U.S. Geological Survey

Notice of Funding Opportunity

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT PROGRAM ANNUAL BASE GRANTS

Funding Opportunity Number

G27AS00170

Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION....1
ELIGIBILITY....3
Cost Sharing Requirement....4
GET READY TO APPLY....5
Required System Registrations....5
PROGRAM OVERVIEW....5
Program Goals....5
Program Description....5
Legislative Authority....6
Type of Award....6
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION....6
Application Content and Format....6
Application Documents....7
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES....26
Address to Request Application Package....26
Submission Dates and Times....27
Submission Instructions....27
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION....29
Eligibility Review....29
Merit Review....30
Review and Selection Process....30
Risk Review....31
AWARD NOTICES....31
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION....32
Administration and National Policy Requirements....32
Reporting....33

BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: G27AS00170

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.805

Estimated Total Program Funding: $11,562,500

Expected Number of Awards: 54

Award Ceiling: $608,550

Award Floor: $202,850

The amount available to each Institute or Center in this funding opportunity will be $202,850. A total of $608,550 will be available to the regional Institute in Guam, which serves Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. A total of $405,700 will be available to the regional Institute in Hawaii, which serves Hawaii and American Samoa. The Government's obligation under this program is subject to the availability of funds.

Cost Sharing Required?
Yes

Closing Date Explanation
Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

OMB Control Number: 1028-0097

Have Questions?
For programmatic/technical assistance questions: Christian Schmidt, cgschmidt@usgs.gov

For program administration questions: Sara Roser, sara_roser@ios.doi.gov

Executive Summary
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. Water Resources Institutes or Centers 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. Institute Directors or their designee(s) are responsible for submitting applications. Responsibility for administration of the State Water Resources Research Institute program has been delegated to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS).

Section 104(b) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 requires the Institutes or Centers to:
(1) "plan, conduct, or otherwise arrange for competent applied and peer reviewed research that fosters –

(A) improvements in water supply reliability;
(B) the exploration of new ideas that –
(i) address water problems; or
(ii) expand understanding of water and water-related phenomena;

(C) the entry of new research scientists, engineers, and technicians into water resources fields; and
(D) the dissemination of research results to water managers and the public.

(2) "cooperate closely with other colleges and universities in the State that have demonstrated capabilities for research, information dissemination, and graduate training in order to develop a statewide program designed to resolve State and regional water and related land problems."
(3) "cooperate closely with other institutes and other organizations in the region to increase the effectiveness of the institutes and for the purpose of promoting regional coordination."

Applications submitted under this Announcement are to be in furtherance of these objectives and promote the national mission and objectives of the U.S. Geological Survey which are focused on providing water-quality and -quantity information, understanding water availability, addressing the influence of drought/wet cycles on water resources, and responding to water-related emerging needs. Specific areas of emphasis are at the discretion of the individual Institute or Center Directors.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

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

Additional Information on Eligibility

Applications will be accepted only from Institutes or Centers established pursuant to the provisions of Section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended. The applicant may consider project proposals only from faculty members or affiliates at institutions of higher education in its State.

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:

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

d. Federal employees and agencies may not serve as a source of matching funds under these awards.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

Yes

Cost Sharing Requirement

Match Rules

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

Each applicant must match each Federal dollar provided with not less than one dollar from non-federal sources.

The matching requirement applies to the overall application, not the individual projects within the application.

The matching requirement must be met during each 12-month budget period and each Federal Fiscal Year (October 1 to September 30).

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.

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

WHAT COUNTS AS MATCH

Match is calculated at the application level (across all projects combined), not project-by-project. Match must be recorded on Line 10.i. of every SF-425 Federal Financial Report submitted during the award period

Allowable match sources include:

Non-federal salaries and benefits

Indirect costs calculated using your Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate (NICR), applied to qualifying direct costs, except tuition and equipment

Federal dollars cannot be used to pay any indirect costs charged to the match

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 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.

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

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 USGS (USGS).

Section 104(b) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 requires the Institutes or Centers to:
(1) “plan, conduct, or otherwise arrange for competent applied and peer reviewed research that fosters –

(A) improvements in water supply reliability;
(B) the exploration of new ideas that –
(i) address water problems; or
(ii) expand understanding of water and water-related phenomena;
(C) the entry of new research scientists, engineers, and technicians into water resources fields; and
(D) the dissemination of research results to water managers and the public.

(2) "cooperate closely with other colleges and universities in the State that have demonstrated capabilities for research, information dissemination, and graduate training in order to develop a statewide program designed to resolve State and regional water and related land problems."
(3) "cooperate closely with other institutes and other organizations in the region to increase the effectiveness of the institutes and for the purpose of promoting regional coordination."

Applications submitted under this Announcement are to be in furtherance of these objectives and promote the national mission and objectives of the U.S. Geological Survey which are focused on providing water-quality and -quantity information, understanding water availability, addressing the influence of drought/wet cycles on water resources, and responding to water-related emerging needs. Specific areas of emphasis are at the discretion of the individual Institute or Center Directors.

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 and 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 3030-0019	Required in year 1 of a new award
Common Form for Biographical Sketch - OMB 3145-0279	For the 104(b), Institute or Center Director ONLY
Common Form for Current of Pending Support - OMB 3145-0279	For the 104(b), Institute or Center Director ONLY

Project Narrative

Each application **that is submitted to Grants.gov** shall consist of the following items. All project proposals must be submitted at **https://www.grants.gov.** Files must be entered or uploaded as **a single pdf document along with the budget workbook (Excel file)**. No zipped or compressed files.

