

# North Bay Watershed Association

## Executive Director Report

TO: BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
FROM: Andy Rodgers, Executive Director  
SUBJECT: Proposal of Small Grants and Scholarship Program

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**Summary:** Consider Approval and Launch of Proposed Small Grants and Scholarship Program

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### Background

Historically, the North Bay Watershed Association (NBWA) successfully sponsored and supported organizations and individuals in the north bay region by offering opportunities to apply for small grant project funding as well as scholarships to attend NBWA's biennial conference. Over multiple years, the program was administered as funds became available and projects meeting NBWA's objectives were proposed. Applications were reviewed by staff and the NBWA Board determined the grant and scholarship awards.

Since the small grants and scholarship programs have not been utilized since prior to the pandemic, the NBWA Board now seeks to rekindle the program with a more defined structure, clear guidelines, and facilitative procedures. This staff report provides a summary outcome of hard work by staff, a focused subcommittee, and input along the way from the full Board. The small grants and scholarship program development subcommittee includes:

- Pamela Meigs, Ross Valley Sanitation District
- John Shribbs, City of Petaluma
- Elizabeth Patterson, Solano County Water Agency
- Rob Carson, MCSTOPPP
- Sabrina Marson, NBWA staff
- Andy Rodgers, NBWA staff

The subcommittee was formed in August 2024 to consider a myriad of program design alternatives and determine a simple and appropriately scaled program to efficiently advance NBWA goals and objectives in the north bay region. The subcommittee's responsibilities include:

- Define primary program goals and objectives.
- Develop guidelines for program eligibility, and application and selection processes.
- Establish procedures for managing applications, reviewing submissions, and distributing funds.
- Create a Program Committee to oversee implementation of the program.
- Assess the program's performance and recommend adjustments to enhance effectiveness.

This program will be additive to our north bay communities and bring needed resources to local entities and individuals in need of financial support.

## Scholarships and Small Grants Program Summary

In developing a small grants and scholarship program, the committee made a concerted effort to encompass a variety of core principles: simplicity, effectiveness, adaptability, and flexibility, ensuring the program succeeds and remains sustainable for consecutive years. The initiative was crafted to promote innovation and actively involve youth and support opportune priorities such as water industry workforce development. Furthermore, the program fosters collaboration among public agencies, encourages community engagement, and supports meaningful projects. Ultimately, the program is designed to encourage projects that demonstrate measurable environmental and community benefits.

- Total FY 2024/25 Program Funding: \$60,000
  - Scholarships: \$10,000
  - Small Grants: \$50,000
- Annual Review of Funding Allocation by Board preceding announcement of program availability
- Set dates for application submission and review.
- Application review and recommendation by Program Subcommittee
- Board Direction: Approve and award scholarship and grant amounts
- Fund Rollover: Unused funds roll over to the next year
- Returned Awards: Credited back to the Program
- Funding Duration: One time, no guarantee of future funding
- Annual Review: Fund amount reviewed and adjusted by the Program Subcommittee for Board approval.

### *Scholarship Administrative Categories:*

Conference Access Scholarship (also known as the Carl Morrison Conference Scholarship)

- Up to \$500 per scholarship
- NBWA sponsored events
  - i.e. Registration for a full day at NBWA's biennial conference and closing reception

Watershed Education Scholarship

- Up to \$1,000 per scholarship
- Scholarships awarded annually
- Any age
- Reside or work within the NBWA boundary (*lands draining to the San Pablo Bay*)
- For any educational institution or purpose

### *Small Grant Administrative Categories:*

Project and Educational Program Development Grants (application required)

- Projects (i.e., focused on achieving goals within a set timeframe)
- Developing/Implementing Educational Programs

Board Initiated Grants (application optional)

- Board may make grants to deserving recipients on its own initiative and timeline.

NBWA Subcommittee and Awardee will work together on how to define performance measurements for use of funds so as not to be rigid or burdensome to awardee staff.

Eligible Recipients include:

- Non-profit 501(c)(3) organizations
- Municipalities
- Tribes
- Public/Private Educational Institution
- Projects/Programs benefiting NBWA residents

While the staff report provides a general outline of the program, the subcommittee continues to work diligently on the finer details of the administrative side. This includes developing outreach plans, refining application materials, and updating the website to ensure seamless communication and accessibility. A soft launch of the program is aimed for April 2025.

### Staff Recommendation

Staff recommends the Board approve Scholarship and Small Grants Program Outline.

### Fiscal Information

The \$60,000 (Scholarships: \$10,000 and Small Grants: \$50,000) will be funded by the current Unassigned Reserves.

### Vote Required

Two-thirds majority.

### List of Attachments

1. None.

### Contact

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