B. Chemical or mechanical treatment projects must prove that the selected method is most effective or financially viable. A third-party survey is required for grantees without one within two years of treatment or for grants exceeding \$7,000.00. Terms of treatment grants are negotiable to secure improved long-term control and the best use of funds. Depreciation of equipment is not an eligible expense. Additionally, treatment projects utilizing any equipment funded in part with county prevention aid must provide the itemized cost of use to ensure only the costs of operation and maintenance are claimed.
- C. Long-Term Control Projects: Projects with evidence of long-term control of Eurasian milfoil with manufacturer guarantees must share a copy of the LSP's annual survey in the two years following the year of application. Long-term control projects must also show recent history, evidence of, or plan for water quality improvements if the site is on the impaired waters list.
- D. Novel Projects: Projects supporting efforts to reduce the spread of AIS by means other than outreach, treatment, or inspection cost sharing are eligible for AIS Grant funds. Grantees must write a proposal meeting all applicable content requirements listed in section 3. Novel project proposals should be emailed to the coordinator between December 1st and December 10th.
- E. End-of-year report forms must be completed and are required to remain eligible for active grantees. Forms are sent to grantees who have received their fulfillments, upon submission of the form a copy is emailed as a receipt.
- F. In-kind Hours and Services must be related to the grant type. For example, AIS monitoring of docks and lifts and shoreline or zebra mussel settling plates or meandering surveys inclusion in the treatment of AIS would be appropriate; buying materials to send out information to association members and postage- are not appropriate (unless technical in nature, e.g., Identification guides for MN AIS). The rate for In-Kind is 25/hour. Association meetings, time spent on newsletters, and time spent on the grant application and fulfillment requests are not eligible; cost-sharing for inspections up to \$400 may be claimed as in-kind.

3. Content and Questions

- A. Projects proposed for funding address the following in the completion of an application:
- B. Profile of service provider: All projects must provide a statement of expertise of the firm, organization, or entity providing services or subcontracting. Provide the name and qualifications of the primary person in charge of fulfilling the obligations of this agreement. If additional information is requested, this is the County's point of contact for your project.

- C. Description: Clearly articulating the implementation plan and scope of work, including goals and expected completion date.
- D. Outcome: A clear articulation of the proposed project(s) outcomes and how you will evaluate the project
- E. Timeline: Include a timeline of planned activities, goals, related meetings, and actions related to the execution of the proposed plan(s)
- F. Outreach/Collaborations/Letters of Support: Please include any outreach collaboration or partnerships in the proposed project(s). Letters of support from affected entities such as townships, municipalities, and watersheds are especially encouraged for any chemical treatment projects.
- G. Evidence of approach: Please cite evidence of the efficacy of the proposed method. In chemical or mechanical treatment, declare your treatment method and how large an area you expect to treat.
- H. Lake Management Plan: Grantees who request more than \$5,000 in grants may be asked for an updated lake management plan upon review of the final applications. If an updated plan is available please send it to the coordinator before **March 15th, 2026**.
- I. Declaration of hardship: To pay for treatment cases of financial hardship, a direct-to-provider payment may be approved as an exception to pay for treatment that benefits the prevention or management of AIS in the County. Send proof of hardship to support the request to the coordinator. Standard proof would be a statement of account with the account number redacted.
- J. Budget: Each project must have a clearly defined budget, including a project total, cash contribution, and in-kind requested. In-kind requested may be up to 25% of the project total.

4. Proposal Evaluation and Grant Award

- A. Meeker County prioritizes these grants to those likely to have the most significant impact on the County. The county reviews applications, and the AIS advisory committee recommends awards. The budget for a proposal is not the sole determining factor.
- B. The County considers all proposals meeting the content requirements in section 3.
- C. Meeker County reserves the right to request additional information from all proposers and negotiate with successful proposers.
- D. Evaluation criteria are based on the RFP's content requirements, the application's accuracy, and project alignment with county priorities and long-term resiliency. Using criteria to rank projects in cases where there is a greater need for funds than available will give grantees a defined and objective explanation of how their projects ranked.
- E. Notice of Award: After the AIS Coordinator and Advisory Committee review the applications, the recommended awards are submitted to the county board for approval. The County sends notice of award within 15 business days from the date of final application approvals by the county board.

5. Terms and Conditions

- A. The County reserves the right to negotiate the final terms and conditions of the grant to be executed. If the Proposer and the County cannot mutually agree upon the project scope and agreement, we reserve the right to discontinue negotiations, select another proposer or reject a proposal. Upon agreement, the proposal is allocated funds and approved by the AIS Taskforce of Meeker County.
- B. Grants are fulfilled as a reimbursement once an itemized invoice for services detailed in the approved project proposal, proof of payment, and a written request for fulfillment are received. The deadline for fulfillment requests in the grant approval letter applies to all grantees.
- C. Grant fulfillment under this hardship exception maintains a 1:1 match. The amount requested must equal the amount spent and documented by the proposer (grantee match can be up to 50% in-kind hours or services, no more than 25% of the eligible project total.) This fulfillment is a payment made to a service provider, not the proposer.

- D. Meeker County shall not be liable for any expenses incurred by the proposer, including but not limited to the costs associated with the preparation of the proposal, attendance at AIS meetings, and costs related to contract negotiations.

