

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 water conservation, water reuse, aquifer recharge, aquifer storage and recovery, streamflow protection or restoration, and water storage projects.

Grants require a 25% cost-share match, which may include in-kind contributions. Incorporated cities have different minimum match requirements based on population. Because these requirements vary, applicants should refer to [OWRD's webpage](#) for additional details. Any local government, person, Indian Tribe, or non-profit organization may apply for funding. "Person" includes individuals, corporations, associations, firms, partnerships, joint stock companies, public and municipal corporations, political subdivisions, the state and any agencies thereof, and the federal government and any agencies thereof.

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 proposed water conservation, water reuse, aquifer recharge, aquifer storage and recovery, streamflow protection or restoration, and water storage project that appear to have merit but lack 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

Applications for Feasibility Study Grants will be accepted through the [online grants platform](#). 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, water reuse, and aquifer recharge, aquifer storage and recovery, streamflow protection or restoration, and water storage projects. Studies may include analysis or evaluation of:

- Hydrological refill capacity, water needs, geology, or hydrology
- Engineering and water exchange
- Financial feasibility
- Instream ecological flows
- Alternative means of supplying water, including costs and benefits
- Water quality impacts
- Environmental impacts or public benefits
- Hydrological analyses
- Development of water management conservation plan
- Data collection and analyses related to the preparation of seasonally varying flow
- Analyses related to assessing the safety of existing dams and identifying actions to address safety deficiencies
- Environmental justice and community impact analyses

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Grant requirements

- **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

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 determine 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>

Sign up for our mailing list: owrd.info/email-signup

Webpage: owrd.info/fsg

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

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