

U.S. Geological Survey

Notice of Funding Opportunity

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT PROGRAM NATIONAL COMPETITIVE GRANTS FY2026 (104g General)

Funding Opportunity Number

G27AS00164

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: G27AS00164

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.805

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$462,500

Expected Number of Awards: 4

Award Ceiling: \$120,000

Award Floor: \$0

The Government's obligation under this program is contingent upon the availability of appropriated funds.

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Closing Date Explanation

Applications, including the full proposal, must be submitted to grants.gov by the State Water Resources Research Institute prior to the 5:00 PM Eastern Time, November 12, 2026 closing date.

Have Questions?

For programmatic technical assistance, contact:

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Last Name: Schmidt

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Program Coordinator, Water Resources Research Program

For program administration assistance, contact:

First Name: Sara

Last Name: Roser

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Grants Specialist, Office of Acquisition and Grants

Executive Summary

This Program Announcement is issued under the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (Public Law 98-242), as amended by Public Laws 101-397, 104-147, 106-374, 109-471, and 117-58. Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to administer program grants to Institutes established under the provisions of section 104(a) of the Act. Water Resources Research Institutes have been established in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. The Institute in Guam also serves the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Institute in Hawaii also serves American

Samoa. The addresses of the 54 Institutes are available at <https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/index.php>. Responsibility for administration of the Water Resources Research Act Program has been delegated to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

Others (see text field entitled "Additional Information on Eligibility" for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Only Water Resources Research Institutes established under the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 are eligible to apply. These Institutes are located at universities in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. The Institute in Guam also serves the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Institute in Hawaii also serves American Samoa.

Applications not eligible for funding:

- a. Applications for research on health effects involving human subjects.
- b. Applications for research involving oceanography (estuarine research applications are acceptable).
- c. Applications for research that do not meet program objectives as outlined.
- d. Applications submitted by an Institute or Center that has not met reporting requirements on a previous award by the USGS.

Participation by federal employees:

- e. Federal employees may, and are encouraged to, collaborate with college or university investigators in this program.
- f. Federal employees may not serve as a principal investigator (PI) but may serve as a Co- PI.
- g. Federal employees and agencies may not receive federal funds for any purpose under these awards.
- h. Federal employees and agencies may not serve as a source of matching funds under these awards.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Match Rules

The following rules apply to all applicants unless they qualify for an exemption (see below):

- a. Each applicant must match each Federal dollar provided with not less than one dollar from non-federal sources.
- b. The matching requirement applies to the overall application, not the individual projects within the application.

- c. The matching requirement must be met during each 12-month budget period and each Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 to September 30).
- d. Matching funds obligated shall be reflected on line 10.i. of each Federal Financial Report, Standard Form 425, completed by the Institute/Center or the host institution thereof, annually.
- e. Matching funds may contain indirect costs and non-federal salaries and benefits. The applicant's negotiated indirect cost rate (NICR) may be applied to both qualifying federal and non-federal direct costs, and the result used to satisfy part of the matching requirement under the non-federal share. The NICR shall not be applied to tuition and equipment costs. Federal funds shall not be used to pay indirect costs. Regulations pertaining to allowable matching funds are provided in the Code of Federal Regulations at [2 CFR 200.306](#).

Exemptions

The following territories are exempt from the matching requirement:

- Guam
- Federated States of Micronesia
- Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
- U.S. Virgin Islands
- American Samoa

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all applicants except individuals applying as a natural person must be registered in SAM.gov. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- Financial assistance registrants must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- Already registered? You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- Need help? For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts applications through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov) so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to [register](#) with Grants.gov. Please allow 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See [Submission Instructions](#) section below for additional details.

Refer to Attachment – Submission Instructions & Tips.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- Research for water resources in each State or Territory served by the Water Resources Research Institutes under the Water Resources Research Act.

Program Description

Recipients are encouraged to prioritize projects in support of the celebration of America's 250th birthday (America250). This may include, but is not limited to, projects that recognize and honor the nation's founding, history, and cultural heritage.

