

Invitation for **SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PROJECT PROPOSALS**

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) is inviting proposals for source water protection projects. Funding is authorized through section 1452 of the Safe Drinking Water Act as administered by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the NDEQ and the Nebraska Department of Health and Human Services.

These funds are a potential source of support for drinking water protection projects in Nebraska. Program overview, grant process, general program information, funding priority, project requirements and format are outlined in the attached guidance.

Any questions you may have regarding this invitation must be submitted in writing, or by email to the Source Water Coordinator, to the address below no later than April 13, 2018. All questions and their answers will be posted on the NDEQ website by April 20, 2018. Proposals must be submitted to the **NDEQ office in Lincoln by 4:00 PM Monday April 30, 2018**. Please direct all questions and requests and proposals to:

Source Water Coordinator
Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality
Telephone: (402) 471-2186
Website: <http://deq.ne.gov>
ndeq.moreinfo@nebraska.gov

Mail
PO Box 98922
Lincoln, NE 68508

Hand Deliver
1200 N. St, Suite 400
Lincoln, NE 68509

Protecting Drinking Water For
Life
with the
Nebraska State Revolving Fund



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY

**INVITATION FOR SOURCE WATER PROTECTION PROJECT PROPOSALS
FUNDING UNDER SECTION 1452 OF THE FEDERAL SAFE DRINKING WATER
ACT**

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ESTIMATED ANNUAL FUNDS	\$100,000+
ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS	<p>Political subdivisions, in Nebraska, that operate a public water system serving a population of 10,000 or less that can show financial hardship with groundwater sources.</p> <p>Hardship eligibility criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MHI (Median Household Income) of the political subdivision population must be less or equal to 120% of the statewide MHI reported in the 2008-2012 ACS five-year estimate of \$51,381. • Applicants that don't meet the hardship eligibility may submit a financial hardship report to the Department for additional consideration justifying the grant request. <p>To obtain your MHI refer to your community data sheet on the AWIN page of our website: http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/AWIN</p>
ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES	<p>Projects that provide long-term benefits to drinking water quality, quantity, and/or education. Eligible projects include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contaminant source identification – research / investigation. • Contaminant pathway removal – includes the closure of abandoned or unused wells. • Contaminant removal – pollution prevention and waste reduction • Contaminant source management – implementation of best management practices (BMPs), ordinance development, and implementation of a Source Water or Wellhead Protection Plan. • Information and education sharing – workshops, brochures, meetings, and media campaigns. • Development of a Drinking Water Protection Management Plan which is an alternative to 9-element watershed management plans. These plans will focus on wellhead protection areas. Plans must address implementable groundwater best management practices. (For additional information please refer to the Fact Sheet attached)
Required Match	10% of Total Project Cost

<p>INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities related to the operations and maintenance of drinking water systems including: treatment, transmission, distribution, consolidation or storage. • Land purchases. • Projects that <u>only</u> develop a traditional Source Water or Wellhead Protection Plan and do nothing toward implementation of the plan; these plans should not be confused with a Drinking Water Protection Management Plan. • Projects requesting only personnel expenses. • Projects geared towards the security aspect of Source Water, such as security fencing and cameras.
<p>APPLICATION DEADLINE</p>	<p>April 30, 2018 4pm</p>
<p>REQUIRED COPY</p>	<p>Hand deliver or mail original proposal to the following address.</p>
<p>Proposals must be delivered to or received by the NDEQ office in Lincoln on or before 4:00 PM Monday April 30, 2018. Late proposals will be returned. Mail or hand deliver applications to:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Source Water Coordinator Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality Telephone: (402) 471-2186</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Hand deliver:</u> 1200 N Street, Suite 400, The Atrium Lincoln, Nebraska 68508</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>Mail to:</u> PO Box 98922 Lincoln, NE 68509-8922</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Facsimile and email submissions will not be accepted Late proposals will not be accepted</i></p> <p>Phone 402-471-2186 Toll Free: 877-253-2603</p>	

GRANT PROCESS

Project proposals will be reviewed by staff at NDEQ, Nebraska Health and Human Services, and representatives of other organizations. Projects recommended by the reviewers will be forwarded to the Director of NDEQ for approval.

