

# Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water<sup>®</sup> 2023 Partner Agreement

Blue Thumb—Planting for Clean Water<sup>®</sup> is a network of clean water and native plant stewards creating change to bridge the gap between knowledge and action by offering resources and programs to Minnesotan residents. Our *Finest on Earth*<sup>™</sup> **Blue Thumb Partners** include local governmental units, non-profit organizations, and private companies all working toward the same goals. Blue Thumb is coordinated by Metro Blooms non-profit.



## Our Challenge

56% of Minnesota's lakes and rivers that we all enjoy and depend on are impaired. The EPA defines runoff as the nation's number one threat to the water quality of our lakes, rivers, streams and wetlands. However, much of the general public is unaware of how runoff from their property impacts our clean water or how they can make a difference.

## Our Shared Vision

Blue Thumb engages with communities and shares accessible knowledge and resources to protect our environment and create a more sustainable future. We are leading the way in changing landscaping norms among professionals and residents. We work towards building pollinator habitat and clean water resources supported by beautiful and ecologically functional landscapes that minimize runoff in cities, towns and suburbs.

## Our Impact

- Partnerships with 50+ organizations including cities, water governing bodies, businesses and nonprofits
- Access to professional display and education materials to distribute to property owners
- Opportunities to network with and support like-minded professionals
- Trusted native plant nurseries and landscape contractors
- Active social media and website with popular native plant selector and partner finder tools
- Workshops for residents on topics including raingardens, resilient yards, turf alternatives, and healthy soils
- Train-the-Trainer workshops for professionals and staff on partner-directed subjects like maintenance

Go to [bluethumb.org/become-a-partner/](https://bluethumb.org/become-a-partner/) to fill out the partner agreement online.



## Blue Thumb Partner Benefits

Blue Thumb is a resource-sharing, information hub connecting public partners, private partners and the general public with each other.

### **Website: A Helping Hand and One-Stop Shop**

Bluethumb.org is a one-stop shop for thousands of residents and professionals looking to learn more about planting for clean water and pollinators. It includes a plant-finder tool, DIY instructions and videos, grant opportunities, a job board, clean water and pollinator events, and a partner-finder tool to help connect residents and potential clients with Blue Thumb partners.

### **Education, Outreach and Marketing Expertise**

Blue Thumb uses its large and growing presence on social media, through website traffic, and at events and workshops to call attention to: the problem of runoff and actions that residents can take to address it; native plants, trees, and shrubs; clean water news and events; and the efforts of our Blue Thumb partners. We are shaping the conversation about planting for clean water and pollinators. Blue Thumb partners have access to educational displays, pamphlets and handouts for print, and other partner-developed materials. Partners also receive marketing support.

### **Professional Development & Finest On Earth Networking**

Blue Thumb Partners are part of a robust and diverse network of like-minded organizations and professionals, receiving hands-on professional development on timely topics at partner meetings and other opportunities throughout the year. These have recently included Resilient Yards, Turf Alternatives, Stormwater Benefits of Trees, Clean Water Communication, Healthy Soils, Buckthorn Remediation, and Equitable Engagement. Additionally, partners are able to network and get connected with each other, utilizing each others' expertise and forming their own partnerships.

#### **Private Partners Value:**

- Blue Thumb workshops offer partners as local resources. Workshop attendees receive partner materials and meet with partner landscape designers.
- Our online partner finder tool refers thousands of website visitors to partners each year. Government partners also direct their residents to the partner finder, connecting project-ready residents to partners.
- Gain expanded reach through our state-wide Lawns to Legumes program pages on our website, bringing in around 70,000 page views yearly.
- Blue Thumb's presence at the State Fair and other events are opportunities to meet potential clients in creating ecologically beneficial landscapes.
- Blue Thumb helps set apart companies that have an environmental focus.

#### **Public Partners Value:**

- Blue Thumb Partners receive a discount on workshops and educational materials.
- Additional shared partner resources and displays means that partners needn't reinvent the wheel, and makes public education and outreach events a breeze.
- Blue Thumb workshops for residents help reach MS4 permitting requirements and educational goals, and are demonstrated to help homeowners convert knowledge into action.
- Public partners want their residents to install BMPs, but cannot recommend specific companies. Blue Thumb's online partner finder is a great resource for their residents.
- Blue Thumb provides extra help publicizing clean water events, programs, activities, and ways to get involved.

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# Blue Thumb Planting for Clean Water® Partner Fee Structure

## Fee Structure

Fees are a necessary part in helping **Blue Thumb – Planting for Clean Water®** achieve our vision and offer all the partner benefits outlined. Partners may fill up to **50% of fees (max \$500) with volunteer action hours on subcommittees and at events, or with in-kind donations such as plants for the state fair exhibit.**

**Nonprofits and volunteer-led organizations** have the option to fulfill their full partner fee through service hours.

## Volunteer Action Hours

Each action hour is counted as a \$50 contribution. **“Volunteer Action Hours”** are limited to those performed within a subcommittee, or under the direction of a subcommittee (i.e. helping at the State Fair or a partner event).

Any unfulfilled volunteer hours will be invoiced at year end. Your volunteer involvement is encouraged and greatly appreciated whether or not you provide the full cash contribution to the program.

