

AGENDA

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Grants Committee
Thursday, September 25, 2025
1:30 PM
Via Zoom

2077 N Street, Suite 310
Lincoln, NE 68510

The public may attend the meeting at either the physical address or via Zoom at

<https://outdoornebraska.zoom.us/j/99402624219> or call +1-312-626-6799, Meeting ID: 994 0262 4219

1. Call to Order
 - a. Roll call
 - b. Verify Quorum
 - c. Notice of Meeting; Published Thursday, September 18, 2025
 - d. Notification of Open Meetings Law Posting
2. Public Comment
3. Approval of December 05, 2024, Grants Committee meeting minutes
4. Grant application process timeline
5. Review Eligibility questions and criteria
6. Grants Portal Demonstration
7. Next Meeting; October 16, 2025, Nebraska Environmental Trust office, 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE, 1:30 PM
8. Adjourn

**This agenda contains a list of subjects known at the time of its distribution on September 18, 2025. A Current copy is kept on file at the offices the Nebraska Environmental Trust, 2077 N Street, Suite 310, Lincoln, NE 68509. Except for items of an emergency nature, the agenda will not be enlarged later than 24 hours before the scheduled commencement of the meeting. Public comment may be offered on any agenda item by completing the sign-in sheet available at meeting. Time for each speaker should not exceed 3 minutes.

MINUTES

Nebraska Environmental Trust
Grants Committee Meeting
Thursday, December 5, 2024
1:00 p.m.

1. Call to Order

Committee Chairman Mr. Kanger called the Grants Committee meeting to order at 1:01 p.m. in Suite 310 at 2077 N St, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Advanced notice of the meeting was published in the Lincoln Journal Star on November 27, 2024. The agenda and documents to be considered at the meeting were provided. The Open Meetings Act was posted near the meeting room entrance and on the Nebraska Environmental Trust website.

Roll call was conducted, and a quorum was present.

Members Present (5):

District I: Committee Chairman Mr. Jeff Kanger, Lincoln; Mr. James Hellbusch, Columbus.

District II: Mr. Roger Helgoth, Omaha.

District III: Mr. Eric Hansen, North Platte.

State Agency Representative: Ms. Sherry Vinton, Director, Nebraska Department of Agriculture.

Members Absent (1):

State Agency Representative: Mr. Tim McCoy, Director, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission.

Staff Present:

Mr. Karl Elmshaeuser, Executive Director; Ms. Holly Adams, Grants Administrator; Ms. Madison Moe, Grants Assistant.

2. Public Comment

None.

3. Approval of October 22, 2024, Grants Committee meeting minutes

Motion by Mr. Hansen, seconded by Mr. Hellbusch, "I move to approve the October 22, 2024, Grants Committee meeting minutes."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Helgoth, Hansen, Vinton, Hellbusch, Kanger

5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

4. Grants Committee determinations and recommendations for funding for 2025 Grant Applications that were previously deemed eligible by the NET Board at the November 7, 2024, meeting

a. Projects Scored and Sorted by Score Through Ranking Systems Process

Executive Director Mr. Karl Elmshaeuser discussed current requests versus available funding and previous ranking systems/scoring. Discussion was had regarding the process of how questions are generated for scoring, specifically as to their basis in Statute and subsequent approvals by the full Board. It was also noted that applicants are made aware in advance of scoring questions/criteria and that scoring a zero on a question will not automatically eliminate an

application from consideration due to the structure of the current scoring rubric. Additional discussion centered around the best way for the Grants Committee to establish a cutline for those grant applications that should be considered for available funding and whether available appropriations should affect the number of grants awarded. Committee Chairman Mr. Kanger highlighted the Board's on-going efforts to support higher quality applications which could be established through a cutline as it could help to maintain the quality of the grants recommended to be moved forward for the funding consideration of the Board.

Motion by Mr. Hansen, seconded by Mr. Helgoth, "I make a motion that the grant applications must have 29.76 points or more to be considered for available funding. Applications must meet the application requirements of financial documentation, administration limits, cash match, real estate requirements, and required documentation by the Executive Director as directed in Title 137 prior to allocation of a grant contract."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Hansen, Vinton, Hellbusch, Helgoth, Kanger
5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

b. Recommendations for funding to the NET Board at the January 9, 2025, meeting

Executive Director Mr. Karl Elmshaeuser went over the documentation provided to the Grants Committee members and noted that – due to the cap on the amount of administration funding – some of the requested funding totals had been reduced accordingly.