A. Signed SF 424, Application for Federal Assistance

B. SF 424A Budget Information

C. Signed Assurances

D. Approved Indirect Rate Agreement(s) for all indirect costs (including indirect rate agreement for subaward university if indirect costs included as match in subaward)

A standard institution-wide agreement that must be provided to justify the indirect cost rate and costs detailed in the budget justification.

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).

E. Signed Matching Funds Commitment Letter

- Institutional cost-sharing agreement (letters) 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.
- Include letters of commitment for all matching funds including those matched from subaward institutions

F. Project Abstract Summary

This is required in Year 1 of a new 5-year cycle. This should be a high level overview encompassing a summary of all activities and objectives covered more specifically in G., H., I. of this proposal.

Include a plain language description of the following:

- Project Title
- Award purpose:
    - avoid acronyms or Federal or agency-specific terminology,
    - clearly state the objectives and goals of the award,
    - use straightforward language, making the purpose easily understandable to anyone, including those not familiar with the program;
- Activities to be performed
    - do not include links
    - detail the specific actions or tasks to be undertaken
    - be concise and direct, avoiding technical jargon or complex terms, to ensure clarity and ease of comprehension;
- Deliverables and Expected Outcomes;
    - describe what the project aims to achieve or produce,
    - be clear and succinct,

    - outline measurable results or products in a manner that is easily graspable

- Intended beneficiary(ies)
    - identify who will benefit from the project (do not include the Federal Government);
    - use simple terms,
    - make target beneficiaries apparent; and

- Subrecipient activities, if known or specified at the time of award.

  Project Abstract Summary character limitation is one page (**no more than 4000 characters**). Use of Times New Roman and 12-point font is recommended.

G. Program Administration/Management Description - **3 page maximum, excluding budget and budget justification**.

- Include:
    - *3 page maximum, excluding budget and budget justification*
    - Institute Director Name, academic rank, email address, and phone number
    - Administrative Personnel: Name, academic rank or title, email address, and phone number of other principals involved in administration of the program, if any.
    - Program and Management Overview Description (narrative)
    - Budget screenshot
    - Budget justification

- Common Form for Biographical Sketch and Common Form for Current or Pending Support must be filled out by the Institute or Center Director ONLY.

H. Information Transfer Description, if applicable - **2 page maximum, excluding CV/biosketch, budget and budget justification**.

- Include:
    - *2 page maximum, excluding CV/biosketch, budget and budget justification*
    - Administrative personnel contact information (name, academic rank or title, email address, and phone number)
    - An overview (narrative) of information transfer activities.
    - PI's CV/biosketch if different from the Institute Director – *2-page maximum; does not need to be the Common Form*.
    - Budget screenshot
    - Budget justification

I. Education and Outreach Description, if applicable - **2 page maximum, excluding CV/biosketch, budget and budget justification**.

- Include:
    - Administrative personnel contact information (name, academic rank or title, email address, and phone number)
    - An overview (narrative) of education and outreach activities.

- PI's CV/biosketch if different from the Institute Director – *2-page maximum; does not need to be the Common Form*.
- Budget screenshot
- Budget justification

J. Individual Project Proposals – Format should follow Institute guidelines, but each must be summarized on a tab in the Proposal Summary Budget workbook. This should only include those selected for funding. Individual budgets and budget justifications must be provided for each.

Project Proposals - Please use the Proposal Summary Budget workbook to provide the requested information. These may include independent research, education, and information transfer & management proposals that are identified for funding as part of Institute's proposal process. "Graduate Fellowship" and "Seed Grant" projects must each be entered as **individual** research proposals if they support research, including full budget details.

Individual proposals should include the following, but format will vary depending on Institute requirements. Consequently, some of this information (**items 1-9**) must also be summarized in the Proposal Summary Budget workbook tab for each project.

Title. Concise but descriptive.

Project Type. Choose from the following: Research, Information Transfer, Education, or Other (please specify).

Congressional District of the university where the work is to be conducted.

WRRI Science Priorities. Choose from the following the one category that most closely applies: Water Scarcity and Availability, Water Hazards, Water Quality, Water Policy, Planning, and Socioeconomics, Watershed Function, Water Technology and Innovation, or Workforce Development and Water Literacy.

USGS Cross-Discipline Landscape and Science Descriptors. Choose from those that most apply.

Geographic Study Area

Keywords. Choose a maximum of three focus categories from the provided list (Attachment 2), with the most preferred focus category first.

Training potential. Estimate the number of graduate and undergraduate students, by degree level, who are expected to receive training in the project.

Principal investigator(s). Provide academic rank, email address, and phone number of the principal investigators.

Start Date. Enter the actual beginning date for the project.

End Date. Enter the estimated end date for the project.

Abstract. Provide a brief (300 word) description of the problem, methods, and objectives.

Plain-language summary. Provide a brief (150 word) description of the study that could be understandable by the public.

Statement of regional or State water problem. Include an explanation of the need for the project: who wants it and why.

Statement of results or benefits. Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used.

Nature, scope, and objectives of the project, including a timeline of activities.

Methods, procedures, and facilities. Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objectives.

Related research. (*Research projects only*) Provide context for the proposed work in terms of previous and ongoing research, including citations.

Investigator's qualifications. Include short (no more than 2 pages) biographical sketches of the principal investigator(s).