Water Resources Institutes have been established in each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Virgin Islands, and Guam. The Institute in Guam also serves the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The Institute in Hawaii also serves American Samoa. Responsibility for administration of the State Water Resources Research Institute program has been delegated to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

The rapid expansion of data centers and other water intensive industries that rely on public supply systems has outpaced the availability of accurate, transparent, and timely information about their water use. Existing datasets often contain gaps, inconsistencies, and uncertainties that limit the ability of communities, utilities, and policymakers to make informed decisions. As public concern grows and water resource pressures intensify, there is a critical need for improved methodologies that can more reliably characterize industrial water withdrawals, cooling demands, and local impacts. This Notice of Funding Opportunity seeks to address these challenges by advancing observational and analytical approaches capable of reducing uncertainty and strengthening confidence in publicly available information.

The scope includes the development, testing, and demonstration of innovative methodologies for observing, estimating, and validating water use associated with data centers and other industries drawing from public supply systems including the identification of variables for accurate prediction of data center water usage, quantification of the uncertainty around those predictions, and the ability to forecast future scenarios of usage. Proposers must design approaches that integrate diverse data sources—such as utility records, operational data, environmental conditions, and publicly reported metrics – to produce more accurate and interpretable representations of water use. A central requirement of this effort is the application of artificial intelligence and machine learning techniques to enhance data transparency, improve traceability, and identify sources of bias or uncertainty within existing datasets. Potential areas of research include quantifying water reuse from onsite or municipal wastewater treatment facilities, characterizing self-supplied withdrawals from wells, reservoirs, or rivers, and evaluating how seasonal variability influences industrial water demand.

Proposed methodologies should be scalable, adaptable to different geographic and regulatory contexts, and capable of supporting both national level assessments and localized decision making. Approaches must account for the variability in industrial processes, cooling technologies, water supply conditions, and the potential for alternative water sources such as reclaimed water or self-supplied withdrawals. Proposers should also incorporate strategies for validating results against independent or ground truth data and for capturing temporal dynamics, including seasonal fluctuations in water use. Proposals must articulate clear performance metrics, describe anticipated data needs and limitations, and outline how their methods will improve upon current practices used by utilities, regulators, and industry stakeholders.

The selected awardee will work collaboratively with federal partners, local utilities, regional planning bodies, and industry representatives to ensure that the resulting methodologies are practical, credible, and aligned with real world information needs. Engagement with these stakeholders should inform the design and refinement of analytical approaches, support the interpretation of results, and help identify pathways for long term adoption. The final deliverables should provide a robust, transparent framework for observing and communicating industrial water use – including reuse, self-supply, and seasonal variability – enabling communities and decisionmakers to better understand the implications of datacenter growth and other public supply dependent industries.

Legislative Authority

This Program Announcement is issued under the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 (codified at 42 USC 10301 et seq.) and amended by Public Laws 101-397, 104-147, 106-374, 109-471, and 117-58. The Water Resources Research Act directs the Secretary of the Interior to administer program grants to Institutes established under the provisions of section (a) of the Act.

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through G (Grant).

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Pre-Application Requirements

Prior to applying, applicants should review presidential actions found at: <https://www.whitehouse.gov/presidential-actions/> and DOI Secretary's Orders found at: <https://www.doi.gov/document-library/secretary-order>. By applying in response to this Notice of Funding Opportunity, the applicant certifies awareness and compliance with all currently effective and applicable executive orders and secretary's orders, including, but not limited to the Executive Order titled Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the Executive Order and Secretary's order titled Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. Applicants are responsible for ensuring their proposed activities are consistent with the intent and requirements of these directives.

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission](#)

[Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants
Common Form for Biographical Sketch - OMB 3145-0279	For the Principal Investigator ONLY
Common Form for Current or Pending Support - OMB 3145-0279	For the Principal Investigator ONLY

Project Narrative

A. All proposal documents (elements 1-15) must be submitted as one file in PDF format. Each element has a maximum potential point value and these elements will be combined in order to rank the proposals; proposals without required elements will not be considered. Elements 3-8 shall not exceed 10 single-spaced pages, with 12-point font and at least 1-inch margins, including tables, pictures, graphs, figures, and appendices. Proposals exceeding the page limit for elements 3-8 will not be considered. The supplemental information (elements 1, 2, 12, 14 and 15) does not count towards the page limit but includes required parts of the proposal. Please include page numbers and short title in either header or footer, but nothing else.

