



# The Nebraska Environmental Trust

*preserving NATURAL NEBRASKA™ for future generations*

## Application Instructions

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# General Instructions

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The following instructions are to assist you in applying to the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET). You will need to submit a complete application in our online application Portal.

## Creating an Account

If this is your first time applying, you will need to create an account. Go to [www.environmentaltrustgrants.org](http://www.environmentaltrustgrants.org) and click on the **Create Account** icon. Once you have your information entered, click **Register**. You will receive an email with a link to sign in and begin the application process.

## Forgot your Password?

If you already have an account in our application Portal, you can go to the main log-in page, [www.environmentaltrustgrants.org](http://www.environmentaltrustgrants.org), and click on the **Forgot your password?** link below the **Sign In** icon. You will enter your email and click the **Email Link** icon. Instructions to reset your password will be emailed to you. If you do not receive this email after clicking the icon, please contact our office.

## Deadline

NET accepts grant applications annually. The application period opens around July and with a deadline of the first Tuesday after Labor Day in September midnight CDT. Applications will not be accepted past this date. Check the NET website for the exact date information:

<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov>

All essential components, including partner letters, must be submitted by the deadline.

## Who will be reviewing my application?

Six members of the NET Board serve on the Grants Committee. The Committee reviews each proposal, first evaluating eligibility and then rating each eligible application.

Applications are then listed in rank order, according to the rated score and funding recommendations based on this list, and are presented to the Board. The list is published and a public hearing is held, after which the Board votes to issue awards.

## Additional Information

NET reserves the right to request additional information, as it deems appropriate. You will be given reasonable time to respond. Failure to provide requested information may cause your application to be declared ineligible.

## Misleading Information

If your application is approved for funding, information provided in the application is a binding attachment to your grant contract. The provision of false or misleading information will disqualify your application. The discovery of false or misleading information could result in a grant being revoked with any funds disbursed repaid back to NET.

# Application Components

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At the top of your screen, there are the options for **My Applications**, **My Projects**, **Contact**, **Help**, and your email address. Once you have started an application and clicked the save icon, it will appear under the **My Applications** page. You can return to your application to make edits any time prior to submitting.

## Creating your Application

Once you have logged on to your account, you will automatically be taken to the **My Applications** page. You will click on the **New Application** icon to start your application.

Once you have started an application and clicked save, you can come back to this page and click on the pencil icon in the manage column to make edits to your application.

There are six tabs that will need to be completed for your application.

- **Cover Sheet**
- **Budget**
- **Real Estate**
- **Timeline**
- **Requirements**
- **Attachments**
- **Submit**

## Buttons at the Top of the Application

Use the buttons in the upper right corner to:

- **Cancel:** This will cancel your work and take you back to the main **Grant Applications**
- **Save:** This will save your application as it is entered. Click on this icon often.
- **Delete:** This will delete your created application
- **Save As:** This will create a duplicate copy of the application with a different Portal ID. To access either of these applications, go back to the **My Applications** section.
- **Print:** This will print your entire application excluding any attachments. You can click on the dropdown arrow to select a single portion of your application to print. This will open in a new tab in your browser. To go back to you application, you will have to click on the previous browser tab.

## Cover Sheet

The first page in your application is your **Cover Sheet**. You will need to complete this tab and click **Save** to move on to the next portion of the application.

- **Project Sponsor** – The Sponsor is the person or organization who will carry out the project.
- **Project Sponsor Short Name** –This can be a condensed version of the Sponsor name. This will be used to identify the Sponsor on the budget section of the application.
- **Project Name** – The project name needs to be one line and needs to best describe this project. If you are submitting more than one project, it is useful to create titles that are clearly distinct.
- **Counties** – select the county or counties where the project will be implemented.

- **Nearest Town** – The location of the nearest town will help NET arrange site visits for your project, if appropriate. Some projects may not have a physical location. We recommend you identify the community where the project sponsor is based.
- **Sponsor Website** – the Sponsor’s web address.
- **Continuation or Resubmission** – If this project is a continuation of a previously funded project, or if the project was applied for in a previous year, select yes.
- **Funding Categories** – Select the funding category or categories that this project is best described by. The description of each category will appear once they are selected. Please note, additional information will need to be provided about this under the Requirements tab.
- **Sponsor Category** – Select the appropriate option. If you select **other**, please provide a description in the text box.
- **Federal and State Permits and Funding** – These questions provide important information to determine project eligibility. If yes, please provide details.

