

Wetland Program Development Grants
Notice of Funding Opportunities (NOFOs)

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency

“Frequently Asked Questions”

The goals of the EPA’s wetland program include increasing the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition. In pursuing these goals, the EPA seeks to develop the capacity of all levels of government to develop and refine effective, comprehensive programs for wetland protection and management.

What are Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs)?

WPDGs are assistance agreements awarded to state, Tribal, local government agencies and interstate/intertribal entities to develop or refine comprehensive state/Tribal/local programs which protect, manage, and restore wetlands.

These programs are meant to develop the capacity of State, Tribal, territory, and local governments to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands in the U.S. by conserving and restoring wetland acreage and improving wetland condition; and use one or more of the following “Core Elements” to achieve this goal:

1. monitoring and assessment.
2. voluntary restoration and protection.
3. regulatory approaches including CWA 401 certification; and
4. wetland-specific water quality standards

Comprehensive wetland programs help enable states, Tribes, territories and local governments to more effectively protect, restore, and manage their wetland resources. Wetland Program Plans (WPPs) for Tribes are an EPA priority and describe overall program goals along with broad-based actions consistent with the Core Elements Framework and more specific activities that help achieve goals. Timelines for the WPPs vary between 3-6 years, with more specific timeframes typically associated with WPP actions/activities.

Actions listed in a WPP should be consistent with the broad actions listed in the relevant core elements chapter of the CEF. A grant eligible version of the CEF can be found at [Appendix A: Program Development and Refinement Actions](#) EPA- approved Tribal WPPs can be found at [State and Tribal Wetland Program Plans](#).

A list of previously funded projects is posted at the [EPA’s Wetland Grants](#).

What is the statutory authority for Wetland Program Development Grants?

The statutory authority for WPDGs is Section 104(b)(3) of the Clean Water Act (CWA).

Does this funding opportunity allow for implementation of wetland programs?

No. Implementation of wetland programs is not eligible for award under this announcement. As stated in the NOFO:

An implementation project is one that is accomplished through the performance of

routine or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge. (All monitoring and mapping projects should transfer information or advance the state of knowledge and therefore are eligible under this grant.)

Where do I find this funding opportunity?

Catalog of Federal Assistance Number: 66.461

NOFOs will be posted on [grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) and at our webpage at [Wetland Program Development Grants](#).

Can foreign universities apply for a grant for a project outside the U.S.?

No, only U.S. states, territories, Tribes, and universities may apply for projects with the U.S.

If an applicant is not able to accept federal funds, can they have another entity serve as their fiscal agent?

Applicants must be able to accept federal funds and must be eligible under the Wetland Grant NOFO. In the scenario above, the fiscal agent would need to be the applicant. An applicant that can accept federal funds and is eligible under the RFP may appoint a fiscal agent if necessary.

What documents must be included in the application, and which are optional?

EPA requires a full application be submitted for all our grant competition opportunities. A full application package requires the following documents at time of submittal.

1. *Application for Federal Assistance (SF-424)*
2. *Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs (SF-424A)*
3. *EPA Key Contacts Form 5700-54*
4. *EPA Form 4700-4 – Preaward Compliance Review Report*
5. *Project Narrative (Project Narrative Attachment Form) prepared as described in Section 4 of the announcement*

Optional Documents:

6. *Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement, if applicable (Use Other Attachments Form)*
7. *Letters of Commitment, if applicable (Use Other Attachment Form)*
8. *Biographical sketches of major project managers, support staff members, or other major project participants for the proposed projects (Use Other Attachments Form found in the Optional Documents section)*

Applications submitted through grants.gov will be time and date stamped electronically. If you have not received a confirmation of receipt from EPA (not from Grants.gov) within 30 days of the application deadline, please contact Myra Price at 202-566-1225. Failure to do so may result in your application not being reviewed.

Does the Standard Form 424 need to be "physically signed" and included in the Narrative or is the SF424 only required to be signed as part of the grants.gov submittal

for which also Assurances are automatically signed during the grants.gov submittal?

The SF424 must be signed as part of the grants.gov submittal. It does not need to be physically signed and attached as part of the project narrative appendices.

Is an Interim Financial Conflict of Interest (COI) statement required, even if it is not applicable?

No, if it is not applicable you do not need to submit it. If EPA determines it is applicable in the future, we will ask you to submit it.

