

United States Geological Survey

WATER RESOURCES RESEARCH ACT PROGRAM NATIONAL COMPETITIVE
GRANTS FY2024 PROGRAM ANNOUNCEMENT For PER – AND POLYFLUOROALKYL
SUBSTANCES (PFAS)

<https://water.usgs.gov/wri/>



Notice of Funding Opportunity - Fiscal Year 2024
Funding Opportunity Number (FON) G24AS00535

Closing Date: 05/30/2024

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A. Program Description

A1. 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.

Catalog of Federal Domestic Assistance (CFDA) Number
15.805

A2. Background, Purpose and Program Requirements

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

The 54 Institutes are organized as the National Institutes for Water Resources (NIWR). NIWR cooperates with the USGS in the administration of the Water Resources Research Act Program.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

Section 104(g) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 requires that this competitive grant program focus on: “water problems and issues of a regional or interstate nature beyond those of concern only to a single State and which relate to specific program priorities identified jointly by the Secretary (of the Interior) and the (water resources research) institutes.” Objectives of this program also include the following:

- A. Promote per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances research as related to the nation’s water quality as well as the social and(or) economic implications that might drive or be affected by PFAS. This includes integration with ongoing USGS science, monitoring, and goals, including those summarized by Tokranov and others (2021; <https://doi.org/10.3133/cir1490>).

B. Promote the dissemination and application of the results of the research funded under this program, both to the scientific community and to the general public.

C. Assist in the training of scientists in relevant water-resource fields. Proposals that include a strong educational component (student support) are encouraged, as are those from early-career faculty.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES

The challenges and opportunities of understanding the effects of per-and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances on water resources are poorly understood, despite the real and growing effect of this group of man-made substances on water quality and the resultant exposure to humans, other organisms, and ecosystems. Research is needed to better understand these interactions and guide management decisions that will improve water resources at the regional or national scale.

Proposals are sought on the following specific areas of inquiry (levels of priority are not assigned, and the order of listing does not indicate the level of priority):

Media-specific methods: Enhanced methods for detection on specific media, with a clear indication of

- new or different compounds,
- new or different methodological approaches,
- lower detection levels for specific media or compounds, especially with respect to EPA health guidelines for PFOA (Perfluorooctanoic Acid) and PFOS (Perfluorooctane Sulfonate).

Media of interest include (in ranked order) (1) Tissues/plasma, (2) sediment, (3) air or interfaces, (4) water.

Atmospheric sources: Improved understanding of atmospheric exchange in PFAS distribution and fate. This may include methods to determine transport of PFAS to the atmosphere and to subsequent receiving waters, such as a water method that determines "new" compounds based on their likelihood to occur in the atmosphere.

Processes oriented at molecular level: Process-oriented research of PFAS fate, transport, and effects, with emphasis on *molecular-level* understanding of PFAS precursor transformation, sorption dynamics, or mechanisms of bioaccumulation and(or) biological/ecological effects, or biodegradation of PFAS along source to receptor pathways and identification of mitigation methods.

Funding Opportunity Goals

Research pertaining to PFAS in water resources in each State or Territory served by the Water Resources Research Institutes under the Water Resources Research Act.

B. Federal Award Information

B1. Total Funding

Estimated Total Funding

\$2,790,000

B2. Award Amount

Maximum Award

\$310,000

Minimum Award

\$0

Applicants shall not request total federal funds exceeding \$310,000 per project.

B3. Anticipated Award Funding and Dates

Anticipated Award Date

December 16, 2024

FEDERAL FUNDS

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

B. All successful proposals will be fully funded for the entire duration of the project with FY 2024 funds, if available.

DURATION OF PROJECT

A. Proposed projects may be of 1 to 3 years in duration, with discrete 12-month budget periods.

B. Awards will be made directly to the **Water Resources Research Institute** through which the proposal was submitted. The project start date is expected to be within 30 days of receiving the award.

