

SGMA Watershed Coordinator Application Frequently Asked Questions

General

Q: How much funding is available in total?

A: \$1.5 million in funding is available. If every applicant requests the maximum amount, we will be able to award five grants.

Q: Will the Department of Conservation pre-review an application and give feedback?

A: No.

Q: If more than one application is submitted per watershed, what happens?

A: Both projects will lose points in the cooperation category, and only one application would potentially be funded.

Q: Will the program rank high v. medium priority basins?

A: Projects must contain at least one high or medium priority basin to be eligible for funding; however, basin designations will not be used to prioritize projects.

Disadvantaged Communities

Q: Does the Department of Conservation have a specific definition for disadvantaged communities?

A: For bond-funded grants, the State defines disadvantaged communities as those where the median household income is 80% or less than the state average.

The State defines severely disadvantaged communities as those where the median household income is 60% or less than the State average.

The Department of Water Resources has developed a [DAC Mapping Tool](#) to help identify these communities. Applicants are encouraged to utilize this or similar tool to determine the disadvantaged communities within their proposed watershed.

Q: Should I utilize the census place, tract, or block group layer when evaluating what disadvantaged or severely disadvantaged communities exist within my watershed?

A: When applying your selected tool to identify disadvantaged communities, consider the scale (place, tract, block group) at which meaningful engagement of disadvantaged community members can best be conducted. For example, census tracts or block groups may be more relevant within urban areas, while census places may be more relevant in rural areas. The Department may consider the population density of the disadvantaged community(ies) identified when evaluating benefits provided.

Q: Will the Department distinguish between disadvantaged communities and severely disadvantaged communities?

A: Projects that serve severely disadvantaged communities will be prioritized.

Q: How should we address situations where only a portion of the watershed is in a disadvantaged community?

A: Disadvantaged communities may be impacted by your proposed work if only a portion of a watershed overlaps with a single disadvantaged community or if only a portion of the watershed contains entire disadvantaged communities. In both cases, consider how the proposed work would impact the residents of those disadvantaged communities and how those residents can be engaged to ensure that they benefit from the proposed work.

Eligibility

Q: Are 501 (c) 12 non-profits eligible to apply?

A: All 501 (c) non-profits are eligible to apply.

Q: What qualifies as "evidence" of strong working connections with stakeholders and a focus on issues within the area?

A: Examples of evidence of strong working connections with stakeholders include letters from stakeholders, memoranda of understanding, or similar documents demonstrating the relationship. Examples of evidence that the applicant focuses on issues in the area include maps of the organization's jurisdiction and the project area, reports or plans that address issues in the area, and relevant projects completed in the area.

Q: Would an individual's involvement in a previous watershed coordinator grant impact their ability to develop an application for this grant cycle?

A: An individual's involvement with a previous application or current grantee would not constitute a conflict of interest for a current applicant.

Q: Would a General Plan or groundwater sustainability plan qualify as a strategic plan with watershed goals?

A: If the applicant is a city or county with a General Plan, that plan could serve as their strategic plan if it contains watershed-related goals. Likewise, a groundwater sustainability plan could qualify as a strategic plan if the applicant has adopted the plan or otherwise formally committed to executing the plan.

Q: Does a groundwater sustainability plan need to be in place in order for us to apply?

A: You may apply if a groundwater sustainability plan for your basin is being developed.

Application Components and Structure

Q: Do we need to use the application template provided on the web?

A: Yes. You must use the template provided to be considered for funding.

Q: Do maps, charts, the workplan, or the budget contribute to the 5-page limit on the narrative section?

A: No. Maps, charts, workplan, and budget will not count toward the page limit.

Q: Does the entire watershed need to be covered by the proposed project area or just a portion of a watershed?

A: The watershed area is defined by the applicant but must include at least one medium or high priority SGMA sub-basin. Projects will vary in size and extent based on applicant needs.

Q: How should we identify our watershed name on the cover sheet & work plan?

A: *SGMA priority basins covered by the proposal should be identified using the basin name on the [SGMA Basin Prioritization Dashboard](#). Hydrologically connected watersheds should be identified using the common name and USGS HUC.*

Q: Will the work plan template be an electronically fillable form?

A: The work plan template is provided as a table within the body of the application. You may duplicate the table to address different performance measures for the position.

Q: Can we use the performance measures identified in our Groundwater Sustainability Plan(s) for the Watershed Coordinator grant program performance measures?

A: Yes. Selected performance measures must be directly related to and reflect the work the watershed coordinator will be doing.