What are the page length requirements/limitations of the Project Narrative?

The Project Narrative must be no more than **twenty-six (26) double-spaced 8.5 x 11-inch pages** (a page is one side of paper) or thirteen (13) single-spaced pages except for documents specifically excluded from the page limit.

Pages should be consecutively numbered, and it is recommended that applicants use a standard 12-point type with 0.75-inch margins and that applicants format their Project Narrative as described below for ease of reading.

Pages to include in the page limit Cover Page, Project Description, budget, and timeline.

Pages not included in the page limit include any supporting materials such as maps (not contained in the body of the narrative), commitment letters from partners, annotated resumes and Quality Assurance/Quality Control Plans that the applicant chooses to provide are not included in the 26-page double-spaced limit for the Project Narrative and should be submitted as attachments

How should the Project Narrative be titled?

When submitting applications please do not use any special characters in the title as those files may not transfer to EPA from grants.gov. Please title projects with the name of the applicant, description of the project (monitoring, mapping, restoration, etc.), and/or the funding opportunity number or the word "WPDG". It might also be helpful if the title includes the date/or year the project was submitted to differentiate between projects.

Are there other potential application components to keep in mind?

Yes. Depending on what is proposed, the following information may need to be considered: Quality Assurance/Quality Control Statement (QA/QC requirements apply to the collection of environmental data). Environmental data are any measurements or information that describe environmental processes, location, or conditions; ecological or health effects and consequences; or the performance of environmental technology. For wetland mapping data requirements please check with Fish and Wildlife Service National Mapping website for details <https://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Contributed-Data.html>.

How do I apply?

All applications must be submitted electronically through Grants.gov as explained in Section IV of the NOFO. Applications must be submitted by the due date list on the first page of the NOFO by 11:59 P.M. EDT. Late applications will not be considered for funding.

Can I get a waiver from applying through grants.gov?

Applicants with limited or no access to the internet may request an exception by following the procedures outlined in the NOFO. The request must be received at least 15 calendar days before the application due date to allow enough time to negotiate alternative submission methods.

Can you submit one file or more in grants.gov?

You can submit only one file per form in grants.gov. You must submit one file/document under the Project Narrative Form. If applicable, we encourage the applicant to submit another single file/document using the Other Documents Form. We recommend that your Other Document Form contain the parts that make up your appendices if you are submitting appendices. This one file can contain your staff resumes, letters of support, maps, and supporting documents.

What do I do if I have problems with grants.gov?

Many applicants do experience challenges with grants.gov. The best way to address grants.gov problems is to NOT wait until the last day to fill out your grants.gov forms and submit your application. Some have submitted a grants.gov application, which they thought was error free, only to receive an error message 24 hours later, after the deadline has passed.

If you do run into problems, please contact grants.gov, as soon as possible. You can contact grants.gov at 1-800-518-4726 and/or at the email address provided in the NOFO (<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/support.html>).

They are open 24 hours a day and 7 days a week. Discuss your problem with grants.gov and document your discussion, for your records.

So that the EPA office can track problems with grants.gov, please notify the Wetland Grants Lead, as listed in the NOFO, and let them know what grants.gov problem you are having. Also let them know what you are doing to try to resolve it (e.g., contacting grants.gov). The Wetland Grant Lead for your NOFO is indicated in Section 1.E of the NOFO.

Please note that the EPA Wetland Grant Lead does not have technical expertise in grants.gov. It is important that you also contact grants.gov directly with any problems. You do not need to wait for a reply from the EPA Wetland Grant Lead before you contact grants.gov.

And, again, submitting your application well ahead of the deadline, will increase your chance of having grants.gov problems resolved prior to the deadline.

What track should I apply under?

There are two separate applicant tracks for eligible applicants. Eligible states, Tribes and territories can submit applications under either Track One-WPP or Track Two-No WPP.

