

**Our Mission:** To assist residents with and provide leadership in the conservation, management, and wise use of natural resources in Washtenaw County. The Washtenaw County Conservation District (WCCD), a local government agency, assists Washtenaw County residents through countywide resource assessments, conservation resource distributions, conservation education, one-on-one technical assistance, and resource programs including this grant.

**Purpose of this Program:** The WCCD School and Community Habitat Grant is designed to assist schools and community organizations with accessing plants and establishing wildlife habitat. Restoring wildlife habitat creates natural ecosystems providing benefits to residents (human or otherwise) including greater biodiversity, air and water filtration, carbon sequestration, aesthetic beauty, and many more.

Grants will be awarded in the form of tree, shrub, native plant material through the WCCD distributions and technical assistance from WCCD and partners. Grant fund availability is dependent on donations made to the WCCD for this purpose and grant selections and awards will be made based on the amount donated.

**Eligibility:** Applicants must represent or be affiliated with a local school or nonprofit organization. The proposed site location must be a public or semi-public space in Washtenaw County. The applicant must be able to demonstrate ownership or permission in perpetuity at the proposed location. The application must demonstrate a benefit to local communities, natural and human.

**Application Submission & Deadlines:** All grant applications must be submitted via the online application form or in digital format (.doc, .docx, .pdf) to Doug@washtenawcd.org with subject line, "2021 School and Community Habitat Grant Application", by the deadline: June 11, 2021 at 4 p.m. Visit the website for the online application form link: <https://www.washtenawcd.org/school--community-habitat-grant.html>

### Grant Annual Timeline:

December 2020 - May 2021: Donations accepted for this grant during WCCD resource distributions.

January 2021: Grant application period opens.

June 11, 2021: Grant application period closes.

July 2021: Grant Recipients selected & announced.

Aug-Oct 2021: Recipients receive design & planning support.

Sept-Oct 2021 OR April-June 2022: Recipients receive materials and support with installation.

### Habitat Grant Application Criteria:

The following list outlines the requirements of an application to be considered by the selection committee:

1. Completed application submitted by deadline, June 11, 2021.

## 2. Project's site location

- a. Site must be contained within land owned by the applicant's organization, or applicant must demonstrate a written contract of agreement with the landowner.
- b. The proposed area for the project must be clearly defined and dedicated for the project. The site should have adequate protection from (or resilience to) potential damage (human traffic, deer, etc.).
- c. Consideration for site location in a high use and visibility area accessible by the public or community.
- d. Extra consideration for locations without existing natural areas or habitat projects, or for projects that are part of a larger vision or initial phased plan of conservation projects.

## 3. Project must demonstrate ongoing plan for support to maintain the site, including summer months.

- a. Plan must include dedicated person to coordinate and conduct maintenance.
- b. Plan must include secondary contact to assist and assume coordination/contact if the primary person leaves.
- c. Plan must include a COVID-19 health policy. This could be the organizations' COVID-19 policy or adopt the WCCD policy (see website resources). The policy must meet current health orders by Washtenaw County's Health Department and be adjusted accordingly and adhered to at the time of the project's installation.

## 4. Demonstrate Benefits

- a. Plan must demonstrate detail on how the project will benefit the school or community
  - i. This should include a community engagement plan that could be through permanent educational signage, annual educational engagements in the space, etc.
- b. Must demonstrate in detail how the plan will provide natural and wildlife benefits.
  - i. It is encouraged for plant selection to be primarily plants native to Michigan. See "What is considered Native?" and the WCCD distribution plant lists below.

### **GRANT AWARD:**

Each grant award will be provided in the form of plant materials, expert design plans, and installation assistance. Recipients will be announced in July 2021 on the WCCD newsletter, website, and Facebook.

### **The WCCD staff and partners will provide the following:**

- Assist with final site selection and develop a design plan (if requested).
- Work with recipient to finalize plant order per design plan (if requested).

- Provide native plants, trees, and/or shrubs for the project. (Total value limited to grant award budget.)
- Deliver requested native plant materials to designated site within the installation period selected.
- Assist with establishing/planting on installation day providing tools and volunteers (if requested).

#### **Grant Awardee Responsibilities:**

- Follow the Grant timeline to meet recipient's requirements and complete the installation.
- **Pre-installation:**
  - Submit list and quantities of requested tree, shrub, and native plant species to be provided by WCCD. Or otherwise demonstrate their plan to source necessary materials.
  - Schedule a site visit for assessment, soil test, and planning.
  - Schedule the project installation date according to the Grant Timeline.
- **Post-installation:**
  - Install the provided WCCD Habitat sign at the site location.
  - Document installation of materials and submit a Final Project Report. See "Reporting" below.
- **Ongoing:**
  - Follow the final maintenance plan for the site.
  - Update the WCCD if the site coordinator changes or if contact information changes.
  - Provide a follow up report 1 year after the installation (see "Reporting" below).

#### **Reporting**

A written Final Project Report including pictures, is required of all grant recipients. The report should outline the project's installation, challenges, and plan for the first year. This report should be submitted no later than October 31, 2021 for fall installation, or June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022 for spring installations. The report should have at least 3 good quality photos that the WCCD may use on our website and in publications to display and share the grant projects. The report and photos should be submitted digitally to the WCCD Resource Coordinator.

Recipients will also commit to submit a Habitat Update Report one year from the date of the initial installation. This should include photos and an update of how the organization engaged with and maintained the space.

#### **What is considered Native?**

We use the Ann Arbor Natural Areas Preservation description of native plants as "plants that were here before Europeans settled in Michigan in the 1700s". For more information about what is considered a native species, please visit the Michigan Natural Features Inventory at <https://mnfi.anr.msu.edu/>

#### **WCCD Program Contact**

Please email the application form and all other supporting documents or questions to the WCCD Resource Coordinator, Doug Reith: [doug@washtenawcd.org](mailto:doug@washtenawcd.org) (734) 302-8713.

For more information and resources, visit:

<https://www.washtenawcd.org/school--community-habitat-grant.html>