



Dakota County Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Program

Application Deadline: Friday March 13, 2026, by 4:30 p.m.

Introduction

Dakota County is an annual recipient of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS) Prevention Aid from the State of Minnesota because of 2014 Session Law Chapter 308. The purpose of the aid is to “prevent the introduction or limit the spread of aquatic invasive species at all the access sites within the county” (MN Statutes 477A.19). In 2015, the Dakota County Board of Commissioners passed a resolution adopting the following guidelines for the use of AIS Prevention Aid:

1. Prepare a comprehensive inventory of boat launches and waterbodies at risk.
2. Undertake awareness campaigns.
3. Develop early detection and response procedures.
4. Manage existing populations of aquatic invasive species.
5. Establish partnerships with local units of government, water management organizations, Soil and Water Conservation District or lake associations.

Dakota County has developed a grant program to fund local AIS prevention and management projects on waters within Dakota County. Examples of projects eligible for funding include (but are not limited to): education and outreach programs, early detection and population assessment, watercraft inspection and decontamination programs, and management of new or established AIS populations.

Eligibility

1. All local government units (LGUs), lake associations, schools, and non-profit organizations in Dakota County are eligible.
2. All projects must be conducted within Dakota County.
3. Project activities must be completed by **December 1, 2026**. Additional work may be proposed but may not be funded during 2026.
4. Applicants requesting funding for projects that may potentially be funded from other grant sources may submit an application for Dakota County AIS funds and adjust the funding request if the outside funds are secured. Under no circumstances may an applicant be compensated more than once for the same work or material purchased.

Applicant Guidelines

1. Applicants must complete the provided application form. Supplemental application materials will be accepted if deemed necessary by the applicant.
2. Proposals may receive full or partial funding based on funding requests and application ranking.
3. Matching funds are preferred, though not required.

Typical Matches by Project Type:

Treatment – 50%

Education and Outreach – 25%

Inspection – 25%

4. All proposals must comply with applicable federal, state, and local laws, rules, and ordinances. Award recipients are expected to provide a copy of Department of Natural Resources (DNR) permitting if aquatic plant management is proposed. Recipients are expected to provide a copy of an executed DNR Delegation Agreement if watercraft inspection activities are proposed.

Evaluation Criteria

Projects will be ranked by Dakota County AIS committee members based upon pre-determined criteria (see page 3). Staff will review projects to determine funding eligibility. Staff has the discretion to reject any application it believes does not meet statutory requirements for funding. Staff also has the discretion to request additional information before approval.

Eligible Expenses

Acceptable expenses include professional services, materials, supplies, labor, printing, and promotions. Consideration of additional cost categories is at the discretion of Dakota County.

Funds and Distribution

An applicant may not be compensated for the same work or materials twice (through more than one grant program). Applicants may submit an application to this program and request that their award be adjusted should the proposal be funded through additional opportunities.

Projects will be reviewed and ranked during the month of March and applicants will be notified of their application status in early April. A letter requesting reimbursement, along with appropriate receipts and accounting for expenses, must be submitted to Dakota County Water Resources by **December 15, 2026**.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants must execute a grant agreement with Dakota County. Applicants are responsible for completing all project activities by **December 1, 2026**. Following completion of the project, a final report must be submitted by **December 15, 2026**. The report will include a summary of budget expenses, summary of activities (including treatment records, if applicable), and measurable results. Photographs of projects are encouraged and appreciated.

Submission

Applications are due by 4:30 pm on **March 13, 2026**. Send completed applications to:

Dakota County Water Resources Attn: Benjamin Hoyt

14955 Galaxie Avenue, Apple Valley, MN 55124

Email: ben.hoyt@co.dakota.mn.us

Additional Information

All questions regarding this RFP must be directed to Benjamin Hoyt – (952) 891-7008— ben.hoyt@co.dakota.mn.us by 4 p.m. February 28th, 2026. Responses will be posted on the Dakota County AIS webpage:

<https://www.co.dakota.mn.us/Environment/WaterResources/AIS/Pages/grant-program.aspx>

Application Evaluation and Grant Award

The following criteria will be used to evaluate applications:

Criteria	Details	Points
Project Concept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proposal has clearly defined goals and outlines history/progression of AIS within waterbody Near-term and long-term benefits within Dakota County are defined. Proposal is reasonable and has good chance of meeting goals/criteria. Project features new and/or innovative ideas for AIS prevention. 	15
Project Targeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project targets species of highest concern (those that put lakes on the MNDNR’s Infested Waters list) including, but not limited to, Eurasian Watermilfoil and Zebra Mussels. Curly Leaf Pondweed is not a species of highest concern. Proposal focuses on lakes with public accesses that are at highest risk of AIS infestation or transport. Project is strategically targeted (e.g., densest colonies, largest colonies, public access location, education audience, etc.) 	20
Implementation Process and Timeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Methods and acceptable timeline are outlined within proposal. Project is consistent with MN DNR guidance and/or MN DNR Best Management Practices 	10
Performance Measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Project includes measurable goals. Project includes monitoring for the purpose of understanding AIS presence and/or distribution. Project assesses pre- and post-project conditions 	10
State and/or Local Government Support and Approvals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consistent with MN DNR permit requirements and MN DNR Best Management Practices Proposal includes letter of support from local water planning authority (e.g., City, Watershed Management Organization) Demonstrated knowledge of DNR permit requirements, when applicable 	5
Project Partners and Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear identification of project partners and stakeholders Project funds or supports initiatives for community education or discussion. Project proposes new or expanded partnerships. Demonstrated support of community members/stakeholders 	15
Project Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Program budget is reasonable. Dakota County AIS plan designates \$42,000 in 2026 for AIS Grants to be distributed among qualified applicants. Local funds and/or in-kind match leveraged. Project includes partnership where partner is donating time or funds toward effort 	25
TOTAL		100



Dakota County Aquatic Invasive Species Grant Application

Applicant Information			
Organization/Applicant Name Type of Organization: Government ___ Non-profit ___ Other ___	Daytime phone	Date	
Address	City	State	ZIP
Email			
Contact Person	Contact Person # <i>If different than above</i>		
Mailing Address <i>If different than above</i>	City	State	ZIP
Email Address <i>If different than above</i>			
Project Information			
Project Title			
Name(s) of affected water bodies <i>If applicable</i>	Water body ID(s) <i>If applicable</i>		
Site Address <i>If applicable</i>	City	State	ZIP
Brief Project Description			
Project Funding			
Amount of (\$) of AIS Grant Program Request		\$	
Amount of (\$) of Match/In-Kind Funding		\$	
Total Project Cost (\$)		\$	

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS AND CONDITIONS:

- a. Once funding has been approved, expenditures must be completed by **December 1, 2026**.
- b. All funding recipients will be required to submit a report summarizing completed project activities to the Dakota County Environmental Resources Department by **December 15, 2026**. Pictures of the project or event are encouraged.
- c. Funding is provided on a reimbursement basis. A letter requesting reimbursement, along with appropriate receipts and accounting for expenses, must be submitted to the Dakota County Water Resources by **December 15, 2026**.
- d. Funds cannot be used for purchasing or supplying food.

- e. Matching funds, though recommended, are not required.
- f. Funding levels will vary and there may be times when there is no funding available. You may wish to inquire about availability prior to filling out the application.
- g. Grant funding is not guaranteed based on application score. Final grant selection is at the sole discretion of Dakota County.

Application Narrative

Please limit your responses to questions 1-5 to no more than 2 pages.

- 1) **Project Concept, Targeting, and Implementation Process and Timeline:** *Describe the AIS issue and how this project will work to address the issue. Describe as specifically as possible project goals, the work plan for the project, timeline and expected outcomes.*

- 2) **Outcomes and Performance Measures:** *What benefits will be realized within Dakota County because of this project, if funded? How will you determine and measure success in ways that are meaningful to citizens and decision makers?*

- 3) **State and/or Local Government Support/Approvals, Project Partners, and Outreach:** *Please list any project partners, and associated roles. This includes required permits and status of approvals for project implementation. Indicate whether the project has received support or approval from the Minnesota DNR, City, or Watershed Management Organization with local water planning authority. How will the project engage the community?*

- 4) **Project Budget:** *Provide a narrative of estimated costs of individual project objectives, any additional stakeholders where funds may be leveraged, and information about budgeted vs actual costs of previously completed projects where applicable.*

- 5) **Additional Information:** *Please include any additional information you would like to share with us regarding your project proposal.*

Project Expenditures

List the objectives that will comprise your project and estimated cost of each objective.

Funding Types

Objectives	Requested Grant Funds	Match	Total
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
Total of Program Objectives	\$	\$	\$

Project Revenues

Include other grant revenue sources, matching dollars, and in-kind contributions for your project, if any.

Project Costs

Project Sponsors	Cash Contribution	In-kind Contribution	Total Project Support
Project Sponsor Contribution			
Other Contributing Sponsors:			
1			
2			
3			

Project Costs continued...			
Project Sponsors	Cash Contribution	In-kind Contribution	Total Project Support
4			
TOTAL: All project sponsors			
Grant amount requested			
Grand Totals	Total Cash	Total In-Kind	Total Project Cost
	\$	\$	\$

I certify that my answers are true and complete to the best of my knowledge.

Name of Authorized Representative (please print): _____

Authorized Representative Signature:

Date:
