

U.S. Geological Survey

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program, National Ground-Water Monitoring Network

Funding Opportunity Number

G26AS00002

Table of Contents

BASIC INFORMATION.....	1
ELIGIBILITY	4
Cost Sharing Requirement	5
GET READY TO APPLY	6
Required System Registrations	6
PROGRAM OVERVIEW	7
Program Goals.....	7
Program Description	7
Legislative Authority	15
Type of Award	15
PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION	15
Application Content and Format.....	15
Application Documents.....	15
SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES	36
Address to Request Application Package	37
Submission Dates and Times	38
Submission Instructions	38
APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION.....	38
Eligibility Review	38
Merit Review.....	38
Review and Selection Process.....	40
Risk Review	41
AWARD NOTICES	41
POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION	41
Administration and National Policy Requirements	41
Reporting.....	42

BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: G26AS00002

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.980

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$900,000

Expected Number of Awards: 20

Award Ceiling: \$300,000

Award Floor: \$5,000

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

OMB Control Number:

Have Questions?

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Executive Summary

The Groundwater and Streamflow Information Program of the USGS is offering a cooperative agreement funding opportunity to States, federally recognized Native American Tribal governments, or local water-resources agencies that collect groundwater data to participate in the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network. The USGS is working to develop and administer the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN). This funding opportunity is to support data providers for the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network.

Legal authority for this opportunity is provided under Public Law 111-11, Subtitle F—Secure Water: Section 9507 “Water Data Enhancement by the United States Geological Survey,” as amended in 2024 by Public Law 118-174. Funds will be used to support connecting new data providers to the Network and to support existing data providers to maintain persistent data service and to enhance the NGWMN.

The funding available for this Program Announcement is expected to be up to \$900,000 for Federal FY2026. This estimate does not bind the USGS to a specific number of awards or to the amount of any individual award. Congress has not yet provided full-year FY2026 funding for USGS, so awards cannot be made until that funding is appropriated. Work performance under these awards must be completed within the two-year cycle from the start date. The timing of funds availability and the signing of the award will determine the start date. Individual applications are restricted to a funding level of \$150,000 for a one-year project or \$300,000 for a two-year project. Funding for routine work under Objective 2A to maintain persistent data services is limited to \$20,000 per year. However, agencies serving more than 500 sites can apply for up to \$40,000 per year for Objective 2A work. Substantial involvement of the USGS is anticipated to provide support to new data providers during the site selection and classification process and to establish web services that interact with the NGWMN Data Portal. USGS will provide guidance to existing data providers on techniques for collection of site information, on well maintenance activities, and on well drilling to support development of the NGWMN. Therefore, these awards will be in the form of cooperative agreements.

All projects must propose a start date between September 1, 2026, and September 30, 2026. Please see Program Overview for more details.

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

State governments

County governments

City or township governments

Special district governments

Native American tribal governments (Federally recognized)

Additional Information on Eligibility

Applicant eligibility:

Applicants can be State, federally recognized Native American Tribal governments, or local water-resource agencies which collect groundwater data. State government agencies that are part of a public university system are eligible to apply under the University authority. Federal agencies are not eligible to apply for NGWMN Cooperative Agreements funding. Funds from the projects cannot be distributed to Federal agencies to act as a contractor. Agencies that are partnering with the local USGS Water Science Center to collect water-level or water-quality data as part of a Cooperative Matching Funds project are considered current data providers and are eligible for funding under Objectives 3-6 to enhance the NGWMN. Discussion and coordination with USGS NGWMN staff are encouraged; however, USGS personnel are prohibited from helping an organization directly prepare its application for competitive funding.

Agencies cannot propose work under Objectives 4, 5, or 6 in a proposal to become a new data provider (Objective 1).

Proposal eligibility:

The following items will result in a proposal or work under the related objective being deemed ineligible:

- Objectives that are missing detailed budgets
- Proposals from data providers working with a local USGS Cooperative Matching Funds project to collect groundwater data that are missing a letter of support from the local USGS Water Science Center
- Proposals with a funding request that exceeds award limits
- Objectives that contract with U.S. Government agencies to perform work

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.

