Water Resources Institute eDrop Guidelines for USGS Proposals

DETAILED INSTRUCTIONS FOR SUBMITTING A PROPOSAL

Submission of a proposal will involve the following steps:

For all USGS proposals that require submission through WRI (Example; 104G):

Wisconsin investigators must submit proposals via the UW Aquatic Sciences Center (administrative home of the Water Resources Institute) online proposal submission system, eDrop (https://edrop.aqua.wisc.edu/).

National Competitive Grants Program
Fiscal Year 2022
Due in eDrop Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at 5:00 pm CST
To allow submissions by WRI (as required) to meet deadline of May 10, 2022 into grants.gov

eDrop directions begin on page 5.

Some information from the USGS/NIWR RFP:
PROGRAM OBJECTIVES
Section 104(g) of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984 requires that this competitive grant program focus on: "water problems and issues of a regional or interstate nature beyond those of concern only to a single State and which relate to specific program priorities identified jointly by the Secretary (of the Interior) and the (water resources research) institutes." Objectives of this program also include the following:

A. Promote collaboration between the USGS and university scientists in research on significant national and regional water resources issues. Proposals exhibiting substantial collaboration between the USGS and the applicant are strongly encouraged. Collaborative proposals should describe in detail the respective roles of the USGS and the applicant in the proposed work. It is anticipated in FY2022 the USGS will have internal funds available for modest support of USGS scientists on selected proposals.
B. Promote the dissemination and application of the results of the research funded under this program, both to the scientific community and to the general public.
C. Assist in the training of scientists in relevant water-resource fields. Proposals that include a strong educational component (student support) are encouraged, as are those from early-career faculty.

RESEARCH PRIORITIES
Proposals are sought on the topic of improving and enhancing the nation's water supply and availability, and promoting the exploration of new ideas that address or expand our understanding of water problems, including the following specific areas of inquiry (levels of priority are not assigned, and the order of listing does not indicate the level of priority):

- **Abundance, location, and persistence of legacy nutrients:** What are the mechanisms that facilitate accumulation and persistence? Where in landscape are they stored and what does that mean for

the potential to enter or move through the hydrologic system? What are the methods, time periods, and utility to characterizing "new" versus "old" sources? Do related nutrients persist and move in the same way, and what does this mean for short- and long-term water quality?

- **Trends of integrated processes:** How do changes in one aspect of water quantity and availability affect other long-term aspects? For example, how are changes in groundwater identifiable as changes in streamflow patterns? How do changes in streamflow result in changes in water quality?
- **Water Conflict:** What are the risks of water conflict as a result of inter-basin transfers driven by water-use behavior, socioeconomic conditions, changing land-use patterns, and climate variability. Aspects for consideration include identification of thresholds, tradeoffs between sectors and(or) communities, conservation opportunities and stakeholder actions, agent-based modeling, relevant laws and regulations, and adaptive management.

PROPOSALS NOT ELIGIBLE FOR FUNDING

A. Proposals for research on health effects involving human subjects.
B. Proposals for research involving oceanography (estuarine research proposals are acceptable).
C. Proposals submitted by an Institute or Center that has not met reporting requirements on a previous award by the USGS.
D. Proposals that do not comply with the terms of this Announcement.
E. Proposals for research that do not meet the listed Research Priorities.

Excluded Parties: USGS conducts a review of the SAM.gov Exclusions database for all applicant entities and their key project personnel prior to award. USGS cannot award funds to entities or their key project personnel identified in the SAM.gov Exclusions database as ineligible, prohibited/restricted or otherwise excluded from receiving Federal contracts, certain subcontracts, and certain Federal assistance and benefits, as their ineligibility condition applies to this Federal program.

Proposals for research involving oceanography (estuarine research proposals are acceptable).

The due date for full proposals to be submitted in eDrop is **Tuesday, April 26, 2022 at 5:00 pm CST**.