Timetable:

April 13, 2018	All questions regarding this invitation must be received in writing.
April 20, 2018	All written questions regarding this invitation and their answers will be posted on the NDEQ website or mailed to potential applicants that specifically request such.
April 30, 2018	Proposals, including a DUNS number, must be received at the NDEQ Lincoln office by 4:00 PM of this due date.
May 2018	Proposals are reviewed by committee.
June 2018	Projects selected and sponsors notified. Funding is made available to begin projects pending approval of a final Work Plan and finalization of a funding agreement.
September 2018	Proposals should plan for projects to start no earlier than September 1, 2018 as ALL project funding is dependent on NDEQ's receipt of the EPA Capitalization Grant. Contracts will not be signed prior to NDEQ receiving funds. Project contract may be signed once funding has been received.

GENERAL PROGRAM INFORMATION

Source Water Protection Grants are available for proactive projects geared toward protecting Nebraska's drinking water supplies by addressing drinking water quality, quantity and/or education. Eligible applicants are political subdivisions in Nebraska that operate a public water system, serving a population of 10,000 or less that can show financial hardship with groundwater sources.

Rather than providing the grant to complete one task, it is preferred that grants be provided to help establish and develop comprehensive local source water protection programs, enhance cooperation and education among citizens, local government, businesses, and agricultural producers. Grants can be used for the development of a Wellhead Protection Plan, but only in conjunction with the implementation of pollution prevention tasks.

Funding is available to develop Drinking Water Protection Management Plans which are an alternative to 9-element watershed management plans. These plans will be specific to Wellhead Protection Areas. Plans must develop implementable groundwater best management practices. The purpose of this plan is to provide an analytic framework for managing efforts to restore and protect a community's drinking water. With the

development and approval of this plan, communities may be eligible to apply for Clean Water Act section 319 Nonpoint Source Program grants to assist in the implementations of these management practices.

****For more information please refer to the Fact Sheet attached.**

Grants cannot be used for only personnel expenses, to purchase land, or for operations and maintenance activities. In addition, activities specific to the treatment, transmission, distribution, consolidation, or storage of the drinking water system which includes mapping of the water distribution system are not eligible. Examples of projects that have previously been funded can be found on the NDEQ website: <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/SWPGMain>

Applicants that receive funding must adhere to EPA's Subaward Policy, CFR §200.320, which states that procurement of services or supplies of more than \$3,000 must obtain price or rate quotations from at least three qualified sources.

It is highly recommended to obtain price or quotes prior to application submission to ensure costs remain within project budget and to expedite the start of project work.

For additional information on EPA's Subaward Policy, please visit <https://www.epa.gov/grants/grants-policy-issuance-gpi-16-01-epa-subaward-policy-epa-assistance-agreement-recipients>

Project areas include:

- Wellhead protection areas - groundwater systems,
- Officially designated future wellhead protection areas, and
- Populations served by the community Public Water Supply System.

GENERAL PROJECT REQUIREMENTS

- A. Projects must focus on the protection of Nebraska public drinking water sources, not operation and maintenance of the system or water treatment.
- B. Projects must include activities in one or more of the three categories: water quality, water quantity, and/or water public education.
- C. Projects must have a good potential for success (i.e., tasks must yield measurable improvement in water quality, reduction of water use, increased resource reliability, citizen knowledge and/or behaviors, etc.).
- D. Commitment must be demonstrated by the public water system and local government to develop, implement, support, and sustain a local protection program after funding is received.
- E. On-the-ground activities must take place within existing wellhead protection areas, designated future wellhead protection areas, or the associated area served by the community Public Water Supply System.

- F. At least a 10% non-federal match to the total project cost is required. For example: a project totaling \$20,000 will receive \$18,000 in grant funds and would have a requirement of \$2,000 in match. Match can be in-kind and/or cash.

FUNDING PRIORITY

Prioritization will be given for the following status/activities:

- A. Developing a Drinking Water Protection Management Plan.
- B. Projects where activities will be sustained beyond the term of the grant.
- C. Projects implementing on-the-ground management activities.
- D. Projects that addressing nitrate contamination/loading.
- E. Public Water Supply Systems that have a NDEQ-approved Wellhead or Watershed Protection Plan and/or designated Groundwater Guardian.
- F. Projects that focus on community education and awareness about how to protect and improve the local drinking water source.

