



Georgia Water Planning

GENERAL GUIDELINES

FOR

SFY2021

REGIONAL WATER PLAN SEED GRANT

Revised July 2020

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CONTACT

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Under O.C.G.A. 28-5-120, the Georgia Environmental Protection Division (EPD) is authorized to make grants to eligible recipients for projects related to water management, both quality and quantity. Using this authority, EPD has established the Regional Water Plan Seed Grant program that provides funds to eligible recipients in Georgia to support and incentivize local governments and other appropriate water users as they undertake implementation activities identified in the applicable Regional Water Plans.

ELIGIBLE RECIPIENTS

Eligible recipients of the Regional Water Plan Seed Grant funds include:

- Local, regional and State units of government such as city or county governments and State agencies;
- Local authorities that operate local government service delivery programs;
- Regional Commissions;
- Resource Conservation and Development Councils;
- Local school systems, State colleges and universities.

Non-governmental organizations (such as private firms and nonprofit organizations) are encouraged to foster partnerships with eligible applicants to develop projects.

Please note that local governments must have Qualified Local Government Status in compliance with the requirements of the Georgia Planning Act of 1989 and the Service Delivery Strategy Law of 1997 in order to be eligible to execute contracts with EPD, Per State Law.

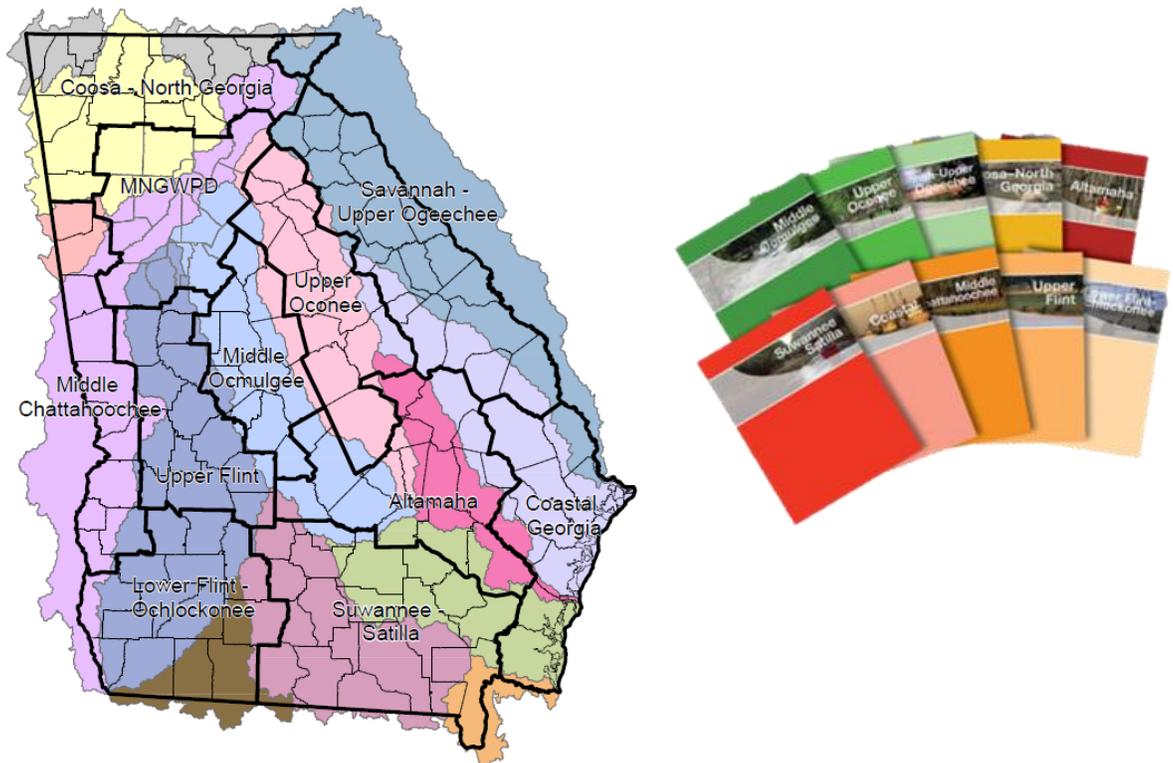
<http://www.dca.ga.gov/LocalGovStatus/planning.asp>

IDENTIFY THE PLANNING REGION AND ACCESS THE REGIONAL WATER PLAN

Information about the water planning regions and the Regional Water Plans are available at the following website: <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov/>

On that site, the water planning region can be located by clicking on the “Water Planning Regions” menu and entering a County name. The Regional Water Plans are available on each water planning region page.