6. Fulfillment Terms

- A. All AIS Grants have a 1:1 match requirement and are fulfilled as a reimbursement. If an applicant has never received AIS Grant Funds, the first \$2,000.00 of a match is not required. A 1:1 match is required even in cases of declared financial hardship
- B. Financial Hardship Exception: If the LSP balance is less than the total grant applied for, the grantee is not entitled to the remaining funds directly but may submit other eligible expenses for standard grant fulfillment as a reimbursement up to the total remaining funds.
- C. Reallocation of award grants: A Grantee's educational grants are eligible for reallocation to AIS treatment or inspection grants upon the Coordinator's approval.
- D. Grant funds provided by other agencies such as MN DNR or agencies distributing AIS State Prevention AID is not eligible for reimbursement under the Meeker County Grant Program. Grantees must disclose the use of such funds before seeking county grant fulfillment.
- E. Fulfillment is contingent upon required proofs; these may differ based on the project type. Standard proofs include a Copy of the check paid, itemized invoice for services, a ledger of in-kind (if awarded), receipts, treatment maps, and AIS (IAPM) permits for Treatment.
- F. Reallocation of unused aid: Meeker County may distribute unused grant funds following the notice of use deadline, to grantees who show financial need for approved projects but exceed their award or the grant limit. Priority is given to long term EWM control projects. Reallocation of unused aid is in addition to an approved grant and is not to exceed \$16,000, without approval by the AIS Executive Committee.

7. Grant Agreement

This proposal shall affirmatively state that the proposer accepts all the general proposal requirements and Grant Agreement Terms; any alterations must be fully described and justified. In addition, if applicants seek the assistance of Meeker County for any project, the proposal must clearly explain how their contribution is needed and whether the proposer allocates any funds for said assistance.

8. Submission of Proposal

- A. Each grant type has a separate application. Online application forms are available on the County AIS Grants Web page. Project proposers are encouraged to utilize the online application. In addition, copies of applications are sent as a receipt via email after submission. Grantees acknowledge the general terms and conditions of this RFP in the application. The forms are also available for download to be mailed to the Coordinator.
- B. If a proposer wishes to include separate information, documents should be emailed or mailed to the Coordinator.
- C. Proposals become the property of the County upon submission. By submitting a proposal, the proposer agrees that Meeker County may copy the proposal to facilitate evaluation or respond to requests for public data and warrants and is not violating any third party's rights, including copyrights.
- D. If submitting applications or supporting documents, deliver them to

Ariana Richardson
AIS Coordinator
114 Holcombe Ave N, Land Use Office
Litchfield, Mn 55355
320-221-0614
Ariana.richardson@co.meeker.mn.us

9. Frequently Asked Questions and Terms:

AIS: Aquatic Invasive Species

LSP: Lake Service Provider

GAN: Grant Award Notice, aka Notice of Award

Financial Hardship: This is when insufficient funds are available to the applicant (proof is a statement of account) to cover the cost of their recommended or planned treatment of AIS.

Q: If I apply for DNR AIS Grants, may I use that towards my match?

A: No, as Grant funds provided by other agencies such as MN DNR or agencies distributing AIS State Prevention AID are not eligible for reimbursement (Section 5.8)

Q: How do we best decide where to treat what holds the most weight?

A: Grantees are advised to work with their permitting specialist to determine this. However, it is strongly recommended that treatment is approached for whole lake benefit as that is how we assess applications. For example, suppose the choice is between treating EWM and CLP. In that case, it is recommended that EWM is prioritized, having a better chance of control carryover and a more significant environmental impact and human health risk. EWM is less prevalent in area lakes, has a longer growing season, and hybridizes with native milfoil.

Q: What if I don't know how to write a grant?

A: The county switched to an online application with the understanding that the presentation of a project matters less than its merits and possible impact. We have received positive feedback since making the move.

Q: What if I still need help?

A: The AIS Coordinator can answer your questions and hosts a Grant clinic online where tutorials on the applications are given

Q: Where do I include a request for water testing, and who do I send it to?

A: If your lake participates in water quality monitoring, that is great! However, we may only reimburse costs associated directly with the management and prevention of AIS. MCAL Grants are separate from AIS Grants and allow for the reimbursement of water testing (RMB Lakes Package). Please include such a request on your MCAL Grant, do not send it to the AIS Coordinator.

Appendix A: Additional resources for AIS Project Proposers

1. The [Behavior-Barrier-Benefit](#) matrix contains insight for proposers of educational or outreach focus projects. For example, Lake Associations may be particularly interested in the Angler or Shoreline owner survey results if they plan to launch a local campaign. Such campaigns would move from an informative approach to an action & commitment approach to promote safe equipment movement or bait disposal on the lake.

Project Focus	Target Audience	Desired Behavior of the Target Audience	Strategy to Achieve Behavior Adoption by the Target Audience
1	Lakeshore Residents	Dry docks, lifts and associated equipment for 21 days	Partner with lake associations to communicate with residents
2	Lakeshore Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dry docks, lifts and associated equipment for 21 days • Remove visible debris from docks, lifts and associated equipment 	Identify and have lake associations promote credible Lake Service Providers
3	Anglers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dispose of unwanted live bait in the garbage • Clean and drain boats 	Partner with fishing clubs and organizations to communicate with participants and members
4	Anglers	Dispose of unwanted live bait in the garbage	Partner with bait retailers to distribute bait disposal bags
5	Anglers	Dispose of unwanted live bait in the garbage on-site	Designated bait and bait water disposal zones at water accesses

Figure A: Table of Target behaviors from the DNR CBSM AIS Grant Template. These are just a few examples of the type of outreach projects proposing organizations may consider.

2. There is a list of Licensed Applicators ([here](#))
3. [List of Third Party Surveyors](#) - It is NOT required that grantees use a provider from this list; it is only provided as a reference.
4. [For information on Permits or Training](#) the DNRs webpage
5. [AIS Detectors](#)