

EPA Regions 1, 2, and 3 Wetland Program Development Grants Training Workshop Questions & Answers

Is EPA scheduled to move to GrantSolutions in the near future?

The Agency has opted to move to a different system, which was launched in December 2020. EPA's new grants system is called the Next Generation Grants System (NGGS).

How different is the grant process from years past? It sounds very similar to past years.

The grant process has not been significantly changed from previous years' Request for Applications. The main difference is that now the WPDG competition submission requires a full federal application, including all mandatory forms. In previous years, only a proposal was required without having to submit the forms until after proposal evaluations were completed. The Request for Proposals has been changed to a Request for Applications (RFA).

In addition, you will also need to contact your Regional Grants Coordinator within one week of the RFA closing to verify that your application was received.

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

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

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

The Intergovernmental Review process will begin when you submit the information to the reviewing agency. It should be done just before you submit your application.

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

If awarded a grant, you will receive notification of your assigned Project Officer when you receive your award document. If you choose to include your WPDG funds in your state, territory, or tribal government Performance Partnership Grant (PPG), you will keep

the same Project Officer for the PPG, but you will also have a technical reviewer (Wetlands Project Officer) assigned to you to review the workplan and progress on the WPDG project activities. You will have two Project Officers.

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

You may submit tables, including the milestone schedule, in landscape format. Please keep all tables double-spaced and ensure all information is legible. As a reminder, the page limit for the FY2021/2022 application is 22 double-spaced pages, or 11 single-spaced pages. Any information submitted beyond the page limit (other than the forms not included as part of the page limit) will not be reviewed.

Is there a time frame for the next RFA announcement?

The FY2021/2022 RFA will be posted to Grants.gov on Friday, May 7, 2021. Due to the timing of posting the RFA, the competition will be open for 48 days and will close firmly on June 24, 2021 at 11:59 P.M. ET.

Will a copy of the PowerPoint be shared in addition to the recording of the training?

A copy of the PowerPoint presentation was emailed to all those who registered for the training workshops that were held in February 2021. The slides for the presentation are posted in PDF format on the EPA WPDG website under Region 2 alongside the link to the recorded training session and this FAQ document.

Can you talk about In-Lieu Fee Program eligibility?

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

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

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

Letters of support are not mandatory and are not specifically included as part of the scoring criteria. Letters of support can come from within or outside your agency/organization and can be used to further explain project partnerships. They can

also be used to demonstrate how your proposed project aligns with other agencies/organizations, or your state, territory, tribal, or local government initiatives.

Can applicants request a debriefing even if they were awarded to review scoring to make future application improvements and gauge strengths/weaknesses?

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

5700.5A1 Section 16. b (3) states:

(3) Provide applicants with timely notification of (i) any ineligibility determinations (e.g., notification that they were deemed ineligible by EPA for award consideration because they were not considered an eligible applicant or otherwise did not meet the threshold eligibility factors in the announcement) and

(ii) decisions that they were not selected for award (e.g., notification to the applicant that they were not selected for award based on their ranking or scoring after an evaluation of their application/proposal against the evaluation and selection factors in Section V of the announcement).

(4) Provide applicants with an opportunity for a timely debriefing to obtain a fuller explanation of why they were deemed ineligible for award consideration or not selected for award.

Can 25% of the match be in-kind?

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

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

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

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

The total funding available for EPA Region 2 (New York, New Jersey, Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands, and 8 Indian Nations) is usually a little less than \$1.4 million. Grant applications may request funds of any amount; there are no specific limitations to the

amount of funding requested. However, please be aware that funding is limited and competitive, and EPA has the discretion to award less funding than requested. In addition, you want to make sure that your project narrative, budget, and milestone schedule reflect the truest and most accurately estimated costs. We will review these components against the amount of funding requested to ensure that the request is reasonable and consistent with other, similar projects' budgets. Generally, federal funding requests are between \$100,000 and \$250,000 in Region 2. Lastly, please remember that you also must include the 25% match.

Can a single project be submitted for Track 1 and 2?

A single project proposal/grant application must be submitted to either Track 1 or Track 2. You cannot submit the same application to both Tracks. However, you may submit one project proposal/grant application to Track 1, and another, different project to Track 2.

Here is the language from the 2019/2020 Request for Applications (RFA):

“Applicants may submit more than one application under this RFA under the applicable track. Each application must be separately submitted, be for a different project, and will be separately evaluated. In addition, state and tribal applicants may submit applications under each track but each application must be submitted under either Track One or Track Two. State and tribal applicants cannot submit one application covering both tracks.”

(Link to last RFA, 2019/2020: <https://www.epa.gov/wetlands/region-2-wetland-program-development-grant-request-applications>)

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

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

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

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

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

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