Budget screenshot

Budget Table and Justification - Include a snapshot of the summary table along with the budget justification. Federal costs must be explained separately from matching funds. The Budget Breakdown, Budget Justification, and the Budget Summary are to be created from the fillable EXCEL template available at https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/files/wrra-104b-budget-files.zip This link may need to be copied and pasted into your browser. Link should be saved and then extracted. A one-page version is included for individual projects

K. Data Management Plan - a supplementary document of no more than *two pages per project* OR *six pages for a combined multi-project DMP (*preferred)* labeled "Data Management Plan."

The document should describe how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data (Public Access to Results of Federally Funded Research at the U.S. Geological Survey: Scholarly Publications and Digital Data (ver. 2.0) | U.S. Geological Survey). A valid DMP may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed (e.g. "No data are expected to be produced from this project"), as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification.

The DMP may include:

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 at:
https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans

L. Budget Workbook

Budget documents consist of two files prepared together from the downloadable template package, plus screenshots embedded in the application PDF. ***All three components are required.***

DOWNLOAD THE BUDGET TEMPLATE PACKAGE BEFORE STARTING

Download URL: **https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/files/wrra-104b-budget-files.zip**

Copy and paste this URL directly into your browser - clicking it as a hyperlink may not work. Once downloaded, **save and extract all files before opening**. The package contains:

- **104b-budget-sheet.xlsx** - the Budget Workbook (Excel)
- **budget-justification_template.docx** - the Budget Justification (Word)

	Component	What it is / where it goes
1	**Budget Workbook (Excel)**	Complete the 104b-budget-sheet.xlsx. Submitted as a separate .xlsx upload - NOT embedded in the PDF.
2	**Budget Breakdown Screenshots**	A screenshot of each component's budget table, pasted into the PDF immediately before that component's written justification.
3	**Budget Justification (Word)**	A written narrative for each cost line using the budget-justification_template.docx, placed in the PDF immediately after that component's screenshot.

Part 1 - Budget Workbook (Excel)

Open 104b-budget-sheet.xlsx and complete every tab that applies to your application. The workbook auto-calculates the Budget Summary from all other tabs, do not enter data directly into that tab.

Tab	Required?	What to complete
Budget Summary	**Auto**	Auto-calculated from all other tabs. Verify all Federal, Non-Federal, and Grand Total figures before submitting. Do not type into this tab directly.
Project Summary	**Auto**	Lists all components (Administration, Information Transfer, Education and Outreach, and each research project) with their Federal and Non-Federal totals. Populated automatically from individual tabs. Do not type into this tab directly.
Administration	**Yes**	Program Administration/Management budget. Includes Salary & Wage Breakdown and Fringe/Tuition breakdown tables in the lower half of the tab (rows 39+).

Information Transfer	**If applicable**	For perpetual, recurring activities: websites, recurring publications, seminar series, newsletters, etc. Leave blank if not applicable - do not delete the tab.
Education and Outreach	**If applicable**	For one-time events: presentations, conferences, workshops, etc. Leave blank if not applicable - do not delete the tab.
Project 1 – Project 15	**One per project**	Complete one tab per individual research project. The left column (A/B) collects project metadata: Plain Language Summary (~150 words, plain language), Project ID (suggested format: SS_YYYY_LastName, e.g. AK_2025_Smith), Fiscal Year, PI Name, PI Affiliation, Title, Project Type, Congressional District (format SS-###), Science Priority, USGS Cross-Discipline fields, Geographic Study Area, and Keywords. Fields shaded light blue have dropdown menus. Do not delete unused tabs.

DO NOT EDIT GREY OR ORANGE CELLS - AND OTHER CRITICAL WORKBOOK RULES

Auto-populated cells: Do not edit, paste into, or otherwise modify any cells with a *grey or orange background*. These are calculated automatically. Altering them causes incorrect totals that will require the budget to be resubmitted.

Salary/Fringe/Tuition entry: Enter salary, fringe, and tuition data *only* in the breakdown tables in the lower half of each tab (rows 39+ on project tabs). **Do not type into the Salaries, Fringe, or Tuition rows in the upper summary table** - those cells auto-populate from the lower tables.

Tab names: Do not rename any tabs. Renamed tabs break the Budget Summary and Project Summary formulas.

Blank tabs: Leave unused tabs blank - do not delete them. Deleting tabs also breaks summary calculations.

Indirect cost rate (rows 32–33): Replace the **"XXXX"** placeholder with your negotiated F&A rate so the formula calculates correctly. Federal indirect costs must be **N/A** per program rules. For sub-award universities, enter the sub-award university's rate in the corresponding sub-award columns (K–L).

Using the Separate Project Workbook (Distributed to PIs)

A single-project version of the workbook is included in the template package and can be sent to individual PIs to complete independently. When copying PI-completed files into the master workbook, follow these rules carefully:

- Copy and paste **only** the project data in **column B** and budget values in **cells without a colored background**. Do not paste into grey or orange cells.

- **Do not submit individual project workbooks** as part of the application package. All projects must be consolidated into the single master 104b-budget-sheet.xlsx before submission.

Part 2 — Budget Breakdown Screenshots

For every proposal component, paste a screenshot of that component's Budget Breakdown Table from the Excel workbook into the compiled application PDF, placed **immediately before** the written Budget Justification for that component.

WHICH COMPONENTS REQUIRE A SCREENSHOT — AND WHICH COLUMNS?

One screenshot is required per component. Capture the following column ranges:

- **Institute University Budget:** Columns B–G (Cost Category, Federal, Non-Federal, Grand Total). Required for: **Program Administration, Information Transfer, Education and Outreach,** and **each individual research project.**
- **Sub-Awards to Other Universities:** Columns I–M, when applicable. Include a screenshot of the sub-award columns for any project that has a sub-award.

How to Create a Budget Screenshot

1. **Open the relevant tab** in 104b-budget-sheet.xlsx (e.g., the Administration tab or Project 1 tab).
2. **Select the Budget Breakdown Table** - the rows and columns showing Federal, Non-Federal, and Grand Total amounts. Both the Federal and Non-Federal columns must be visible in the screenshot.
3. **Copy and paste as an image** into your Word document. In Word: **Paste Special à Picture**. Or use a screen capture tool (Snipping Tool / Snip & Sketch on Windows; Command+Shift+4 on Mac) to capture the table area directly.
4. **Place the screenshot in the PDF** immediately before the written Budget Justification for that component.
5. **Repeat** for each component.

FEDERAL AND NON-FEDERAL COLUMNS MUST BOTH BE VISIBLE

Do not crop or combine the Federal and Non-Federal columns. The screenshot must show both columns clearly so reviewers can verify the federal request and matching contribution separately. Screenshots that obscure either column may result in the budget being returned.

Part 3 — Budget Justification (Word Template)

Complete a separate budget justification for each proposal component using **budget-justification_template.docx**. Every cost category has a **Federal** section and a **Non-Federal** section - both must be addressed. Write "N/A" with a brief explanation for any category that does not apply; do not leave fields blank.

INCOMPLETE JUSTIFICATIONS DELAY ALL AWARDS

Budgets returned for correction slow the processing of 104b and 104g awards. The categories most commonly returned are: **Supplies, Equipment, Travel, and Other Direct Costs**. These require itemized details; lump sums will not be accepted.

Non-Allowable Expenses

The following types of costs have been explicitly rejected on past awards and must not be included:

Expense Type	Why It Is Not Allowable
Souvenirs and prizes	Not allowable under federal financial assistance regulations, regardless of purpose (e.g., public outreach meeting prizes).
Food and snacks	Food is not an allowable federal expense unless it is part of per diem expenses incurred during qualifying travel. Workshop refreshments, participant meals, and similar costs are not allowable.

Volunteer reimbursement	Providing an incentive to volunteers to participate in a study or survey outside of identified salary is impermissible.
Unallowable supplies	Supplies must be directly necessary for the project. Generic or loosely described supply budgets (e.g., "$232 for supplies") will be returned. Supplies labeled "Miscellaneous Supplies" will not be funded.

Justification Requirements by Cost Category

Complete each section with the level of detail shown below. Highlighted rows in amber are the categories most commonly returned for insufficient detail.

Cost Category	Required Detail - Federal and Non-Federal Separately
Salaries - PIs	Name, title/position, estimated hours, rate of compensation, total cost per individual. **Example (Federal):** Professor Smith, PI, 2 weeks of 1 summer month: $14,444 × 0.50 = $7,222
Salaries - Graduate Students	Name, title/position, hours per week, number of weeks, rate, total. Health insurance à Fringe Benefits. Tuition à Tuition category. **Example (Federal):** RA support for 2 graduate students: 4.5 academic months + 1.5 summer months: 20 hrs/wk @ $29.50/hr × 26 wks × 2 = $30,680
Salaries - Undergraduate Students	Name/role, rate per hour, hours per week, number of weeks, total. **Example (Federal):** Student Intern, $16/hr × 15 hrs/wk × 30 weeks = $7,200
Salaries - Others (Director, Admin, Post Docs, etc.)	Name, role, rate, hours per week, number of weeks, total per individual. **Example (Federal):** Jones, Part-time research associate, summer: $20/hr × 20 hrs/wk × 12 wks = $4,800
Fringe Benefits (all categories)	State the applicable fringe rate for each employee category. Include health insurance here if provided. **Example (Federal):** PI (44%) = $3,178 | Graduate Student (7.77%) = $2,384
Tuition (Graduate & Undergraduate)	Number of semesters, rate per semester, total amount. State in-state or out-of-state. **Example (Federal):** Tuition remission (38%) for 9 academic months, in-state graduate tuition: $8,740 **Example (Non-Federal):** Out-of-state tuition $6,054/year ($3,027/semester) for full-time graduate student
Supplies	These are items considered consumables required to complete the project. Itemized breakdown required for **lab and field supplies separately**: quantity, unit cost, total per item. **Supplies without cost details may not be funded.**

	Example (Federal): Field: 50ml containers (1 box of 100/box @ $50/box=$50), plastic bags (2 boxes of 50/box @ $2.50/box = $5), nitrile gloves (1 box of 100/box @ $30/box = $30) Field total = $85 Lab: parafilm (1 roll of 10 feet @$25/roll = $25), sample labels at 50/roll = $5, markers (1 box of 10/box @ $4/box = $4) Lab total = $34. **Returned example (do not submit):** "$119 is requested for supplies on this project" - no itemization, no per-unit costs
Equipment	Non-expendable property with useful life >1 year and cost **≥$10,000/unit**. Provide number of units, model number, cost per unit, purpose, and disposition after project. **Vendor quote required for any equipment exceeding $10,000 in value.** **Example (Federal):** $2,500 - YSI Sonde Exo 599101, in-field water quality analysis | $10,500 - MicaSense RedEdge multi-spectral camera, plant health monitoring; camera remains with PI's lab post-project. Vendor quote attached (required, cost >$10,000). **Returned example (do not submit):** "$10,000 for sondes at each site" - no model number, no per-unit cost, no utility description, no post-project disposition, no vendor quote

Services or Consultants	Identify specific tasks. Itemized breakdown required: personnel, time, rate, supplies, travel. **Costs not explained may not be funded.** Sub-awards must provide the same level of detail including unit costs. **Example (Federal):** Sample analysis for Project X, conducted by ABC Lab. 100 samples × $30/sample = $3,000
Travel	A separate breakdown per trip: destination, number of personnel, number of days, per diem rate, lodging rate, mileage/rate or airfare. For conferences: full name (no abbreviations), location, approximate dates. **Missing details will delay the entire award.** Travel is limited to project personnel only. **Example (Federal):** 1) National Institutes for Water Resources annual meeting, Washington DC: 1 person, 4 days/nights, hotel $200/night=$800, airfare $600, taxi $100, per diem $36/day=$144. Total $1,644 | 2) Field trip to [site]: 1 researcher, 3 days/2 nights, mileage $0.655/mi × 168 mi=$110, lodging $98/night × 2=$196, per diem $59/day × 3=$177. Total $483 **Returned examples (do not submit):** "2-3 day planning trip to field sites = $3,000" or "$1,400 for instate travel to stakeholder meetings" - both lack mileage, hotel, per diem, trip count, days, and personnel details
Other Direct Costs	Itemize all costs not covered elsewhere (e.g., publication fees, lab analyses). Provide rate, number of units, cost per item. Services/consultants go in that category above. **Costs not explained may not be funded.** Food/snacks are not allowable even for participant workshops. **Example (Federal):** Nutrient Stakes, Western Lab, $75/sample, 3 field sites × 2 seasons = $450 | Publication: $150/page × 4 pages = $600, Journal of Environmental Quality | University Imaging Center: $500 for 2 hours, publication-quality larval images | Open access publication fee, Management of Biological Invasions: $2,000 **Returned example (do not submit):** "Workshop participant snacks: 100 people × $5 each" - food is not an allowable federal expense outside of per diem travel costs
Indirect Costs	**Federal: Always enter "N/A" - indirect costs are not allowable on the Federal portion of this award.** **Non-Federal:** Indirect costs on the matching portion are allowable and encouraged to meet the 1:1 match requirement. State your negotiated F&A rate and the modified total direct cost base it applies to. Include a copy of your current Indirect Cost Rate Agreement. Replace the "XXXX" placeholder in the Excel workbook with your actual rate. **Example (Non-Federal):** Indirect costs at 55.5% of modified total direct costs per federally negotiated rate agreement (attached). Used as match = $42,380

Sub-Awards and Special Notices

SUB-AWARD BUDGET JUSTIFICATIONS

If the application includes sub-awards to other universities, submit a **separate budget justification form** covering each sub-award. The sub-award justification must include the same level of detail as the primary institution's justification, including unit costs for all line items.

Include approved indirect cost rate agreements for **all** indirect costs claimed as match - both the primary institution's agreement and any sub-award university's agreement.

Grant funds may NOT be used by USGS or other federal employees for collaboration on the project(s).

UNCREWED AIRCRAFT SYSTEMS (UAS) - READ BEFORE INCLUDING IN BUDGET

There are restrictions on using grant funds for Uncrewed Aircraft Systems (UAS). If your request includes funding for UAS, you must determine whether the UAS qualifies as a "covered" system under DOI policy before submitting.

The Department of Interior will not approve funding for covered UAS, and including a covered UAS in your request may cause significant delays in processing the award.

Refer to the **Covered UAS Assessment Guide** (doi-covered-uas-assessment-guide-v3.0.pdf) enclosed with this announcement to determine whether your UAS is covered.

All UAS operated under DOI operational control, including cooperator aircraft, must have a current **OAS-36U DOI UAS Data Card** or letter of authorization issued by the Office of Aviation Services. Review: **https://www.doi.gov/sites/doi.gov/files/opm-11.pdf**

Common Mistakes - Side-by-Side Examples

The following examples are drawn from budgets that have been returned to institutions for correction. ***Incomplete budgets slow processing for all awards.***

Supplies

Acceptable - Supplies	**Returned / Needs Correction**
Field sampling supplies: 50ml sample containers (1 × 100 count @ $50 = $50) plastic bags (2 × 50 count @ $2.50 = $5) nitrile gloves (1 × 100 count @ $30 = $30) Subtotal: $85 Lab supplies:	a. $232 is requested for supplies on this project b. $200 ($2 each × 100) for souvenirs/prizes for public outreach meetings **Needs correction:**

parafilm (1 × 100 ft @ $5 = $5) sample labels (1 × 100 count @ $5 = $5) permanent markers (1 × 5 pack @ $4 = $4) Subtotal: $14	*a. More detail needed: number of items, price per item, relevance to project* *b. Souvenirs and prizes are not allowable federal expenses*

Equipment

Acceptable - Equipment	**Returned / Needs Correction**
$2,500 - YSI Sonde Exo 599101, in-field water quality analysis; 1 unit @ $2,500 $5,500 - MicaSense RedEdge multi-spectral camera, plant health monitoring at field site. Camera remains with PI's lab post-project. Manufacturer's quote attached.	$10,000 for sondes at each site **Needs correction:** *Must include: model number, number of units, cost per unit, utility to project, and what happens to equipment after project ends. Vendor quote required for any equipment exceeding $5,000.*

Travel

Acceptable - Travel	**Returned / Needs Correction**
1) NIWR Annual Meeting, Washington DC: 1 person, 4 days/4 nights. Hotel $200/night = $800 Airfare = $600 Taxi = $100 (round-trip) Per diem $36/day = $144 Total: $1,644 2) Field trip to [site]: 1 person, 3 days / 2 nights. Mileage: $0.655/mi × 168 mi = $110	a. YR 1: 2-3 day planning trip to field sites = $3,000 b. $1,400 for instate travel to meetings with stakeholders **Needs correction:** *Both lack required detail: mileage or airfare cost, hotel rate, per diem rate, number of trips, number of days, number of people. Missing info will delay the entire award.*

Lodging: $98/night × 2 = $196 Per diem: $59/day × 3 = $177 Total: $483	

Other Direct Costs

Acceptable - Other Direct Costs	Returned / Needs Correction
Nutrient Stakes, Western Lab: $75/sample, 3 sites × 2 seasons = $450 Publication fee, Journal of Environmental Quality: $150/page × 4 pages = $600 Imaging Center: 2 hrs for publication-quality images = $500 Open access fee, Management of Biological Invasions = $2,000	Workshop participant snacks: 100 people × $5 each **Needs correction:** *Food is not an allowable federal* *expense unless it is part of per* *diem during qualifying travel.* *Workshop refreshments/meals* *are never allowable.*

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 200.3. 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.

- **The Budget Breakdown, Budget Justification, and the Budget Summary are to be created from the fillable EXCEL template available at https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/files/wrra-104b-budget-files.zipThis link may need to be copied and pasted into your browser. Link should be saved and then extracted. This must be completed and submitted with the proposal package.**
- **Include a snapshot of the summary table along with the budget justification for each proposal component. Federal costs must be explained separately from matching funds.**

- **Budget Summary is automatically calculated as part of the Budget workbook, but it is the responsibility of the Institute to ensure that totals are correct.**

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).

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.

Other Required Information
Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.112, applicants must state in their application if any actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of submission.

1. *Applicability*

1. This section intends to ensure that non-Federal entities and their employees take appropriate steps to avoid conflicts of interest in their responsibilities under or with respect to Federal financial assistance agreements.
2. In the procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and by subrecipients, the conflict-of-interest provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 apply.

2. *Notification*.
    1. Non-Federal entities, including applicants for financial assistance awards, must disclose in writing any conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency or pass-through entity in accordance with 2 CFR 200.112.
    2. Recipients must establish internal controls that include, at a minimum, procedures to identify, disclose, and mitigate or eliminate identified conflicts of interest. The recipient is responsible for notifying the Financial Assistance Officer in writing of any conflicts of interest that may arise during the life of the award, including those that have been reported by subrecipients.
3. *Restrictions on lobbying.* Non-Federal entities are strictly prohibited from using funds under a grant or cooperative agreement for lobbying activities and must provide the required certifications and disclosures pursuant to 43 CFR part 18 and 31 U.S.C. 1352
4. *Review procedures*. The Financial Assistance Officer will examine each conflict-of-interest disclosure on the basis of its particular facts and the nature of the proposed grant or cooperative agreement, and will determine whether a significant potential conflict exists and, if it does, develop an appropriate means for resolving it.
5. *Enforcement*. Failure to resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies the government may be cause for termination of the award. Failure to make required disclosures may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338, Remedies for noncompliance, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR part 180).

Required Certifications and Disclosures which capture the Conflict of Interests and Overlap or Duplciation of Effort Statement disclosures as well as the FAIR requirements listed above:

Instructions for Applicants: A single page containing responses to the listed topics (1-5) must be included in the compiled application PDF immediately following the Data Management Plan. Provide the topic name for each of the four components, followed by a written response. For components where no condition applies, use the standard language provided. The Authorized Organization Representative's signature on the SF-424 covers the Certification Regarding Lobbying (Component 3) for awards over $100,000, no separate signature block is required on this page.

1. **Conflict of Interest Disclosure**

    Per **2 CFR §1402.112 (Financial Assistance Interior Regulation)**, applicants must disclose in writing any actual or potential conflict of interest that exists at the time of application submission. The requirements below apply throughout the life of the award.

Requirement	What It Means for Applicants

Disclose at submission	Disclose in writing any actual or potential conflict of interest to the DOI awarding agency at the time of application, per 2 CFR 200.112. If no conflict exists, state that explicitly.
Notify during the award	If a conflict arises at any point during the life of the award, including conflicts reported by subrecipients, notify the Financial Assistance Officer in writing promptly. Recipients must maintain internal controls to identify, disclose, and mitigate conflicts on an ongoing basis.
Procurement	Conflict-of-interest provisions in 2 CFR 200.318 apply to all procurement of supplies, equipment, construction, and services by recipients and subrecipients under this award.
Lobbying prohibition	Grant and cooperative agreement funds are strictly prohibited from use in lobbying activities. Required certifications and disclosures must be provided pursuant to 43 CFR Part 18 and 31 U.S.C. 1352.
Failure to disclose	Failure to resolve conflicts to the government's satisfaction may result in award termination. Failure to make required disclosures may result in remedies under 2 CFR 200.338, including suspension or debarment (see also 2 CFR Part 180).

In your application, state one of the following:

	No conflict: "No actual or potential conflict of interest exists at the time of this application submission."
	Conflict exists – disclose in writing: Describe the nature of the actual or potential conflict of interest in a written attachment. The Financial Assistance Officer will review the disclosure and determine whether a significant conflict exists and how it will be resolved.

2**. Single Audit Reporting Statement**

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending **$1,000,000 or more** in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System.

In your application, state one of the following:

	Not required: "Our organization was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year."
	Required: "Our organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year." If checking this box, also provide: • The EIN associated with the Single Audit report

- Whether the report is available through the Federal Audit Clearinghouse website (audits.fac.gsafac.gov)

3. **Certification Regarding Lobbying**

Applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A. The Authorized Organization Representative's signature on the SF-424 serves as this certification, no additional signature is required here. However, this certification must be affirmatively acknowledged in the application.

In your application, state the following (required if requesting more than $100,000):

"The Authorized Organization Representative's signature on the SF-424 submitted with this application represents the applicant entity's certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR Part 18 - Certification Regarding Lobbying, as required for applicants requesting more than $100,000 in Federal funds."

If requesting $100,000 or less, state: **"This certification is not applicable – Federal funds requested do not exceed $100,000."**

4. **Disclosure of Lobbying Activities**

- The Federal share of this award is more than $100,000, **AND**

Federal and matching funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) under this award may **not** be used to pay any person for lobbying, that is, for influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress in connection with this award.

A completed **SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities"** form must be submitted as part of this application if **both** of the following are true:

- The applicant has made, or has agreed to make, any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application or award.

In your application, state one of the following:

	SF-LLL not required: "No payments using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with this application or award have been made or agreed to."
	SF-LLL attached: "A completed SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities, is included with this application. See 43 CFR Subpart 18.100 and 31 U.S.C. 1352."

5. **Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement**

Applicants must indicate whether this application overlaps with any other current or pending Federal application or funded project with respect to activities, costs, or key personnel time commitments.

In your application, state one of the following:

	No overlap - use this exact language: "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regard to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel."
	Overlap exists - provide all of the following: • A complete description of the overlap or duplication (activities, costs, and/or key personnel time commitment) • A copy of the overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to the other funding entity • The name of the other funding entity and program, the date the proposal was submitted, and the anticipated notification date • **Important:** if the overlapping proposal is subsequently awarded, you must immediately notify the USGS point of contact. Overlap may impact selection or funding amount.

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, December 30, 2026.**

Program Website Link

https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/

LATE SUBMISSIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

Applications received by Grants.gov after 5:00 PM Eastern Time on December 30, 2026, will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by USGS. USGS recommends submitting at least 24–48 hours before the deadline to allow time to resolve any technical issues.

FOR SPONSORED PROGRAMS OFFICES — SUBMISSION FILE SUMMARY

This application requires two separate file uploads to Grants.gov:

1. **Single compiled PDF -** All narrative components, forms, letters, and budget justifications assembled in one PDF in the order listed in the "Application Content and Format" section. Budget screenshots (see below) must be embedded within this PDF.
2. **Budget Workbook (Excel) -** The completed Proposal Summary Budget workbook submitted as a separate .xlsx file alongside the PDF. Do not embed or zip the Excel file.

Budget screenshots in the PDF:

For every proposal component (Program Administration, Information Transfer, Education and Outreach, and each individual research project), a snapshot/screenshot of the relevant Budget Breakdown Table from the Excel workbook must be pasted into the PDF immediately before that component's budget justification narrative. **Files must not be zipped or compressed.**

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 12/30/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 5:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

OMB Control Number: 1028-0097

Submission Instructions

Apply Through Grants.gov

To apply through 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 (GRANTXXXXXXXX) 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.

How to Submit an Application to USGS via Grants.gov

Grants.gov applicants can apply online using Workspace. Workspace is a shared, online environment where members of a grant team may simultaneously access and edit different webforms within an application. A separate Workspace can be created for each Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA).

For complete Workspace instructions: https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html

WORKSPACE SUBMISSION - STEP BY STEP

Create a Workspace: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting. Search for the FON on Grants.gov.

Complete a Workspace: Add participants to the Workspace to work on the application together. Complete all required forms online or by downloading PDF versions. Check for errors before submission. Complete the SF-424 first — it auto-populates fields in other forms. Adobe Reader note: If using downloaded PDF forms, visit https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html to ensure you have the correct version. Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are mandatory.

Upload Your Files: Upload your compiled PDF narrative and the Budget Workbook Excel file as separate attachments. Do not zip or compress either file.

Submit the Workspace: Click the Sign and Submit button on the Manage Workspace page under the Forms tab.

Track Your Submission: After submitting, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is assigned automatically. Save this number. Use the Track My Application page to monitor status.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials:
https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-training.html

Applicant Support: Grants.gov provides applicants 24/7 support via the toll-free number 1-800-518-4726 and email at support@grants.gov. For questions related to the specific grant opportunity, contact the USGS program contacts listed at the end of this document.

TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES DURING SUBMISSION

If you experience difficulties, call the Grants.gov Support Center immediately and get a ticket number. The ticket number helps USGS track your issue if you need to contact the program. Do not end the browser session while a submission is in progress, transmissions can take time and the screen may appear inactive. Wait for a confirmation email to the AOR.

Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

Online Submission: All applications must be received by the established due date. The applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application will receive an acknowledgement of receipt and a tracking number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) from Grants.gov with the successful transmission of their application. This applicant with the AOR role will also receive the official date/time stamp and Grants.gov Tracking number in an email serving as proof of their timely submission.

When USGS successfully retrieves the application from Grants.gov, and acknowledges the download of submissions, Grants.gov will provide an electronic acknowledgment of receipt of the application to the email address of the applicant with the AOR role who submitted the application. Proof of timely submission shall be the official date and time that Grants.gov receives your application. Applications received by Grants.gov after the established due date for the program will be considered late and will not be considered for funding by USGS.

Applicants with a slow internet connection should be aware that transmission can take time before Grants.gov receives your application. Grants.gov will provide either an error or a successfully received transmission in the form of an email sent to the applicant with the AOR role attempting to submit the application. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

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

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 via email.

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.

Application must be from an eligible Water Resources Research Institute and align with the requirements of this announcement. Applications that do not pass the eligibility review will be removed from consideration.

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 (WRRA) program staff with budgetary reviews by the Grants Specialist of the DOI Office of Grants. The USGS WRRA review is primarily a technical evaluation to determine if individual projects listed in each Institute's application meet the WRRA priorities.

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.

In addition, all applications are subject to an internal evaluation process to ensure alignment with Departmental and Administration priorities, and each applicant must demonstrate that at least 25% of its submission directly supports these priority areas to ensure federal financial assistance is strategically targeted, advances high-impact national objectives, and promotes mission-critical initiatives across the bureau; applications that do not meet this threshold may be required to revise, supplement, or further justify their content to comply with oversight expectations including, but not limited to, their alignment with the identified Executive and Secretarial Orders below.

The Program Announcement provides rigorous science and transparent communication (EO14303 *Restoring Gold Standard Science* (May 23, 2025) and SO3441 *Implementing the Requirements of EO14303, Restoring Gold Standard Science* (August 29, 2025)), hazard and risk assessment that enhance local preparedness (EO14239 *Achieving Efficiency Through State and Local Preparedness* (March 18, 2025)), the strategic use of Artificial Intelligence (SO3444 *Leading Interior's Path to Artificial Intelligence Transformation* (September 17, 2025)), and natural resource stewardship that balances the needs of ecosystems, communities, and the economy (EO14313 *Establishing the President's Make America Beautiful Again Commission* (July 3, 2025)).

Program Manager to Review after receipt of application.

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: 03/01/2027

Anticipated Project End Date: 02/29/2028

DO NOT BEGIN WORK BEFORE RECEIVING YOUR NOTICE OF FEDERAL AWARD

The signed Notice of Federal Award from an authorized Grants Officer is the only document that authorizes you to begin work and incur costs. Verbal notifications, emails, or other informal communications do not constitute authorization.

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

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions (Attachment 1) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards. The USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

USGS WRRA anticipated awards will be on or around 3/1/2027 with an end date of 2/29/2028.

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.

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.

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions (Attachment 1) for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards. The USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

1. All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.
2. The Federal Government has the right to:
    1. Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and
    2. Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

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.

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:

REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OVERVIEW

Financial Reporting:

- Use the Federal Financial Report (SF-425) form for all financial reporting.
- Final financial report is due within 90 calendar days after the award period end date or termination date.
- For awards longer than 12 months, interim financial reports are required at the frequency established in the Notice of Award (exception: if the recipient requests payment at least once annually via SF-270/271 throughout the entire period).
- As a requirement of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021, Institutes are required to report Federal:non-Federal expenditures for the past Fiscal Year (10/1-9/30). Reporting request is initiated by WRRA.

Technical Reporting:

- The recipient shall prepare an Annual Program Report summarizing its activities during the reporting period under its base grant (104b), national competitive grant program (104g) awards for which it is the lead institute, and coordination awards funded either by the USGS or by pass-through funds from another Federal agency. Reporting must use the USGS-provided template (an Excel Workbook). The reporting period for the annual program is currently September 1 through August 31, unless changed by the USGS Program Office.
- The Annual Program Report is to be filed with the USGS within 90 days of each annual reporting period unless a different date is specified.

- The Annual Program Report for each Institute shall consist of the following components and shall be in the format specified in the Annual Report template provided by the WRRA program office:
    - **Research:** A synopsis of each ongoing and completed research project during the reporting period. Includes base grant (104b), national competitive grant program (104g) projects for which you are the lead, and coordination awards. Include only national competitive grant program projects for which you are the lead institute.
    - **Publications:** All reports, journal articles, datasets, and other products published during the reporting period from projects supported with WRRA and required matching funds. Include both current projects and those whose award periods have ended. Acknowledge USGS WRRA support on all products, including those published after the award period ends.
    - **Information Transfer:** A brief description of information transfer activities supported with WRRA and required matching funds, including education and outreach, conferences, social media, or other activities.
    - **Student Support:** A summary of the number of students supported with WRRA and required matching funds, including base grant (104b) and national competitive grant program (104g) awards for which you are the lead, as well as coordination awards.
    - **Interaction with USGS:** A summary of projects that include direct collaboration with USGS staff.
    - **Notable Achievements and Awards:** A brief description of any especially notable achievements and awards resulting from work supported with WRRA and required matching funds and by coordination awards during the reporting period

Ongoing Compliance:

- 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.
- 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 SF-LLL form per 43 CFR 18.100.
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and

information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over $30,000 to the FFATA Subaward Reporting System (FSRS).

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.Performance Reports

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT
OMB Control Number: 1028-0097

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