If you are a state, Tribe or territory and your application/project is to develop a Wetland Program Plan (WPP) or if you already have an approved WPP and your application/project is to carry out some aspect of the WPP then that application/project can and should be

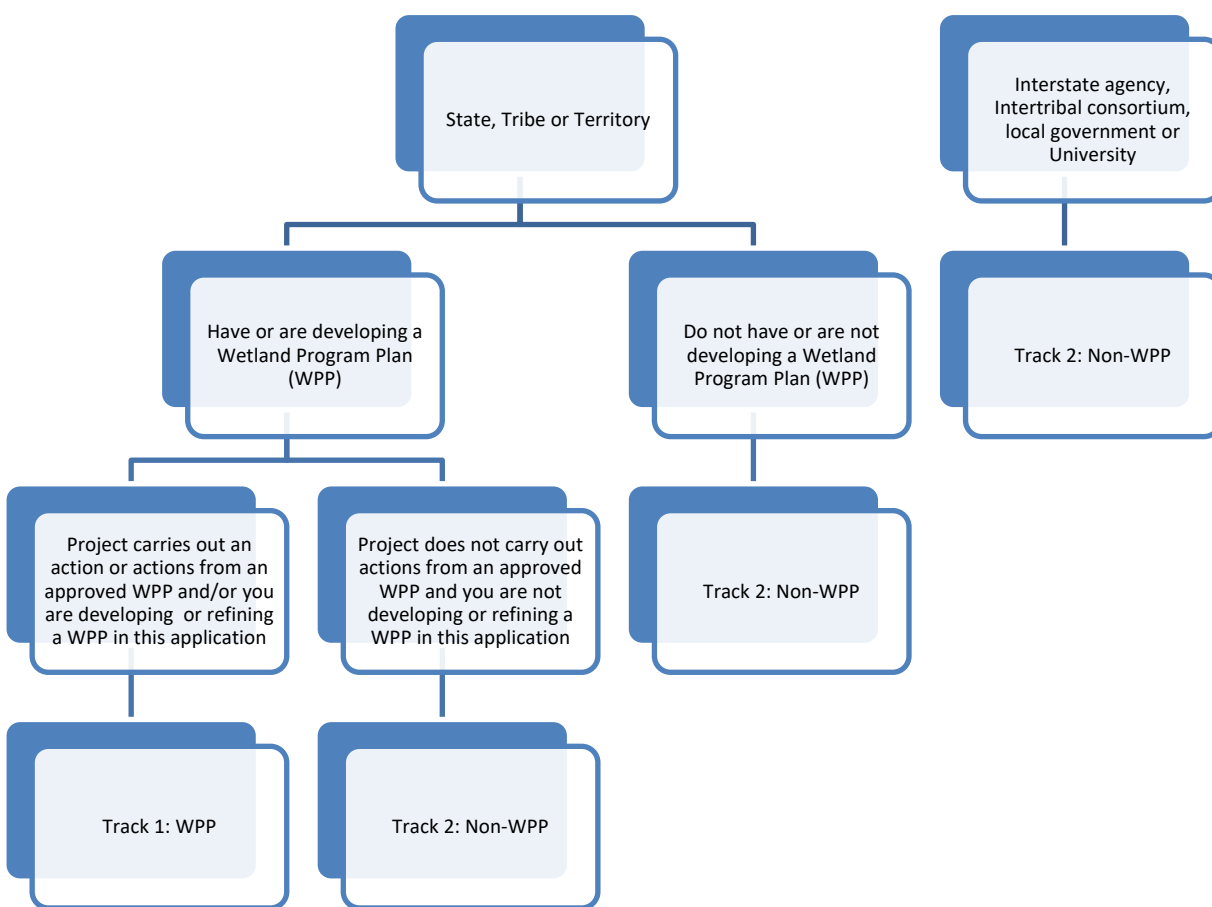
submitted under Track 1-WPP.

If you are a state, Tribe or territory applying to develop a WPP you can also include in that submittal a task that will develop your wetlands program while you are developing your WPP. An example may be to develop a WPP as well as a task to pilot or inventory wetlands on your Tribal lands.

If you are a Tribe and you do not have a WPP, are not planning on developing a WPP, or are submitting an application that is not carrying out some aspect of your approved WPP then you must submit that application/project under Track 2.

If you are an interstate agency, intertribal consortium, local government or university that is an agency of a state you must submit under Track 2.

Applicants under each track will only compete for awards against other applicants in their track. See Section 6 of the NOFO for further information.



Is there a preference given to Track 1: WPP over Track 2: Non-WPP?

There is no preference given to Track 1: WPP over Track 2: Non-WPP applications but typically Track 1: WPP has a larger pool of funds allocated to it so potentially more awards will be given to Track 1: WPP than Track 2: Non-WPP.

Will a proposal rank/score higher if they have an EPA approved Wetland Program Plan in place?

There are no additional points for having an EPA approved Wetland Program Plan; however, there are more funds available under Track One to accommodate the NOFO focus on developing wetland programs. The Region has discretion to move funds between the two tracks, if necessary.

Can I submit more than one application?

Applicants may submit more than one application under this NOFO under the applicable track. Each application must be separately submitted and be for a different project. In addition, state, Tribal or territory applicants may submit one or more application under each track, but each application must be submitted under either Track One: WPP or Track 2: Non-WPP.

Applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks.

Will we accept proposal for 1 year funding only?

Yes. We will accept proposals for 1 year funding. However, the next NOFO will not be announced for approximately two years. Applicants need to be aware there will be no grant announcement next fiscal year.

How much competition money is available?

The total amount of federal funding available under each announcement is given on page 1 of the NOFO and depends on Agency funding levels, which may vary from year to year, and other applicable considerations.

The EPA reserves the right to increase or decrease (including to zero) the total number of awards and dollar amounts for each Track or change the ratio of Track One: WPP to Track 2: Non-WPP assistance agreements it awards. Such change may be necessary as a response to the quality of applications received, the amount of funds awarded to the selected applicants, or budget availability.

Is there a match requirement?

Yes. All applicants must describe in their application how they will contribute the required minimum cost share/matching funds (see Section 2.B of the NOFO for information on the minimum non-federal 25 percent cost share/match requirement). In certain instances, the match requirement may be reduced if the state, Tribe, or territory is able to demonstrate the need to the appropriate EPA Regional Administrator. A Tribe may have their match reduced to zero if the award is placed into a Performance Partnership Agreement (PPG).

Can the match be reduced?

Yes, see Section 2.B. of the NOFO for additional information on match waivers.

Can Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) funds be used as match?

In general, most BIA assistance funds can be used for match. Please check with your BIA contact to determine whether their funds can be used as match for other federal grants. EPA GAP, CWA 319 or CWA 106 funds cannot be used as match for WPDGs.

Can staff salaries be used as cost share/match? Do salaries that come from other federal grants be used as cost share/match?

Yes, staff salaries for time spent on work for the grant that are not covered by the EPA wetlands federal grant funds can be used for match. Salaries paid for from another Federal source may count as match for this grant if it is allowable by the other grant program. Please check with your federal grant contact to determine whether their funds can be used as match for other federal grants.

What is the project period of awarded grants?

It is anticipated that the assistance agreements awarded under this announcement will have one to four-year project periods. If necessary, an additional year of time can be given under special circumstances.

Most awards are made and projects can start approximately one and a half to two months (45-60 days) after an applicant receives a selection of funding notice from the EPA Selection Official. If an applicant needs to start work before the time of award preaward cost 45 days or more before award may be allowed. Please notify your EPA Project Officer in writing (email) beforehand. All work done before award is at the applicants' risk in case an award is ultimately not made for any reason.

What is the difference between a subawardee that is located in the "other" budget category and sub-contractors found under "contracts" in the SF-424A form?

Subawardees are generally project partners and the like and are not providing commercial service. A commercial service is some that is normally paid for under normal business to the public or others. Contractors/subcontractors provide a service that is something normally charge anyone as a part of their normal business.

What if I name sub-awardees/sub-grantees and/or contractors in my project application? Pay careful attention to the information in the CONTRACTS AND SUBAWARDS provisions found at <https://www.epa.gov/grants/epa-solicitation-clauses>. Generally, a named contractor/subcontractor will only be reviewed as part of the application if the applicant indicates that they were obtained using a competitive process to the extent required by the procurement procedures listed in [2 CFR Part 200](#).

Never list or describe a contractor or subcontractor as a partner.

Can supplies such as trees to help restore wetlands be purchased with this funding opportunity?

If the trees will be used for a demonstration (as described in the NOFO and below) and/or a training restoration project, then yes purchasing trees would be allowable.

