



DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES AND ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL
Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council
Fiscal Year 2024
Community Water Quality Improvement Grant
Request for Proposals (RFP)

Synopsis

The Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council is announcing a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support implementation projects and activities that focus on the developed landscape to improve water quality in impaired watersheds in Delaware. There is funding available in grants for *Community Water Quality Implementation Projects* within Delaware's developed landscape to improve water quality in impaired watersheds with established total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or watershed with an approved watershed restoration or pollution control strategy. Stormwater retrofits, stream and wetland restoration, implementation and evaluation of new Best Management Practices (BMPs), and other nonpoint source water pollution control projects not currently feasible for funding through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund program will be selected by the Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (DWIAC) through a competitive grant process for funding.

Important Dates

April 24, 2024

Proposals due to the DNREC NPS Program office no later than 4:30 p.m. Applications received after that time will not be reviewed.

June 2024

Grant Awards announced, and recipients notified.

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**Section I
Introduction and General
Guidelines**

Goal Statement:

The Community Water Quality Improvement Grant (CWQIG) is an annually determined set aside in the Delaware Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) Non-Federal Administrative Account. The program is designed to assist Delaware non-profit organizations, conservation districts, community organizations, and/or homeowner's associations with implementing projects or programs within Delaware's developed landscape to improve surface and groundwater quality in designated impaired watersheds consistent with specific plans developed for watershed improvements. Programs and projects selected will demonstrate innovative and/or environmentally beneficial and sustainable methods, techniques, and/or practices for water quality improvements with cost effective and measurable results.

In undertaking these projects, it is the intent that surface and ground water quality throughout the State of Delaware is measurably improved and that citizen education and actions regarding the waters of the State are benefited. The available funding should be used to assist with project/program implementation with a priority for projects that promote community involvement, leverage additional resources, further education and outreach, demonstrate innovative science, policy, and technology, and provide a project/program approach that is both measurable and transferable in water quality improvements obtained.

The proposal should be designed to demonstrate water quality improvements to local impaired waters on developed landscapes with traditional and/or innovative, yet sustainable and cost-effective approaches. In addition, these projects should lead to ways of approaching nonpoint source load reductions while also contributing knowledge of cost effective, sustainable new ways of doing business.

General Guidelines

This packet contains guidelines for completing an application for a Community Water Quality Improvement Grant. The projects will be selected for funding by the Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council through a competitive grant process. The distribution of these funds will be made according to policies and procedures set forth by the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council (WIAC). Applications shall be received and reviewed by the Division of Watershed Stewardship who will make recommendations to WIAC regarding their approval. The

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WIAC and its subcommittees have the responsibility for reviewing applications and shall make recommendations to the Secretary of DNREC who shall have sole authority for approval of funds from the CWSRF Non-Federal Administrative Account.

DNREC and the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council, as an advisory group to DNREC, reserve the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement.

DNREC and the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council as an advisory group to DNREC reserve the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Department policy and guidance, if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Any additional selections for awards will be made no later than 6 months after the original selection decisions.

**Section II
Specific Requirements**

Applicant Requirements

Applicants may be any Delaware non-profit organization, conservation district, community organization, and/or homeowner's association within the State of Delaware.

Agricultural operations and private for-profit firms are not eligible for these funds. Interested parties may enter into working arrangement with eligible applicant.

Eligible Costs

At least 75 percent of the award must be utilized for implementation of the project. Construction costs, project materials, and labor cost related directly to the construction/ implementation would be included. Up to 25 percent of the funds provided by this award may be used for administrative costs (personnel salaries, indirect costs, travel, and indirect costs), planning and/or design costs.

Engineering Requirements

DNREC and the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council, as an advisory group to DNREC, require an appropriate licensed professional seal construction plans. This applies to implementation projects along with innovative research projects that include construction. Grant reimbursement will not occur if sealed plans are not submitted prior to construction. DNREC reserves the right to waive the requirement on a case by case basis after review of the grant proposal.

