

| Summary of Project Costs (Including Required 25% Match): | | |
|---|---|----|
| NEW: Water Quality Management Plan Funds Requested (max \$125,000): | \$ | |
| OR: Watershed Management Plan Update Funds Requested (max \$50,000): | \$ | |
| Local Share (minimum 25% of DNR request): | | |
| Cash Match: | (minimum 5% of DNR request) | \$ |
| In-Kind Match: | (minimum 25% of request when added to cash match) | \$ |
| Total Project Cost: | | \$ |
| Example: WMA is requesting \$100,000 from DNR; \$5000 local cash match required, \$20,000 in-kind required; total match provided is \$25,000 or 25% of \$100,000 (minimum match values represented) | | |

| 5. GRANT SOLICITATION TIMELINE | |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Event | Date |
| Grant Solicitation announced for eligible Applicants | November 17, 2025 |
| Grant Application due date | January 16, 2026 |
| Grant Application evaluation by Iowa DNR and selection of the Successful Applicant(s) | January 16 – January 31, 2026 |
| Notification of Successful Applicant and all Applicants of intent to award | January 30, 2026 |
| Drafting of Contract, Environmental Protection Commission review, and execution of Contract (start of Contract) | No later than March 17, 2026 |
| Term of Contract with the Successful Applicant (end of Contract) | End no later than June 30, 2028 |

NOTE: The intent for this cycle is to also support watershed management plan updates as a new category of award with a cap of \$50,000 per award per watershed management authority (or similar 28E-bound watershed management intergovernmental cooperative organized under Iowa Code Section 466B.22). For most applicants, only one type of funding is applicable, e.g., if you have an existing watershed plan for the watershed that is the subject of your 28E agreement, you are limited to applying for update funds. If you are outside of this example scenario, use the additional space provided in the Project Description to outline your specific scenario and why you consider yourself eligible for additional funds. The amount of eligible award will be determined in review by the interagency review team and justification will be provided if any deviations are disallowed.

Each Applicant must identify the fiscal agent for any Contract resulting from this Solicitation, which can be the applying entity if suitable, and will be responsible for any reporting requirements and work products. Each Applicant must have a federal Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number which is available for free from: <https://sam.gov/>

EXAMPLE BUDGET TEMPLATE

A budget must be included with your application. Include brief narrative of what will be the primary uses of the funds (e.g., hiring a consultant, supporting existing staff), sources of match funds, description of equipment needs, and similar. The included table is just an example of the budget format that can be used, if providing your own budget spreadsheet or similar, please attempt to adhere to the budget categories below or provide adequate descriptions if deviating.

Narrative:

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| Budget Year(s): | | | Match Information | | |
|---|-----------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Budget Category | Total Cost/Item | DNR Request | In-Kind Match ¹ | Cash Match ² | Total Match ³ |
| Salary & Benefits: | | | | | |
| Indirect Costs: | | | | | |
| Travel/Training: | | | | | |
| Supplies: | | | | | |
| Publication, distribution, or other media costs: | | | | | |
| Contractual: | | | | | |
| Equipment (single items greater than \$5,000 each): | | | | | |
| Other: | | | | | |
| Totals: | | | | | |
| Total FTEs (If supporting salary with DNR funds): | | Total Project Cost: | | | |

Notes:

1. In-Kind Match: Value of local contributions to planned campaign by all partners not provided as cash
2. Cash Match: Total must be at least 5% of DNR request
3. Total Match: Total of in-kind and cash must be at least 25% of DNR request

Example: Max request \$125,000; Total Match required = 25% or \$31,250; Minimum Cash Match required 5% of \$125,000 or \$6250; remaining \$25,000 match required can be provided as a combination of in-kind or cash

If using DNR grant funds for salary, please provide FTE estimates for reporting purposes.

SECTION 1:

Introduction

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Grant Application Solicitation is to receive Applications from Responsible Applicants to provide the services identified on the Grant cover sheet and further described in Section 2 of this document to the Iowa DNR. The Iowa DNR intends to award a Contract(s) beginning approximately March 17, 2026, and ending roughly 24 months following the contract start date. As a result of this Grant Application Solicitation, it is anticipated that the Iowa DNR will notify applicants of the intent to award by January 30, 2026.