The description of a demonstration project is:

Demonstration projects must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or

approaches, where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project. A project that is accomplished through the performance of routine, traditional, or established practices, or a project that is simply intended to carry out a task rather than transfer information or advance the state of knowledge, however worthwhile the project might be, is not a demonstration and all or parts of the application will be eliminated from consideration. Such projects are implementation projects and are not eligible for funding under this announcement. Individual project tasks that are for program implementation are not eligible for funding.

Can funds for a WPDG be included in a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG)?

Yes. States, Tribes, or intertribal consortium can place Wetland Program Development Grant funds into a PPG. Ideally, the PPG should be created and in place before the time of grant award or created concurrently with the award of the wetland grant funds. The proposed project must have a project period that is within the PPG project period. It cannot be longer than the PPG project period.

Is it allowable to put the milestone summary in table format, and if so, does it need to be doubled spaced?

Yes, feel free to put the milestone schedule in a table format. It doesn't have to be double-spaced just make sure that it is easily readable.

Would a bibliography be put in the attachments?

The optional attachments include pictures and maps, staff resumes, and support letters, etc. (See Section 4 of the NOFO). Bibliographies or literature citations are not required in proposals. If an applicant chooses to provide literature citations, this information should be outside the 26-page limit and in the attachments.

What other key links/resources should I know about?

Additional information, including information concerning deadline extensions or other modifications, can be found at <http://www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants> and www.grants.gov.

Who is the primary Agency Contact?

There is a primary Regional Contact that is describe in Section 1.E. Agency Contact Information of the NOFO. The EPA's preference is to contact the person listed in Section 1.E. of the NOFO about any questions you may have about the competition or our WPDG grant program. In addition, Myra Price, price.myra@epa.gov is the National Wetland Program Development Grant point of contact.

How will I know if my application will be funded?

Following the EPA's evaluation of applications, all applicants will be notified regarding their status via email to the point of contact listed on the SF-424 form.

What is the accountability and reporting requirements under this WPDG?

Performance reports and financial reports must be submitted at a minimum annually (most are semi-annually and may include quarterly check-in calls) and are not considered late until 30 days after the reporting period. The final report is due 120 days after the assistance agreement has expired. Recipients will be required to report direct and indirect environmental results from the work accomplished through the award. At the time of submitting the final report grantees will need to provide copies of project deliverables (outputs) if there are any other than the final report.

Programmatic reports should include activities for the reporting period any issues that may have occurred, forecasting for the next project period, and any outputs or outcomes that have occurred.

Reports should be submitted electronically to the EPA Project Officer.

Before close-out the assistance agreement the grantee should submit all deliverables including a 1-page summary of the project, a final programmatic report, a final financial report and finalize all billing of the agreement.

Would grant funds be provided to the grantee on an advance basis or on a reimbursement basis?

Funds for Wetland Program Development Grants are typically provided on an advance basis, unless the EPA requires a specific grantee to use reimbursement only. Recipient organizations should request only those funds required to meet **immediate** disbursement requirements and must disburse funds as soon as possible to minimize federal cash on-hand in accordance with Title 2: Grants and Agreements, Part 200-Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Section 200.305 which reads:

§ 200.305 Federal payment.

*(a) **Payments for States.** Payments for States are governed by Treasury-State Cash Management Improvement Act (CMIA) agreements and default procedures codified at [31 CFR part 205](#) and Treasury Financial Manual (TFM) 4A-2000, "Overall Disbursing Rules for All Federal Agencies."*

*(b) **Payments for recipients and subrecipients other than States.** For recipients and subrecipients other than States, payment methods must minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds from the Federal agency or the pass-through entity and the disbursement of funds by the recipient or subrecipient regardless of whether the payment is made by electronic funds transfer or by other means. See [§ 200.302\(b\)\(6\)](#). Except as noted in this part, the Federal agency must require recipients to use only*

OMB-approved, government-wide information collections to request payment.

(1) The recipient or subrecipient must be paid in advance, provided it maintains or demonstrates the willingness to maintain both written procedures that minimize the time elapsing between the transfer of funds and disbursement by the recipient or subrecipient, and financial management systems that meet the standards for fund control and accountability as established in this part. Advance payments to a recipient or subrecipient must be limited to the minimum amounts needed and be timed with actual, immediate cash requirements of the recipient or subrecipient in carrying out the purpose of the approved program or project. The timing and amount of advance payments must be as close as is administratively feasible to the actual disbursements by the recipient or subrecipient for direct program or project costs and the proportionate share of any allowable indirect costs. The recipient or subrecipient must make timely payments to contractors in accordance with the contract provisions.