Projects with over 5,000 square feet of disturbance must comply with the Sediment and Stormwater Regulations.

Frequency of Proposals

Applicants may submit up to two project proposals per grant cycle.

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Geographic Requirements

For a proposal to be considered eligible for funding, all work included in the proposals must take place within the State of Delaware.

Delaware's impaired watersheds with established total maximum daily loads (TMDLs) or watershed with an approved watershed restoration or pollution control strategy.

Ineligible Costs and Projects

Projects required by enforcement action taken by DNREC, punitive or penalty related requirements, required mitigation, and agricultural practices are ineligible for these funds. However, projects (with the exception of agricultural) that plan for improvements that may meet a permit condition are acceptable.

Expenses incurred prior to the issuance of a Purchase Order are not reimbursable.

Insurance Requirements

There are insurance requirements for grant recipients. Applicants should review their existing insurance coverages and determine if their existing insurance coverage meets the requirements set out below. If the Applicant's current insurance does not meet the requirements set out below, please explain in your submittal how any deficiencies in the required insurance coverages will be handled. A request for the reduction in liability insurance will be handled on a case by case basis.

Grant recipients shall maintain the following insurance during the grant term:

- Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance in accordance with applicable law, and
- Comprehensive General Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, and
- Medical/Professional Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate; or
- Miscellaneous Errors and Omissions - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, or
- Product Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, and

If required to transport state employees, Automotive Liability Insurance covering all automotive units used in the work with limits of not less than \$100,000 each person and \$300,000 each accident as to bodily injury and \$25,000 as to property damage to others.

A Certificate of Liability Insurance and/or copies of the insurance policies will be required before a grant agreement is executed.

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Matching Requirements

This grant does not require a cash match. Proposals will be evaluated on leveraging and preference is given to projects that include match, cost share, or leveraging by federal, local, or other state funds. If using volunteer hours for additional match, the dollar value for volunteer hours that should be used is \$29.56/hour¹.

Project Duration

Implementation of the project should not extend beyond **2 years** of the date of grant award. Research projects that will demonstrate innovative science will be a **3 year** grant with no less than a year dedicated to monitoring the project once implementation is complete.

Reporting Requirements

Award recipients will be required to submit quarterly status reports and a final report. Applicants receiving a grant award will be notified of specific reporting requirements in the grant award agreement.

Grantees are responsible for submitting detailed invoices at a period of no more than once per month for disbursement of funds. Disbursement procedures will be provided at the time of grant award notification.

Grantee Responsibilities

Grant award recipients will be required to sign a memorandum of agreement with the Department. All award recipients are required to comply with all state and federal laws and guidelines pertaining to the use of grant funds.

Grant award recipients may be required to give a presentation to the Water Infrastructure Advisory Council at the end of the project period.

Award Information

Funding for projects receiving a grant award in this grant cycle will be subject to a minimum \$25,000 grant with a maximum of \$75,000.

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) Nonpoint Source Program (NPS) will administer the grant application process and provide technical and financial guidance.

¹ Based on 2022 State of Delaware Value of Volunteer Time.
<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

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Section III
Grant Proposal Format and
Evaluation Criteria

Grant Proposal Format

Applicants are required to follow the Proposal Evaluation Criteria listed below to describe, within your proposal, how the project meets the program goals and priorities, the geographic scope of the project, cost effectiveness of the project, technical merit and feasibility, and organizational capacity to complete the project. The recommended length (not including cover page, signature page, and exhibits) of the proposal is 5-6 pages. Applicants may be contacted if the selection committee has any questions regarding your proposal.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Cover Page The cover page should include the proposal title, partners/sponsor(s), point of contact information, period of time the proposal will cover (e.g. 6 months, 1 year, etc.), project cost, requested amount of funding, and information contained in the below summary table.