1.2 Definitions

For the purposes of this Grant Application Solicitation and the resulting Contract(s), the following terms shall mean:

“Applicant” means any Watershed Management Authority that is formed as a separate legal entity under Iowa Code chapter 28E and that submits a Responsive Application to the Iowa DNR in response to this Solicitation. “Applicant” also may include a local or regional entity demonstrating the characteristics of a Regional Public Comprehensive Planning Organization (RPCPO), as described in Clean Water Act section 205, which is applying on behalf of a Watershed Management Authority. An RPCPO Applicant shall include a narrative explanation of how it demonstrates the characteristics of an RPCPO and its specific relationship to any WMA. For purposes of this Solicitation, an RPCPO Applicant may consider any Iowa Code chapter 466B.22 WMA characteristics to be indicative of its capacity as an RPCPO.

Each Applicant must identify the fiscal agent for any Contract resulting from this Solicitation, which can be the applying entity if suitable, and will be responsible for any reporting requirements and work products. Each Applicant must have a federal Unique Entity Identification (UEI) number which is available for free from: <https://sam.gov/>

“Application” or **“Proposal”** means the Applicant’s documentation submitted in response to the Grant Application Solicitation as their request for consideration for grant funding.

“Contract” or **“Subaward”** means the subaward contract(s) entered into with the successful Applicant(s) pursuant to this Solicitation. The “subaward” terminology specifically refers to those contracts where the primary grant recipient passes funds through to a subrecipient or contractor, and will be interchangeable with “contract” or “subaward contract” for the purposes of this grant application solicitation.

“Eligible Applicant” means any Applicant that is either a Watershed Management Authority or RPCPO. Applicants that previously received funding through the Watershed Management Authority Planning Grants program are eligible for additional funding under this Grant Application Solicitation, especially plan update funding which is new for the 2025 cycle.

“Grant” means the Water Quality Management Planning Grant established by the Iowa DNR using Section 604(b) and Section 319 Clean Water Act for Watershed Management Authorities.

“Grant Application Solicitation” or **“Solicitation”** means this solicitation for Grant Applications and any attachments, exhibits, schedules or addenda hereto.

“Hydrologic Unit Code” or **“HUC”** means a system by which each hydrologic unit is identified by a unique code, thus called a hydrologic unit code (HUC) consisting of two to twelve digits based on the six levels of classification:

2-digit HUC - Region

4-digit HUC - Subregion

6-digit HUC - Accounting Unit

8-digit HUC - Cataloguing Unit

10-digit HUC - Watershed

12-digit HUC - Subwatershed

“Iowa Code Chapter 28E Agreement” or **“Agreement”** means an Agreement entered into by qualifying Political Subdivisions to form a Watershed Management Authority.

“Iowa Department of Natural Resources” or **“Iowa DNR”** means the agency identified on the Grant Application Solicitation cover sheet that is issuing the Solicitation.

“Responsible Applicant” means an Applicant that has the capability in all respects to perform the requirements of the Contract. In determining whether an Applicant is a Responsible Applicant, the Iowa DNR may consider various factors including, but not limited to, the Applicant’s capabilities and qualifications to provide the goods or services requested, the Applicant’s integrity and reliability, the past performance of the Applicant and the best interest of the Iowa DNR and the State, and the extent to which the Applicant complies, in DNR’s judgment, with the requirements of Iowa Code chapters 466B and 28E and section 205 of the Clean Water Act.

“Responsive Application” means an Application that complies with the material provisions of this Grant Application Solicitation.

“State” means the State of Iowa and all state agencies, boards, and commissions.

“Successful Applicant” means an Applicant that was recommended for funding and subsequently awarded a contract as a result of this Solicitation.

“Watershed” means a geographic area of land, water, plants and animals within the confines of a drainage divide. Watershed boundaries define the aerial extent of surface water drainage to a point and always follow the highest ridgeline around the stream channels and meet at the lowest point of the land where water flows out of the watershed.

“Watershed Management Authority” or **“WMA”** means a watershed management authority formed in accordance with Iowa Code Chapter 466B Subchapter II and that has completed all of its required filings with the Iowa Secretary of State pursuant to the provisions of Iowa Code section 28E.8. Appendix A includes Subchapter II of Iowa Code chapter 466B.

1.3 Overview of the Grant Application Solicitation Process

Eligible Applicants will be required to submit their Applications in electronic format to the Issuing Officer. It is the Iowa DNR’s intention to evaluate Applications from all Responsible Applicants that submit timely Responsive Applications in accordance with Section 3, Evaluation of Applications.

1.4 Background Information

This Solicitation is designed to provide Applicants with the information necessary for the preparation of competitive Applications. Successful Applicants will be expected to work with the Iowa DNR to develop a final product that includes the elements described in Section 2 with the goal of replicating the process in other watersheds throughout the state.