### Narrative

**200 Word Summary** - It is important that your overview be brief but give a clear description of the project. It should summarize the key activities you wish to undertake and outcomes you hope to achieve. This summary will be used to describe your project in NET publications.

**Narrative** - For your full narrative, in 1,200 words including the following:

- Describe in detail the design of the project, how it will be implemented, and what objectives will be achieved. Emphasize the environmental objectives, benefits, and outcomes. Include who will benefit from this project and how. Describe the economic, social and/or public health impacts this project will have (06.003.06)
- Highlight innovative features and preventive components of the project. What measures have been or will be taken to maximize cost-effectiveness? Who is contributing to this project and in what ways? Describe how you will measure the outcomes and evaluate your success (06.003.02).
- If the project will require continuing maintenance and/or administration, discuss how these costs will be funded and how this responsibility will be assured (06.003.05).
- Provide a list of federal and state permits or approvals this project will require. Describe the status of these permit applications.
- Pertinent photos and graphs can be uploaded in the attachment section below the narrative box and will not be counted within the 1,200-word narrative. It must be one pdf file. Any additional attachments can be included under the Attachments tab.

### Financial Documents

The last section of the Cover Sheet tab has a section to upload financial documents. The attachment must be a combined pdf file. Only one file can be included in this section. If you have additional information you’d like to upload, you can attach your files under the Attachments tab.

This information is not required for every donor or contributor to the project.

**The following information is required for the Project Sponsor. If this information is not provided on your application, your project may be ineligible. Contact us if you’re unsure what is required for your organization:**

- **Government Agencies** – List source(s) of income available, current revenue, appropriation and/or current levy and levy limit (if applicable). Provide current annual budget summary.
- **Not-For-Profit Organizations** – Provide the operating budget for the current year and most recent Form 990 Tax Return.
- **For-Profit Organizations** – Provide operating budget for the current year, and most recent profit/loss statement.
- **Individual** – Applicants may be asked to supply information at the discretion of NET.

### Primary Contact Information

Once you have entered all the above information, you will click the save icon. This will take you back to the top of the page. You will then move on to the **Primary Contact Information** tab under the **Cover Sheet** tab.

In this section, you will provide the information for the individual who is best informed about this application, can answer questions that may arise, and provide additional information. Please include contact information so that we may reach this individual directly.

This individual will also be the main contact on the project if it is awarded.

### Signer's Contact Information

An authorized agent of the Sponsor must sign the certification of the application. The authorized agent should be the president, director, or manager of your organization. If the primary contact and signer are the same, click the check box next to "Is the signer contact the same as the primary contact?" at the top of the page.

The signature page will be available to print, sign, and scan when all sections of the application are completed.

## Budget

The next tab to complete is the Budget tab. This is where you will enter the amount of grant funds you are requesting.

### Budget Details

Under the Budget Details, enter how many years of funding, or the time needed, to complete the proposed project. NET can fund a project for a maximum of three years per application award. Budget sheets will become available for the number of years you indicate here after you have saved this page.

### Categories

**Note:** this section will need to be completed first, before moving onto entering dollar amounts in your yearly proposed budgets.

The following, and their examples, are categories that are available for your proposed project's budget. See the sections below for further details and restrictions on these categories.

Click on the **Manage Categories** icon to add details about your request.

- **Personnel/Fringe Benefits** – Hours worked towards a project and employer's share of Medicare and Social Security taxes. Benefits limited to health, dental, and vision insurance up to \$5/hour worked or actual costs, whichever is less. Overtime pay and other benefits are not eligible but can be used as match towards the project.

- **Operating Expenses** - Any operational expense used towards the project. Examples include, rent, utilities, etc.
- **Supplies** - Supply items costing less than \$5,000 each, utilized directly towards the project.
- **Contractual/Outside Services** - Hired contracted or outside services for the project. Example: engineers, advertisements, meeting room rentals, publications etc.
- **Administration** - A percentage or amount charged to the project for general administration costs related to administration of the grant and project file. Not to exceed 5% of Project Costs or \$10,000, whichever is less.
- **Equipment/Personal Property** - Equipment items costing \$5,000 or more each. Items under \$5,000 can be considered a supply item. Bids are not required on the application, but if awarded, will be required for reimbursement.
- **Travel** - Meals, transportation, lodging, and/or mileage at the federal rates.
- **Real Estate/Real Property** - Purchase of land, easements, or improvements. Additional information is required under the Real Estate tab.