(2) Whenever possible, advance payment requests by the recipient or subrecipient must be consolidated to cover anticipated cash needs for all Federal awards received by the recipient from the awarding Federal agency or pass-through entity.

Will there be future WPDG competitions?

EPA expects to hold future competitions for Wetland Program Development Grant depending on our federal budget and appropriation. Regional WPDG NOFOs should be held every two years on the odd numbered years. A Tribal-only WPDG NOFO should be released every two years on the even numbered years.

Can you apply to both the Regional WPDG NOFO and the Tribal WPDG NOFO?

Yes, Tribes and intertribal consortia can apply to both the appropriate regular Regional WPDG NOFO and the next Tribal WPDG NOFO with either the same application or different applications. If you submit the same application under both NOFOs and you score high enough to be funded in either competition you may be selected for funding under one or the other NOFO but not both. If you submit the same application under both NOFOs and you score high enough to be funded in one but not both NOFOs, you may only be selected for funding under that NOFO.

If you submit different applications under the Regional and Tribal WPDG NOFOs each submittal will be reviewed independently of the other.

If a project is funded under one competition, please do not submit it again during a subsequent competition because it will not be funded twice.

What if I have other questions?

Visit www.epa.gov/wetlands/wetland-program-development-grants for answers to frequently asked questions. Other questions about the NOFO must be submitted in writing via e-mail and must be received by the Agency Contact identified in Section 1.E, Agency Contact Information, before the date indicated on page 1 of the NOFO.

Do you have general advice on submitting grant applications?

In general, for any grant application you submit for any program, it is a good idea to:

- Read the request for proposals carefully.
- Understand the key focus of this grant-funding program.
- Comply with application requirements.
- Pay attention to deadline dates and times.
- Note the threshold eligibility criteria. If your application does not meet these criteria it cannot be reviewed in the competition.
- Note the ineligible activities and do not apply to fund those.
- Note the match requirement and make sure your proposal meets it.
- Note the format for applications and have your application follow it. Especially follow the page limitation as any information on pages beyond the page limit of 26 single-sided pages will be removed and not reviewed or scored.
- Read the selection criteria carefully, as this is what reviewers will use to score your proposal.
- Make key information easy to find for application reviewers.
- Have someone else go over your application before you send it in.
- Ask for feedback, if your proposal is not successful.

How do I link to the HUC in which the project takes place?

Use the USGS website (http://water.usgs.gov/wsc/map_index.html) to navigate to the 8-12 digit HUC in which the project will take place and copy that link into the proposal.

What is my first step if you are awarded a grant/cooperative agreement with EPA for wetland mapping?

Please visit the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) at http://www.fgdc.gov/standards/projects/FGDC-standards-projects/wetlands-mapping/2009-08%20FGDC%20Wetlands%20Mapping%20Standard_final.pdf and then to facilitate accurate data production and inclusion into the National Wetlands Database it is recommended that you visit the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's, National Wetlands Inventory, Contributed Data page at: <http://www.fws.gov/wetlands/Data/Contributed-Data.html> or contact them at Wetlands_Team@fws.gov, before work has started. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's, National Wetlands Inventory can help you with QA/QC requirements for mapping wetland projects.

Questions Regarding the Biennial Grant Cycle

Why did the Region decide to implement a 2-yr funding process?

It gives us the opportunity to provide two fiscal years of funding under one NOFO. The NOFO is not expected to change in concept from previous NOFOs and the focus is still Wetland Program Plans and the Core Elements Framework. In addition, going to a two-

fiscal year grant provides applicants with a greater ability to plan financially for more than one year at a time.

If an application doesn't get selected, can they reapply next year?

No. They will have to wait until the next grant cycle (in two years) to reapply.

If our application does not get selected under this competition, will the Region hold applications for the next solicitation?

No. All applicants will need to re-apply under the next Request for Applications in two years.

How will you handle second year funding?

All applications will be incrementally funded. Incremental funding will be determined based on an assessment of the workplan. The increments will be determined based on the budgets submitted with the work plan and how best to support the work under the project period.

What if the 2nd year(increment) of WPDG funding is less than the estimate 2nd year of funding amount allocated to EPA? How will that affect the incremental funds available for that 2nd year of funds?