- Total drainage area being treated (acres) and associated runoff curve number
- % Impervious Area
- Best Management Practice(s) Proposed or Type of Innovative Research Proposed
- Total runoff reduction proposed and/or nutrient reduction (from DURMM v.2) or other approved regional method (Chesapeake Bay BMP reduction).

Signature Page This page should contain the signatures of the grant applicant, landowner(s) on which the project will occur, and the responsible party for any matching funds. Letters of support from the landowners, and letters of future maintenance may be included in this section.

Geographic Location (10 Points)

Background and Justification Describe the issue or problem to be addressed by the grant proposal, why the work is necessary. Include the following:

- **Implementation Projects:**
 - Identify the County and /or Municipality in which the project is located.
 - Give site specific information (i.e., street location, parcel identification, waterbody draining to, etc.).
 - Identify the watershed and sub-watershed (i.e., Deep Creek subwatershed within the Chesapeake Bay watershed).
 - Provide a map that shows the project location.

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- Include any site reconnaissance information, including but not limited to: recharge feasibility mapping, soils mapping and/or soils testing, contours via Lidar data or survey, drainage area/acres treated, % impervious cover.
 - Include an aerial of the project area with the limits and important features clearly noted. Additional exhibits are encouraged.
 - List the impairments of the watershed and/or site area, including management plans that have been developed:
 - Give the TMDL reduction requirements established, watershed restoration plan, or pollution control strategy recommendations.
 - Give local factors and concerns (i.e., in a CSO area, in an highly impervious area with no stormwater controls, in an highly eroding stream channel, etc.).
- **Research Projects**
 - Give the information for implementation projects along with the specifics of the research site as well as the control site (if a remote location).

Meeting Program Goals and Priorities (40 Points)

Implementation Projects: Describe the project proposal in as much detail as possible. Include the following items:

- What type of practices are being proposed and what are the square footage of practice area and/or cubic footage of storage being proposed?
- What are the nutrient/sediment reduction and runoff reduction efficiencies for the practice(s)?
- Using Delaware Urban Runoff Management Model version 2 (DURMM v.2), or other regional approved method (Chesapeake Bay BMP), estimate the total pounds of nutrient/sediment reduction and/or volume of runoff reduction based on the site parameters. Include documentation of how the reduction figure was arrived.
- What is the expected lifespan of the improvement as proposed?
- Will nutrient/sediment reduction and/or runoff reduction remain a constant over the lifespan of the improvement or will there be a diminishing return?
- Who will design the project?
- Who will construct the project?

Research Projects In addition to the above, describe the expected contribution of the research project to the field of study. Include the following items:

- Describe how the research will move the field of study from theory to practice.
- How is this proposal innovative?
- Where has this technique been tried in the past?
- Have there been prior roadblocks to implementation in Delaware?
- What do we already know about this technique?
- Based on similar research, what are the expected results (i.e., % nutrient/sediment reduction, % runoff volume reduction, etc.).
- What is the expected lifespan of the demonstration project, and what is its applicability to be repeated?

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- Describe how, where, and when you plan on implementing results from this study?
- BMP performance testing will need to adhere to monitoring guidance and evaluation protocols defined in the International Stormwater BMP Database, www.bmpdatabase.org.
- Describe how monitoring will be conducted.
- List who will be conducting the monitoring (environmental scientist, volunteers)

Technical Merit and Project Feasibility (30 Points)

The proposal will be evaluated on the technical feasibility given the proposed budget and timeline. The proposal should identify the applicant's (and partners) ability to undertake and successfully complete this project. The Review Team will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project taking into account the applicant's organizational capacity, experience, facilities and technical expertise to accomplish the proposed plan of work and its likely success.