B4. Number of Awards

Expected Number of Awards

9

B5. Type of Award

Funding Instrument Type

G - Grant

C. Eligibility Information

C1. Eligible Applicants

Eligible Applicants

25 – Others (see text field entitled “Additional Information on Eligibility” for clarification)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Awards are available only to Water Resources Research Institutes established pursuant to the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act and listed at <http://water.usgs.gov/wrri/index.php>. However, any investigator at an institution of higher learning in the United States is eligible to apply for an award through a Water Resources Research Institute. The application, with full proposal along with the SF-424 and SF-424B and budget forms, must be submitted through grants.gov (<http://www.grants.gov>) by the university at which the Institute is located. Proposals requesting matching funds from an Institute are authorized at the discretion of the Institute Director.

C2. Cost Sharing or Matching

Cost Sharing / Matching Requirement

Yes

This program has a cost share requirement.

This program has a match requirement.

MATCHING FUNDS

A. Each applicant must match each Federal dollar provided to support each proposed project with not less than one dollar from non-federal sources. States may have different guidelines as to the sources of matching funds - please check with your Institute Director for details.

Note: Guam, the Federated States of Micronesia, the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, American Samoa, and the U.S. Virgin Islands are exempt from the matching requirement.

B. Matching funds shall be obligated during the period of performance.

C. The matching requirement should be met during each 12-month budget period.

D. Matching funds obligated shall be reflected on line 10.i of each Financial Status Report, [Standard Form 425](#).

E. Matching funds may contain indirect costs and non-federal salaries and benefits. The applicant’s negotiated indirect cost rate (NICR) may be applied to **both** qualifying federal and non-federal direct costs, and the result used to satisfy part of the matching requirement under the non-federal share. The NICR shall not be applied to tuition and equipment costs. **As per the Water Resources Research Act, federal funds shall not be used to pay indirect costs.**

C3. Other

PROPOSALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

- A. Proposals for research on health effects involving human subjects.
- B. Proposals for research involving oceanography (estuarine research proposals are acceptable).
- C. Proposals submitted by an Institute or Center that has not met reporting requirements on a previous award by the USGS.
- D. Proposals that do not comply with the terms of this Announcement.
- E. Proposals for research that do not meet the listed Research Priorities.

Excluded Parties: USGS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. USGS cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

D. Application and Submission Information

Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures

Grants.gov Application Submission and Receipt Procedures

This section provides the application submission and receipt instructions for U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) program applications. Please read the following instructions carefully and completely.

1. Electronic Delivery

USGS is participating in the Grants.gov initiative to provide the grant community with a single site to find and apply for grant funding opportunities. USGS encourages applicants to submit their applications online through Grants.gov.

2. How to Register to Apply through Grants.gov

a. *Instructions:* Read the instructions below about registering to apply for USGS funds. Applicants should read the registration instructions carefully and prepare the information requested before beginning the registration process. Reviewing and assembling the required information before beginning the registration process will alleviate last-minute searches for required information.

Organizations must have an active System for Award Management (SAM) registration, and Grants.gov account to apply for grants. If individual applicants are eligible to apply for this funding opportunity, then you may begin with step 3, Create a Grants.gov Account, listed below.

Creating a Grants.gov account can be completed online in minutes, but SAM registration may take several weeks. Therefore, an organization's registration should be done in sufficient time to ensure it does not impact the entity's ability to meet required application submission deadlines.

Note: An entity will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) by SAM. No Dun and Bradstreet (DUNS) number is required after April 4, 2022.

