



Richland Soil and Water Conservation District

2026–2027 Conservation Education Mini-Grant Application and Guidelines

Key Dates

- Application Deadline: **September 24, 2026**
- Grant Completion Deadline: **June 11, 2027**

There will be **one mini-grant cycle** for the 2026–2027 school year.

Grant Acknowledgment

Recipients must acknowledge their grant award **within 5 days** of receiving the notification. Failure to respond within this timeframe will result in forfeiture of grant funding.

Using District Resources

Grants cannot include clothing, basic classroom materials, items that are not directly related to the implementation of the conservation-focused project, or personnel costs, including wages, salaries, or other compensation. Applicants are strongly encouraged to collaborate with the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District to strengthen their proposals and projects. The district offers the following resources:

- Seed Sanctuary Program (free native vegetable, herb, & wildflower seed packets)
- Environmental Education Materials
- Conservation Activity Kits
- Guest Speakers and Classroom Presentations
- Technical Support

We encourage you to contact the district early in your planning process to fully leverage available resources and ensure your project complements, rather than duplicates, existing district programs.

Grant Reporting Requirements

- A formal **award letter and confirmation email** will be sent upon selection.
- All recipients must submit a **progress update** by January 29, 2027.
- **Copies of receipts** and a **brief final report** containing captioned photos of the completed project are required for reimbursement.
- All receipts for grant-related expenses must be submitted to RSWCD for auditing purposes.
- If a school is unable to complete the grant project, **notify RSWCD immediately** so that funds may be reallocated to other applicants.

Showcasing Your Project

- Grantees are strongly encouraged to invite district staff to observe or participate in project completion.



- As a natural extension of the grant project, grant winners are also encouraged to participate in the annual NACD Youth Conservation Poster Contest to further student learning and engagement. Learn more about the 2027 competition at richlandcountysc.gov/conservation.



Richland County public, private, and alternative schools are eligible to apply for up to \$1,000 in grant funding to support conservation projects and youth environmental education initiatives through Conservation Education Mini-Grants sponsored by the Richland Soil and Water Conservation District. To be eligible for funding, schools must be located in Richland County (including the City of Columbia) or, in the case of schools in Lexington-Richland School District Five, must serve Richland County students.

Mini-Grants may be used to support conservation-related student projects including, but not limited to, outdoor classrooms, school gardens, nature trails, wildlife habitats, rain barrels, composting initiatives, air quality campaigns, litter clean-ups, rain gardens, erosion control, virtual learning opportunities for students, and take-home activities promoting environmental stewardship.

Awards are competitive, and proposals will be evaluated on the project's conservation impact, feasibility, student and community involvement, and educational outcomes. Grants are available in amounts up to \$1,000; applicants should design a budget based on what is most appropriate for their project.

There will be **one mini-grant cycle** for the 2026-2027 school year. The application deadline is **Thursday, September 24, 2026**. Funding is issued as a reimbursement for project expenses; copies of receipts and a brief final report containing captioned photos of the completed project are required for reimbursement. Project work and the expenditure of funds must be completed by **Friday, June 11, 2027**.

For more information, contact Chelsea Holliday at (803) 576-2087 or holliday.chelsea@richlandcountysc.gov.

Conservation Districts are political subdivisions of state government under the local direction of five-member Boards of Commissioners. The Richland Soil and Water Conservation District promotes the wise use and care of natural resources, with a focus on soil and water, for long-term sustainability in a changing environment.

Contact

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2084
E-mail: soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov
Facebook: www.facebook.com/rswcd



2026-2027 Conservation Education Mini-Grant Application

Please respond to the following questions. Expand response areas and attach additional pages as necessary.

Applicant's Name: _____ Title/Position: _____

Applicant's E-mail: _____ Applicant's Phone: _____

School: _____

School Address: _____

Principal's Name: _____ Principal's E-mail: _____

1. Project Title:
2. Briefly describe the proposed project.
3. How will this project promote natural resource conservation and conservation education?
4. I am applying for: ___ \$250 ___ \$500 ___ \$750 ___ \$1,000
5. Project Budget (add additional rows as necessary):

Item	Unit Cost (\$)	Quantity	Total Cost (\$)
Total (\$)			

6. If your proposed project will cost more than the Mini-Grant award amount you requested above, how will the rest of the project be funded? Do you have any committed or potential sources of matching funding?



7. Project timeline: Describe your project's timeline. Assume mini-grants will be awarded by October 15.
8. Student Involvement:
 - a. How many students will be involved in this project? List by grade.
 - b. How will students be involved in this project?
9. Collaboration: Describe if and how other faculty members, staff, parents, project mentors, local businesses, or community volunteers will be involved with the project.
10. Educational Outcomes: How will this project enhance student learning? Please include any state academic standards and/or school or classroom learning goals this project will be used to address.
11. Optional Supporting Materials: You are welcome but not required to submit captioned photographs, letters of support, or other materials demonstrating why your project deserves to receive a Conservation Education Mini-Grant. (Tip: At least one letter of support and at least one photo are recommended. These may be submitted, along with the application, via US Mail or email per the instructions below.)
12. Administrator certification: A school administrator (principal or headmaster) must certify they are aware of this grant proposal, support the proposed project, and, if the project is selected for funding, will allow the project to be installed or completed on school property. Please have your school administrator either sign on the line below OR submit a separate certification (via US Mail or email per the instructions below) acknowledging their support for this project.

Administrator's Signature

Date

Submit your application and any optional supporting materials by US Mail or email to:

Richland Soil and Water Conservation District
2020 Hampton Street, Room 3063A
Columbia, SC 29204
Phone: (803) 576-2084
E-mail: soilandwater@richlandcountysc.gov

Application Deadline: September 24, 2026