### *Calculations and Details Column*

This section will need to have details of your budget and how it was calculated. You can include an attachment with further details. Be as specific about these details as possible. For example, if you are requesting Equipment/Personal Property, please list each item. Bids are not required on the application, however, are recommended to help estimate the cost of your request.

### **Reasonable Costs**

A cost is reasonable if, in its nature and amount, it does not exceed what would be incurred by a prudent person under the circumstances prevailing at the time the decision was made to incur the cost. The question of reasonableness is particularly important when the Grantee is predominantly funded by the Grant. In determining reasonableness of a given cost, consideration must be given to:

- a. Whether the cost is generally recognized as ordinary and necessary for the operation of the Grantee or the proper and efficient performance of the Grant award.
- b. The restraints or requirements imposed by such factors as: sound business practices; arm's-length bargaining; federal, state, local, tribal, and other laws, and regulations; and terms and conditions of the Grant award.
- c. Market prices for comparable goods or services for the geographic area.
- d. Whether the individuals concerned acted with prudence in the circumstances considering their responsibilities to the Grantee, their employees, and where applicable its students or membership, the public at large, and the Nebraska Environmental Trust.
- e. Whether the Grantee significantly deviates from its established practices and policies regarding the incurrence of costs, which may unjustifiably increase NET award's cost.

### **Administration**

The NET limits the amount of General Administrative Expense for a grant. Costs that are administrative in nature but are in direct support of a project activity should be charged to the project activity and not to General Administration. General Administration costs relate to administration of the grant and project file. General Administration Expenses shall mean those expenses related to overall administration, including (but not limited to) salaries, wages, employer's share of social security and Medicare taxes, workers' compensation, unemployment insurance, and employer-provided health, dental, or vision insurance

premiums of Sponsor staff or others engaged in grant management, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation. General Administration Expenses shall not exceed 5% of Project Costs or \$10,000, whichever is less.

The following limits apply to reimbursements for General Administrative Expenses: wages, per employee, shall be limited to a 40-hour work week; the employer's share of social security taxes and Medicare taxes on wages shall be limited to 7.65% of gross wages; the employer's share of employer-provided health, dental, or vision insurance premiums, which shall not exceed the actual cost or up to \$5.00 per hour in total, whichever is less.

### **Personnel & Fringe Benefits**

General compensation for personal services includes all remuneration, paid currently, or accrued, for services of employees rendered during the period of performance under the Grant award, including but not necessarily limited to wages and salaries. Compensation for personal services may also include fringe benefits. Compensation for employees engaged in work on Grant awards will be considered reasonable to the extent that it is consistent with that paid for similar work in other activities of the Grantee.

### **Non-reimbursable Expenses**

The following personnel expenses will not be reimbursed with grant funds but can be used as matching funds: Actual wages in excess of a 40-hour work week; health, dental, and vision insurance costs over \$5.00 per hour, limited to a 40-hour work week; life insurance costs; retirement account contributions; tuition or higher education paid as an employee benefit; a payout for unused sick or vacation leave; overtime payments; indirect costs as a percentage of gross wages.

If Sponsor uses indirect costs as a cash match to the grant, the NET will not reimburse costs for office rent, utilities, phone, internet, printing, etc.

Bonuses will not be reimbursed with grant funds and cannot be used as matching funds.

**In-kind match is not eligible and will not be considered when reviewing the application.**

### **Matching Funds – Cash Match Only**

Matching funds are not required to apply. However, during the scoring process, more points are awarded to projects with cash match. Do not overestimate match. Match over 100% will not earn additional scoring points. If awarded, the proposed amount for match will be required. Matching funds, as identified in the application, shall be proportionally injected into the Project as NET funded activities are drawn down. The NET may waive this requirement for some or all of the Project, upon a written request by the Sponsor.

### ***In-Kind Contributions***

In-kind match, or any non-monetary donated contribution to the development of a project by the applicant or project co-sponsors, is **not eligible**. Only **cash match** towards a project will be considered when rating the project.