- The following proposals are ineligible for consideration under this Announcement:
- Proposals from U.S. Government agencies or U.S. Government employees
- Proposals from Federally Funded Research and Development Centers (FFRDC)
- Proposals principally involving the direct procurement of a product, equipment, or service not used for data collection

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

No

In-kind services cost-share guidelines

Although not required, in-kind services cost sharing is used to create partnerships to meet the goals of building and enhancing the NGWMN. This allows agencies to contribute work they are doing at NGWMN sites to match the Federal funding provided for the NGWMN. Only work performed at NGWMN sites or potential new NGWMN sites (well drilling) can be used as in-kind services. This can include the costs of collecting water-level or water-quality data at sites that are part of the NGWMN.

In-kind services are not required for work proposed under Objectives 1, 2 or 3 because work done under these objectives is of benefit primarily to the NGWMN.

While no specific match rate is required, a match of agency in-kind services to USGS funding of at least 25% is suggested to indicate applicant's commitment to a project by showing that it has invested its own resources. The formula for calculating the match percent is: $((\text{match costs}) / (\text{match costs} + \text{USGS Funding})) * 100$.

Proposed work on Objectives 4-6 that does not provide at least 25% match will be scored lower during proposal evaluation.

For Objective 6, in-kind match is limited to supplies and equipment only. Salary and travel are not considered as part of the in-kind match for Objective 6.

Since each objective is scored independently during review, in-kind services cost sharing must be provided separately for each objective. Include in-kind services cost sharing in the detailed budget for each objective and provide details similar to that required for work to be funded by the USGS. List the individuals or contractors who will be doing the work and each individual task they will be doing.

Examples of in-kind resource match are salaries, contracts for work supported under this proposal, contractual support, travel expenses, software purchase, equipment or supplies used for the project, and indirect costs or overhead charges. Agency activities related to operation and maintenance of NGWMN sites that are a part of their current (local agency) network can be used as in-kind services match. This can be either the collection of water-level data for a NGWMN site or water-quality sampling of a NGWMN site. Work to perform quality assurance of data at NGWMN sites can also be used as in-kind services match. Drilling work used as match can only be for wells that will be added to the NGWMN. The need for these wells should be described in the same detail required for other NGWMN sites. Their benefit to the NGWMN needs to be

demonstrated. All in-kind service activities must occur during the performance period of the project.

All contributions, including cash and third-party in-kind, will be accepted as part of the recipient's in-kind match when such contributions meet all the following criteria:

- Verifiable from the recipient's records
- Not included as contributions for any other federally assisted project or program
- Necessary and reasonable for proper and efficient accomplishment of project or program objectives
- Allowable under the applicable cost principles
- Not paid by the Federal Government under another award, except where authorized by Federal statute to be used for cost matching
- Provided for in the approved budget when required by the Federal awarding agency
- Conform to the provision of the appropriate OMB Circular, as applicable

Volunteer services furnished by professional and technical personnel, consultants, and other skilled and unskilled labor may be counted as in-kind match if the service is an integral and necessary part of the project. Rates for volunteer services shall be consistent with those paid for similar work in the recipient's organization. In those instances, in which the required skills are not found in the recipient organization, rates shall be consistent with those paid for similar work in the labor market in which the recipient competes for the kind of services involved. In either case, paid fringe benefits that are reasonable, allowable, and allocable may be included in the valuation.

Third-party in-kind services can include work done by another State, federally recognized Native American Tribal governments, or local agency in support of your project provided it meets the same limitations listed for applicant in-kind services.

The applicant must document the amount and type of in-kind resource that will be contributed to the fulfillment of the project and include this information in the detailed budget breakdown.

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](#) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts applications through [Grants.gov](#) so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to [register](#) with Grants.gov. Please allow 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See [Submission Instructions](#) section below for additional details.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- The focus and goal of the Network is on long-term data collected at a sufficient frequency to determine seasonal and long-term effects. Water-level and water-quality data from both wells and springs are included in the NGWMN. The NGWMN allows water managers to share their water-level and water-quality monitoring data to help monitor current conditions and avoid future water conflicts that may result from changes in the environment.

Program Description

The National Ground-Water Monitoring Network (NGWMN) is designed to be a compilation of selected wells and springs from existing monitoring efforts to create a network to assess long-term water-level and water-quality trends at a national scale. The National Ground-Water Monitoring Network is presented in the document ‘A National Framework for Ground-Water Monitoring in the United States’ and is available at: https://usgs.gov/apps/ngwmn/remote-content/content/doc/ngwmn_framework_report_july2013.pdf

The NGWMN focuses on monitoring groundwater in the Nation’s most productive aquifers. The Network is designed primarily to help answer questions of groundwater availability at a principal or major aquifer scale. The NGWMN focuses on serving data at actively monitored sites to help answer current groundwater availability questions. To create a unified network, field and data management techniques need to be as consistent as possible and sites need to be selected and classified in a common manner. In addition, site density in the Network should be consistent at the [principal and major aquifer](#) scale. The [Well Density Table](#) has the recommended well densities for each state and principal aquifer.