Note: The USGS RFP is able to be downloaded – PLEASE DISREGARD all information regarding registering and/or submitting through grants.gov. WRI IS REQUIRED TO SUBMIT THE PROPOSALS. Please note details regarding conflict of interest disclosure, overlap or duplication of effort statement, etc.:

https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/view-opportunity.html?oppId=338699

Specific, Required, Budget Forms are able to be downloaded:

https://www.wri.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/104g-budget-sheet.xlsx

PROPOSAL specific directions from the RFP (PROPOSAL PREPARATION):

All proposal documents (elements 1-14) must be submitted as one file in PDF format. Each element has a maximum potential point value and these elements will be combined in order to rank the proposals. Elements 2-7 shall not exceed 10 single-spaced pages, with 12-point font and at least 1-inch margins, including tables, pictures, graphs, figures, and appendices. Proposals exceeding the page limit for elements 2-7 will not be considered. The supplemental information (elements 1,8-14) does not count towards the

page limit but includes required parts of the proposal. Please include page numbers and short title in either header or footer, but nothing else. **Note that this format has been revised from previous years.**

1. <u>Cover Page</u>. Must include full and short title, lead PI name and contact information (email and telephone number), collaborator and co-PI names, federal funds requested, matching fund contribution, abstract (300 words), plain-language summary (150 words), and keywords. This helps fulfill the new Project Abstract Summary requirement which will be visible to the public.

2. <u>Address specific priority</u>
   - Repeat Title Only
   - Describe the problem/issue and directly address a research priority described in Section A2.
   - Document the magnitude of the situation and relevance to state, regional, and national issues.
   - Why is this project/topic innovative, important, and timely?

3. <u>Integration with USGS science:</u>
   - How does the proposed work initiate or further collaboration with the USGS?
   - How does it supplement recent or ongoing work by the USGS?

4. <u>Scientific value of proposed work</u>
   - What are the goals and objectives of the research?
   - What is the potential to expand fundamental knowledge through the stated goals and objectives?
   - Describe the methods, field area, and facilities as a function of these objectives.

5. <u>Anticipated Benefits to Scientific Community and General Public</u>
   - Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used
   - Describe the potential outcomes and the potential, realistic impacts of the proposed work.
   - How does the proposed research build on previous research or lay the groundwork for future research?
   - What tangible products are expected? These might include data, methods, workflows, manuscripts, and (or) new communication strategies.

6. <u>Products and Information Transfer</u>
   - Provide a timeline of key activities, including field seasons, data collection, and lab analyses, as appropriate.
   - Explain the planned transfer of results to user groups.
   - How will new information be made available to the scientific community and general public?
   - Identify stakeholders and planned communication strategies (e.g., workshops, publications, extension).

7. <u>Training Potential</u>
   - Detail the educational component, including student support and engagement of early-career researchers.

8. <u>Government Involvement</u>
   - If a Federal employee will collaborate on the project, provide a detailed description of the role and responsibilities of the Federal collaborator in the proposed research project. This should be in the context of the already explained collaboration, objectives, and methods. (Elements 3 and 4)

9. <u>Budget</u>

- o Use the budget templates to provide the required detail and justification. <u>The PI's salary is an acceptable budget item, but the federal share of the salary should not exceed two months per year</u>. Document salary for other staff and researchers, including any overhead expenses at institutions beyond that of the PI.
  https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/WRRI-104g-Budget.zip

10. <u>Data Management</u>
    - o Should be in the context of products and information transfer (Element 6). Please use the template at https://www.usgs.gov/media/files/usgs-data-management-plan-checklist.
11. <u>Cited Literature</u>
    - o Should include only those referenced in proposal.
12. <u>Qualifications of Research Team</u>
    - o Provide a brief biographical sketch, no more than 3 pages, for the PI and any co-PIs.
13. <u>Matching Commitment Letter</u>
    - o Institutional cost-sharing agreement (letter) signed by an official authorized to commit the applicant to all or part of the matching share or a third party, in-kind contribution signed by an official authorized to commit the third party. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal. The USGS does not need the originals.
14. <u>Letters of Support</u>
    - o These are optional. Scanned legible PDF documents should be uploaded as part of the proposal.