PROPOSAL FORMAT AND REQUIRED INFORMATION

The following format and information is required for all proposals. Failure to use this format or to furnish the information requested may disqualify the proposal from funding consideration.

PROJECT PROPOSALS FORMATTING MUST:

- **Not exceed 10 pages (including Title Page, Project Description, and Project Area Map);**
- **Formatted for 8.5" X 11" paper**
- **Use 10 pt or larger type with single-spaced sentences, double spaced paragraphs, and 1" margins.**
- **Include DUNS number.**

SUBMIT ORIGINAL PROPOSAL TO THE DEPARTMENT

- A. **Title Page (one page)**
 - a. Project Title (if developing a Drinking Water Protection Management Plan, please incorporate into title.)

- b. Project's Primary Sponsor: Organization name, address, telephone number, fax number, web-site (if applicable), DUNS number.
- c. Project Manager: Name of contact person, address if different from above, telephone number, and email address
- d. Project's Co-sponsors: Names of co-sponsoring organizations, if applicable
- e. Funds requested and match offered
- f. Project Area
- g. Project Period: Initial month/year – final month/year (not to exceed 2 years)
- h. Signatory
 - The individual having signatory authorization must include a statement authorizing the project in the cover letter of the application. This can read as follows:
 - I certify that the applicant has authority to undertake or participate in the proposed project.*

B. Project Description

- a. Introduction/Background Information
 - i. Provide a brief historical perspective and justification for the project.
 - ii. Define the nature and extent of the need(s) to be addressed.
 - iii. Describe other activities ongoing or planned in the project area that relate to water quality, water quantity, and/or public education.
- b. Project Objectives
 - List objectives and describe what is expected to be accomplished during the period of the project. Objectives must relate to the identified water quality, quantity or educational deficiencies and reflect progress in resolving those deficiencies.
- c. Project Tasks
 - i. Describe specific source water protection actions proposed to be implemented within the scope of the grant. Tasks must be related to specific project objectives
 - ii. Detail the information and education activities that are planned before, during, and after project implementation.
 - iii. Include in the proposal how public and stakeholder participation is included in project planning, design, and implementation.

iv. Describe the method of evaluation that will be used to determine project effectiveness. The evaluation approach must be tailored to the specific project and will be based on factors such as the project's size and objectives.

v. ****If proposing to develop a Drinking Water Management Plan please include detail regarding how you will complete plan expectations described on attached "Drinking Water Management Plan Fact Sheet".**

d. Partnerships

Identify the roles and responsibilities of organizations and groups involved in the proposed project regardless of funding source. The NDEQ strongly recommends that a project team be assembled to involve the appropriate organizations and stakeholders in planning the project and preparing the project proposal.

e. Project Costs/Funding Sources

Provide a detailed budget for each major task or work element of which requested grant funds or match funds will be allocated. Use the categories as listed in the attached example and blank budget forms. These forms are also available electronically at the NDEQ website under the blank reimbursement request

forms: <http://deq.ne.gov/Publica.nsf/pages/WAT087>

C. Project Area Map (one page)

Provide a map of the wellhead protection area. If unsure whether the map you have is the most current, contact NDEQ at (402) 471-3376.

D. Budget Summary Table (one page)

The cost of the entire project must be defined and broken out by grant funds and matching funds in the included budget table. When including matching funds, the value of the cash and in-kind match may be combined in the budget although other federal funds may not be used to meet the 10% required match. Indirect costs will not be allowed.

See Below for example

Project Name:			
Activity	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
Personnel			
Travel			
Material & Supplies			
Equipment*			
Contractual			
Implementation			
Other			
TOTAL	\$0	\$0	\$0

EXAMPLE BUDGET

Example Budget for NDEQ Source Water Protection			
Activity	Grant Funds	Matching Funds	Total
Personnel			
Water Operator	\$5,000	\$0	\$5,000
NRD Program Manager	\$0	\$3,000	\$3,000
Travel			
Transportation	\$0	\$300	\$300
Lodging	\$435	\$0	\$435
Meals	\$0	\$210	\$210
Material & Supplies			
Brochures	\$0	\$200	\$200
Equipment*			
Pump with control	\$5,500	\$0	\$5,500
Contractual			
Well Abandonment	\$2,000	\$0	\$2,000
Implementation			
Water conservation rebates	\$3,000	\$0	\$3,000
Other			
Conference registration	\$0	\$400	\$400
TOTAL	\$15,935 (~80%)	\$4,110 (~20%)	\$20,045

*Equipment is defined as tangible, nonexpendable, personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of \$5,000 or more per unit.