Complete organization instructions can be found on Grants.gov here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration.html>

1) *Register with SAM*: All organizations applying online through Grants.gov must register with the System for Award Management (SAM). Failure to register with SAM will prevent your organization from applying through Grants.gov. SAM registration must be renewed annually. For more detailed instructions for registering with SAM, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/organization-registration/step-2-register-with-sam.html>

2) *Create a Grants.gov Account*: The next step is to register an account with Grants.gov. Follow the on-screen instructions or refer to the detailed instructions here:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration.html>

3) *Add a Profile to a Grants.gov Account*: A profile in Grants.gov corresponds to a single applicant organization the user represents (i.e., an applicant) or an individual applicant. If you work for or consult with multiple organizations and have a profile for each, you may log in to one Grants.gov account to access all of your grant applications. To add an organizational profile to your Grants.gov account, enter UEI assigned by SAM in the UEI field while adding a profile. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/add-profile.html>

4) *EBiz POC Authorized Profile Roles*: After you register with Grants.gov and create an Organization Applicant Profile, the organization applicant's request for Grants.gov roles and access is sent to the EBiz POC. The EBiz POC will then log in to Grants.gov and authorize the appropriate roles, which may include the AOR role, thereby giving you permission to complete and submit applications on behalf of the organization. You will be able to submit your application online any time after you have been assigned the AOR role. For more detailed instructions about creating a profile on Grants.gov, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/authorize-roles.html>

5) *Track Role Status*: To track your role request, refer

to: <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/registration/track-role-status.html>

b. *Electronic Signature*: When applications are submitted through Grants.gov, the name of the organization applicant with the AOR role that submitted the application is inserted into the signature line of the application, serving as the electronic signature. The EBiz POC **must** authorize people who are able to make legally binding commitments on behalf of the organization as a user with the AOR role; **this step is often missed and it is crucial for valid and timely submissions.**

3. 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. For each funding opportunity announcement (FOA), you can create individual instances of a workspace.

Below is an overview of applying on Grants.gov. For access to complete instructions on how to apply for opportunities, refer to:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.html>

- 1) *Create a Workspace*: Creating a workspace allows you to complete it online and route it through your organization for review before submitting.
- 2) *Complete a Workspace*: Add participants to the workspace to work on the application together, complete all the required forms online or by downloading PDF versions, and check for errors before submission. The Workspace progress bar will display the state of your application process as you apply. As you apply using Workspace, you may click the blue question mark icon near the upper-right corner of each page to access context-sensitive help.

- a. *Adobe Reader*: If you decide not to apply by filling out webforms you can download individual PDF forms in Workspace. The individual PDF forms can be downloaded and saved to your local device storage, network drive(s), or external drives, then accessed through Adobe Reader.

NOTE: Visit the Adobe Software Compatibility page on Grants.gov to download the appropriate version of the software at:

<https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants/adobe-software-compatibility.html>

- b. *Mandatory Fields in Forms*: In the forms, you will note fields marked with an asterisk and a different background color. These fields are mandatory fields that must be completed to successfully submit your application.

- c. *Complete SF-424 Fields First*: The forms are designed to fill in common required fields across other forms, such as the applicant name, address, and UEI Number. Once it is completed, the information will transfer to the other forms.

- 3) *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. Grants.gov recommends submitting your application package at least 24-48 hours prior to the close date to provide you with time to correct any potential technical issues that may disrupt the application submission.

- 4) *Track a Workspace Submission*: After successfully submitting a workspace application, a Grants.gov Tracking Number (GRANTXXXXXXXX) is automatically assigned to the application. The number will be listed on the Confirmation page that is generated after submission. Using the tracking number, access the Track My Application page under the Applicants tab or the Details tab in the submitted workspace.

For additional training resources, including video tutorials, refer to:

<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 number listed in the application package of the grant you are applying for.

If you are experiencing difficulties with your submission, it is best to call the Grants.gov Support Center and get a ticket number. The Support Center ticket number will assist the USGS with tracking your issue and understanding background information on the issue.

4. Timely Receipt Requirements and Proof of Timely Submission

a. *Online Submission.* All applications must be received by the due date established for each program. Proof of timely submission is automatically recorded by Grants.gov. An electronic date/time stamp is generated within the system when the application is successfully received by Grants.gov. 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. Again, 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 using slow internet, such as dial-up connections, should be aware that transmission can take some time before Grants.gov receives your application. Again, 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. The Grants.gov Support Center reports that some applicants end the transmission because they think that nothing is occurring during the transmission process. Please be patient and give the system time to process the application.