Proposal element	Description	Points
1. Title Page	Must include full and short title, lead PI name and contact information (email and telephone number), collaborator and co-PI names, federal funds requested, matching fund contribution, abstract (300 words), plain-word summary (150 words), keywords, and project abstract summary (description follows).	
2. Address specific priority	• Repeat Title Only • Describe the problem/issue and directly address a research priority described in Section III. • Document the magnitude of the situation and relevance to state, regional and national issues. • Why is this project/topic innovative, important, and timely?	10 points
3. Executive Order/Secretarial Order Alignment	• Clearly state and defend how the proposal aligns with and supports the Executive Orders/Secretarial Orders identified in the Legislative Authority Section. • How does the proposed work initiate or further collaboration with the USGS? • How does it supplement recent or ongoing work by the USGS?	20 points
4. Integration with USGS science:	• How does the proposed work initiate or further collaboration with the USGS? • How does it supplement recent or ongoing work by the USGS?	5 points
5. Scientific value of proposed work	• What are the goals and objectives of the research? • What is the potential to expand fundamental knowledge through the stated goals and objectives? • Describe the methods, field area, and facilities as a function of these objectives.	15 points
6. Anticipated Benefits to Scientific Community and General Public	• Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used. • Describe the potential outcomes and the potential, realistic impacts of the proposed work.	10 points

	• How does the proposed research build on previous research or lay the groundwork for future research? • What tangible products are expected? These might include data, methods, workflows, manuscripts, and(or) new communication strategies.	
7. Products and Information Transfer	• Provide a timeline of key activities, including field seasons, data collection, and lab analyses, as appropriate. • Explain the planned transfer of results to user groups. • How will new information be made available to the scientific community and general public? • Identify stakeholders and planned communication strategies (e.g., workshops, publications, extension).	10 points
8. Training Potential	Detail the educational component, including student support and engagement of early-career researchers.	10 points
9. Budget	• A budget table, including all categories, must be included in the proposal. If budget includes a sub-award or contract, the same level of detail must be provided. • A budget justification, including details, must be provided for all costs. Federal expenses must be separated from matching expenses. Federal employees may NOT be paid with project funds. • Use the budget templates to provide the required detail and justification. <i>Costs that are not described in adequate detail may not be funded.</i> • Travel must be specific as to location(s) and specific meeting(s)/conference(s). • The PI's salary is an acceptable budget item, but the federal share of the salary should not exceed two months per year. Document salary for other staff and researchers, including any overhead expenses at institutions beyond that of the PI. https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/WRRI-104g-Budget.zip	10 points

10. Data Management	Should be in the context of products and information transfer (Element 7). Please use the template at https://www.usgs.gov/media/files/usgs-data-management-plan-checklist .	3 points
11. Cited Literature	Should include only those referenced in proposal.	
12. Qualifications of Research Team	Provide a brief biographical sketch, no more than 3 pages, for the PI and any co-PIs.	2 points
13. Matching Commitment Letter	Institutional cost-sharing agreement (letter) signed by an official authorized to commit the applicant to all or part of the matching share or a third party, in-kind contribution signed by an official authorized to commit the third party. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal. The USGS does not need the originals.	
14. Government Involvement	A letter of support from USGS is required regardless if the project includes a USGS co-PI. Letter must be signed by someone in leadership at a designated center. If a proposal includes a USGS co-PI the letter of support should outline the USGS co-PI's level of commitment to the project. If a USGS employee will collaborate on the project and is requesting USGS funds, provide a detailed description of the role and responsibilities of the Federal collaborator in the proposed research project. This should be in the context of the already explained collaboration, objectives, and methods (Elements 3 and 4) and must include an explanation of personnel, expenses, and timeline. Examples have been provided as Attachment C. The signee cannot be the collaborator. Additional letters of support are optional. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal.	5 points

B. Collaboration by Federal Employees

Federal employees may, and are encouraged to, collaborate with college or university investigators in this program. Federal employees may not serve as a principal investigator (PI), but may serve as a co-PI. Federal employees and agencies may not receive federal funds for any purpose under these awards. Federal employees and agencies may not serve as a source of matching funds under these awards. Federal employees must prepare a Statement of Government Involvement (Element 9), which is to be included with collaborative proposals. US Geological Survey scientists may receive funding up to \$40,000 per proposal from internal US Geological Survey appropriations. Consequently, this statement must include a workplan, budget (salary, travel, lab expenses, etc.), and explanation of personnel. This must be separate from the rest of the proposal budget because the funding is from a non-WRRA source and is not included

in the budget for the award. An example is provided as an attachment. Proposals with a federal collaborator must be accompanied by a letter of support that is signed by someone in leadership at the designated center; this cannot be the collaborator. Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form and Budget Narrative. For non-construction programs or projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs" form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

C. Detailed Budget Narrative

The project budget shall include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all estimated project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A.

D. Data Management Plan - a supplementary document of no more than two pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP) that addresses the elements outlined in the USGS DMP template (<https://www.usgs.gov/media/files/usgs-data-management-plan-checklist>) Note: If a single summary, the DMP can be longer than two pages but not greater than six pages to accommodate multiple projects

1. the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
2. the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies);
3. policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;
4. provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives; and
5. plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of free public access to them.
6. If the project(s) will create geospatial data as a deliverable, the applicant must provide evidence that the product does not already exist. The applicant will need to query their proposed geospatial product(s) at geoplatform.gov, a federal website, and provide a screenshot capture of their quer(ies).

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management web site here: [Data Management Plans | U.S. Geological Survey](#). Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined DMP by the lead PI that also addresses all subaward data management needs, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

The project budget shall include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all estimated project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A.

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

Applications must be filed at <https://www.grants.gov> prior to 5:00 PM Eastern Standard Time, November 12, 2026.

Program Website Link: <https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/>

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 11/12/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Applications, including the full proposal, must be submitted to grants.gov by the State Water Resources Research Institute prior to the 5:00 PM Eastern Time, November 12, 2026 closing date.

Submission Instructions

Apply Through Grants.gov

To apply through [Grants.gov](https://www.grants.gov), please follow the instructions in the [Quick Start Guide for Applicants](#). Before applying, ensure that at least one person at your organization is registered and has the Authorized Organization Representative (AOR). Only the AOR can submit the application. If you need more users, they must create their own Grants.gov account. Follow these steps below to apply:

- *Create a Workspace:* Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- *Complete a Workspace:* Invite participants to the workspace so you can collaborate on the application. Required applications forms are included in the Grants.gov Funding Opportunity Package and can be completed in the Workspace, unless noted otherwise in the Required Forms table above. Check for errors before submission.
- *Submit a Workspace:* An application may be submitted through workspace by clicking the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page, under the Forms tab
- *Track a Workspace Submission:* After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application.

The system generates a date and time stamp and sends it to the applicant's AOR via email as proof of submission. Make sure your application passes the Grants.gov validation checks. Do not encrypt, zip, or password-protect any files. Only registered individuals in SAM as both a user and an AOR can submit applications. Please allow 30 days to register in Grants.gov.

Application System Technical Support: For Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms, and application packages, contact Grants.gov Customer Support at 1-800-518-4726 or by email at Support@grants.gov.

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

During the eligibility review, USGS verifies that each application:

- Was submitted on time
- Contains all required documents (see Application Components Checklist section)
- Is from an eligible Water Resources Research Institute (see Eligibility)
- Aligns with the requirements of this announcement

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

The evaluation of applications submitted by the Institutes, including proposals, is the responsibility of the USGS Water Resources Research Act (WRRRA) program staff with budgetary reviews by the Grants Specialist of the USGS Office of Acquisition and Grants.