Drinking Water Protection Management Plan Fact Sheet

The following expectations will be required in order for the Drinking Water Protection Management Plan to be approved by NDEQ:

- ✓ Meet EPA's alternative to a 9-element watershed management plan elements
 - o Identification of the causes or sources of water quality problem;
 - o Wellhead Protection area goal(s) and explanation of how the proposed project(s) will achieve or make advancements towards achieving water quality goals;
 - o Schedule and milestones to guide project implementation;
 - o Proposed management measures such as activities which can reduce water contamination (including how the activities will be maintained) and explanation of how these measures will effectively address the water quality problems identified above. This would include strategically selected types and locations of implementable "on-the-ground" Best Management Practices; and
 - o Monitoring component that will evaluate the effectiveness of the management practices. (e.g., soil sampling, vadose sampling, water sampling)

For more information on each of these bullets, please refer to the *Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our*

Waters: https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/2008_04_18_nps_watershed_handbook_handbook-2.pdf

- ✓ Area to include the 50 year time-of-travel based on a three-dimensional groundwater model approved by NDEQ-WHP program. Contact Samantha Radford at 402/471-3376 or sam.radford@nebraska.gov for requirements and approval procedures.
 - o Complete a scoping meeting with stakeholders, project sponsors, and NDEQ to ensure all the most accurate and current data is used in the modeling process.
- ✓ Community based planning process for the development of the plan is required. Please refer to *Community-Based Watershed Management Planning Guidebook*: <http://deq.ne.gov/publica.nsf/pages/WAT120> for more information.
- ✓ Strong implementable Information and Education program.
- ✓ Must contain all required elements of WHP Plan to submit for state approved WHP Plan. <http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/WHPA> for more information.
- ✓ Must meet NDEQ approval criteria before final reimbursement
 - o Complete draft plan submitted to NDEQ for review at least two months prior to project completion and allow for one round of plan edits.

SOURCE WATER PROTECTION GRANTS Q&A

Questions from previous years

- Q1. *Who are eligible to apply for this grant?*
A1. Starting this year, eligible applicants are public water systems that provide service to 10,000 persons or less, that are operated by political subdivisions, and that demonstrate serious financial hardships. This includes;
- Cities or Villages
 - NRDs and counties that operate public water systems that serve 10,000 or less
 - Sanitary and Improvement Districts (SIDs)
- Q2. *How can we determine our Median Household Income in order to demonstrate financial hardship?*
A2. In order to demonstrate financial hardship, the political subdivision population must be less or equal to 120% of the statewide Median Household Income (MHI). The current statewide MHI is at \$51,381. To meet this criterion, the community's MHI must be equal to or less than \$61,657. One way to determine a community's MHI is by going to the NDEQ website (<http://deq.ne.gov/NDEQProg.nsf/OnWeb/AWIN>) and searching for your community under the AWIN database. AWIN datasheets will provide specific information for your community which includes the MHI. You may print this sheet off and include it with your proposal.
- Q3. *If we have a consulting firm that we prefer to work with assist us with community projects, do we have to still obtain additional quotes from other consultants?*
A3. Yes. According to EPA's Subaward Policy, if the contract for consultant services is more than \$3,000, then proper procurement of these services must be followed to ensure fair competition. Obtaining at least three quotes or price rates from comparable professional services would be adequate for the purposes of this regulation.
- Q4. *Is there a match required?*
A4. Yes. The grant will require a minimum 10% match of the total project cost.
For example: Total project cost of \$10,000 = \$9,000 grant + \$1,000 match
- Q5. *Why is the security funding no longer available for this grant?*
A5. The Department of Health and Human Services already administrates a Public Water Supply (PWS) Security Grant. This grant has similar requirements as the Source Water Grant but focuses primarily on PWS security. For more information on this grant please contact DHHS at (402) 471-3121.
- Q4. *Are applicants required to have a state-approved Wellhead Protection Plan?*
A4. No. Having a state-approved Wellhead Protection Plan will give a proposal funding priority but is not required.
- Q5. *Can a municipality apply for a Source Water Protection grant if the community's wellhead protection plan has not yet been completed?*
A5. Yes. A completed wellhead protection plan is not a requirement for receiving Source Water grant funding.
- Q6. *Can the grant funds go towards funding the wellhead protection plan for one well?*

A6. Funds can be used toward developing a wellhead protection plan if it is part of a larger more comprehensive plan to protect all the community's drinking water wells or a Drinking Water Management Plan as described in the Fact Sheet.

