



Environment and Natural Resources Trust Fund

2022 Request for Proposal

General Information

Proposal ID: 2022-250

Proposal Title: Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers

Project Manager Information

Name: Mimi Daniel

Organization: MN DNR - Operational Services Division (OSD)

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Project Basic Information

Project Summary: This collaborative project creates a college to workforce pathway for under-represented students interested in pursuing Natural Resources careers by reducing barriers that inhibit successful educational attainment.

Funds Requested: \$182,000

Proposed Project Completion: June 30 2025

LCCMR Funding Category: Small Projects (H)

Secondary Category: Environmental Education (C)

Project Location

What is the best scale for describing where your work will take place?

Statewide

What is the best scale to describe the area impacted by your work?

Statewide

When will the work impact occur?

In the Future

Narrative

Describe the opportunity or problem your proposal seeks to address. Include any relevant background information.

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) project provides a college to workforce pathway for under-represented students (women, racial and ethnic minorities, and individuals with disabilities) who are pursuing STEM degrees at state and tribal colleges and technical schools. Through a strategic partnership between the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR), the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA), the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR), and Conservation Corps Minnesota and Iowa (CCMI), this project intends to reduce and eliminate barriers that inhibit under-represented students from completing STEM degrees and obtaining environmental employment post-graduation.

This project initially received three appropriations totaling \$1,287,000 to serve three cohorts of students. Cohort 1 started in 2019 with 16 students and cohort 2 started in 2020 with 16 students. Student recruitment (12 students) for the third cohort is underway. The third cohort needs \$182,000 to fund the fourth year of the program (July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025). The additional funds will be used for program staffing, fellowships, training and final project results to ensure that the students in the third cohort can complete their final year in the program. MNDNR, MPCA and BWSR will provide in-kind support.

What is your proposed solution to the problem or opportunity discussed above? i.e. What are you seeking funding to do? You will be asked to expand on this in Activities and Milestones.

MNDNR is seeking an additional year of program funding so students in the third cohort have a full, four-year experience during their post-secondary STEM education. They will gain invaluable skills and direct work experience in areas such as water resources and wildlife management, recreation, conservation practices, surveying, engineering, habitat restoration, and management. This cohort of students has not had the full high school experience due to the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential to provide them with as much support as possible and afford them with a full uninterrupted program.

The MNDNR is the project lead; in consultation with the partners, MNDNR will administer and evaluate the overall project. MNDNR will contract with CCMI to administer the fellowship program and provide outreach and training to students in the third cohort. The state agencies will provide in-kind funding for mentors and state-sponsored internships.

What are the specific project outcomes as they relate to the public purpose of protection, conservation, preservation, and enhancement of the state's natural resources?

As a result of this work effort, students are prepared for natural resources careers within the public sector upon graduation. The COVID-19 pandemic triggered program changes, such as shifting to a virtual experience. However, students have remained engaged, and the project continues to move forward.

This project's long-term goal is to share these students' experiences within their communities in ways that further awareness of and interest in environmental careers. As students embark on career planning, they will seek experiential opportunities within state agencies, ultimately resulting in broader diversity among Minnesota citizens engaged in natural resources and environmental careers.

Activities and Milestones

Activity 1: Fellowship Program Administration

Activity Budget: \$92,600

Activity Description:

The fellowship program helps students in the IDEC program overcome barriers to academic success and equip them with professional skills that contribute to career success. IDEC student participants or “fellows” are provided with a supportive community, yearly academic scholarship, and professional development. They work with the CCMI program manager, who coordinates resources and helps them navigate challenges during the journey. Fellows attend in-person cohort sessions every other month during the academic school year to stay connected to their peers and participate in professional development opportunities. Fellows receive a financial award- \$2,000 in their first year of the program and \$1,000 in their second, third, and fourth year of the program. Fellows remain in the program until they graduate and obtain their STEM degrees.

CCMI’s program manager, in collaboration with the project manager, will coordinate and manage the outreach, fellowship payments, support services, cohort meetings, and professional development opportunities. This one-year supplemental funding will allow 12 students in cohort 3 to continue participating in the fellowship program during the 2024-2025 school year.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
3 fellows in cohort 3 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees.	June 30 2024
9 fellows in cohort 3 will graduate and obtain their STEM degrees.	June 30 2025

Activity 2: Agency-Sponsored Internship Program Administration

Activity Budget: \$27,400

Activity Description:

The internship program, which runs from June to August, allows fellows to learn more about environmental and natural resources career paths through paid, on-the-job experience. The internship includes a first-year summer rotational experience and second and third-year summer agency-internships. Cohort 3 fellows will complete their first-year summer rotational experience in calendar year 2022 and second and third-year summer agency-internships in calendar years 2023 and 2024 respectively.