The NGWMN serves data from the data providers’ databases. To accomplish this, the data providers must set up and maintain persistent web services for their databases. The data elements from these web services are mapped to the Portal elements so that data can be retrieved to answer questions at a regional scale that crosses data provider boundaries.

Network Policies, Standards and Procedures

The requirements for the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network are described in the National Ground-Water Management Framework Document, which is available online at: https://usgs.gov/apps/ngwmn/remote-content/content/doc/ngwmn_framework_report_july2013.pdf.

“Tip Sheets” are available to provide guidance related to the NGWMN and can be found at: <https://www.usgs.gov/apps/ngwmn/learnmore.jsp> under the ‘Resources’ tab. The tip sheets are a quick reference for data providers on the following topics:

[Well Selection Criteria for Water Levels](#)

[Well Selection Criteria for Water Quality](#)

[Defining the Subnetwork](#)

[Defining Monitoring Categories](#)

[Populating the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry](#)

[Minimum Data Requirements for Candidate sites](#)

[Web Service Development](#)

[Water-Quality Web Services](#)

These tip sheets should be used as guidance during all projects. For new data provider projects, they contain information on well selection and classification, minimum requirements for NGWMN sites, adding sites to the NGWMN, and guidelines on web services. For projects with existing data providers, they contain information on density guidelines and criteria for NGWMN sites.

Both Well Selection tip sheets reference a spreadsheet that lists well densities for the NGWMN by Principal Aquifer and State. Applicants should consult the [Well Density Table](#) before they propose adding new wells to the NGWMN or drilling new wells to enhance the Network.

Objectives

The NGWMN is providing financial support for six objectives described in this section. The type of work supported under each objective is described in this section. The requirements that need to be included in the proposal for each objective are described in section “Prepare Your Application” of this program announcement. Proposed work outside these objectives will not be funded.

If an agency is applying as a new data provider, then the ‘Support to become a new data provider’ objective must be completed before work can begin on any other objectives. During the second year of a new data provider project, the applicant can propose work under Objectives 2 and 3 that begins once the Objective 1 work is planned to be completed. New data provider proposals may not propose work under Objectives 4, 5, or 6.

Costs (salary, travel, chemical analysis, etc.) associated with the actual collection of water-level

or water-quality data is not supported under any objective. However, those costs can be included as in-kind services.

Equipment is defined as tangible personal property (including information technology systems) having a useful life of more than one year and a per-unit acquisition cost that equals or exceeds the lesser of the capitalization level established by the recipient or subrecipient for financial statement purposes, or \$10,000. A quote is required for any single piece of equipment that costs \$10,000 or more. If an individual item is valued at less than \$10,000, it is considered a supply.

Purchase of monitoring equipment or supplies is limited to continuous water-level monitoring equipment under Objectives 5 or 6. Purchase of downhole cameras, geophysical logging equipment, or GPS equipment is not supported under any objective. However, reasonable costs for renting equipment while it is used for work on NGWMN sites is allowed. Costs to purchase these items may be used as agency in-kind services.

Work under Objectives 1 and 2 is designated as work to support the NGWMN. Work under Objectives 3-6 is designated as work to enhance the NGWMN. Applicants applying for work to enhance the network under Objectives 3-6 are encouraged to either have an active Persistent Data Services project or apply for one as part of the proposal. Work under Objectives 3-6 can only be funded if data is flowing to the NGWMN.

Objective 1: Support to become a new data provider

This objective provides funding to perform work necessary to become a data provider to the NGWMN. The agency will select and classify sites from their existing networks for inclusion in the NGWMN. They will provide data from agency databases to the NGWMN Portal by creating new web services or repurposing existing web services. They will document field and data management practices specific to their agency so that users of the NGWMN data have information on the quality of data from the varied sources. A brief report summarizing the work to become a new data provider is required.

Ideally, work to become a new data provider would be completed in year one of a two-year project but may continue into a second year if necessary. Note that no other objectives may be initiated on the project until the 'Support to become a new data provider' objective is complete.