## Blue Thumb Subcommittees

In 2021, we launched subcommittees that will help plan and implement organizational planning. These subcommittees are headed by and populated with Blue Thumb Partners, and supported by Metro Blooms staff where appropriate and as needed.

Subcommittee options and details are listed on the following page.

## Partner Fees

We’ve simplified partner fees to be based on the size of your organization. We’ve also included a fee range for your consideration. The minimum partner fees are equal to or less than previous years’ fees.

### Small Organizations: \$300 - \$900

- Business (Gross revenue < \$500,000)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget < \$500,000)
- City (Population < 5,000)
- County / SWCD (Population < 50,000)
- Watershed District (Taxable Market Value < \$1 Billion)

### Medium Organizations: \$600 - \$1,800

- Business (Gross revenue \$500,000 - \$1,000,000)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget \$500,000 - \$1,000,000)
- City (Population 5,000 - 50,000)
- County / SWCD (Population 50,000 - 400,000)
- Watershed District (TMV \$1 - \$5 Billion)

### Large Organizations: \$1,200 - \$10,000

- Business (Gross revenue > \$1 Million)
- Nonprofit, WMO (Annual budget > \$1 Million)
- City (Population > 50,000)
- County / SWCD (Population > 400,000)
- Watershed District (TMV > \$5 Billion)



## Blue Thumb *Finest on Earth*<sup>TM</sup> Partner Service Opportunities

### Maintaining Our Success

To maintain Blue Thumb's success, we need dedicated partner time contributions. We are asking partners to help plan and implement various divisions of the program. Hours served go toward a reduction of membership fees at \$50 per hour. Up to 50% (max \$500) of the total fee may be paid in service hours (up to 100% for nonprofits and volunteer-led organizations).

**Please review the adjacent subcommittee options. Note that some subcommittees will also put a general call out for volunteers where appropriate (i.e. helping set up and/or staff the state fair exhibit or other events).**

We encourage partners to consider serving on a subcommittee. Some subcommittees have a seasonality to their workload, which our Blue Thumb partners can understand. With that in mind, subcommittee chairs also understand that partners may not be able to attend every meeting or event, but we value your input and welcome you to join a subcommittee.

If you want to learn more about a subcommittee, please reach out to the listed subcommittee chair. If one isn't listed then Stephanie at [shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov](mailto:shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov) or Jacqueline at [jacqueline@metroblooms.org](mailto:jacqueline@metroblooms.org) can help you.

**Please note: Blue Thumb Partners hosting Minnesota Water Stewards may use MWS volunteer hours to help fulfill their volunteer action hours.**

### Blue Thumb Subcommittees

#### Membership Recruitment and Retention

- Grow and sustain membership. Define partner benefits and sponsorship opportunities.
- Chaired by: Beth Carreño; [bcarreno@ricecreek.org](mailto:bcarreno@ricecreek.org)

#### Workshop Development & Promotions

- Help plan workshop content and promotions.
- Chaired by: Sage Passi; [sage.passi@rwmwd.org](mailto:sage.passi@rwmwd.org)

#### EJ Hub

- Build Equity into Blue Thumb and share with partners.
- Chaired by: Stacey Lijewski; [Stacey.Lijewski@hennepin.us](mailto:Stacey.Lijewski@hennepin.us)

#### Resources & Materials

- Develop and champion Blue Thumb resources.
- Chaired by: Amy Juntunen; [amy@jass.biz](mailto:amy@jass.biz)

#### Partner Meetings

- Plan and host partner meetings: decide themes/topics, locations, and speakers.
- Open chair

#### Year End Recognition Event

- Plan and throw the winter partner recognition event.
- Chaired by: Beth Carreño and Stephanie Hatzenbihler; [bcarreno@ricecreek.org](mailto:bcarreno@ricecreek.org) & [shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov](mailto:shatzenbihler@rochestermn.gov)

#### State Fair & Engagement

- Decide and plan exhibit theme and other engagement events.
- Chaired by: Bre Bauerly; [bre@mnlcorp.com](mailto:bre@mnlcorp.com)

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## Blue Thumb Planting for Clean Water® Fee for Service Structure

### Fee for Service Structure

Fees are a necessary part in helping **Blue Thumb** achieve our goals. We recognize that some organizations have an easier time paying directly for services than for partnership dues. To that end, we've developed an "on-ramp" for potential partners to join Blue Thumb through the purchase of services or materials. Please contact us with any questions.

### Partner Fees

For a full definition of partner fees and organizational determination, see the Partner Fee Structure page, above. Non-partners can purchase services and materials at the standard cost and apply the designated proportion of that cost to a partner fee, if they choose to.

**Small Organizations: \$300 - \$900**

**Medium Organizations: \$600 - \$1,800**

**Large Organizations: \$1,200 - \$10,000**

### Blue Thumb Sponsorships

We are also offering marketing and program sponsorships as another way to promote partners and support programs. To learn more, please email Jacqueline Nguyen ([jacqueline@metroblooms.org](mailto:jacqueline@metroblooms.org)) and/or indicate your interest on the online partner agreement form.



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