

## SOURCE WATER PROTECTION GRANTS Q&A

### *\*\*New Q & A for 2016 RFP\*\**

- Q1. *Who are eligible to apply for this grant?*
- A1. Starting this year, eligible applicants are public water systems operated by political subdivisions with populations of 10,000 inhabitants or less which demonstrate serious financial hardships. This includes;
- Cities or Villages
  - Nebraska Rural Water Districts operating on their own
  - NRDs with populations of 10,000 or less that operate public water systems (**As of the date of this publication, LB182 was being considered in the legislature. Passage and approval of LB182 by the legislature and the governor would change this condition, but likely not in time for this year's grant awards.**)
  - 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.

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### *\*\*Questions from Previous Years\*\**

- 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. A County Health Departments are not eligible because they are not a political subdivision.
- 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. Semi-annual reporting and a final report, with final financial details, 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.