In order to fulfill the provisions of Iowa Code section 455B.105 and Iowa Code chapter 466B, subchapters II, the Iowa DNR is seeking Applications from Eligible Applicants. Clean Water Act Section 604(b) funding will be used to fund this Grant; therefore eligibility is limited to entities defined under Iowa Code chapter 466b, subchapter II, as Watershed Management Authorities and to entities demonstrating the characteristics of an RPCPO.

The purpose of this Solicitation is to request Applications for evaluation by Iowa DNR to award planning money to Successful Applicants. Total funding for contracts awarded by the Iowa DNR as a result of this Solicitation process is anticipated to be up to \$500,000. The maximum request for award for this Solicitation should be no greater than \$125,000.

Comprehensive Water Quality Management Plan

This funding is being made available to support watershed-based water quality management planning and assessment efforts. Details of the final deliverable can be found in Section 2.10 of this Solicitation. This includes, but is not limited to, a physical environment inventory and an assessment of relevant issues. The final deliverable shall include specific Goals / Objectives / Action Steps with quantifiable estimates and expected results, and should then serve the Watershed Management Authority as an implementation guide to reach the goals identified by the WMA.

Iowa Smart Planning Principles

Iowa Code chapter 18B, "Land Use – Smart Planning," was enacted during Iowa's 2010 legislative session (2010 Iowa Acts 1184, sections 17 and 18, 83rd General Assembly Senate File 2389). Iowa Code section 18B.1 authorizes and encourages consideration of Smart Planning principles in making resource decisions.

This grant program encourages consideration of Smart Planning Principles as some of these principles relate to watershed-based water quality planning and are relevant to the operation of Watershed Management Authorities. Smart Planning information can be found at:

http://rio.urban.uiowa.edu/smart_planning/index.html

http://publications.iowa.gov/11078/1/2011_Smart_Planning_in_Iowa_Guide.pdf

1.5 Administrative Information

1.5.1 Technical Guidance - The Issuing Officer identified in the Grant Application Solicitation cover sheet is the primary contact for questions about this Solicitation and the submission or document preparation processes. For technical questions related to Watershed Management Authorities or watershed-based water quality management planning, please see the DNR Watershed Improvement Program contact page:

<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Watershed-Improvement/Contact-Watershed-Staff>

1.5.2 Grant Solicitation Timeline - The dates provided in the Solicitation Timeline on the Solicitation cover sheet are provided for informational and planning purposes only. The Iowa DNR reserves the right to change the dates. If the Iowa DNR changes any of the deadlines for Applicant submissions, the Iowa DNR will issue an addendum to the Solicitation.

1.5.3 Amendment to the Solicitation - The Iowa DNR reserves the right to amend the Solicitation at any time using an addendum. The Applicant shall acknowledge receipt of all addenda in its Application. If the Iowa DNR issues an addendum after the due date for receipt of Applications, the Iowa DNR may, in its sole discretion, allow Applicants to amend their Applications in response to the addendum.

1.5.4 Amendment and Withdrawal of Application - An Applicant may not amend its Application at any time after the Application is submitted. Applicants must notify the Issuing Officer in writing prior to the due date for Applications if they wish to completely withdraw their Application.

1.5.5 Costs of Preparing the Application - The costs of preparation and delivery of the Application are solely the responsibility of the Applicant.

1.5.6 Submission of Applications - The Iowa DNR must receive the Application at the Issuing Officer's electronic mail address identified on the Solicitation cover sheet no later than the "Grant Application Due Date" and time listed on the Solicitation cover sheet. This is a mandatory requirement and will not be waived by the Iowa DNR. Any Application received after this deadline will be rejected. It is the Applicant's responsibility to ensure that the Application is received prior to the deadline. Applicants must submit files as Adobe PDF or MS

Word documents as described in Section 2 of this Solicitation. Emails containing large files, emails including many recipients or files that are suspected of containing viruses may be rejected by the state's electronic mail system. Applicants are solely responsible for ensuring delivery to the Issuing Officer by the time and date described in this Solicitation, and DNR is not responsible for Applications that may be blocked by filters, restricted by size, or otherwise determined to be undeliverable by the State of Iowa Office of the Chief Information Officer automated systems and administrators.

Applicants must furnish all information necessary to enable the Iowa DNR to evaluate the Application. Applications that fail to meet the mandatory requirements of the Solicitation will be rejected. Oral information provided by the Applicant shall not be considered part of their Application unless it is provided in writing.