Motion by Mr. Hellbusch, seconded by Mr. Hansen, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends project 25-144 is reduced by \$1,837 and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: Clarification was made that this reduction is solely due to the cap on the amount of administration funding.

Voting Aye: Vinton, Hellbusch, Helgoth, Hansen, Kanger
5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Hellbusch, seconded by Mr. Hansen, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends project 25-156 is reduced by \$5,000 and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Vinton, Hellbusch, Helgoth, Hansen, Kanger
5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Hellbusch, seconded by Mr. Hansen, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends project 25-163 is reduced by \$5,000 and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Hellbusch, Helgoth, Hansen, Vinton, Kanger
5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Helgoth, seconded by Mr. Hansen, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends project 25-137 for the full requested amount and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Helgoth, Hansen, Vinton, Hellbusch

Abstain: Kanger

4 Voted Aye. 1 Abstention. Motion carried.

Motion by Mr. Hellbusch, seconded by Mr. Helgoth, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends projects 25-161, 25-164, 25-160 for the full requested amounts and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Vinton, Hellbusch, Helgoth, Kanger

Abstain: Hansen

4 Voted Aye. 1 Abstention. Motion carried.

The Board took a break from 1:49 p.m. to 1:55 p.m.

Motion by Mr. Hellbusch, seconded by Mr. Hansen, "I move that the Grants Committee recommends projects 25-106, 25-142, 25-155, 25-127, 25-134, 25-131, 25-116, 25-128, 25-135, 25-117, 25-107, 25-114, 25-130, 25-109, 25-112, 25-118, 25-132, 25-115, 25-153, 25-149, 25-126, 25-165, 25-102, 25-121, 25-104, 25-147, 25-122, 25-140, 25-154, 25-101, 25-138, 25-143, 25-113, 25-139, 25-166, 25-110, 25-124, 25-150, and 25-111 for the full requested amounts and to be moved on for consideration by the Nebraska Environmental Trust Board."

Discussion: None.

Voting Aye: Vinton, Hellbusch, Helgoth, Hansen, Kanger

5 Voted Aye. Motion carried.

5. Next Meeting

The next Grants Committee meeting date has yet to be determined.

6. Adjourn

Committee Chairman Mr. Kanger adjourned the meeting at 1:57 p.m.

Karl L. Elmshaeuser, Executive Director

Grant Process Timeline

- **Sept. 25th** at 1:30 p.m. - Grants Committee Meeting – Information Session on Process -via zoom <https://outdoornebraska.zoom.us/j/99402624219>
- **Oct. 16th** at 1:30 p.m. - Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Eligibility Determinations & Recommendations - in person at NET office
- **Nov. 6th** - Board meeting – Public Hearing and Full Board Decisions on Eligibility
- **Nov. 10th** – Grants Committee Scoring Begins
- **Nov. 26th** – Scoring submissions due into the Grants Portal – NET staff will need this additional time to process the scoring results
- **Dec. 11th** at 1:30 p.m. - Grants Committee Meeting – Grant Application Scoring and Recommendations for Funding - in person at the NET office
- **Jan. 8th** - Board Meeting – Public Hearing and Full Board Decisions on Grant Awards

Review Eligibility Questions and Criteria

Agenda Item #: 5

Object: Review of Eligibility Requirements

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: Discussion

Attachments: 4 pages

BACKGROUND

Nebraska Environmental Trust Act from Nebraska Revised Statutes §81-15,167 to 81-15,176. Nebraska Environmental Trust Board Rules and Regulations Title 137.

Nebraska Environmental Policy Section V: Grant Applications

EXPLANATION

The Grants Committee receives an application after the Executive Director has reviewed it for completeness. A technical review is made, if necessary, and provided to the Grants Committee members in the Grants Portal. The Executive Director makes an eligibility recommendation to the Grants Committee. The Grants Committee makes a determination of eligibility and recommendation to the full NET Board for consideration.

After the Grants Committee makes their recommendations to the NET Board for consideration, the NET Board may adopt or revise the Grant Committee determination for eligibility. If the NET Board determines an applicant is eligible, it would then be scored by the Grants Committee. An application must be eligible before it is considered for scoring.