If a Region receives less than the estimate, the grant may need to be amended to show that the budget will be cut by the percentage of the difference. The Project Officers assigned to each grant will work with the grantees to determine how, what and where to adjust the funding and work plan, if necessary.

Should the milestone schedule and budget narrative reflect the fact that WPDG funds are allocated in two separate allotments?

Yes, it should. For the WPDG competition, 50% of total funding is awarded in year one, and the remaining 50% in year two of the grant. Your milestone schedule and budget should reflect the breakdown of funding between all years of your grant, anticipating that 50% of the funding will be available in the first year, with the remaining funding available in the second year. The objectives and activities of your project should always align with the amount of funding requested and show that the funding will be used efficiently and in a timely manner.

When does the Intergovernmental Review clock start? Does it start at the time of grant submission or after an award has been announced?

The Intergovernmental Review process will begin when you submit the information

to the reviewing agency. It should be done just before you submit your application.

This needs to be done if your project will “move earth” including any demonstration restoration projects.

How do we know who the Project Officer is? Is it different for awards that included in a state's PPG?

If awarded a grant, you will receive notification of your assigned Project Officer when you receive your award document. If you choose to include your WPDG funds in your state, territory, or Tribal government Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), you will keep the same Project Officer for the PPG, but you will also have a technical reviewer (Wetlands Project Officer) assigned to you to review the workplan and progress on the WPDG project activities. You will have two Project Officers.

Does the double-spaced, portrait-style format also apply to tables you have in the application package? Specifically, can you do the milestone schedule table in landscape and the rest of the NOFO in portrait?

You may submit tables, including the milestone schedule, in landscape format. Please keep all tables double-spaced and ensure all information is legible. As a reminder, the page limit for application is 26 double-spaced pages, or 13 single-spaced pages. Any information submitted beyond the page limit (other than the forms not included as part of the page limit) will not be reviewed.

Can you talk about In-Lieu Fee Program eligibility?

Implementation of individual mitigation projects, mitigation banks, or in-lieu-fee mitigation programs are not eligible for funding. Applications that carry out studies that maybe part of an in-lieu fee program/instrument are eligible for funding, but the actual creation of an in-lieu fee instrument is not eligible for funding.

WPDG funds can be used to develop tools, procedures, studies, and/or programs to evaluate the ecological performance of compensatory mitigation projects (e.g., mitigation banks, in-lieu fee projects and permittee-responsible mitigation) and incorporate the results/findings/lessons learned into future compensatory mitigation project decision- making (Regulatory Core Element).

What weight do letters of support have in the grant proposal review?

Letters of support are not mandatory and are not specifically included as part of the scoring criteria. Letters of support can come from within or outside your agency/organization and can be used to further explain project partnerships. They can also be used to demonstrate how your proposed project aligns with other agencies/organizations, or your state, territory, Tribal, or local government initiatives.

Can applicants request a debriefing even if they were awarded to review scoring to

make future application improvements and gauge strengths/weaknesses?

Applicants who receive funding may request a debriefing; however, under [EPA Order 5700.5A1](#) – Policy for Competition of Assistance Agreements, we are only required to offer debriefings for unsuccessful applicants. Offering debriefings to successful applicants will be dependent upon staff resources in each given Region and the number of debriefings requested from awarded grantees.

5700.5A1 Section 16. b (3) states:

- (3) Provide applicants with timely notification of (i) any ineligibility determinations (e.g., notification that they were deemed ineligible by EPA for award consideration because they were not considered an eligible applicant or otherwise did not meet the threshold eligibility factors in the announcement) and
- (ii) decisions that they were not selected for award (e.g., notification to the applicant that they were not selected for award based on their ranking or scoring after an evaluation of their application/proposal against the evaluation and selection factors in Section V of the announcement).
- (4) Provide applicants with an opportunity for a timely debriefing to obtain a fuller explanation of why they were deemed ineligible for award consideration or not selected for award.

Can 25% of the match be in-kind?

Yes. Please refer to Section I.D, Cost Share (a.k.a. Match) of EPA's [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#) and [2 CFR 200.306](#) for further information on in-kind contributions and how to document the match in proposed budgets.

Can Track Two funds be moved to Track One if applications don't fulfill the budgets?