Partners and Cooperators

Q: What is the difference between partners and cooperators?

A: Partner organizations are those that have committed to funds or in-kind services to support the watershed coordinator's work. Partnerships must be evidenced by letters of commitment and/or other signed documents that explain the relationship and outline the partner's contributions.

Cooperating organizations are those organizations, government agencies, or groups working with the applicant to ensure that all entities in the region work in agreement and are non-duplicative of each other's activities. Cooperation may be evidenced by letters of support, signed agreements, board resolutions, or other signed documents. Cooperating organizations do not need to provide evidence of financial contributions made to support the watershed coordinator.

Q: Do partners need to provide a Board resolution demonstrating support?

A: The applicant may choose what documents to provide from partners so long as those documents outline the partners' financial or in-kind contributions to the proposed work and explain the relationship between the partner and the applicant.

Q: Is there an ideal number of partners & cooperators to demonstrate "multiple committed partnerships & extensive cooperation?"

A: No. The number of partners and cooperators included in the application will and should reflect the actual partnerships and cooperation developed or envisioned.

Q: Do we need Statements of Qualifications for consultants, partners, and cooperators?

A: Statements of Qualifications are not required; however, enough information should be provided in the required application materials to demonstrate capacity to complete the proposed work.

Eligible Costs/Budget

Q: Can the grant fund half of a full-time equivalent position?

A: Yes.

Q: Can the grant fund more than two part-time Watershed Coordinators as long as it does not exceed 1 FTE / year?

A: No. the funds may be split between a maximum of two part-time Watershed Coordinators.

Q: Will the program fund project implementation?

A: No. The program will fund the Watershed Coordinator's time to plan and administer projects but will not fund direct implementation work.

For example: For a riparian revegetation project, we would fund the Watershed Coordinator's time developing project designs, writing funding applications, and managing the project if that time is not covered by other funding sources. We would not fund purchase of any materials needed for the project, tools specific to one project and not previously included in the budget, or labor costs to prepare the project site, plant the vegetation, and set up irrigation/fencing.

Q: Can the watershed coordinator conduct technical activities such as monitoring using grant funds or are they only allowed to develop monitoring protocols?

A: Watershed coordinators may conduct technical activities such as monitoring as part of the grant.

Q: What types of technical services can we include in our budget?

A: Examples of allowable technical services include translation services, GIS mapping, monitoring activities, meeting facilitation, outreach to disadvantaged communities

Q: Do I need to include proof of estimated expenses in the application?

A: Proof of estimated expenses is not required at the application stage. However, budgets will be evaluated as part of the application review. For funded projects, proof of costs incurred must be submitted with each invoice; and the Department can only pay for actual costs incurred.

Q: Does the grant program require competitive procurement of the watershed coordinator or can that person be contracted sole source?

A: Applicants should follow their organization's sourcing requirements.

Q: Applicants may request funds for consultants or contractors to provide technical assistance to the Watershed Coordinator. How much can we charge for technical services vs watershed coordinators costs?

A: The bulk of the budget should be for watershed coordinator costs. Technical services should be incidental to and support work performed by the watershed coordinator.

Q: Is there a maximum dollar limit for travel, personal computer, software, or seminars/training workshops and conferences?

A: No; however, how the budget is allocated will be considered as part of the application review and may impact your application's competitiveness.

Q: May we request \$300,000 to be spent over a shorter period than three years, or are we limited to \$100,000 per year?

A: The \$300,000 may be spent over a shorter period; however, how the budget is allocated will be considered as part of the application review and may impact your application's competitiveness.

Q: Does the person hired have to carry the title “watershed coordinator” or just agree to take on the function of leadership as a watershed coordinator?

A: If the project is funded, the person hired must log hours as a watershed coordinator for reimbursement purposes.

Q: What is pro-rated rent for a work from home situation?

A: Please refer to your accountant or legal counsel to determine this rate.

Q: Can in-kind contributions from partners and funds from other state sources be claimed as match?

A: This program is funded by Proposition 50. For this funding source, match funds may only come from non-state sources.

Q: Is local match required? If not, will providing local matching funds make for a stronger application?

A: Local match is not required for this solicitation. However, providing match may improve the competitiveness of the project.

Q: Can the grant cover organizational establishment - eg, the watershed coordinator establishing a watershed coordination group, filing for 501c3 status, incorporating, setting up bylaws, etc?

A: Yes. The applicant should show how this activity would benefit the watershed and SGMA goals in their application.