Water Planning Regions



REGIONAL WATER PLANNING COUNCIL SUPPORT

All applicants must coordinate their project proposals with the Chair or designated representative of the applicable Regional Water Planning Council(s), and applications must include a letter of endorsement from the Chair(s) or designated representative(s) of the Council(s), as noted under the Requirements for Funding. EPD liaisons or planning contractors supporting each Council can provide assistance in linking project proponents with the applicable Council(s). Please contact Jennifer Welte at (404) 463-1694 or Jennifer.Welte@dnr.ga.gov for more information. Applicants should seek input from the Council Chair or designated representative regarding their projects prior to the pre-application meeting described under the Requirements for Funding.

MAXIMUM REIMBURSEMENT AND MINIMUM MATCH

Maximum reimbursement amount for a Regional Water Plan Seed Grant is capped at **\$75,000** and limited to **60%** of the total project cost.

Award recipients must provide a **minimum match amount** of **40%** of the total project cost. Of the required 40% match, **a minimum of 10% of the total project cost** must be in the form of a **cash expenditure** with the remaining amount in the form of in-kind services/resources.

The cash match must be expended to pay for specific elements of the project budget and may not include indirect costs, equipment operation costs, or in-kind services.

**Applicants who are able to demonstrate a match commitment of 50% or greater and/or a cash match of 20% or greater may receive priority consideration for funding.*

TO DETERMINE APPROPRIATE GRANT AND MATCH AMOUNTS WITH PERCENTAGES, PLEASE USE THE
SEED GRANT FUND AND MATCH CALCULATOR PROVIDED AT

<https://epd.georgia.gov/regional-water-plan-seed-grant-funds>

MATCH IS EXPLAINED IN MORE DETAIL IN
APPENDIX A: MATCH FAQ SHEET

ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES AND PROJECTS

Types of Regional Water Plan activities and projects that are eligible for funding by the Regional Water Plan Seed Grant include:

- Undertaking programs to address critical information and/or data needs identified in the Regional Water Plan(s);
- Providing technical assistance to support implementation of Regional Water Plan management practices;
- Preparing and distributing technical guidance that address management practices in two or more water planning regions;
- Tracking and analyzing available monitoring data and reporting on water resource conditions as identified as needs in the Regional Water Plan(s); or
- Undertaking other specific implementation activities identified in the Regional Water Plan(s).

The Regional Water Plan Seed Grant program is specifically for projects associated with the 10 Regional Water Planning Councils and their Regional Water Plans. However, projects that are located within the Metro Water District, or applicants who are located within the Metro Water District, are eligible to apply for a Seed Grant if all of the following apply:

- The project will provide benefits in one or more neighboring Water Planning Council region(s),

- The project addresses implementation of management practice(s) or other recommendation(s) from the Regional Water Plan(s) for those regions, and
- The application is endorsed by the neighboring Water Planning Council(s) in those regions.

REQUIREMENTS FOR FUNDING

At a minimum, applications must address the Requirements for Funding below in order to be considered for funding:

- Regional Water Plan Seed Grant projects must specifically identify the Regional Water Plan(s) and management practice(s) or other recommendation(s) from each plan that the project is designed to address. The Regional Water Plans are available at <https://waterplanning.georgia.gov>.
- Applications must include a letter of endorsement signed by the Regional Water Planning Council Chair or authorized signatory from the relevant Council or Councils that at a minimum describes how the project is consistent with the Council's implementation priorities and the vision and goals articulated in their Regional Water Plan(s).
- Applicants must schedule and participate in a project development pre-application meeting with EPD staff.
- Commit to a minimum 40% Project Match with 10% of the **total project cost** in the form of cash contribution.

KEY RANKING CRITERIA

In addition to the Requirements for Funding and Eligible Activities and Projects, criteria are assigned priority according to EPD rules and guidelines. These priorities are incorporated into the competitive scoring process used to allocate funds.