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/legislations-and-regulations>

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 utilizing 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)

Internal Procedural Guidance for the Evaluation of Applications Regarding Prohibition of Directly Funding Regulatory Programs or Funding Actions Mandated by Regulations.

Method To Used To Determine Neb. Rev. Stat. § 81-15,176(2)(a) Eligibility:

To make a determination as to whether an application would directly fund a regulatory program or fund an action mandated by regulations, staff and board members shall utilize the following decision tree to evaluate an application:

1. Is the grant providing direct assistance to a regulatory program?
 - a. Is the applicant a governmental entity? (If yes, proceed to b. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
 - b. Is the program being funded regulatory in nature? (If yes, proceed to c. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
 - i. Regulatory means to control, direct, or govern. Generally this means statutes, rules, regulations, or ordinances that direct or require some other entity or person to do something. (Definition from Title 137).
 - c. Is the applicant being funded the one in control of the program? (If yes, funding is prohibited. If no, the grant does not provide direct assistance to a regulatory program, skip to 2.)
2. Is the grant funding the implementation of actions mandated by regulations?
 - a. Is the grant funding an activity the applicant is required to do? (If yes, proceed to b. If no, grant is permissible.)
 - b. Is the requirement in regulation? (If yes, proceed to c. If no, grant is permissible.)
 - i. Note: regulations means only those rules codified in the Nebraska Administrative Code or the Code of Federal Regulations. (Definition from Title 137).
 - c. Is the grant for remediation? (If yes, grant is permissible. If no, grant is funding the implementation of actions mandated by regulations and is not permissible.)

If it is determined that an application fails either Question 1 or Question 2 above, it is not eligible for funding.

Grants Portal Demonstration

Agenda Item #: 6

Object: How to utilize the grants portal for review

Contact Person: Holly Adams

For: Discussion

Attachments: 2 pages

BACKGROUND




Login page: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>

EXPLANATION

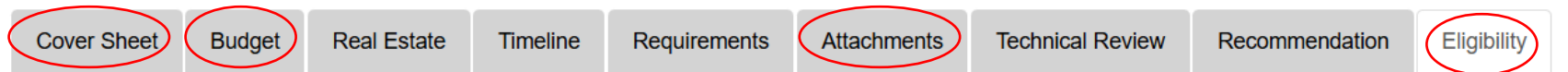
Grant applications are submitted by applicants through the NET grants portal. The Grants Committee utilizes the Grants Portal to review applications and make scoring determinations.

How to Review Projects for Eligibility

1. Login to Grants Portal at the following link: <https://environmentaltrustgrants.org/>
2. You will see the following screen when logged in:

Need Eligibility Review 73		Eligibility Completed 0		Abstained 0		
Manage	App ID	Project Sponsor	Project Name	Review Group	Amount Requested	Term of Request
	26-101	ROAM Share (dba Heartland Bike Share)	The Free Rides Project	Air Quality	\$240,000	3
	26-102	Southwest Weed Management	2026 - 2027 Western Republican River Basin Riparian Habitat Project	Water	\$186,960	1
	26-103	Grand Island Area Clean Community System	Operation of Regional Household Hazardous Waste Facility	Waste Management	\$360,478	2

3. To open a project for review, click on the pencil icon under the manage column. This will open the application.
4. You can go through and review the entire application. The main tabs you will utilize will be the following:



- a. **Cover Sheet** – Grant Application Summary and Narratives
- b. **Budget** – Proposed dollar amounts for application, including grant funds and cash match
- c. **Attachments** – The applicant’s attachments. Sometimes there’s supplemental information provided.
- d. **Eligibility** - The applicant’s responses to the eligibility criteria questions

5. **Eligibility Tab – You do not have to enter a review here.** However, it can be utilized for your own notes. If you click on the “Enter my Review” icon, you will see the criteria question, the applicant’s response, and the eligibility criteria information.



	Criteria	Applicants Response	Applicants Explanation	Review
1.	Does your project provide direct assistance to regulatory programs? (04.001.01)	No	All project funds go directly to supporting air quality improvement to Nebraskans through access to bike share mobility. No funds provide assistance to regulatory programs.	

6. **How to abstain from reviewing a project –** Under the Eligibility tab, click on the “Abstain” icon. This will remove the project from your review list. **Note: this will need to be completed during the eligibility review process.**



	Criteria	Applicants Response	Applicants Explanation