1.5.7 Disqualification - The Iowa DNR may reject outright and not evaluate an Application for reasons including without limitation:

- The Applicant fails to deliver the Application by the due date and time.
- The Applicant fails to deliver a budget proposal.
- The Application is not compliant with the requirements of the Solicitation.
- The Application limits the rights of the Iowa DNR.
- The Applicant fails to timely respond to the Iowa DNR's request for information, documents, or references.
- The Applicant fails to include any signature, certification, authorization, stipulation, disclosure, or guarantee requested in Section 2 of this Solicitation or in the Certification Letter.
- The Applicant presents the information requested by this Solicitation in a format inconsistent with the instructions of the Solicitation or otherwise fails to comply with the requirements of this Solicitation.
- The Applicant provides misleading, inaccurate, or unbalanced responses.
- The Iowa DNR determines that the content is in any way misleading or inaccurate through a verification process.
- There is insufficient evidence (including evidence submitted by the Applicant and evidence obtained by the Evaluation Committee from other sources) to satisfy the Iowa DNR or any member of the Evaluation Committee that the Applicant is properly qualified to satisfy the requirements of the Solicitation.

1.5.8 Nonmaterial Variances - The Iowa DNR reserves the right to waive or permit cure of nonmaterial variances in the Application if they judge it to be in its best interest to do so. Nonmaterial variances include minor informalities that do not affect responsiveness, that are merely a matter of form or format, that do not change the relative standing or otherwise prejudice other Applicants, that do not change the meaning or scope of the Solicitation, or that do not reflect a material change in the requirements of the Solicitation. In the event the Iowa DNR waives or permits cure of nonmaterial variances, such waiver or cure will not modify the Solicitation requirements or excuse the Applicant from full compliance with Solicitation specifications or other contract requirements if the Applicant is ultimately selected. The determination of materiality is in the sole discretion of the Iowa DNR.

1.5.9 Application Clarification Process - The Iowa DNR reserves the right to contact an Applicant at any time after the submission of Applications for the purpose of clarifying an Application or to ensure mutual understanding. This contact may include written questions, interviews, site visits, a review of past performance if the Applicant has provided goods and/or services to the State or any other political subdivision wherever located, or requests for corrective pages in the Application. An individual authorized to legally bind the Applicant shall sign responses to any request for clarification. Responses shall be submitted to the Issuing Officer within the time specified in Iowa DNR's request. Failure to comply with requests for additional information may result in rejection of the Application as non-compliant.

1.5.10 Reference Checks - The Iowa DNR reserves the right to contact any reference to assist in the evaluation of the Application, to verify the information contained in the Application and to discuss the Applicant's qualifications and the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Application.

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- 1.5.11 Information from Other Sources** - The Iowa DNR reserves the right to obtain and consider information from other sources concerning an Applicant, such as the Applicant's capability and performance under other contracts, the qualifications of any subcontractor identified in the Application, the Applicant's financial stability, past or pending litigation, and other publicly available information.
- 1.5.12 Release of Claims** - By submitting an Application, the Applicant agrees that it will not bring any claim or cause of action against the Iowa DNR or the State based on any misunderstanding concerning the information provided herein or concerning the Iowa DNR's failure, negligent or otherwise, to provide the Applicant with pertinent information as intended by this Solicitation.
- 1.5.13 Evaluation of Applications Submitted** - Applications that are timely submitted and are not subject to disqualification will be reviewed in accordance with Section 3 of the Solicitation. The Iowa DNR and Evaluation Committee will not necessarily select the Applicant(s) offering the lowest cost Application. Instead, the Iowa DNR intends to select the Applicant(s) the Evaluation Committee believes will provide the best value to the Iowa DNR.
- 1.5.14 Notice of Selection and Acceptance Period** - The Iowa DNR will send a notice of intent to negotiate subaward contracts to all Applicants submitting a timely Application. It is the intent of Iowa DNR that negotiation and execution of the contract(s) shall be completed as described on the cover page of this Solicitation. If the apparent successful Applicant(s) fails to negotiate and deliver an executed contract by that date, then Iowa DNR may extend the negotiation period, or cancel the selection and negotiate a contract(s) with any remaining Applicant(s) that the Iowa DNR believes will provide the best value to the Iowa DNR.
- 1.5.15 Definition of Contract** - The full execution of a written contract shall constitute the making of a contract for the subaward goods and services requested by the Solicitation, and no Applicant shall acquire any legal or equitable rights relative to any contract for goods and/or services until a separate written contract, with terms and conditions acceptable to the Iowa DNR, has been fully executed by the successful Applicant(s) and Iowa DNR. By submitting an Application, each Applicant acknowledges that selection of an Applicant shall not create any contract or other obligation until a separate written contract has been executed as described above.
- 1.5.16 No Minimum Guaranteed** - No guarantee is made that an Applicant(s) will be selected or any contract(s) will be executed as a result of this Solicitation. Iowa DNR will exercise its right to determine and accept all portions of any apparent successful Application, or Iowa DNR may choose to reject all Applications.