- Project proposals must specifically identify the Regional Water Plan(s) and management practices or other recommendations from each plan that the project is designed to implement and describe how the project is intended to implement them.
 - If a project proposal addresses data or information needs, the applicant must specify the connections between the data to be collected and specific management practices or other recommendations in the Regional Water Plan(s) and demonstrate how the data will be applied or integrated in the Regional Water Plan(s) or plan implementation.
 - If a project proposal includes water quality monitoring, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will be required. If the data will be submitted to EPD for listing or delisting purposes, a Sampling and Quality Assurance Plan (SQAP) will instead be required. The requirements for a SQAP are contained in EPD's [Guidance On Submitting Water Quality Data For Use By The Georgia Environmental Protection Division In 305\(b\)/303\(d\) Listing Assessments \(SQAP\)](#). (Please click the link or find on EDP's website.)
- Project proposals must be consistent with the implementation priorities and vision and goals articulated in the applicable Regional Water Plan(s). To ensure this consistency, proposals

must demonstrate significant coordination between the applicant, Council(s), and EPD during preparation of the application and throughout the awarded project.

- Project proposals must demonstrate the state, regional and/or local benefits of the project including, but not limited to, enhancing water supply or water quality improvements that also provide water availability benefits.
- Project proposals must demonstrate how the project will enable continued and new implementation of Regional Water Plan management practices and other Regional Water Plan recommendations.
- Project proposals must demonstrate how the effectiveness of the project will be evaluated. Numerical measures should be used where appropriate.

ADDITIONAL PRIORITIES

Additional priority, which may increase competitiveness, will be given to project proposals that:

- Demonstrate a match commitment of 50% or higher. *Note, this will lead to a higher total project cost and the cash match must still equal 10% of the total project cost.*
- Demonstrate a cash match commitment of 20% or higher.
- Demonstrate collaboration with multiple Regional Water Planning Councils, cooperating partnerships, EPD and/or involving multi-governmental agencies, and other implementation stakeholders.
- Demonstrate coordination with other water management projects and activities within the watershed as well as projects conducted across jurisdictional boundaries.
- Demonstrate additional environmental benefits including but not limited to protection of in-stream flows, water conservation, air quality and energy conservation.
- Demonstrate cost effectiveness of both grant and match funds. Cost effectiveness is defined as having the largest possible impact with the funds available. Project proposals utilizing indirect charges as a sole source of match will not score as well due to a reduction of cost effectiveness.

NOTE:

Project applicants who have received grant funds in past years but have NOT demonstrated successful administration of previous Section 319(h), Section 106, Section 604(b) or other grant funded projects may receive a reduction in points during project review. Successful administration includes, but is not limited to: completing all project activities during the contract period, meeting all required deadlines, completing the project on time and on budget, expending all grant funds requested on project activities, and providing adequate documentation as requested by EPD.

APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS

Please follow ALL instructions and complete ALL sections.

Deadlines for Pre-Application Meeting or Conference Call

All applicants are required to meet with EPD to discuss the project proposal before an application is submitted. Project partners, consultants, or other affiliated parties are welcome to attend, but the primary applicant must be in attendance or on the phone. All pre-application meetings must be completed by **October 16, 2020**.

Required Format and Deadline for Application

Applications must be typed single-spaced and in 12-point Times New Roman font. Please number pages and include the project name and applicant name on each page. Please attach all appendices and supporting documentation. (If a single email, including all attachments, exceeds the email size limit, attachments may be sent separately.)

All applications should be provided electronically via email to blue.cole@dnr.ga.gov, with a subject line of: "FY2021 SEED GRANT APPLICATION"

APPLICATION DEADLINE

Applications must be e-mailed by **October 31, 2020**

APPLICATION SECTIONS

1. Project Title

Please include the name of the Regional Water Plan(s) as part of the Project Title.

2. Lead Organization and Primary Contact

Please provide the name, address, telephone number and email of the Lead Organization and primary contact. It is acceptable to also include a secondary point of contact (for instance, when an applicant would like to include a contact for a major project partner). However, a primary contact must be provided for the applying organization to serve as a point of contact for invoicing, documentation and reporting.

3. Project Background & Goals

The Project Goals section should **clearly state the overall goal of the proposed project in a concise manner** (no more than three paragraphs in length). Please refer to the “Eligible Activities and Projects” section to help guide the overall goal of the project proposal. Applicants are encouraged to think of this section as a “sound bite” that provides an accurate account of what their project will accomplish in the grant period. The information provided must be factual and all objectives should be realistic and attainable.