Required Indirect Cost Statement to be submitted with Application All organizations must include the applicable statement from the following list in their application, and attach to their application any documentation identified in the applicable statement:

We are:
o   A U.S. state or local government entity receiving more than $35 million in direct Federal funding each year with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We submit our indirect cost rate proposals to our cognizant agency. Attached is a copy of our most recently approved rate agreement/certification.
o   A U.S. state or local government entity receiving less than $35 million in direct Federal funding with an indirect cost rate of [insert rate]. We have prepared and will retain for audit an indirect cost rate proposal and related documentation.
o   A [insert your organization type; U.S. states and local governments, do not use this statement] that has previously negotiated or currently has an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. [Insert either: "Attached is a copy of our most recently approved but expired rate agreement. In the event an award is made, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award is made." *or* "Attached is a copy of our current negotiated indirect cost rate agreement."] A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate]. If we receive an award, we will submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after the award date.
o   A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is lower than 10%. Our indirect cost rate is [insert rate;

must be lower than 10%]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat indirect cost rate of [insert rate; must be lower than 10%] against [insert a clear description of the direct cost base against which your rate is charged (e.g., salaries; salaries and fringe benefits; or modified total direct costs). However, please note that your organization cannot charge indirect costs in excess of the indirect costs that would be recovered if applied against modified total direct costs as defined in §2 CFR 200.68]. We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish an approved rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period.

o   A [insert your organization type] that has never submitted an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency and has an indirect cost rate that is 10% or higher. Our indirect cost rate is [insert your organization's indirect rate; must be 10% or higher]. However, if we receive an award we will not be able to meet the requirement to submit an indirect cost rate proposal to our cognizant agency within 90 calendar days after award. We request as a condition of award to charge a flat *de minimis* indirect cost rate of 10% to be charged against modified total direct project costs as defined in 2 CFR §200.68. We understand that we must notify USGS in writing if we establish a negotiated rate with our cognizant agency at any point during the award period. We understand that additional Federal funds may not be available to support an unexpected increase in indirect costs during the project period and that such changes are subject to review, negotiation, and prior approval by USGS.

o   A [insert your organization type] that is submitting this proposal for consideration under the "Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit Network", which has a Department of the Interior-approved indirect cost rate cap of 17.5%. If we have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must apply this reduced rate against the same direct cost base as identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement per 2 CFR §1402.414. If we do not have an approved indirect cost rate with our cognizant agency, we understand that we must charge indirect costs against the modified total direct cost base defined in 2 CFR §200.68 "Modified Total Direct Cost (MTDC)". We understand that we must request prior approval from USGS to use the 2 CFR 200 MTDC base instead of the base identified in our approved indirect cost rate agreement. We understand that USGS approval of such a request will be based on: 1) a determination that our approved base is only a subset of the MTDC (such as salaries and wages); and 2) that use of the MTDC base will still result in a reduction of the total indirect costs to be charged to the award. In accordance with 2 CFR §200.405, we understand that indirect costs not recovered due to a voluntary reduction to our federally negotiated rate are not allowable for recovery via any other means.

o   A [insert your organization type] that will charge all costs directly.

Matching funds may contain indirect costs and non-federal salaries and benefits. The applicant's negotiated indirect cost rate (NICR) may be applied to **both** qualifying federal and non-federal direct costs, and the result used to satisfy part of the matching requirement under the non-federal share. The NICR shall not be applied to tuition and equipment costs. **As per the Water Resources Research Act federal funds shall not be used to pay indirect costs.**

What needs to be uploaded into eDrop: A SINGLE PDF with the items 1-14 above and in the order listed, along with the excel budget sheet uploaded as an excel document (but also included in the PDF).

NOTE: Steps 1 through 6 are completed online at eDrop (https://edrop.aqua.wisc.edu/.

STEP 1. CREATE AN eDROP ACCOUNT

Create an account in the Aquatic Sciences Center's Web-based proposal submission system, eDrop (https://edrop.aqua.wisc.edu/). The account that you may have created to submit a different proposal through the Aquatic Sciences Center will work for submitting a full proposal.