### **Travel**

Travel costs are the expenses for transportation, lodging, subsistence, and related items incurred by employees who are in travel status on official business of the Grantee. Such costs may be charged on an actual cost basis as allowed under the adopted Policies of the Nebraska Environmental Trust, Section VI: Grantee Conditions, J. Travel Policy.

Lodging and subsistence. Costs incurred by employees for travel, including costs of lodging, other subsistence, and incidental expenses, must be considered reasonable and otherwise allowable only to the extent such costs do not exceed charges normally allowed by the federal per diem rates and rules. If these costs are charged directly to the Grant award documentation must justify that:

- a. Participation of the individual is necessary to the Grant award; and
- b. The costs are reasonable and consistent.

**Federal Rate Reimbursement** – Reimbursement requests for meals, mileage, and lodging will be reimbursed at the federal rate. Alcohol reimbursement is prohibited.

### **Operating Expenses**

There is no universal rule for classifying certain costs as either direct or indirect under every accounting system. A cost may be direct with respect to some specific service or function, but indirect with respect to a different award or other final cost objective. Therefore, it is essential that each item of cost incurred for the same purpose be treated consistently in like circumstances to avoid possible double charging of Grant awards. Operational costs are those costs that can be identified specifically with a particular final cost objective that can be directly assigned to such activities or to a specific property with a relative ease and with a high degree of accuracy.

### **Personal Property - (Equipment \$5,000 or more)**

The Sponsor will report to the NET all personal property purchased with full or partial funding in a manner and form prescribed by the NET. The Sponsor will identify by year, make, model, and serial number if available. Personal property and other personal property purchased with grant funding shall be used only for the purposes of the Project during the grant contract term. The Sponsor will obtain at least three (3) bids for any personal property purchased costing \$5,000 or more, for which more than one vendor is available.

### **Real Estate**

Real estate includes, but is not limited to, land acquisitions, easements, or improvements. Sponsor shall provide continued access to the properties affected by this Agreement for periodic reviews and visits, annual accounting reports on NET funded Defense Funds (easements only) and proof of annual tax payments.

### **Supplies**

Items directly required for the Grant award that are not over \$5,000 in individual value (Personal Property/Equipment).

### **Contracted & Outside Services**

Costs of professional and consultant services rendered by persons who are members of a particular profession or possess a special skill, and who are not officers or employees of the Grantee, are allowable and fees must be supported by evidence of bona fide services rendered. Outside services, such as meeting room rentals, advertisements, publications, etc. would fit into this category. The Sponsor will obtain at least three (3) bids for any contractual service costing \$20,000 or more, for which more than one vendor is available.

### **Funding Partners**

A partner is any individual or organization that will contribute funds, services, and/or materials to the project. Any Partner contributing to the project will need to provide a letter of support. These letters should specify the dollar contribution to be made and confirm the partner's commitment to the project. A legally accountable representative of an organization must sign the letters.



Partner letters are to be submitted at the time of application and are carefully considered as part of your proposal. Additional partner letters submitted after the application deadline will not be considered during the review process.

Click **Funding Partners**, **Manage Funding Partners**, and then **Add** to identify any partners contributing cash match. NET and your agency will automatically populate the first two column headings. Partners added here will automatically populate the column headings for any Partner contributions on each year of your grant. Click **Save** to go back to the main Budget tab.

List the partners and their contributions. Attach the letter of confirmation of participation from each partner as a pdf file. Letters of support or endorsement from others, who are not partners, are not appropriate in this section.

Do not enter non-funding partners (partners not contributing any cash match towards the project) under your project's budget. For non-funding partners, support letters can be uploaded under the attachments tab of the application. Their contribution towards the project can also be mentioned in the project narratives.

### Budget Year 1, Budget Year 2, Budget Year 3

A Budget sheet will be available for 1, 2, or 3 years, depending on the number of years you have indicated under the **Budget Details** tab. Click **Budget 20XX**, then **Manage Budget**, and enter funding requested from NET, in the first column, and contributions from your organization and each Partners. Repeat this for each Budget year.

Click **Save** to update the budgets and go back to the main Budget tab. The Budget Summary will automatically be populated with information from the individual years. The Total Amount Requested in the heading, will now include the total amount requested from NET. Any changes must be made in the individual year's budget.

You can go to the **Budget Summary** tab to see the total amount requested and proposed for all years.

## Real Estate

This tab will only need to be filled out if the proposed project is requesting NET funding for the acquisition, development, improvement and/or restoration of real property or easements.