Web services established in this objective are how agency data are shared with the NGWMN Data Portal. Guidance for setting up the web services is available in the [Web Service Development](#) tip sheet. The web services must return the minimum data elements as described in the [Minimum Data Requirements for Candidate sites Tip Sheet](#). The service must return the data in XML format. We encourage, but do not require the use of data standards for the XML web services that are established. These include: [WaterML2](#) for water-levels, [GWML2](#) for lithology and construction information, and [WQX](#) for water quality data.

For water-level network sites, separate web services are required to serve water-level, well-construction, and lithology data.

For water-quality network sites, water-quality data can be provided by either setting up new web services or by making the data available through the [USEPA's Water Quality Exchange](#). New

data providers are encouraged to provide data through the Water Quality Exchange as this makes the data available to the NWQMC [Water-Quality Data Portal](#), which can be used to provide the data to the NGWMN. If web services are used to serve the water-quality data instead, they should follow the guidelines in the [Water-Quality Web Services Tip Sheet](#) and use of the WQX standard is encouraged. In either case, separate web services are required for water-level, well construction, lithology, and water-quality data (if not provided through the USEPA Water Quality Exchange).

If using USEPA's Water Quality Exchange, data providers would need to regularly upload their data to ensure that recent data are available.

During the site selection and classification portion of the project, providers may identify sites that would be beneficial to the NGWMN but are missing some required data elements. These sites can be added to the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry but should not yet be displayed on the Portal (Display Flag set to 'N'). These sites will then be eligible for funding under Objective 3 to fill the site information gaps. If all sites have missing data elements, work to fill those gaps for selected wells may be proposed under Objective 3 in a project to become a new data provider. This gap filling work would be done in year two of a new data provider project.

Software purchases or license fees to support delivery of NGWMN data via web services are supported. However, software purchases or license fees related to storage of agency data, routine processing, and/or quality assurance of data are not supported.

Travel costs are not supported for work under Objective 1.

Objective 2: Support persistent data service from existing data providers

This objective provides funding to perform activities necessary to maintain persistent data services from agency databases to the NGWMN Portal and to support work to add new sites to the network and upgrade or improve web services. Work under this objective can consist of two parts that will require separate budgets and workplans and will be evaluated separately.

Part 2A: Work under Part 2A is to support data providers to keep the sites and information in the NGWMN current and to maintain the database connections (web services) to the NGWMN Data Portal. In most cases, support for this work is limited to a maximum of \$20,000 per year. Agencies that serve more than 500 sites to the NGWMN may request additional funding above this level to accommodate the additional sites. This additional funding must be explained and justified in the work plan and cannot exceed \$40,000 per year.

Activities supported under Objective 2A are:

- Maintain web services that provide data to the portal
- Fix issues with the services so that data continues to flow to the NGWMN Data Portal
- Verify that data is flowing to the NGWMN Data Portal at least once every three months
- Keep the list of sites in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry up to date
 - Remove sites that are no longer active
 - Add new replacement sites to the NGWMN
 - Resolve issues with duplication of NGWMN sites

- Expand the number of sites in the NGWMN. This may include selecting sites for a Principal Aquifer that was not part of the data provider’s original project. This can support selecting and classifying the new sites and adding the sites to the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry. Adding less than 20 new sites to the NGWMN must be done under Objective 2A. Expansion of sites under Objective 2B should be for 20 or more new sites
- Keep metadata for NGWMN sites in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry up to date
- Provide updates to the NGWMN Data Provider page

Part 2B: Work supported under Part 2B allows agencies to apply for funding to support additional work described below. There is no funding limit on this additional work beyond the annual and project limits (\$150,000 for a one-year project or \$300,000 for a two-year project). This additional work may include:

- Upgrade web services in conjunction with major agency database upgrades
- Add new fields to existing services that have recently been requested by the NGWMN Portal staff
- Upgrade existing services to provide data using established XML data standards (WaterML2, GWML, or WQX)
- Modify existing water-quality services to meet guidelines in the [Water-Quality Web Services](#) Tip Sheet
- Modify existing databases to store fields required as Minimum Data Elements by the NGWMN and modify existing web services to serve these new fields
- Expand web services. This can include adding new web services that were not originally set up when the agency became a data provider. For example, an agency that currently provides only water-level data could use this objective to add a web service to serve water-quality data
- Expand the number of sites in the NGWMN. This may include selecting sites for a Principal Aquifer that was not part of the data provider’s original project. This can support selecting and classifying the new sites and adding the sites to the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry. Adding less than 20 new sites to the NGWMN must be done under Objective 2A. Expansion of sites under Objective 2B should be for 20 or more new sites

Software purchases and license fees to support delivery of NGWMN data via web services are supported. However, software purchases or license fees related to storage of agency data or routine processing of data are not supported. Quality assurance of routinely collected data is not supported.