After completing the first-year summer rotational experience, fellows choose one of the three agencies (MNDNR, MPCA or BWSR) to intern for their second and third summer. Through the second and third-year summer agency-internships, fellows gain more work experience in their desired career fields before graduating from college.

In consultation with its partners, MNDNR will coordinate the third-year summer agency-internships' administration. MNDNR, MPCA, and BWSR will provide in-kind funding for these internships. In total, MNDNR and its partners will provide 12 third-year full-time agency-internships to fellows in cohort 3. This one-year supplemental funding will ensure fellows in cohort 3 can fully participate in the third-year internship experience.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
12 Fellows gain work skills, accumulate 450 hours for a combined 900 total hours experience	August 31 2024

Activity 3: Mentorship program administration

Activity Budget: \$62,000

Activity Description:

Fellows in cohort 3 are paired with MNDNR, PCA, or BWSR employees who serve as their mentors. The mentorship program enhances college success, encourages personal and professional development, and promotes fellows' career advancement. Through regular interactions with their mentors, fellows gain knowledge, skills, and resources to achieve academic and career success. Mentors also benefit from the mentoring relationship by building mentoring skills, translating them back to their workplace and job. The program offers a structured framework to help ensure productive conversations between mentors and fellows. The program uses a one-on-one mentoring approach that includes in-person meetings (while practicing social distancing), video conferencing, email, and phone communication. All mentors receive ongoing training and regular support.

MNDNR, CCMI, MNPCA, and BWSR will continue to work collaboratively to administer the overall mentorship program. The project manager and CCMI's program manager will continue to provide leadership and support services to the mentors for the program's duration. Supplemental funding will ensure students in cohort 3 receive the full mentorship experience.

Activity Milestones:

Description	Completion Date
12 fellows will develop personally and increase their ability to navigate education and career space	June 30 2025

Project Partners and Collaborators

Name	Organization	Role	Receiving Funds
Mark Murphy	Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa	Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa will receive ENRTF funding for this project via contract for program administration to include the fellowship program and on-going student support.	Yes
Reena Solheid	MN Pollution Control Agency (MPCA)	MPCA provides mentors and intern supervisors funds second and third-year internships	No
Angie Becker-Kudelka	MN Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR)	BWSR provides mentors and intern supervisors funds second and third-year internships	No
Sarah Strommen	MN Department of Natural Resources	MNDNR will receive funding through the appropriation to coordinate the inter-agency mentorships and internships and overall project administration and evaluation.	Yes

Long-Term Implementation and Funding

Describe how the results will be implemented and how any ongoing effort will be funded. If not already addressed as part of the project, how will findings, results, and products developed be implemented after project completion? If additional work is needed, how will this be funded?

This project breaks down barriers that inhibit under-represented students from pursuing post-secondary STEM education and careers. The project's results and data will be used to identify how to refine our diversity recruitment efforts using the experience-based college-to-careers pathways model. In the years to come, we hope that this becomes our standard model for how we do business and not just a "program." The ultimate objective is that this program's results serve as a model that continues to attract students from under-represented communities to natural resources careers in greater numbers and provides sustainable and meaningful long-term careers.

Other ENRTF Appropriations Awarded in the Last Six Years

Name	Appropriation	Amount Awarded
Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers	M.L. 2017, Chp. 96, Sec. 2, Subd. 05b	\$487,000
Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers to Serve Minnesota's Changing Demographics	M.L. 2018, Chp. 214, Art. 4, Sec. 2, Subd. 05I	\$550,000
Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers	M.L. 2019, First Special Session, Chp. 4, Art. 2, Sec. 2, Subd. 05d	\$250,000

Project Manager and Organization Qualifications

Project Manager Name: Mimi Daniel

Job Title: Project Manager

Provide description of the project manager's qualifications to manage the proposed project.

Mimi Daniel is a resourceful collaborator with over 13 years of progressive experience working in private, non-profit, and state and local government units, particularly in HR, diversity and inclusion, workforce development, and adult education contexts. Currently, she works for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, where she is the project

manager for the current LCCMR project- Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers.

Mimi's expertise includes grant administration, project management, career pathways programming, and training. She has led initiatives to design, plan and manage career and education programs and consulted on workforce development initiatives for several organizations. Some of her past leadership roles include Minnesota Fasttrac Consultant for DEED, GED Supplemental Services Grant Coordinator for the Minnesota Department of Education, and Consultant for Minnesota State Colleges and Universities.