SECTION 2: Format and Content of Applications

2.1 Instructions

These instructions prescribe the format and content of an Application. They are designed to facilitate a uniform review process. Failure to adhere to the Application format may result in the disqualification of the Application.

- 2.1.1 The Application shall be typewritten on 8.5" x 11" paper with 1" margins in font size 11 (Arial or Calibri) submitted as a PDF document. If the Applicant is not able to save the document in PDF format, the Application may be submitted in Microsoft Word. To reduce file size and prevent the occurrence of the file being rendered undeliverable by either party's email system due to size, Applicants are discouraged from attaching large images unless such images can be appropriately embedded in the document.
- 2.1.2 The Application must be submitted to the Issuing Officer via email by the closing date and time of this Solicitation.
- 2.1.3 The Iowa DNR may treat all information submitted by an Applicant as public information per Iowa Code Chapter 22 unless the Applicant designates any information in its Application as confidential. The Applicant will then provide an additional, alternative copy of the Application with confidential information excised with justification based on Iowa Code or other applicable law supporting the confidential designation and an explanation of why disclosure of said information is not in the best interest of the public.
- 2.1.4 The Application shall include the content described in Sections 2.2, 2.4, 2.5 2.6 and 2.10 of this Solicitation.

2.2 Certification Letter

During the Contract Negotiation Phase, an individual authorized to legally bind the Applicant shall sign a Certification letter. The letter shall include the Applicant's mailing address, electronic mail address, Federal UEI number (UEI number can be obtained at www.sam.gov), and telephone number addressed to the Issuing Officer. A scanned copy of this letter is appropriate for the electronic submission required by this Solicitation.

2.3 Table of Contents and Pagination

The Applicant is encouraged to include a table of contents of its Application and number all pages.

2.4 Executive Summary

The Applicant shall prepare an executive summary and overview of the Scope of Work it is proposing, including all of the following information:

- 2.4.1 An overview of the Applicant's plans for complying with the requirements of this Solicitation.
- 2.4.2 Any other summary information the Applicant deems pertinent.

2.5 Scope of Work and Technical Requirements

The Applicant shall address each requirement in Section 2.10 of the Solicitation as provided for in that Section and explain how it will comply with each requirement. Applications must be fully responsive to each requirement. Unless otherwise noted, merely repeating the requirements may be considered non-responsive and may disqualify the Applicant. Applications must identify any deviations from the requirements of this Solicitation or requirements the Applicant cannot satisfy. Any deviations from the requirements of the Solicitation or any requirement of the Solicitation that the Applicant cannot satisfy may disqualify the Applicant. In addition to addressing the Technical Requirements, Section 2.10 requires the Applicant to provide a work plan describing how the Applicant would accomplish the project.

2.6 Financial Assistance Request

A Financial Assistance Request portion of the Application shall contain a narrative that includes an itemized description and associated costs of all activities required to successfully fulfill the requirements of a Contract resulting from this Solicitation. A minimum 25% Applicant match shall be required of any financial assistance request. The match shall include a minimum 5% of request as a hard-dollar contribution from the WMA members or other partners, and the remaining match portion may be a combination of staff time / labor, supplies, or other relevant project expenses (soft match or in-kind) the Applicant anticipates providing in order to fulfill the activities of a Contract resulting from this

Solicitation. For example, a \$100,000 financial assistance request would require a local match total of \$25,000, with a minimum hard-dollar contribution of \$5,000 and soft match of at least \$20,000. The Applicant must demonstrate that it has a positive cash flow, as any Contract entered into as a result of this Solicitation will be on an expense reimbursement basis. The narrative should also describe the purpose and types of any travel; describe, explain and justify any equipment (cost per unit \$5,000 or more); and describe any subcontracts, including the scope of work or services to be provided. The example budget template (Page 3) included in this Solicitation can be used by Applicants to summarize the narrative and show the cost breakdown.

2.7 Overview of Statement of Work Requirements

The Applicant shall address each requirement in this Section and indicate whether or not it will comply with the requirement. If the context requires more than a yes or no answer or the section specifically indicates, the Applicant shall explain how it will comply with the requirement. Applications must address each requirement. Merely repeating the requirements may be considered non-responsive and may disqualify the Applicant. Applications must identify any deviations from the requirements of this Solicitation or requirements the Applicant cannot satisfy. If the Applicant deviates from or cannot satisfy the requirement(s) of this section, the Iowa DNR may reject the Application.

2.8 Definitions

For a full list of definitions used in this section and throughout the Solicitation, please review Section 1.2.