D1. Address to Request Application Package

Applications, including the full proposal, must be submitted to grants.gov by the State Water Resources Research Institute prior to the 5:00 PM Eastern Time, May 30, 2024 closing date. Proposals must be submitted as a complete application package (full proposal, SF-424 and SF-424B, matching commitment letter, budget breakdown, budget justification, and budget summary) to grants.gov by the university that houses the Institute. **PI's must coordinate with their respective Institute prior to submission to allow time for the Institute to meet the deadlines of this program announcement.**

Program Website Link

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

D2. Content and Form of Application Submission

1. SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, signed, and dated. Do not

include any proprietary or personally identifiable information. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the “Federal” funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the “Other” box and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the “Budget Narrative” section below).

Any applicant organization that has not completed the financial assistance certifications and representations within their SAM.gov registration must submit the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov.

Project Narrative

PROPOSAL PREPARATION

All proposal documents (elements 1-14) must be submitted as one file in PDF format. Each element has a maximum potential point value and these elements will be combined in order to rank the proposals. Elements 3-8 shall not exceed 10 single-spaced pages, with 12-point font and at least 1-inch margins, including tables, pictures, graphs, figures, and appendices. Proposals exceeding the page limit for elements 3-8 will not be considered. The supplemental information (elements 1, 2, 9-14) does not count towards the page limit but includes required parts of the proposal. Please include page numbers and short title in either header or footer, but nothing else. **Note that this format has been revised from previous years.**

Proposal element	Description	Points
1. Title Page	Must include full and short title, lead PI name and contact information (email and telephone number), collaborator and co-PI names, federal funds requested, matching fund contribution, abstract (300 words), plain-word summary (150 words), keywords, and project abstract summary (description follows).	
2. Project Abstract Summary	<p>Include a plain language description of the following (use bulleted terms to highlight portions of the summary):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose (avoid acronyms or Federal or agency specific terminology) [purpose]; • Activities to be performed [activities]; • Deliverables and Expected Outcomes [outcomes]; • Intended beneficiary(ies) [beneficiaries]; and • Subrecipient activities, if known or specified at the time of award [sub-recipient]. <p>Project Abstract Summary character limitation is one page (no more than 4000 characters). Use of Times New Roman and 12-point font is recommended. This is required by Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memoranda M-21-20 and M-22-02 and will be publicly posted on USAspending.gov for selected proposals.</p>	

3. Address specific priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Repeat Title Only • Describe the problem/issue and directly address a research priority described in Section III. • Document the magnitude of the situation and relevance to state, regional and national issues. • Why is this project/topic innovative, important, and timely? 	15 points
4. Integration with USGS science	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the proposed work initiate or further collaboration with the USGS? • How does it supplement recent or ongoing work by the USGS? 	10 points
5. Scientific value of proposed work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the goals and objectives of the research? • What is the potential to expand fundamental knowledge through the stated goals and objectives? • Describe the methods, field area, and facilities as a function of these objectives. 	20 points
6. Anticipated Benefits to Scientific Community and General Public	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used. • Describe the potential outcomes and the potential, realistic impacts of the proposed work. • How does the proposed research build on previous research or lay the groundwork for future research? • What tangible products are expected? These might include data, methods, workflows, manuscripts, and(or) new communication strategies. 	20 points
7. Products and Information Transfer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a timeline of key activities, including field seasons, data collection, and lab analyses, as appropriate. • Explain the planned transfer of results to user groups. • How will new information be made available to the scientific community and general public? • Identify stakeholders and planned communication strategies (e.g., workshops, publications, extension). 	10 points
8. Training Potential	Detail the educational component, including student support and engagement of early-career researchers.	10 points
9. Budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A budget table, including all categories, must be included in the proposal. If budget includes a sub-award or contract, the same level of detail must be provided. • A budget justification, including details, must be provided for all costs. Federal expenses must be separated from matching expenses. Federal employees may NOT be paid with project funds. 	10 points