- State in a **clear and concise** manner and articulate how the proposed project is consistent with the implementation priorities and the vision and goals articulated in the applicable Regional Water Plan(s). The vision and goals can be found in Section 1 of the Regional Water Plan(s).
- Identify the applicable Regional Water Plan(s) management practice(s) to be implemented with this project, and include all relevant details about how the project addresses the action(s) identified by the management practice(s). Management practices and the related actions are discussed in Sections 6 and 7 of the Regional Water Plan(s). Note that this information may be provided in a table format.
- Clearly identify how the project will enable continued and new implementation of Regional Water Plan management practices and other Regional Water Plan recommendations.
- Include quantifiable goals such as numbers to be addressed, percent achieved, and minimum targets.

4. Project Activities

The Project Activities should detail the actions that will be taken in order to achieve the project goals, the methods of implementation for each activity, and the measures of success that will be used to assess the effectiveness of each activity.

Project Activity: Identify and describe the main strategies for achieving the project goals. Please include as many activities as are necessary to accomplish the project.

Measures of Success: Describe what evaluation criteria will be applied to each project activity to assess the appropriateness and effectiveness of the associated activity. Where appropriate, describe how particular criteria will be measured.

Tasks: Describe the specific tasks that are necessary to complete each project activity. Please be detailed and specific about the project activities that will be completed using available resources, and provide quantifiable information where appropriate.

Deliverables: Identify any items that will be delivered as a result of each task. Provide quantifiable information where appropriate. Examples of deliverables include, but are not limited to: maps, reports, pictures, monitoring data, and monitoring reports.

5. Roles and Responsibilities of Partnering Organizations

A description of the roles and responsibilities for all Partnering Organizations allows for a clear delineation of duties and will help maintain a sense of accountability for project partners. Identify and include all Federal, State, regional and local organizations that will contribute time, services or resources to this project and provide a detailed explanation of the expected responsibilities of each partner. **Please note that private organizations that will be reimbursed as paid sub-contractors on the project are not considered to be Partnering Organizations.**

6. Project Location

Project Area Description and Map: Identify the approximate size and location of the proposed project area on a map (paper and electronic copies). Be sure to include the ENTIRE project area on one map. If necessary due to size, attach the map as an application appendix, and reference the appendix in this section.

7. Project Budget

The Project Budget includes budget costs organized in a Project Budget Table and a Budget Narrative. The project budget delineates proposed grant and in-kind or cash matching expenditures by Item (A-J).

The project proposal must provide sufficient detail to justify all project costs. Project Activities and Tasks must correspond directly to the break-out of budget expenditures in the Item Description. For example, if a turbidity meter is listed as an equipment budget item, the Project Activities must include a task that would require the purchase of a turbidity meter – i.e., TSS monitoring.

The project proposal must provide dollar amounts and identify funding sources of match (name of organization/person, cash, or in-kind.) If the match source is not from the Lead Organization, then sufficient detail is needed from the Partnering Organization showing match source and commitment in the accompanying Letter of Commitment. The project proposal must also provide details on what Item is paid for with match, especially cash match.

Item Description for Project Budget Table:

Break out the following summary information in each Item in the Project Budget Table for both grant and match allocation. Specific details and justification need to be provided in the Budget Narrative.

**Applicants must use the budget format included in the application template.
All project proposals are limited to \$75,000 in requested state funding**

Budget Narrative:

Supply a Budget Narrative that relates to Project Activities/Tasks and justifies the expenses covered by grant dollars and match values in appropriate Item Description.

(A) Personnel Narrative: *Personnel budget items must include the position title, salary rate, percentage of full-time equivalent (FTE), resulting dollar amount, number of years to be reimbursed, and a description of responsibilities for each position cited, regardless of funding source. Summarize responsibilities and duties of staff on Lead Organization payroll as related to Project Activities and Tasks for each position cited, regardless of funding source.*

(B) Fringe Narrative: *Fringe benefit budget items must include the position title, percentage of FTE, resulting dollar amount, fringe rate (as a percentage of salary), and number of years to be reimbursed for each position cited, regardless of funding source.*

(C) Travel Narrative: *Travel budget items should be calculated by multiplying the number of expected travel miles by the current mileage rate. Applicants should also clearly identify the personnel traveling by position title, and the type and purpose of travel. Correlate travel budget items with a specific Project Activity and Task. **NOTE: out-of-state travel must be pre-approved by EPD and is dependent upon reason for travel and cost.***