Mimi holds a Master of Education in Human Resource Development from the University of Minnesota. Also, she holds a Minnesota teaching license in Adult Basic Education and is a certified Project Management Professional.

Organization: MN DNR - Operational Services Division (OSD)

Organization Description:

The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources (MNDNR) works to integrate and sustain the interdependent values of a healthy environment, a sustainable economy, and livable communities. DNR's integrated resource management strategy shares stewardship responsibility with citizens and partners to manage for multiple interests. The Minnesota Department of Natural Resources' mission is to work with citizens to conserve and manage the state's natural resources, provide outdoor recreation opportunities, and provide for commercial uses of natural resources in a way that creates a sustainable quality of life.

MNDNR is committed to providing equitable access to outdoor spaces so all Minnesotans can enjoy the benefits afforded by a healthy and thriving environment. We are also committed to attracting and retaining a workforce that reflects Minnesota's diversity.

Budget Summary

Category / Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Purpose	Gen. Ineligible	% Benefits	# FTE	Classified Staff?	\$ Amount
Personnel								
1 Project Manager		To manage overall project including administration and evaluation			30%	0.7		\$89,496
							Sub Total	\$89,496
Contracts and Services								
Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa	Professional or Technical Service Contract	1FTE Program Manager to administer the project with the following components: Yearly fellowship; Training & Professional development; Outreach; Wrap-around services and Support; Travel				1		\$83,700
							Sub Total	\$83,700
Equipment, Tools, and Supplies								
							Sub Total	-
Capital Expenditures								
							Sub Total	-
Acquisitions and Stewardship								
							Sub Total	-
Travel In Minnesota								
	Miles/ Meals/ Lodging		Travel related expenses in final year of the program to visit potential and existing program sites statewide.					\$1,500
							Sub Total	\$1,500

Travel Outside Minnesota								
							Sub Total	-
Printing and Publication								
							Sub Total	-
Other Expenses								
		Direct and Necessary	Direct and Necessary for MNDNR's costs to administer the program: HR support(\$1,165); Safety Support (\$180); Financial Support (\$1,161); Communications Support (\$1,311); IT Support (\$2,479); Planning Support (\$1,008)					\$7,304
							Sub Total	\$7,304
							Grand Total	\$182,000

Classified Staff or Generally Ineligible Expenses

Category/Name	Subcategory or Type	Description	Justification Ineligible Expense or Classified Staff Request
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Non ENRTF Funds

Category	Specific Source	Use	Status	Amount
State				
In-Kind	MN DNR, MPCA, BWSR	Award 12 summer agency-internships for 12 students.	Pending	\$87,842
			State Sub Total	\$87,842
Non-State				
			Non State Sub Total	-
			Funds Total	\$87,842

Attachments

Required Attachments

Visual Component

File: [c0133902-9e5.pdf](#)

Alternate Text for Visual Component

A graphic showing a brief overview of the Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program. The graphic says “Working Together to Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers: The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program provides a unique college-to-careers pathway for under-represented STEM college students who want to pursue careers in the environmental and natural resources field. Partnership includes: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Poll...

Administrative Use

Does your project include restoration or acquisition of land rights?

No

Does your project have potential for royalties, copyrights, patents, or sale of products and assets?

No

Do you understand and acknowledge IP and revenue-return and sharing requirements in 116P.10?

N/A

Do you wish to request reinvestment of any revenues into your project instead of returning revenue to the ENRTF?

N/A

Does your project include original, hypothesis-driven research?

No

Does the organization have a fiscal agent for this project?

No

Working Together to Increase Diversity in Environmental Careers

The Increasing Diversity in Environmental Careers (IDEC) program provides a unique college-to-careers pathway for under-represented STEM college students who want to pursue careers in the environmental and natural resources field. Partnership includes: Minnesota Department of Natural Resources, Minnesota Pollution Control Agency, Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources, Conservation Corps Minnesota & Iowa.

Find more information at: www.conservationcorps.org/idec



A Fellowship, Mentorship, and Internship Program

Fiscal Years 2020 - 2024

COHORT 1
16 students

September 2019

Program fully funded



June 2023

COHORT 2
16 students

September 2020

Program fully funded



June 2024

COHORT 3
12 students

September 2021

Program partially funded

June 2025



Fiscal Years 2024 - 2025

Funding needed to finish Cohort 3