Q7. *My community has a septic system within our well head protection area that we would like to decommission. Are the expenses associated with the decommission eligible in the source water program?*

A7. Yes. Decommissioning septic systems within the wellhead protection area is an eligible activity under the grant program.

Q8. *We would like to apply to do two projects in the same area, is it better to submit them as two separate applications or one?*

A8. It's up to the applicant to decide whether it's easier to combine them or submit them separately. The RFP criterion favors more well-rounded projects.

Q9. *What are examples of normal operations and maintenance items which are ineligible under the Source Water Protection grant program?*

A9. Examples of operations and maintenance include, but are not limited to:

Pumps for PWS Well	Variable Frequency Drive PWS Pump
Backhoe	PWS Well Transducers
SCADA System	A New PWS Well
Valves	

Q10. *Would the expense of looping lines to prevent low pressure be eligible under the Source Water Protection grant program?*

A10. No. This activity falls under operations and maintenance and is not funded under the grant program.

Q11. *Can grant money be used to connect Village water to a nearby drinking water pipeline?*

A11. No. Connecting to a nearby drinking water pipeline is categorized under operations and maintenance and would not be an eligible expense.

Q12. *Can Source Water Protection grant funds be used for the purchase of a back-up generator for the well's pump?*

A12. No. The back-up generator is viewed as an emergency-security measure and security projects are no longer an eligible expenditure under this program.

Q13. *Can the grant funds be used to purchase GPS equipment that would be used to gather data on their water system and curb stops to develop a new map?*

A13. No. In the past this was an eligible activity, however, the Department of Health and Human Services administers a grant every year that does fund these activities. It has been decided because of this, the Source Water Grant will be focused more towards protection of the source of drinking water and less on the distribution system.

Q14. *Can the grant be used to pay a teacher or water operator for their role in the implementation of the grant?*

A14. Yes, the funds can be used to pay a teacher, water operator, or other project administrator for their role in implementing, coordinating, or administering the project a part of a larger Source Water Protection project. Projects requesting only personnel expenses are ineligible though. Be sure the percent used for administration is reasonable to the work being done.

Q15. *Is it true that any city capable of being bonded is not eligible for these grants?*

A15. No. There is no eligibility restriction on cities with regard to bonding.

Q17. *Can a County Health Department apply for a Source Water Protection grant?*

A17. Yes, if the county operates a public water system that serves 10,000 or less and can demonstrate serious financial hardship.

Q18. *Can grant money be used to donate toward the Nebraska Rural Water Association for the services they provide for free?*

A18. No. Grant funds cannot be used as a donation.

Q19. *Can grant funds be used to pay for expenses associated with attending the NeRWA annual conference?*

A19. No. This is not an eligible expense under the grant program.

Q20. *Can the grant funds be used for administrative purposes?*

A20. Administrative activities that relate specifically to the grant, and occur during the grant period, are eligible expenses. There is no set percent of the total grant funds awarded that can be used on administrative expenses. Be sure the percent used is reasonable to the work being done.

Q21. *If awarded, is there any grant administration associated with the grant or is the grant just based on the application and financial transaction that takes place?*

A21. General administration is required for the grant. If a proposal is awarded, the grant money is disbursed on a reimbursement basis. An administrator will need to submit reimbursement requests to the Department prior to payment of grant funds. Reports include MBE/MBE, semi-annual report and a final report, with final financial details, and record keeping for audits are also required as part of award requirements.

Q22. *Can we use the grant to pay for water sampling?*

A22. Yes and no. Yes, if water sampling is part of a larger more comprehensive project to protect all the community's drinking water wells or as part of a Drinking Water Management Plan as described in the Fact Sheet. No, if this is the state-required monitoring of your PWS well or intake.