The application must identify whether mineral rights are intact if applying for a land purchase or easement. The application must also include an aerial photo of the property and legal description.

### Threatened or Endangered Species

Projects will not be funded that jeopardize habitat of threatened or endangered species. Grantees must cooperate with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and/or the Nebraska Game & Parks Commission to assure compliance with this requirement.

### Historic Preservation

Projects will not be funded that jeopardize historic or cultural resources. Grantees must cooperate with the Nebraska State Historical Society to assure compliance with this requirement. Grantees will be required to meet conditions of compliance established by any of these agencies at their own expense.

### Required Information

To provide adequate information for NET to evaluate real estate proposals, the following information must be provided:

1. Legal description of all property or easements, including county where project is located, and the number of acres affected.
2. Site Plan that shows the legal boundary of site, existing features and structures, and proposed structures and improvements. Include the scale, a north arrow, and a key. Clearly label the plan.
3. Attach a pdf file that briefly describes the landscape - what is the current condition of the property and what do you want it to look like in the future? Do the proposed changes work for the landscape?

### Our project will be implemented on land that is not identified yet. How do we complete this section?

In the narrative section, clearly describe the criteria you will use to select property for your project and an estimate of acres to be affected by the project. If funded, you will be required to provide this specific identifying information for selected property as a component of your grant reports.

### Restoration/Improvement/Development Projects

1. Attach detailed plans, profiles, or cross-sections to show that the structures will be designed in accordance with any applicable regulations, codes, or standard practices, and to allow reasonable estimation of cost.
2. Explain the rationale used to locate this project and to develop the design submitted.
3. Describe all analysis and field investigations made to substantiate the design of the project.
4. Provide a detailed discussion of any yet-to-be completed requirements for preparing the final plan, including geologic or hydrologic investigation, soil mechanics, structural, embankment or foundation criteria.
5. If restoration of, or improvements to, property not owned by the sponsor(s), attach a letter from the landowner(s) confirming participation in the project.

### Acquisition/Easement Projects

Several questions should be addressed when proposing a land acquisition or easement:

1. Why should NET be involved and does this project accomplish the purpose of NET?
2. What is the conservation, historical and cultural values of this property?
3. What is the conservation purpose of this proposal?
4. What capacity does the applicant have (personnel, financial resources, etc.) to carryout/accomplish the proposed purpose?
5. Who will hold title to the property or easement and describe how property maintenance will be handled.

NET will not assist government agencies or subdivisions in the acquisition of land through the power of eminent domain. Proof of a willing seller is required prior to issuing funds.

**NET will require payment of property taxes, or in-lieu of tax payments, for all property acquired with grant funding, regardless of the tax status of the grantee.**

### Prior to Closing

Prior to closing the following will need to be completed and submitted:

1. Acquisitions: Copy of purchase agreement that includes acknowledgement of the Trust's involvement in the project.
2. Easements – Copy of purchase agreement that includes acknowledgement of the Trust's involvement in the project and all conditions “survive closing.”
3. Title Commitment.
4. Copy of appraisal to support purchase price.
5. Brief description of management plan for the site.
6. Copy of the land acquisition or easement document that includes a Reservation of Deed statement indicating the Trust's involvement in the transaction.

### At Closing

Acquisitions/Easements: Reservation of Deed statement in the deed indicating the Trust's involvement in the purchase.

### After Closing

1. Copy of recorded Deed/Easement/Memorandum of Contract.
2. Final Title Policy.
3. Closing Statement.
4. Baseline Inventory – including photos of property from established photo points, FSA colored map and site map showing location of all buildings, wells, etc.
5. Biological Inventory – reflecting the specific purpose of the grant (prairie, endangered plant or animal).
6. Management Plan – final plan required within one year of closing – may include grazing plan, burn plan, restoration and improvement plan, public access, land use policies, monitoring plans to measure progress toward goals and ability to adapt plan if something isn't working.
7. Provide proof of tax payments annually during grant contract (tax receipt or cancelled check).

## Timeline

Click on the **Manage Timeline** button and then click **Add**. List the scheduled month and year to begin each component of the project. As you add dates the timeline will be sorted automatically by date when you click the save icon.