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel must be specific as to location(s) and specific meeting(s)/conference(s). A budget justification, including details, must be provided for all costs; federal expenses must be separated from matching expenses. Use the budget templates to provide the required detail and justification. https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/files/wrra-104g-budget-files.zip. <i>This link MUST be copied and pasted into your browser. Folder must be saved and then extracted. This new template must be completed and submitted with the proposal package.</i> <p><i>Costs that are not described in adequate detail may not be funded.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The PI's salary is an acceptable budget item, but the federal share of the salary should not exceed two months per year. Document salary for other staff and researchers, including any overhead expenses at institutions beyond that of the PI. 	
10. Data Management	Should be in the context of products and information transfer (Element 7). Please use the template at https://www.usgs.gov/media/files/usgs-data-management-plan-checklist .	3 points
11. Cited Literature	Should include only those referenced in proposal.	
12. Qualifications of Research Team	Provide a brief biographical sketch, no more than 3 pages, for the PI and any co-PIs.	2 points
13. Matching Commitment Letter	Institutional cost-sharing agreement (letter) signed by an official authorized to commit the applicant to all or part of the matching share or a third party, in-kind contribution signed by an official authorized to commit the third party. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal. The USGS does not need the originals.	
14. Letters of Support	Proposals with a federal collaborator must be accompanied by a letter of support that is signed by someone in leadership at the designated center; this cannot be the collaborator. Additional letters of support are optional. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal.	

COLLABORATION 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.
- E. There is no funding available for collaboration by USGS staff and collaborations should leverage ongoing work.
- F. Proposals with a federal collaborator must be accompanied by a letter of support that is signed by someone in leadership at the designated center; this cannot be the collaborator.

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form and Budget Narrative. For non-construction programs or projects, applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, "Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs" form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

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 or SF424C.

Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposals submitted to USGS must include a supplementary document of no more than four pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP). This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. 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. This supplementary document may include:

- the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
- 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);
- policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;
- provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives; and
- plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of free public access to them.

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management web site here: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans> Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include

subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined DMP by the lead PI that also addresses all subaward data management needs, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

Conflict of Interest Disclosure

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.

(a) 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.

(b) 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.

(c) *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.

(d) *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.

(e) *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).

Single Audit Reporting Statement

All U.S. states, local governments, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, and non-profit organizations expending \$750,000 USD or more in Federal award funds in the applicant's fiscal year must submit a Single Audit report for that year through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse's Internet Data Entry System](#). U.S. state, local government, federally recognized Indian tribal government, and non-profit applicants must state if your organization was or was not required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year. If your organization was required to submit a Single Audit report for the most recently closed fiscal year, provide the EIN associated with that report and state if it is available through the [Federal Audit Clearinghouse](#) website.

Certification Regarding Lobbying

Applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funding must certify to the statements in [43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A-Certification Regarding Lobbying](#). If this application requests more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Official's signature on the appropriate SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance form also represents the entity's certification of the statements in 43 CFR Part 18, Appendix A.

Disclosure of Lobbying Activities

Applicants and recipients must not use any federally appropriated funds (annually appropriated or continuing appropriations) or matching funds under a Federal award to pay any person for lobbying in connection with the award. Lobbying is influencing or attempting to influence an officer or employee of any U.S. agency, a Member of the U.S. Congress, an officer or employee of the U.S. Congress, or an employee of a Member of the U.S. Congress connection with the award. Applicants and recipients must complete and submit the [SF-LLL, "Disclosure of Lobbying Activities"](#) form if the Federal share of the proposal or award is more than \$100,000 and the applicant or recipient has made or has agreed to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection with the application or award. The SF-LLL form is available with this Funding Opportunity on Grants.gov. See 43 CFR, Subpart 18.100 and 31 USC 1352 for more information on when additional submission of this form is required.

