



Public Land Survey System Monument Grant Requests

Overview

Discover the significance of the Public Land Survey System (PLSS)! Instituted in 1785, this system divides land into townships and sections, simplifying land identification and descriptions, and enabling efficient land management and real estate transactions. PLSS monumentation involves physically marking important PLSS locations, such as corners of a section or township, with markers called monuments.

In Minnesota, where PLSS surveys were pivotal for early settlement and development, neglect threatens the integrity of these historic markers. But change is underway.

Thanks to critical legislation passed last year, Minnesota is investing \$9.7 million in the Monument Grant Program, empowering counties to preserve and update PLSS records and monuments. This initiative ensures that our state's property infrastructure endures.

The impact? Immense! By maintaining the PLSS, certainty and stability of land boundaries will be provided. A stable PLSS will support infrastructure development, land management, and environmental stewardship.

The PLSS isn't just history—it's our foundation. Join us in preserving this vital system, securing Minnesota's legacy for future generations.

Find more information on the [Preserving the Public Land Survey System](#) webpage.



Brass-capped aluminum pipe monument (front) compared to previous wood post monument (back).

Initiated Requests for Funding

The PLSS Monument Grant Request for Proposal (RFP), launched on February 1, 2024, closes on April 5 for full applications. Prior to this, applicants were required to submit a letter of intent by February 22. This step aimed to assess county interest and the demand for PLSS work and funding.

Grants range from \$50,000 to \$300,000, and counties can submit multiple requests. This document shares a summary of the estimated scope of proposals based on received letters of intent. The available grant funds of \$9.1 million (after administrative costs) will not meet the anticipated requests of over \$16 million.

The response indicates significant interest and need for PLSS preservation funding, signaling that current one-time funding falls short of demand.

Funding requests reflect current challenges:

- Rural counties have conflicting characteristics of vast area and significant public lands vs. limited tax base and low population.
- The overwhelming backlog of PLSS remonumentation in most counties poses a daunting financial burden.
- Even counties equipped with survey programs struggle due to funding and staff shortages for PLSS remonumentation.
- Inflation and labor shortages in Minnesota exacerbate financial strains on counties.
- County recorder funds often fall short or are depleted, rendering them inadequate for PLSS remonumentation.
- Current PLSS preservation heavily relies on private surveyors providing services to private landowners or county projects.



65 Counties
responded to the RFP with a letter of intent.



70 Applications
have been initiated for funding requests.

Corners to be Remonumented

13,503

Total

193

Average

Survey Records to be Updated

57,332

Total

819

Average

Anticipated Requests

\$16,168,454

Total

\$230,978

Average

Years to Complete Remonumentation

0-100

Total

20

Average

Annual Funding Needed to Remonument

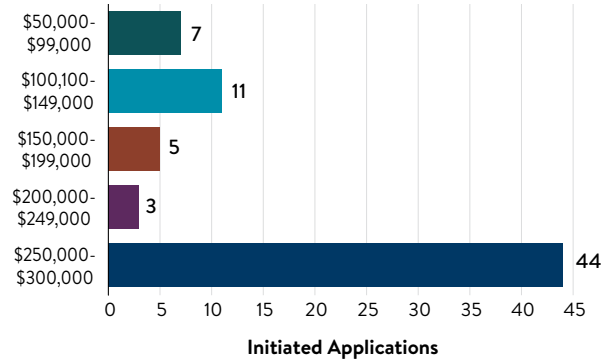
\$13,500,000

Total

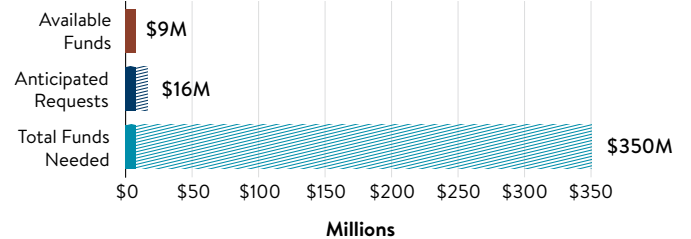
\$210,000

Average

Anticipated PLSS Monument Grant Requests



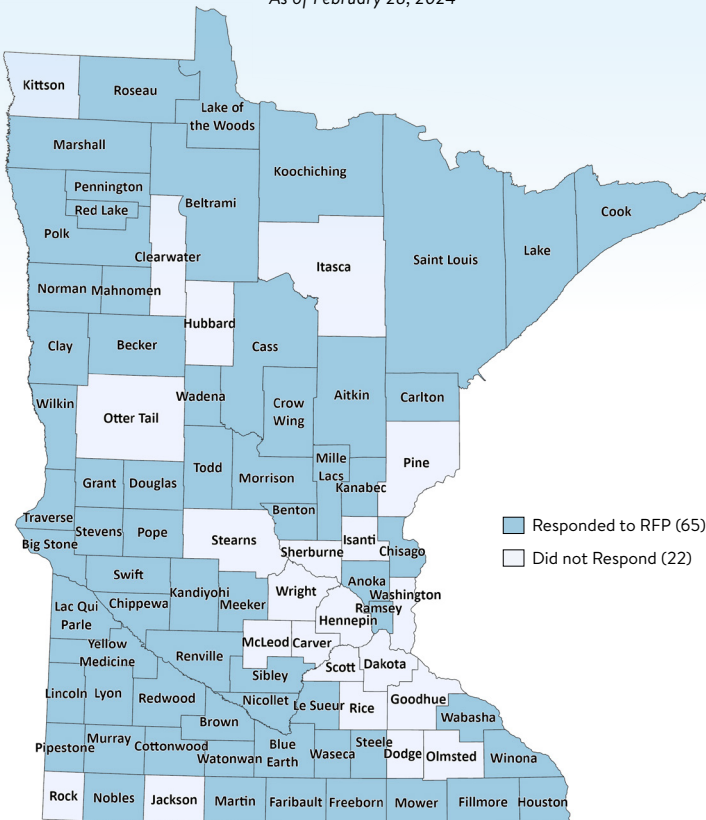
Current vs. Long-Term Funding Needs



The 65 responding counties indicated that it would take an average of **20 years** (up to 100) to complete all remonumentation needs of the applicants, totaling \$270 million. This is in alignment with the Minnesota Association of County Surveyors estimate that it would take **\$350 million** to complete remonumentation statewide, preserving more than 162,000 monuments.

Counties Responding to the PLSS Monument Grant RFP

As of February 28, 2024



Next Steps

- Counties will complete the full grant applications due April 5, 2024.
- The Geospatial Advisory Council (GAC) PLSS Preservation Committee, a cross-sector team, will evaluate applications prioritizing criteria defined in the legislation.
- Selected grantees will be announced April 30, 2024.
- Workplans will be approved, and grant projects will begin May 2024.
- Project work, evaluation, and final reimbursements are to be completed by March 31, 2026.

Questions about the PLSS grants? Contact MnGeo at gisinfo.mngeo@state.mn.us