

Feasibility Study Grants

Helping Oregon evaluate water resource projects

Background

The Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) partners with Oregonians to pursue integrated and innovative solutions for complex water challenges and an uncertain water future. We do this work to achieve a secure and sustainable water future, addressing instream and out-of-stream needs, for all Oregonians and Oregon's environment, economy, communities, and cultures. As part of this work, OWRD invests in the identification, investigation, and implementation of water projects. Feasibility Study Grants provide funding for studies to evaluate the feasibility of developing water conservation, reuse, or storage projects. Grants require a 50% cost-share match, which may include in-kind contributions.

What is a feasibility study?

A feasibility study is an assessment of the practicality of a proposed project and can be used to determine if and how a project should proceed to implementation. Feasibility Study Grants fund qualifying costs of studies that evaluate the feasibility of a proposed conservation, reuse, or storage project that appears to have merit but is lacking important details necessary to determine whether or not to proceed with implementation. The feasibility study focuses on helping to answer the essential question of, "should we proceed with the proposed project idea?" All activities of the study are directed toward helping answer this question.

How to apply

The application materials and timelines are posted on our webpage under the Feasibility Study Grants Funding Opportunity page. OWRD encourages applicants to schedule a pre-application conference with staff before applying for a grant. Staff are available to help applicants submit strong applications.

Eligible Studies

Eligible studies examine the feasibility of water conservation, reuse, and storage projects. Studies may include analysis or evaluation of:

- Hydrological refill capacity, water needs, geology, or hydrology
- Engineering and water exchange
- Financial feasibility
- Fiscal analysis
- Instream ecological flows
- Alternative means of supplying water, including costs and benefits
- Environmental impacts or public benefits
- Hydrological analyses
- Water quality impacts

Sign up for our mailing list: <https://bit.ly/owrd-signup>

Webpage: <https://www.oregon.gov/OWRD/programs/FundingOpportunities/Pages/default.aspx>

Contact: OWRD.grants@water.oregon.gov or 503-979-9160

Feasibility Study Grants

Grant requirements

- **Cost-match** – Grants require a 50% cost-share match, which may include in-kind or cash match.
- **Permits and regulatory approvals** – Prior to release of funds, recipients must obtain all required permits and regulatory approvals.
- **Reporting** – Recipients must submit quarterly progress reports and a final report to OWRD that describe the completed work and project expenditures.

Storage-specific study requirements

All applicants proposing to evaluate a storage project must determine whether the project triggers the need to incorporate specific elements into the study.

According to Oregon Administrative Rule [OAR 690-600-0050(2)], a storage feasibility study triggers the storage-specific study requirements if the project proposes any one of the following actions:

- A. Impound surface water on a perennial stream;
- B. Divert water from a stream that supports sensitive, threatened, or endangered fish species; OR
- C. Divert more than 500 acre-feet of surface water annually.

Storage feasibility studies that propose any one of these actions **must** address in their application how they will incorporate the following study elements into their feasibility study:

- Analyses of ecological flows
- Comparative analyses of alternative means of supplying water
- Analyses of environmental harm or impact
- Evaluation of need and ability to augment instream flows
- Analysis requirement related to municipal use

Applications: OWRD reviews all applications to make the final determination on whether the study must address the storage-specific requirements. An applicant may have their application returned as incomplete if they do not address the storage trigger questions or fail to adequately describe how the required elements will be addressed in the study.

Final Reports: OWRD reviews all final reports to ensure that all storage-specific study requirements have been included in the study and meet the minimum criteria. Revision of final reports, and potentially additional work, will be required in circumstances where the minimum criteria are not met.

More information on the Storage-Specific Study Requirements is available on the Feasibility Study Grants Applications, Forms and Guidance webpage:

<https://www.oregon.gov/owrd/programs/FundingOpportunities/FeasibilityStudyGrants/Pages/Forms.aspx>

Application Review Process

Applicants submit applications

OWRD conducts completeness review

Application Review Team (ART) reviews and evaluates each application and makes funding recommendations

OWRD solicits public comments on ART funding recommendations (30 days)

OWRD considers public comments and presents funding recommendations to the Water Resources Commission

Commission makes funding awards decision at Commission Meeting