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement

Applicants must provide a statement indicating if there is any overlap between this Federal application and any other Federal application, or funded project, in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel. If no such overlap or duplication exists, state, "There are no overlaps or duplication between this application and any of our other Federal applications or funded projects, including in regards to activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel". If any such overlap exists, provide a complete description of overlaps or duplications between this proposal and any other federally funded project or application in regards to activities, costs, and time commitment of key personnel, as applicable. Provide a copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity and identify when that proposal was submitted, to whom (entity name and program), and when you anticipate being notified of their funding decision. The statement and the description of overlap or duplication, when applicable, may be provided within the proposal or as a separate attachment to the application. If at any time a proposal is awarded funds that would be overlapping or duplicative of the funding requested from USGS, the applicant must immediately notify the USGS point of contact. Any overlap or duplication of funding between the proposed project and other active or anticipated projects may impact selection and/or funding amount.

D3. Unique Entity Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM)

Identifier and System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Registration: This requirement does not apply to individuals applying for funds as an individual (i.e., unrelated to any business or nonprofit organization you may own, operate, or work within), or any entity with an exception to bypass SAM.gov registration with prior approval from the funding bureau or office in

accordance with bureau or office policy. All other applicants are required to register in SAM.gov prior to submitting a Federal award application and obtain a [Unique Entity Identifier \(UEI\)](#) which replaces the Data Universal Numbering System (DUNS) number from Dun & Bradstreet in April 2022. A Federal award may not be made to an applicant that has not completed the SAM.gov registration. If an applicant selected for funding has not completed their SAM.gov registration by the time the program is ready to make an award, the program may determine the applicant is not qualified to receive an award. Federal award recipients must also continue to maintain an active SAM.gov registration with current information through the life of their Federal award(s).

Register with the System for Award Management (SAM)

Applicants can register on the [SAM.gov](#) website. The “Help” tab on the website contains User Guides and other information to assist you with registration. The Grants.gov “[Register with SAM](#)” page also provides detailed instructions. Applicants can contact the supporting Federal Service Desk for help registering in SAM. Once registered in SAM, entities will be assigned a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI). Entities must renew and revalidate their SAM registration at least once every 12 months from the date previously registered. Entities are strongly encouraged to revalidate their registration as often as needed to ensure their information is up to date and reflects changes that may have been made to the entity’s IRS information. There is no cost to register with SAM.gov. There are third-party vendors who will charge a fee in exchange for registering entities with SAM.gov; please be aware you can register and request help for free. If applicable, foreign entities who want to receive payment directly to a U.S. bank account must enter and maintain valid, current banking information in SAM.

D4. Submission Dates and Times

Due Date for Applications

May 30, 2024

Application Due Date Explanation

Applications, including the full proposal, must be submitted to grants.gov by the State Water Resources Research Institute prior to the 5:00 PM Eastern Time, May 30, 2024 closing date. Proposals must be submitted as a complete application package (full proposal, SF-424 and SF-424B, matching commitment letter, budget breakdown, budget justification and budget summary) to grants.gov by the university that houses the Institute. **PI’s must coordinate with their respective Institutes prior to submission to allow time for the Institute to meet the deadlines of this program announcement.**

D5. Intergovernmental Review

Prior to application submission, U.S. state and local government applicants should visit the [OMB Office of Federal Financial Management website](#) and view the “State Point of Contact (SPOC) List” to determine whether their application is subject to the state intergovernmental review process under Executive Order (E.O.) 12372 “Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs.” States not on the list do not participate in the intergovernmental review process, and therefore do

not have a SPOC. If you are located within a State that does not have a SPOC, you may send application materials directly to a Federal awarding agency. If your state is on the list, contact the designated entity for more information on the state's prior review requirements for Federal assistance applications.

