



Water Project Grants and Loans

Partnering with Oregonians to invest in water resource projects

Overview

In 2013, the Oregon Legislature passed Senate Bill 839, establishing the Water Supply Development Account to provide grants and loans for implementation-ready projects that address an instream or out-of-stream water supply need and have economic, environmental and social/cultural benefits. Projects must provide benefits in each of these three categories to be eligible for funding.

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.

Additional requirements apply to storage projects – please contact the Oregon Water Resources Department (OWRD) for more information.

How to apply

Applications for Water Project Grants and Loans are accepted through the [online grants platform](#). There is no minimum or maximum grant amount. The [application instructions](#), and [scoring criteria document](#) offering guidance on how applications are evaluated are available online on OWRD's webpage under the Water Project Grants and Loans Forms and Guidance page.

Prior to applying for a grant, applicants are strongly encouraged to contact OWRD staff to learn about funding requirements and the evaluation criteria. OWRD staff are available [for pre-application conferences](#) to help applicants submit strong applications.

Review process

After the application deadline, OWRD accepts public comments on all complete applications. A Technical Review Team (TRT) then scores and ranks projects based on the project's economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits. The TRT's funding recommendations are posted for a second public comment period. OWRD reviews the TRT funding recommendations along with all public comments and provides funding recommendations to the Water Resources Commission. The Commission makes the final decision on which projects receive funding.

Eligible Projects

Projects eligible for funding include:

- Conservation
- Reuse
- Above-ground storage
- Below-ground storage
- Streamflow protection or restoration
- Water distribution, conveyance, or delivery systems in connection with newly developed or existing water
- Other water supply projects that result in economic, environmental, and social/cultural public benefits

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More information online: owrd.info/wpgl

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

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Grant and loan requirements

- **Water Management Conservation Plan** – If an applicant or co-applicant is required to have a plan, the plan must be submitted to OWRD at the time of application and receive approval prior to the funding decision date.
- **Permits and regulatory approvals** – Prior to release of funds for project construction, recipients must obtain all required permits and regulatory approvals.
- **Measurement and reporting** – Recipients must regularly measure and report the water diverted and used from the project. Applicants are encouraged to budget for this in their application. OWRD will make the final determination on the method, timing, frequency and location of measurement.
- **Reporting** – Recipients must submit semi-annual progress reports and a final report to OWRD that describe the completed work, project expenditures, and public benefits achieved.
- **Notation** – Signage and project materials must include a notation indicating that Oregon Water Resources Department funding was used.
- **Post-completion** – Recipients must monitor, evaluate, and maintain the project for a specified number of years, and provide annual reports for 5 years.

Application Review Process

Applicants submit applications
OWRD conducts completeness review
OWRD solicits public comment on applications (30 days)
Technical Review Team (TRT) reviews applications and public comments, scores and ranks each application; and makes funding recommendations
OWRD solicits public comments on TRT funding recommendations
OWRD considers TRT funding recommendations and public comments and presents funding recommendations to the Commission
Commission makes grant award decisions at Commission Meeting

Storage-specific requirements

Additional requirements apply to certain storage projects with “newly developed” water that meet *one* of the following criteria, they: 1) impound surface water on a perennial stream; 2) divert water from a stream that supports state or federally listed sensitive, threatened or endangered fish species; OR 3) divert more than 500 acre-feet of water annually. “Newly developed water” is the increment of water associated with new or expanded storage. When a funded project triggers these requirements, OWRD will add one or both of the following conditions to the water right permit or limited license associated with the proposed project.

Water dedicated instream

The recipient of a *grant* for new or expanded above-ground storage that meets the conditions listed above must dedicate the equivalent of 25% of the newly developed water to instream use.

Seasonally varying flows

A recipient of a grant or loan that meets the conditions above and stores water outside of the official irrigation season will require a seasonally varying flow (SVF) prescription on their water right. An SVF prescription identifies the streamflow (when, how much, for how long, how often) that needs to remain instream to protect ecological functions of a watershed while diverting water for out-of-stream uses. OWRD is responsible for determining the flow prescription, after an application has been selected for funding and before it releases any loan or grant funds. *The funding recipient is not responsible for developing an SVF.*