2.9 Applicant Qualifications

Successful Applicants shall be a Watershed Management Authority or RPCPO or similar entity acting on behalf of a WMA, and shall be located in the State of Iowa. The range of the eligible watersheds must be no larger than a HUC 8 watershed and no smaller than a complete HUC 12 watershed (no sub-HUC 12 watershed applicants).

2.10 Statement of Work

Each Applicant shall submit a plan demonstrating that the Applicant has funding, personnel, and legal authority to fulfill each of the following requirements before the end of the anticipated Ending Date of any Contract resulting from this Grant Application Solicitation.

The Applicant must explain in writing how it qualifies for funding and how it plans to meet the obligations of the Solicitation in a narrative Statement of Work. The narrative shall provide the following information:

- How the Applicant plans to utilize funding for watershed-based water quality management planning activities within the limits of the requested time period
- A detailed implementation schedule and milestones (a template is included as Table 1 in Section 4)
- A watershed map, which identifies the targeted HUC watershed(s), the size and name of the HUC, and the cities and counties included in the watershed.
 - For those applying for plan update funds, if a specific sub-region of the 28E HUC watershed is targeted for the updated/enhanced planning, a scope-setting map for just the update is appropriate
 - Example: The WMA is targeting a lake subwatershed within the HUC 8 for enhanced planning to determine appropriate implementation efforts needed to achieve lake water quality goals, a map of just the lake and its subwatershed is appropriate as a scope-setting document.
- A description of the watershed, which includes the environmental issues of concern and demonstrates that the resource is valued by stakeholders.
- Goals, outputs, and measures of success should be identified:
 - Goals – Provide a clear and concise statement of the project’s goals and objectives.
 - Results of Activities (Outputs) – Describe the anticipated products / results from the accomplishment of work plan activities.
 - Projected Environmental Improvement (Outcome) – Describe the changes or benefits to the environment that are to result from the accomplishment of work plan commitments and outputs.
 - Established Baseline for Measurement – Provide a baseline for measuring the results of the project and discuss how this baseline will be used to determine whether the project resulted in environmental improvement.

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- As detailed in Section 2.6 of this Solicitation, the Applicant must include a Financial Assistance Request of no more than \$125,000 and estimate the projected use of those funds by the type of work necessary to create a water quality management plan for its Watershed Management Authority. This estimate shall include a description of the 25% match (minimum 5% hard-dollar match funds) dedicated to the project. Applicants who can demonstrate a higher level of financial and / or in-kind support may be considered as more competitive.
 - Applicants who have received funding from previous grant applications must describe the current status of the original planning grant and how the additional grant will be used to further meet planning goals.
 - Plan Update Requests shall only apply for a maximum of \$50,000 per watershed management authority unit unless sufficient justification for the need for additional funds is provided in the narrative.
 - Example: The HUC 8 defined in the WMA agreement has distinct regions that require enhanced planning efforts to address differing pollutants or similar complications, such as one subwatershed area being a source water protection area with a nitrate concern and another subwatershed having significant streambank and soil erosion leading to infrastructural concerns, both requiring divergent engineering or planning solutions not appropriate for a single subcontractor to complete.
 - The DNR understands that not all WMAs are the same size, and those larger WMAs may benefit from additional funds for plan update needs at this time. The DNR reserves the right, via Evaluation Committee, to determine appropriateness of each ask based on the narrative provided in the application.
 - The Applicant must include a narrative explanation of how it is either a WMA formed as a separate legal entity under Iowa Code chapter 28E, or how it demonstrates the characteristics of an RPCPO under Clean Water Act section 205 and its specific relationship to any WMA.
 - The Applicant must explain how its Application links to the State of Iowa's Nonpoint Source Management Plan (NPSMP). This shall include a discussion of the NPSMP Goal(s), Objective(s), and/or Action Step(s) that will be addressed by the Application. The complete NPSMP can be found online at:
<http://www.iowadnr.gov/Environmental-Protection/Water-Quality/Watershed-Improvement/Nonpoint-Source-Plan>

A Contract awarded as a result of this Solicitation will specify that the Contractor provide the DNR with periodic project updates as a condition of completing the grant. Reporting requirements will include providing all reports required by the US Environmental Protection Agency under the authority of Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act (CWA), and will include, but may not be limited to, quarterly reporting of project expenditures, planned activities and accomplishments, and completion status of the project. The Contractor shall also be required to comply with all other relevant requirements of other relevant federal statutes, rules and regulations as they pertain to the use of federal funds authorized under Section 604(b) of the CWA.