Yes. In the case that the requested funds do not meet the total dollar amount obligated to each track, EPA has the discretion to move funding from one track to another if necessary.

What is the maximum funding amount that can be requested for a single project?

The total funding available each competition varies depending on the EPA Region. Project ceiling amounts can be found in each NOFO in Section 2.A.(1) Other Eligibility Requirements.

Should the proposal be based on established management plans? So, can these be specific to specific reserves or do they have to be global plans for the state?

If available, yes, your project narrative should demonstrate how your project contributes to larger environmental management plans. The plans can be local, specific reserve plans and/or more comprehensive state plans. If these plans do not exist your application will not be affected. If such plans do exist and you do not include how your project fits into the plans, you may lose points for not including

this information. We do have the ability to look up this information and will see if you choose not to include it.

Can the funds be used to cover direct costs of state and federal agencies or by an organization that works with federal funds?

Yes, funds can be used on projects involving other federal agencies. Grant dollars can go out as a sub-agreement with another federal agency or federally funded agency. The federal agencies and/or organizations should be explicitly stated in the budget & budget narrative. During the budget review, a grant specialist might have additional questions about these agreements to ensure the costs are allowable and not being used as cost share/matching for another federal award.

Can activities running with federal funds be used for matching? Only state-funded activities?

Federal grant dollars generally cannot be used for cost-share/matching for other federal awards unless the Federal statute authorizing the program indicates this is permissible. Please refer to Section I.D, Cost Share (a.k.a. Match) of EPA's [Interim General Budget Development Guidance for Applicants and Recipients of EPA Financial Assistance](#) and [2 CFR 200.306](#) for further information on cost-share/match.

Can match be met by waiving overhead?

Yes. Overhead can be reported in direct or indirect cost sections of the budget.

In the case where an applicant voluntarily offers to reduce overhead and provides an explanation, the difference can be used as match.

If an applicant is updating their WPP (not as a part of their proposal), can they link their proposal to the new WPP or does their proposal need to reference the currently approved WPP?

To be eligible for Track 1, proposals should reference an approved WPP or propose developing a WPP. If an applicant is currently updating their WPP, it may be appropriate to crosswalk the connection between the current and future WPPs.

Can applicants propose using WPDG funds to purchase a drone or Unmanned Aircraft System (UAS) or Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV)?

Yes – while there are rules and compliance considerations to keep in mind – currently the EPA would allow the use of grant funds for UAS-related costs, as long as they would otherwise be allowable under the grant. Applicant should ensure their proposal is compliant with prohibitions at 2 CFR 200.216.

Applicants should review [EPA's UAS Policy \(Feb 2025\)](#) before submitting a proposal. Applicants should review the American Security Drone Act (ASDA) of 2023 (included in the National Defense Authorization Act of 2024) - [National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2024, 2023 Enacted H.R. 2670, 118 Enacted H.R. 2670, Part 2 of 3](#). The ASDA may place additional restrictions on the use of grant funds beginning on December 22, 2025. An additional resource may be the EPA UAS Program [EPA Unmanned Aircraft Systems \(UAS\) Program | US EPA](#).

From EPA's UAS Policy related to costs:

Grant (including Cooperative Agreement): EPA grantees are not restricted by 31 U.S.C. 1343(d) from using grant funds awarded from any appropriation account that is otherwise an appropriate source of funding for the grant (such as, for example, the State and Tribal Assistance Grants (STAG) account) for UAS-related costs so long as doing so would be within the scope of the grant and otherwise allowable under the grant regulations. Therefore, EPA grant and cooperative agreement recipients may use EPA awarded funds for UAS-related costs where the costs are reasonable and necessary for the performance of the Federal award. However, programs must not direct, encourage or suggest that financial assistance recipients transfer title or possession of UAS to EPA. Additionally, grantees are not subject to the NPM Established Categories and Conditions for UAS Uses as described in section 7 of this document.

EPA recommends applicant review updates (as of October 1, 2025) to thresholds in federal procurements - [Federal Acquisition Regulation: Inflation Adjustment of Acquisition-Related Thresholds](#).

- The micro-purchase threshold increases from \$10,000 to \$15,000
- The simplified acquisition threshold (SAT) increased from \$250,000 to \$350,000
- The executive compensation reporting threshold increases from \$30,000 to \$40,000