### When does the funding year begin?

If awarded, projects cannot begin until all individuals have signed the NET grant contract. The last signature date will be your project's start date. Typically, this will be around late winter or early spring. Following the first year, if the project is a multi-year project, the project years will follow the fiscal year cycle (July 1 – June 30). The project's contact will be notified of the award decision. Check NET's website for award updates.

## Requirements

Under this section, you will be answering the Eligibility and Scoring Criteria questions. The answers here will be reviewed by the Grants Committee. Six members of NET Board serve on the Grants Committee. The Committee reviews each proposal, first evaluating eligibility and then rating each eligible application.

You will click on each tab, then click on the **Update Responses** tab, enter your answers, and click **Save**. These questions are all required to be answered.

## Eligibility

The eligibility questions were created using the Nebraska Environmental Trust (NET), Title 137, Chapter 4 – Criteria for Eligibility and the Nebraska Revised Statute 81-15,176. The chapter and section information are listed in parenthesis after each question. You can go to that section to read more information. Answers in this section will be used by the Grants Committee to help determine eligibility of projects. Projects deemed eligible will be moved on to scoring.

More information on NET's legislation and regulations can be found here:

<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov/about/lr.html> Once questions have been entered, click **Save** and then the **Back** icon to return to the previous page.

## Eligibility Criteria Questions

1. Does your project provide direct assistance to regulatory programs? (04.001.01)
2. Does your project implement actions mandated by regulations, excluding remediation? (04.001.01)
3. Will your project pay for private benefits or provide assistance to projects or portions of projects whose benefits are primarily private in nature? Compensation for contributions made to a project, such as land or land rights, shall not constitute payment for private benefits. (04.005)
4. Will your project relieve private liability for environmental damage (except for projects for remediation of soils or ground water) or provide assistance to projects in order to relieve such liability? "Private liability" shall mean liability to a person or entity and shall include fines or penalties imposed by a governmental entity. (04.001.01)
5. Does this project have direct beneficiaries who could afford these costs without experiencing serious financial hardship? Direct beneficiaries shall not be deemed to include a person who receives incidental benefits from a project which primarily benefits the general public. (04.001.02)
6. Does your project provide the greatest environmental benefits relative to cost? (04.001.02)
7. Does your project provide clear and direct environmental benefits? A project will be considered to have clear and direct environmental benefits if the realization of those benefits can be reasonable expected, as a result of the project and if those benefits will be obvious, even if not quantifiable. Educational projects may be considered to have clear and direct environmental benefits. (04.003)
8. Does this project make a real contribution to achieving the Board's environmental categories? (04.004)

Those categories are:

- a. **Habitat:** actions to preserve or restore native habitats and areas critical to at-risk, rare or endangered species; other preservation actions for at-risk, rare or endangered species including actions to understand ecosystem relationships which inform sound management; community habitat enhancement emphasizing native and ecologically appropriate plantings which provide food and shelter for wildlife; actions to inform and educate which contribute to the fulfillment of this category.

- b. **Surface and Ground Water:** actions to preserve or restore lakes, waterways and ground water from degradation or depletion; actions to research, design or foster best management practices; actions to conserve water and/or efficiently and effectively manage water use; actions to inform and educate which contribute to the fulfillment of this category.
  - c. **Waste Management:** actions promoting and implementing source reduction, waste management or toxicity reduction; actions promoting and implementing the development of recycling markets; actions promoting and implementing reuse and other disposal diversion actions; actions to inform and educate which contribute to the fulfillment of this category.
  - d. **Air Quality:** actions promoting and implementing clean air strategies; including greenhouse gas *reductions*; actions to research, design or foster best management strategies; actions to inform and educate which contribute to the fulfillment of this category.
  - e. **Soil Management:** actions and strategies to preserve, conserve and restore soil health; actions to research, design or foster the implementation and management of these strategies; actions to inform and educate which contribute to the fulfillment of this category.
9. Does your project offer public benefits? (04.005)
10. Will this project pay for land or easements acquired without the full and express consent of the landowner? Will this purchase eliminate the property tax liability? (04.001.05 and 81-15,176)
11. Is your project environmentally acceptable? (04.002)

A project is considered to be environmentally acceptable when:

- a. The project will not jeopardize the continued existence of any threatened or endangered species or result in the destruction or modification of the critical habitat of any such species and shall meet the requirements contained in the Nongame and Endangered Species Conservation Act, Nebraska Revised Statute § 37-801; and (04.002.01)
  - b. The plan of development minimizes any adverse impacts on the natural environment, adequately addresses existing cultural resources and results in environmental net gain. (04.002.02)
  - c. In addition to any proposed mitigation measures, all aspects of the project which can be anticipated to result in environmental enhancement shall be considered in determining whether the plan minimizes adverse impacts. The Board may request additional information it deems necessary in determining environmental acceptability. The applicant, if required by the Board, will be provided a reasonable period of time to respond to requests for information and such other items as the applicant of the Board identifies as relevant to the issued of environmental acceptance. (04.002.03)
12. Is your project financially and technically feasible? (04.006)
- a. Financial Feasibility: A project is financially feasible if sufficient funds can be made available to complete the project and if sufficient annual revenues can be obtained to operate, maintain, and replace the project as applicable. Each applicant shall submit a project budget

identifying the nature and amount of each source of funds to be used for the project; a schedule indicating when such funds will be received; and a schedule indicating when the funds available will be expended for project purposes. The remaining financial data supplied by the applicant will depend upon the type of applicant. (04.006.01)

- b. Technical Feasibility: A project that is structural in nature shall be considered technically feasible when it can and will be designed, constructed, and operated to accomplish the purpose(s) for which it was planned to utilize accepted engineering and other technical principles and concepts. A project which is nonstructural in nature shall be considered to be technically feasible when it can and will be designed and carried out to accomplish the purpose(s) for which it was planned. (04.006.02)

### Scoring Criteria

The Scoring Criteria in this section was developed using Nebraska Environmental Trust's Title 137, Chapter 4 and 6 and the Nebraska Revised Statute 81-15, 175 and 176

(<https://environmentaltrust.nebraska.gov/about/lr.html>). The answers to these questions will be used by the Grants Committee to Score your project.

1. **Application Question:** Does your project conform to the funding categories? Explain which categories and how.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project conform to the funding categories? (04.001.03, 04.004, and 81-15,176)

- a. 0 – Does not meet criteria – Outside of scope
- b. 1 – Low – Undefined project, just lists the category
- c. 2 – Below Average – Lacks clarity of purpose
- d. 3 – Average – Meets one category objective
- e. 4 – Above Average – Two categories well defined
- f. 5 – High – Three or more categories well defined

2. **Application Question:** Does your project produce a commitment of cash funds from other funding sources? Please provide the percentage of match to the project's funds.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project produce a commitment of cash funds from other funding sources? (81-15, 175 (2)(b))

- a. 0 – Does not provide any match
- b. 1 – Provides 5% - 24% match
- c. 2 – Provides 25% - 49% match
- d. 3 – Provides 50% - 74% match
- e. 4 – Provides 75% - 99% match
- f. 5 – Provides 100% match

3. **Application Question:** Evaluation of performance looking back the last 3 grant cycles. Has any of your project in the last 3 grant cycles received a 15-day notice that was enforced and/or had quarterly or final reports overdue? If yes, please explain. If you have not applied to NET within the last 3 grant cycles, please indicate that.

**Scoring Criteria:** Evaluation of performance looking back the last 3 grant cycles. (06.003.07)

- a. 0 – Received a 15 Day Notice that was enforced
  - b. 1 – Final Report was late
  - c. 2 – Two Quarterly Reports were late
  - d. 3 – All Quarterly Reports and Final Report submitted on time, no extensions
  - e. 4 – All Reports submitted on time, no extensions and no modifications requested
  - f. 5 – New Applicant (Entity has not applied to NET in the last 3 grant cycles)
4. **Application Question:** Does the project result in a public-private partnership? If yes, please explain how. (Letters of support are not considered as a partnership; actual contributions are a partnership.)

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project result in a public-private partnership? Letters of support are not considered as a partnership; actual contributions are a partnership. (81-15,175 (2)(c))

- a. 0 – No partnerships
  - b. 1 – Low – Two entities
  - c. 2 – Below Average – Three entities
  - d. 3 – Average – One entity plus one public entity
  - e. 4 – Above Average – Two entities plus one public entity
  - f. 5 – High – Three entities plus one public entity
5. **Application Question:** Does this project attain a geographic mix that provides funding for a diverse area? Please explain the number of counties and how they are impacted by this project.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does this project attain a geographic mix that provides funding for a diverse area? (06.003.01 and 81-15,175 (2)(d))

- a. 1 – Actual project in one to two counties
  - b. 2 – Actual project in three to five counties
  - c. 3 – Actual project in more than five counties.
6. **Application Question:** Does this project provide public access?