> **NOTE:**
>
> **STEPS 2 through 6 (below) may be completed separately.**
>
> **You do not need to upload your entire proposal package in a single session; however, you must hit the "SAVE" button to avoid losing anything you enter. We encourage you to frequently SAVE your updates.**
>
> **Your account will remain active through the submission deadline, and you may edit each section until your proposal is officially submitted (see Step 5).**
>
> **Your proposal is not officially submitted until you click on the "SUBMIT" button in the "Submission Preview" tab.**

STEP 2. LOG IN TO eDROP AND ENTER PROPOSAL INFORMATION

Log on to the eDrop system and:
- Select "ADD PROPOSAL" next to the "FY22 USGS/NIWR 104(G) Competitive Grants Program."
- Enter title, keywords, and project initiation and completion dates and click "Update."

Provide the following information directly into form fields on the web page:
- A. Investigators (PI, Co-PI and Associate PI).
  Note: For Wisconsin, only faculty members (or persons having principal investigator status at his/her institution) in the University of Wisconsin System or other Wisconsin college or university may be designated as Principal Investigators. Other investigators affiliated with a project are to be designated as Associate Investigators.
- B. Financial Contact (for administering the project)
- C. Federal Funds Requested
- D. Match Funds Submitted
- E. Proposal Start Date
- F. Proposal End Date
- G. Research Category
- H. Abstract
- I. Focus Categories

STEP 3. VERIFY YOUR BUDGET INFORMATION

The budget requirements are very specific for this proposal submission. The primary sponsor requires salary breakdowns to include both percentages <u>and</u> number of hours for any position having salary in the budget. Detailed supply and travel expenses are also necessary. Please make sure to review prior to putting together the overall proposal PDF (uploaded in Step 4 below and including the budget). An excel format budget is also requested to be uploaded separately from the overall PDF. Upload this excel document

"104G Excel Budget File Upload WRI."

For budget or required documents advice, including questions regarding submission of multi-campus or multi- institutional proposals, contact Melissa A. Boyce (maboyce@wisc.edu).

STEP 4. UPLOAD PROPOSAL

Upload the PDF proposal file prepared as directed in the RFP and summarized above. The eDrop system permits you to "browse" your local computer files to locate and upload the PDF file you saved locally.

STEP 5. SUBMIT YOUR PROPOSAL

After you have provided all the necessary information and are satisfied your proposal is complete, click on the "Submit Proposal" button. Please note that once you have done this, you will no longer be able to edit your submission. If the submission is successful, you will receive an email confirmation. **This step MUST be completed by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on April 26, 2022.**

STEP 6. PROVIDE ADMINISTRATIVE APPROVAL

All proposal submissions require administrative approvals and clearances before they can be moved forward with WRI submitting the proposal. **Ensure that administrative approval has been provided by 5 p.m. Central Daylight Time on April 26, 2022.** See below:

Wisconsin campuses other than UW-Madison: An email stating that the proposal has received all required approvals and clearances must be sent to Melissa Boyce (maboyce@aqua.wisc.edu). This email must be from a campus official who is authorized to approve extramural grant applications and have a **"Subject" of FY22 104G.** The body of the email needs to identify the PI, the approved budget amount with an annual breakdown and total for all years, the approved cost share/match amount and the submitting institution name, along with the current F&A agreement included as an attachment. Attachment of official transmittal documents or electronically routed authorization forms are also acceptable as long as they show the required details and institutional approvals.

UW-Madison: The WISPER system should be used to provide required clearances and to show principal investigator approval, chair approval, and division approval. The WISPER record should not be routed through UW-Madison Research and Sponsored Programs (RSP); it should be routed to WISPER user MELISSA A BOYCE instead, along with requesting "chair approval" of WISPER user MELISSA A BOYCE. The "Submission Method" selection for the WISPER record should be "Internal Routing Only" and the "Short Title" should be **FY22 104G**. Proposals are required to be submitted through the Water Resources Institute (WRI), therefore, the RSP routing will occur once WRI routes for submission. The WISPER record must be routed by the proposal deadline and must contain all of the proposal documents. Please note that the Sponsor in WISPER record should be WISCONSIN WATER RESOURCES with the main sponsor INTERIOR, US GEOLOGICAL SURVEY

For more information:
Water Resources Institute: Melissa A. Boyce (maboyce@aqua.wisc.edu). During the campus telecommuting, please email to schedule one of the following; telephone/Team/Zoom meeting.