



OPERATIONS GRANT GUIDELINES 2016

MN Severe Storms Conference
PO BOX 46171
Plymouth, MN 55446

Email: grants@mnssc.org

Website: www.mnssc.org

OPERATIONS GRANT GUIDELINES

MISSION

It is the mission of the Minnesota Severe Storms Conference to:

- Train spotters and chasers to improve observational skills, reporting accuracy and personal safety
- Equip spotters and chasers with information about the latest tools and technologies that can be utilized to observe and report severe weather
- Connect members of the weather community in order to improve the severe weather reporting network

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The MN Severe Storms Conference Operations Grant provides non-profit organizations funds up to \$1,000 to purchase equipment or other tangible assets and related supplies and services in order to improve Skywarn operations.

Operational grants may be used for projects that:

- Enhance any of the following that are currently in use for Skywarn operations (may include hub or spoke systems):
 - Repeaters
 - Repeater antenna systems
 - Repeater radio/controller systems
 - Echolink related equipment (only when RF-based communications are not practical)
 - Net control equipment
 - Radio systems
 - Antenna systems
- Establishment of reporting resources in currently underserved areas (must demonstrate the presence of an existing spotter base that will utilize the equipment)
 - Repeaters
 - Repeater antenna systems
 - Repeater radio/controller systems
 - Echolink related equipment (only when RF-based communications are not practical)

ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the operations grant, you must be located within the state of Minnesota and/or the Chanhassen, MN CWA. Organizations need not be formally incorporated, nor do they need to have 501(c)3 status. Governmental and for-profit organizations are not eligible.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- The operations grant will provide funds up to 80% of your total project cost, not to exceed \$1,000. You must match or raise the remaining 20% from other sources.
- The project must advance the mission of the MN Severe Storms Conference and must demonstrate the potential for significant or long-term impact for Skywarn operations.
- Personnel expenses may include only services directly related to equipment installation or setup.
- Limited and reasonable expenses related to the maintenance of equipment such as warranties or other service agreements may be included.

- You will be required to submit a final report demonstrating completion of the project and achievement of planned goals. The report is due **September 30, 2016**.
- You are encouraged to send a representative to the 2016 MN Severe Storms Conference to participate in the public announcement of the grant award.
- You will be required to discuss your project at the 2017 MN Severe Storms Conference (date TBA).

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications must be received by February 28, 2016. Late applications will not be accepted.

APPLICATION PROCESS

- Mail completed applications to:

MN Severe Storms Conference
PO Box 46171
Plymouth, MN 55446
- The grant guidelines and application form can be downloaded at www.mnssc.org.
- Complete the application PDF form or generate your own forms with the same information in the same format. Handwritten applications will not be accepted. Keep a copy of your entire application for your files.
- Your application must include ALL required materials, including:
 1. Applicant Summary
 2. Project Budget – provide explanatory notes for expenses and other sources of income
 3. Statement of income and expenses for most recently completed calendar or fiscal year – if you do not have this information, please include a statement explaining why.
 4. Narrative – see Narrative tips – limited to five pages
 5. Equipment Specifications and at least two estimates/bids
 6. Completed W-9 – Grant award may be considered taxable income. Please consult your tax professional.
 7. Certification Signatures
- Email grants@mnssc.org with any questions that come up while completing your application. Application errors or grant requests that do not provide sufficiently detailed descriptions may reduce the size of your award or make the application ineligible. We highly encourage you to take advantage of this opportunity.
- A grant committee made up of members of the weather community will review all applications and make the final decision on an award recipient or recipients. The grant committee members are not affiliated with the MN Severe Storms Conference other than in an advisory role solely related to the grant review process. All decisions are final and cannot be appealed.
- All applicants will receive a letter notifying them of the committee’s decision by **March 31, 2016**.
- Grant money will be disbursed to the award recipient(s) via check by **March 31, 2016**.
- The earliest start date for the award recipient’s project is **April 1, 2016**. Public announcement of award recipient will be made at the 2016 MN Severe Storms Conference.

NARRATIVE TIPS

The narrative should describe the need your organization will address. This is the most critical part of the application and should take the most time for you to complete. This section is your chance to describe your organization and project in detail, and convince the grant committee to choose your project. Your narrative should be five pages or less.

Items your narrative should address:

- Describe your organization in detail
- Review the mission and history of your organization and highlight your accomplishments
- Describe your project in detail
- Demonstrate financial stability of your organization
- Demonstrate ability to maintain project equipment in the future
- Explain why your proposal should be supported and what your expected outcomes are
- Develop your method of evaluation and make sure the goals you have set are measurable; describe how the results will be measured

KEY DATES

January 1, 2016	Grant application cycle begins
February 28, 2016	Grant application deadline
March 31, 2016	Award recipient(s) announced, grant money disbursed
April 1, 2016	Earliest project start date
Spring 2016 (TBA)	Public announcement of award winner at 2016 MN Severe Storms Conference
September 30, 2016	Final report deadline
Spring 2017 (TBA)	Presentation of project at 2016 MN Severe Storms Conference