**Scoring Criteria:** Does this project provide public access? (04.005)

- d. 0 – No
  - e. 2 – Yes
7. **Application Question:** Is the project cost effective? Provide the percentage. To calculate the percentage of overhead, please take the amount you're requesting for operating expenses and divide it by the total amount of funds you're requesting minus the administration requested. Formula: Operations/ (NET Funds requested – Administration)

**Scoring Criteria:** Is the project cost effective? (Formula: Operating Expenses/(NET Funds requested – Administration) = Cost Effective Percentage). (06.003.02)

- f. 0 – 12% or higher
- g. 1 – 10 to 11.99%
- h. 2 – 7 to 9.99%
- i. 3 – 4 to 6.99%
- j. 4 – 2.01 to 3.99%

k. 5 – 0 to 2.00%

8. **Application Question:** Does the project have economic impacts? Measurables must be provided in application.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project have economic impacts? Measurables must be provided in application. (06.003.03)

- a. 0 – Does not meet criteria – No data provided
- b. 1 – Low – Lack in clarity in project scope
- c. 2 – Below Average – Generalization of goals to be accomplished
- d. 3 – Average – Increases in opportunities or mitigation of hazards well defined
- e. 4 – Above Average – Proposed measurements provided
- f. 5 – High – Outcomes can be verified independently

9. **Application Question:** Does the project produce direct environmental impacts? Measurables must be provided in application.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project produce direct environmental impacts? Measurables must be provided in application. (06.003.04)

- g. 0 – Does not meet criteria – No data provided
- h. 1 – Low – Lack of clarity in project scope
- i. 2 – Below Average – Generalization of goals to be accomplished
- j. 3 – Average – Direct environmental impacts are well defined
- k. 4 – Above Average – Proposed measurements provided
- l. 5 – High – Outcomes can be verified independently

10. **Application Question:** Does the project produce long term environmental benefits for the general public? Explain the number of years your project will provide an environmental benefit.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project produce long term environmental benefits for the general public? (06.003.05 and 81-15,175 (2)(g))

- a. 0 – Not sustainable (e.g., requires on-going financial support to maintain)
- b. 1 – One year
- c. 2 – Two years
- d. 3 – Three years (can demonstrate that it can continue without NET Board support)
- e. 4 – Four to nine years
- f. 5 – Ten years or more

11. **Application Question:** Does this project have a plan for evaluating the results of the expenditure of grant funds? Please explain how.

**Scoring Criteria:** Does the project have a plan for evaluating the results of the expenditure of grant funds? (06.003.06)

- a. 0 – No plan provided (e.g., lack of evaluation of rent, lease, purchase alternatives)
- b. 1 – Tangible and/or intangible benefits provided
- c. 2 – Goals, objectives, and outcomes provided
- d. 3 – Baseline measurement, target, and improvement provided



- e. 4 – Measurable real time value provided
- f. 5 – Independent validation process of data provided

## Attachments

All attachments uploaded in previous sections will appear here. You can click the **Add Attachments** icon to access or change these files. Click **Save** after any changes made, then **Submit**.

## Submit

When you're ready to submit your application, you will go to the **Submit** tab and click the **Ready for Signature** icon. A pop up will appear with further instructions. Once, you've clicked yes, the system will check for any incomplete sections. It will give you a list of any issues with your application. You can go back to the section with the deficiency and complete the required fields. Once you have made those edits, you will click **Save**, go back to the **Submit** tab, and click **Ready for Signature**.

Once all required fields are complete, you will be given the option to print the **Signature Page**. You can print or save the signature page, have the authorized individual sign, then upload the document as a pdf file, and click **Submit**.

Once successfully submitted, the heading at the top of the application will set the status as **submitted** and you will receive an email confirmation.

**Note: the application is not successfully submitted until you upload the signature page and click submit.**

## Re-Open

If you need to make edits to your application after submitted, you can click on the **Re-Open** icon. You will then need to go through the submission process again. A new signature page will need to be uploaded if anything in the amount requested changed.

## Questions?

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Email: [env.trust@nebraska.gov](mailto:env.trust@nebraska.gov)

Or call: 402-471-5409