D6. Funding Restrictions

The Federal awarding agency that provides the largest amount of direct funding to your organization is your cognizant agency for indirect costs, unless otherwise assigned by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB). If the Department of the Interior is your organization's cognizant agency, the Interior Business Center will negotiate your indirect cost rate. Contact the Interior Business Center by phone 916-930-3803 or using the IBC Email Submission Form. See the IBC Website for more information.

Organizations must have an active Federal award before they can submit an indirect cost rate proposal to their cognizant agency. Failure to establish an approved rate during the award period renders all costs otherwise allocable as indirect costs unallowable under the award. Recipients must have prior written approval from USGS to use amounts budgeted for direct costs to satisfy cost-share or match requirements or to cover unallowable indirect costs. Recipients shall not shift unallowable indirect costs to another Federal award unless specifically authorized to do so by legislation.

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted with Application

All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:

- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than \$35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.
- A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than \$35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.
- A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, do not use this statement] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." *or* "Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement."]
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we

will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.

- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate; must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in [§2 CFR 200.68](#)]. We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.
- A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in [2 CFR §200.68](#). We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by USGS.
- A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the “Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network”, which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of 17.5%. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement per [2 CFR §1402.414](#). If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR §200.68 “Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)”. We understand that we must request prior approval from USGS to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that USGS approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.
- A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

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. **As per the Water Resources Research Act, federal funds shall not be used to pay indirect costs.**

D7. Other Submission Requirements

E. Application Review Information

E1. Criteria

Peer review process

Maximum Points: 100

Elements 1-14 (table in Section D2) will be evaluated by a peer-review panel composed of Institute directors, university scientists, and USGS staff experienced in water-resources research. Note that both required elements and element scoring have been revised from previous years and are detailed in the project-narrative section (Section D2).

E2. Review and Selection Process

Proposals submitted by the Institutes are evaluated for completeness after the closing date by OAG in consultation with USGS WRRRA Program staff. The WRRRA Program staff notifies Institutes submitting unacceptable proposals that their proposals will not be further reviewed.

Only proposals submitted to grants.gov that meet the requirements of this announcement will be considered and evaluated by a peer-review panel composed of Institute directors, university scientists, and USGS staff experienced in water-resources research. After conflicts of interest have been considered, each proposal will be reviewed by at least three assigned reviewers. Each proposal will be discussed by the panel and scored according to the listed criteria. Each proposal will be assigned a panel member responsible for writing up the panel summary of the proposal evaluation. Panel summaries will be sent to the submitting Institute.

E3. CFR – Regulatory Information

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

E4. Anticipated Announcement and Federal Award Dates

F. Federal Award Administration Information

F1. Federal Award Notices

F2. Administrative and National Policy Requirements

See the “[DOI Standard Terms and Conditions](#)” for the administrative and national policy requirements applicable to DOI awards.

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions 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](#):

- (a) 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.
- (b) 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.

Attachment 1 includes the Special Terms and Conditions associated with this award program.

F3. Reporting

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

Significant Development Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify USGS in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. USGS will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, USGS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies USGS may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement

contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

G. Federal Awarding Agency Contact(s)

G1. Program Technical Contact

For **programmatic technical assistance**, contact:

First Name:

Christian

Last Name:

Schmidt

Address:

USGS, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston, VA 20192

Telephone:

208-387-1324

Email:

cgschmidt@usgs.gov

Program Manager, Water Resources Research Program

G2. Program Administration Contact

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First Name:

Sara

Last Name:

Roser

Address:

U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive (MS 205), Reston, VA 20122

Telephone:

703-648-7357

Email:

sroser@usgs.gov

Grants Specialist, Office of Acquisition and Grants

G3. Application System Technical Support

For **Grants.gov** technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages, contact:

Name:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Telephone:

1-800-518-4726

Email:

Support@grants.gov

H. 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, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

Projects Descriptions of the projects selected for funding since FY 2021, when the program began, are provided at <https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/grants.php>.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1028-0097, Expiration Date: 3/31/2026

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.