The **State Mileage Rate** for 2020 is \$0.575 per mile. For more information, please visit the following website: <http://sao.georgia.gov/state-travel-policy>

(D) Equipment Narrative: *All equipment budget items and costs must be itemized separately. Please include brief descriptions, specifications or actual quotes AND associated activity/task to justify the proposed costs. The term "Equipment" applies only to individual items with a useful life of more than one (1) year and an acquisition cost equal to or greater than \$5,000.*

(E) Supplies Narrative: *Supply budget items may be collectively summarized by type (monitoring, administrative, printing, etc.) as long as the collective total for each type is less than \$2,000. Otherwise, they must be itemized separately.*

(F) Contractual Narrative: *Contractual budget items represent formal financial relationships between the Lead Organization and subcontractors, and must identify the type of subcontractor and the applicable Project Activities. For each large subcontract item (\geq \$30,000), a detailed budget breakdown using the same item description must be attached as an appendix to the application. A copy of the bid request or job announcement, and contractual agreement must be submitted to EPD.*

(G) Other Narrative: *Other budget items and costs must be itemized separately. Items allocated to this Item Class Category include in-kind volunteer contributions to match. Specify expenses (either dollar amount or percentage of totals) allocated to the project that are eligible for Seed Grant reimbursement or match.*

(I) Indirect Charges Narrative: *Indirect Charge costs will not be reimbursed utilizing grant funds. However, applicants may use indirect charges as match. Project proposals utilizing indirect charges as a sole source of match will not score as well due to a reduction of cost effectiveness.*

8. Project Implementation and Drawdown Schedule

All project proposals must include a Project Implementation and Drawdown Schedule, which details expected execution of tasks, reporting requirements, and expenditure of funds. **It is anticipated that Regional Water Plan Seed Grant projects will be twenty-four (24) months in duration and must be no longer than thirty (30) months in duration.**

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION AND DRAWDOWN SCHEDULE

The schedule template is an MS Excel file formatted to fit one 11 x 17 inch sheet and can be expanded or shortened as appropriate by the applicant.

9. Project Attachment(s):

Provide list of all documents and supporting files included with application.

APPENDIX A MATCH FAQs SHEET

WHAT IS MATCH?

Match is a resource commitment beyond the grant dollar amount requested, and is required as part of a Regional Water Plan Seed Grant contract to implement the project.

HOW MUCH MATCH IS REQUIRED?

Award recipients must provide a minimum match amount of 40% of the total project cost for all Regional Water Plan Seed Grant projects. Of the required 40%, a minimum of 10% of the total project cost must be in the form of cash. Applicants who are able to demonstrate a match commitment of 50% or greater and/or a cash match of 20% or greater may receive priority consideration for funding.

Example Calculation for Determining Match Commitment: Grant Funds Requested $\times \frac{2}{3}$ = Required Minimum Matching Funds

Grant Funds Requested:	\$75,000
Minimum In-Kind Match Required:	\$37,500
Minimum 10 % Cash Match required:	\$12,500
<hr/>	
Total Project Cost:	\$125,000

To Determine Appropriate Grant and Match Amounts With Percentages,
Please Use the **Seed Grant Fund and Match Calculator** provided at:

<https://epd.georgia.gov/regional-water-plan-seed-grant-funds>

WHAT CAN BE USED AS MATCH?

CASH MATCH: Cash contributed specifically to cover the actual costs of the project. The cash match must be expended to pay for specific elements of the project budget.

These costs **may not** include:

1. Indirect costs
2. Equipment operation
3. In-kind services

IN-KIND MATCH: Contributions made directly in the form of efforts or goods, with dollar value specified, to implement the project. These amounts must be:

1. Verifiable (see section below regarding tracking match commitments);
2. Directly related to accomplishing project goals;
3. Not already being counted as match for another project.

How Do I Track Match Contributions?

1. Match contributions must be tracked on a quarterly basis along with invoicing for grant funds and progress reports;
2. Match contributions must be entered into the Lead Organization's accounting records and be auditable from those records (i.e. type, quantity, value of contribution, date of contribution, signature of contributor/partner organization);
3. When recording in-kind match, accounting records must show how the value placed on the match was derived (i.e. number of volunteer or personnel or meeting space hours and hourly rate for each, etc.);
4. Volunteer hours and services must be documented.