While budget information and reports provided to DNR may include data like the number of full-time employees utilized by the Applicant and the salaries paid to such employees, nothing in any ensuing agreement between the DNR and the Applicant, if there is one, shall, or shall be interpreted to, create an employer/employee relationship between the Iowa DNR and such employees. Any employees hired by or contracted to the Applicant to complete the work described in the agreement shall not be employees of the DNR but shall be the responsibility of the Applicant or its member organizations.

SECTION 3:
Evaluation of Applications

3.1 Introduction

This section describes the evaluation process that will be used to determine which Application(s) provides the greatest benefit.

3.2 Evaluation Committee

The Iowa DNR intends to conduct a comprehensive, fair, and impartial evaluation of Applications received in response to this Grant Application Solicitation. The Iowa DNR will use an interagency Evaluation Committee to review and evaluate the Applications.

3.3 Overview of Evaluation Process

The Iowa DNR will conduct a preliminary evaluation of all submitted Applications to determine if they comply with the Format and Content requirements described in Section 3 (i.e. to determine if the Applicant is a responsible Applicant submitting a Responsive Application). Applications that do not comply with the Format and Content requirements may be rejected as unresponsive by the Iowa DNR, without further scoring of the technical Application.

Applications that are deemed responsive by the Iowa DNR will be forwarded to the members of the Iowa DNR evaluation committee for scoring. The Applications will be ranked relative to one another with the top ranking Applicants recommended to receive funding until funding is depleted. Total funding available for distribution to Applicants submitting Applications pursuant to this Solicitation is anticipated to be as much as \$500,000. The maximum amount of funding an individual Applicant may request pursuant to this Solicitation is \$125,000.

3.4 Preferences

Preferences required by applicable statute or rule shall be applied, where appropriate.

3.5 Evaluation Criteria

Evaluation of Applications may include, but will not be limited to, the following criteria, which are not listed in any particular order of importance:

- 3.5.1 Whether the Application is designed to develop and implement a watershed-based water quality plan or plan update that is sustainable for at least 20 years and considers planning beyond demonstration projects; whether the cost of goods and/or services required to perform the work is necessary, eligible, allocable, and reasonable in accordance with federal guidelines. (20 points)
- 3.5.2 The manner in which the Application encourages and relies upon cooperation among several political subdivisions to develop the watershed plan or plan updates. Applications that require and demonstrate more cooperation of political subdivisions will be given additional consideration. (20 points)
- 3.5.3 Whether the Application encourages a comprehensive, multi-objective planning approach to watershed management utilizing creativity and innovative techniques to accomplish partner-driven watershed goals. (20 points)
- 3.5.4 Discussion of how support (i.e., political, technical, public, etc.) for the plan will be generated and maintained within each of the participating jurisdictions and potential of the proposed project to lead to the abatement of significant water quality problems. (20 points)
- 3.5.5 Strength of planning partnership and familiarity with watershed or water quality work of designated partners as well as level of in-kind and/or financial match contributions pledged to the project, above the minimum required in accordance with this Solicitation. (20 points)

SECTION 4:
Contractual Terms and Conditions

4.1 Preface

This Grant Application Solicitation is not a contract and does not give rise to any contractual rights, benefits, or obligations. If a contract (subaward) is executed with a successful Applicant, such a contract shall represent the entire agreement between the parties, and no term or provision of this Solicitation shall be construed as part of the formally executed contract. To the extent that this Solicitation describes requirements and provisions with which a successful Applicant may later be required to comply, such terms or provisions will be included in the executed Contract. Any resulting Contract shall be available to the public as part of the public record in accordance with applicable law.

4.2 Selection Contingent Upon Contract Negotiations

The initial selection of an applicant(s) means that the Iowa DNR will negotiate in good faith with the selected applicant(s) in expectation of executing a contract. If the Iowa DNR determines within its sole discretion that it cannot execute a contract with the selected applicant(s), then it may select another applicant(s) based on the next highest score or reissue a Solicitation at a later time.

4.3 Duration of Contract Term, and Amendments to Extend Duration of Contract

The term of the Contract shall be twenty-four months, unless terminated earlier in accordance with the terms of the contract. The effective date of the contract shall not precede the date upon which both parties have signed the contract and the date upon which the contract is approved by the Environmental Protection Commission, if such approval is required.