- **Time Schedule and Benchmarks** (10 points)
 - Break down the Scope of Work into tasks with target dates for completion of each task. It should list target milestones, timelines, and describe how each milestone addresses project objectives.
 - Give a timetable for the implementation of project. Include any monitoring time as applicable.
 - Give a detailed budget for project implementation and monitoring.
 - Research projects need to allow for no less than 1 year of monitoring after implementation is complete.
- **Cost effectiveness** (10 points)
 - Describe the cost effectiveness of the proposal through implementation. Consider the cost of the planning phase as well as the design, construction, monitoring, and long-term maintenance and sustainability of the project.
 - Include a description of other alternatives considered and why the selected proposal was chosen.
 - Give the amount of dollars spent for the pounds of nutrients/sediment removed and/or volume of runoff reduced.
 - Describe how the longevity of the practice relates to the initial cost.
- **Maintenance** (10 points)
 - Who will be accountable for the maintenance of the practice after the grant has ended?
 - What is the yearly cost to maintain the project?
 - What funding is available for maintenance?
 - A letter of agreement for future maintenance must be included.

Leveraging/Co-funding (10 points)

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The proposal should identify cooperative partnerships with stakeholders, creation of sustainable and effective commitments, and should demonstrate strong support from partners and other relevant agencies and organizations. The applicant may attach letters of support from cooperating agencies identifying how they intend to support the project. Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate how the applicant will coordinate/leverage the funding with other sources of funds (i.e., funding entities, project partners, surrounding communities, and businesses). (10 points).

- Match funding
- Cost share
- Co-funding
- Letter of support
- Volunteer Hours

Note: Applicants may choose to demonstrate leveraging by pledging their own funds or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share. Applicants who choose to cost share voluntarily must meet their cost share obligations if their proposals are selected for award. Please note that only eligible and allowable costs may be used for matches or costs shares. Federal grants may be used as matches or cost shares.

Programmatic Capability (10 Points) _This section should include a list of applicant’s qualifications` to complete the project.

- Include the names and relevant experiences of people and organizations that will participate in the planning, design, construction, maintenance and/or monitoring of the proposed project. If any necessary consultants or contractors are not known at the time of grant preparation, then the means of selecting a qualified candidate should be described.
- An appropriate licensed professional is required to seal construction plans for implementation and innovative research projects.
- Plan for timely and successful achievement of the project objectives.
- Other similar grant awards including other grants awarded through DNREC

Insurance If the Applicant’s current insurance does not meet the requirements, please explain in your submittal what level of coverage you have and how any deficiencies in the required insurance coverages may be handled. Provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance form with your application.

<p>Section IV How to Apply</p>

Submission of Proposals

An electronic copy of the proposal and supporting materials (e.g. project support letters from partners) in pdf format AND a copy in Microsoft Word must be submitted to the Nonpoint Source Pollution Program no later than 4:30 pm, on April 24, 2024. The emailed proposal

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must be less than 10 megabytes in size. Proposals will not be accepted by facsimile machine submission. Project proposals selected for awards will need to sign grant applications prior to receiving grant award.

Email proposal to:

Jim Sullivan

NPS.Grants@delaware.gov

Subject: Community Water Quality Improvement Grant

**Section V
Proposal Review and Selection
Process**

Proposal Review and Selection Process

Proposals will be reviewed for threshold eligibility purposes as described in the Proposal Evaluation Criteria of this announcement. A team of resource experts will conduct a merit evaluation of each eligible proposal, rank them, and submit recommendations for funding to the Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council.

Preference is given to projects involving cooperative partnerships and sponsors without a dedicated source of funds for repayment of Clean Water State Revolving Fund loans.

**Section VI
Contact Information**

Contact Information

For further details regarding the Community Water Quality Improvement Grant sponsored through the Delaware Water Infrastructure Advisory Council, applicants are encouraged to contact

- Jim Sullivan, Nonpoint Source Pollution Program James.Sullivan@delaware.gov

Additional information is available online at: <https://dnrec.alpha.delaware.gov/environmental-finance/community-water-quality-improvement/>

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control solicits and encourages Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women's Business Enterprises (WBE), and Small Business Enterprises (SBE) in all service contracts and is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity of its workforce.