

# Dane County Land & Water Resources Department: Dane County Free Native Plant and Storm Drain Mural Grants help local groups take action to protect area waters

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MADISON, January 6, 2022 – The Dane County Land & Water Resources Department and the Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership are currently accepting grant applications for their Storm Drain Mural Program and Free Native Plants for Schools and Communities Program. Both grants aim to engage local groups in projects that protect area waters.

“Dane County is deeply invested in protecting our local waters, but we can’t do it alone. We hope that through these grants we can encourage groups to start their own projects to reduce runoff into our lakes, rivers, and streams and make sure only rain enters the storm drain,” said Dane County Executive Joe Parisi.

The [Free Native Plants for Schools and Community Projects](#) program helps provide schools and community groups with free native plants. Native plants increase infiltration and reduce soil compaction through their deep root systems, reducing stormwater runoff and pollution into area waterways. Once established, native plants require little maintenance besides occasional weeding. They also add beauty to the landscape and provide important food and habitat to wildlife and pollinators. Since the program began in 2016, more than 19,000 plants have been distributed to 100 different schools and community groups, including neighborhood associations and community centers. Schools and community groups located within Dane County are encouraged to apply. An interactive map of projects that have received plants in the past and an application form are available on the [program webpage](#). Applications are due by February 1.

The [Storm Drain Mural Program](#) uses art to educate Dane County residents about stormwater pollution. Water that enters a storm sewer often travels to local waterways without being cleaned—carrying trash, soil and other pollutants to our lakes, rivers, and streams. The goal of these colorful murals is to capture the attention of those who pass by, help them understand where the stormwater that enters their storm drain flows, and get them thinking about what they can do to keep the drains and our area waters clean.

Led by Dane County, the Madison Area Municipal Stormwater Partnership, and local artists, the Storm Drain Mural Program has painted 40 murals across 15 Dane County communities since 2018. Municipalities, organizations, schools, and community groups located in Dane County that are interested in having an area storm drain mural painted are encouraged to apply. Applicants have the option to assist with the mural design and painting or choose from a catalogue of pre-made designs. An application form is available on the [program webpage](#). Applications are due by February 15.