4.4 Acceptance of Terms and Conditions

By submitting an Application, each Applicant acknowledges that to receive Grant funding as a Successful Applicant, they will be required to accept the specifications, terms and conditions of a contract that would result from this Solicitation, without change except as otherwise negotiated during the contracting process or expressly stated in its Application. Exceptions that seek to materially change the General Terms may result in the Application being rendered non-responsive by sole discretion of the Iowa DNR and may result in the disqualification of the Application. An Applicant's failure to state an exception to any provision and propose alternative language may be deemed by the Iowa DNR to constitute Applicant's acceptance thereof. The State reserves the right to refuse to enter into a contract with the successful Applicant(s) for any reason, even after delivery of notice of selection or intent to award a contract.

Applicable General Terms and Conditions are available at the following websites:

- Iowa Department of Administrative Services General Terms and Conditions: <https://das.iowa.gov/procurement/terms-and-conditions>
- EPA Grant Terms and Conditions: https://www.epa.gov/system/files/documents/2023-09/fy_2023_epa_general_terms_and_conditions_effective_october_1_2023_or_later.pdf
- Note: EPA Grant Terms and Conditions may be updated for any final contract (subaward) in conjunction with the determination of which DNR awarded 604(b) grant is utilized to fund the pursuant contract. Grant terms are locked in with each grant award at the date of award and apply for the whole term of the award (5 years unless otherwise noted).

Specific project terms will be negotiated during the contract process as "Special Conditions". Other terms and conditions as stated herein relate only to this Solicitation, and do not extend to other or future contracts a prospective Applicant may currently have or may have in the future with the Iowa DNR, nor do the terms and conditions as stated herein relate to any Iowa DNR subawards or contracts which may be in process.

4.5 Deadline for Execution of Contract

By submitting an Application, each Applicant agrees that any and all contracts resulting from this Solicitation must be negotiated and signed by all parties no later than March 17, 2026 unless such deadline is extended by Iowa DNR in

writing. Any failure by a successful Applicant or its third party Applicants to negotiate and sign a contract with the State of Iowa prior to this deadline may result in suspension or termination of negotiations with the successful Applicant, and Iowa DNR may elect to negotiate with any other Applicant.

4.6 Contract Deliverables Template

The following table represents how major tasks will be laid out in any resultant subaward Contracts with Successful Applicants. Referencing this may be helpful to the applicant when establishing Statement of Work components such as outputs, schedules, and milestones.

Table 1. Project implementation schedule and milestones

| Obligation | Task Milestone Date |
|--|---|
| <p>Task 1: Develop a comprehensive watershed plan: Each Successful Applicant shall produce and deliver to the Iowa DNR a watershed-based water quality plan, including a focus on Smart Planning principles. The plan should include but not be limited to the following elements:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Executive Summary 2. Physical Environment Inventory: Land use, precipitation, topography, watersheds, soils, monitoring information, impaired waters, floodplain information, recreational areas, and fish and wildlife habitat. 3. Assessment of Issues: Flood control, water quality, erosion and sediment control, agricultural and urban drainage, wetlands, groundwater, land use management, public education, social dynamics and demographics, and funding. 4. Goals, Objectives and Actions: Plans for addressing the issues listed above including a detailed implementation schedule of activities, and accompanying budget, including identification of practices and the number of practices required to achieve stated goals and expected results. Action steps must be specific and identify a responsible party. | <p>Due 45 days prior to the end of the contract period</p> |
| <p>Task 2: Regular Status Updates</p> <p>Description: Each Successful Applicant shall provide the Iowa DNR with a detailed grant implementation schedule, with milestones, for developing the Water Quality Management Plan at the beginning of the contract and report against that schedule via written quarterly status updates. Quarterly status updates shall include, but not be limited to, a specific description of how the Applicant has worked toward developing a comprehensive plan including the utilization of funds awarded to the Applicant for purposes of watershed-based water quality planning, updates to the implementation schedule, completions of milestones, and any deviations and / or additions to the schedule.</p> | <p>Quarterly for the duration of the Contract resulting from this Solicitation.</p> |
| <p>Task 3: Final Narrative Report</p> <p>Description: In addition to fulfilling the requirements of Task 1 above,</p> | <p>Due 45 days prior to the end of the contract period</p> |

each Successful Applicant shall provide a final report to the Iowa DNR. This final report shall include a narrative of the process used to create the water quality plan, including what activities took place, successes and obstacles (and if and how they were overcome), and a final financial statement. Specific to the requirements of Section 604(b) funding, the Successful Applicant's final report shall contain, at a minimum, the following information:

- the total federal Section 604(b) funds expended by the project;
- a summary of other funds expended on the project;
- a summary of accomplishments and objectives by the project during the term of the Contract;
- a comparison of actual accomplishments to the objectives established for the project in accordance with the work plan;
- if the project objectives were not met, an explanation as to why; and
- all other reporting requirements as specified by Section 604(b) rules, regulations and guidance.