Proposals submitted by the Institutes are evaluated for completeness after the closing date by OAG in consultation with the USGS WRRRA Program staff. The WRRRA Program staff notifies Institutes submitting unacceptable proposals that their proposals will not be further reviewed. Only proposals submitted to grants.gov that meet the requirements of this announcement will be considered and evaluated by a peer-review panel composed of Institute directors, university scientists, and USGS staff experienced in water-resources research. After conflicts of interest have been considered, each proposal will be reviewed by at least three assigned reviewers. Each proposal will be discussed by the panel and scored according to the listed criteria (see table in Project Narrative section). Each proposal will be assigned a panel member responsible for writing up the panel summary of the proposal evaluation. Panel summaries will be sent to the submitting Institute.

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct

- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

Prior to conducting the comprehensive merit review, an initial review will be performed to determine whether: (1) the applicant is eligible for an award; (2) the information required by the NOFO has been submitted; (3) all mandatory requirements of the NOFO are satisfied; (4) the proposed project is responsive to the program objectives of the NOFO (program determination); and (5) the proposed project is in compliance with all applicable executive and secretary orders, including the President's executive order on Ending Radical and Wasteful Government DEI Programs and Preferencing as well as the executive order and Secretary order on Restoring Truth and Sanity to American History. If an applicant fails to meet the requirements or objectives of the NOFO, or does not provide sufficient information for review, the applicant will be considered non responsive and eliminated from further review.

The program also reviews proposals for alignment with relevant Executive Orders and Secretarial Orders. These include if a proposal provides rigorous science and transparent communication ([EO14303](#) Restoring Gold Standard Science/[SO3441](#) Implementing the Requirements of EC14303, Restoring Gold Standard Science), hazard and risk assessment that enhance local preparedness ([EO14239](#) Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness), the strategic use of Artificial Intelligence ([SO3444](#) Leading Interior's Path to Artificial Intelligence Transformation), and natural resource stewardship that balances the needs of ecosystems, communities, and the economy ([EO14313](#) Establishing the President's Make America Beautiful Again Commission). Water Resource Research Institutes should directly address on-the-ground management needs, informing cost-effective, science-informed natural resource management decisions that advance all three goals outlined in the DOI FY26-30 Draft Strategic Plan.

Program Manager to Review after receipt of application. Proposals will be reviewed and scored based on the Proposal Elements and Points as outlined in *Prepare Your Application, Application Content and Format, Project Narrative*.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 05/01/2027

Anticipated Project End Date: 04/30/2030

Start and end date of the period of performance will be determined by the Grant Specialist.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

Geospatial Data

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), recipient must follow these rules for geospatial data:

Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at [43 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2811](#)).

Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality.

Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data.

These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

Termination Provisions

Per § 200.340 Termination, the Federal award may be terminated in whole or in part as follows:

- By the DOI sub-agency or pass-through entity, if the recipient or subrecipient fails to comply with the terms and conditions of the award.

- By the DOI sub-agency or pass-through entity with the consent of the recipient or subrecipient, in this case, both parties must agree on the termination conditions, including the effective date and, for partial termination, specify which parts will be terminated.
- By the recipient or subrecipient by providing written notice to the DOI sub-agency or pass-through entity, stating the reasons for the termination, the effective date, and, for partial termination, the portion to be terminated. However, if the DOI sub-agency or pass-through entity determines that the remaining portion will not achieve the purpose of the award, they may terminate the entire Federal award.
- By the DOI sub-agency or pass-through entity in accordance with the terms of the Federal award, including, if authorized by law, if the award no longer meets program goals or DOI priorities.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) and 2 CFR 170 requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation, and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts and consortiums equal to or over \$30,000 to SAM.gov.

Other Information

Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the USGS program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S.

are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment in all Notices of Award.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT

We are collecting this information in accordance with the program identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Public report burden for this collection is estimated to average 45 hours per grant application and 12 hours to prepare a final technical report. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Bureau Clearance Officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS807, Reston VA 20192.