Travel costs are not supported for work under Objective 2.

Objective 3: Filling gaps in information at NGWMN sites

This objective provides funding to perform work necessary to fill metadata gaps in the required data elements listed in the NGWMN [Minimum Data Requirements](#) for Candidate Sites tip sheet.

The work may include data entry from available sources or field data collection efforts that fill metadata gaps.

For existing data providers, work to fill site information gaps can only be proposed for sites that are in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry on the closing date of the funding opportunity. A table of sites for which work is proposed must be included in the proposal and should include the NGWMN ID for each site.

New data providers can propose work for year two of a two-year proposal that they know will need to be done at all sites prior to entry into the NGWMN. The specific sites do not need to be listed, since they have not been selected yet.

Examples of supported site information gap-filling activities include:

- Data collection to fill metadata gaps
 - Sounding wells to determine depth
 - Well logging to determine well construction details including screen intervals, casing diameter and depth, etc. Logging can include downhole camera surveys
 - Well logging to determine lithology
 - GPS or leveling of land surface altitude and/or measuring points at wells or springs
 - GPS update of latitude/longitude at wells or springs
 - Entry of all applicable data collected under this objective into agency databases and the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry
- Data entry to fill metadata or NGWMN data gaps
- Entry of lithologic data from paper files
- Entry of well construction data from paper files
- Entry of historical water-level or water-quality data for NGWMN sites into current agency databases

Data collection techniques and quality assurance methods for data collected under this objective should be described in the Data Management Plan submitted with the proposal.

Reasonable equipment rental and travel costs are allowed. Software purchases to analyze data collected during the project are supported.

Objective 4: Site maintenance

This objective provides funding to perform maintenance work on wells or springs in the NGWMN to ensure that data are of high quality. The work may include well redevelopment, well rehabilitation or repair, periodic pumping to ensure connection to the aquifer, or aquifer/slug testing of the well to quantify aquifer connection. Other maintenance activities can include replacing shelters, installing protective casing, or installing fencing to protect the site. Work that helps ensure the quality of the data or helps protect the site so that data may be collected will be considered under this objective.

Site maintenance tasks can only be done at sites that are in the NGWMN Monitoring Location

Registry on the closing date of the funding opportunity. A table and map of sites for which work is proposed must be included in the proposal.

Landscaping or brush clearing to improve site access is not supported under this objective. Construction of pathways to improve site access is also not allowed.

Examples of supported site maintenance activities include:

- Well redevelopment
- Periodic pumping of observation wells to assess/maintain connection to aquifer
- Well-integrity testing
- Borehole camera investigations to determine site status
- Well rehabilitation or repair
- Well shelter replacement or repair
- Installation of protective surface casing at wells
- Fencing or other measures to secure the site

Data collection techniques and quality assurance methods for data collected under this objective should be described in the Data Management Plan submitted with the proposal.

Reasonable equipment rental and travel costs are allowed. Software purchases to analyze data collected during the project are supported.

Objective 5: Well drilling

This objective provides funding to install wells to enhance or maintain the NGWMN. Well installation may include replacement wells for existing NGWMN sites or installation of wells at new locations that fill spatial gaps in the NGWMN Network.

Sites that are to be replaced under this objective must be an existing data collection site in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry. A table and map of the sites proposed for replacement must be included in the proposal and should include the NGWMN ID for each well. Sites that are to be drilled to fill new gaps in the NGWMN do not need to be in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry.

Drilling shall be done by qualified and licensed agency staff or by using a licensed contract driller. All state drilling requirements must be met. Well drilling activities cannot be contracted to the USGS. In addition, USGS staff cannot be contracted to serve in any role in the drilling operations using NGWMN cooperative agreement funds.

Data collection at new wells to obtain minimum data elements for the NGWMN is allowed under this objective. This can include geophysical logging, GPS surveys, and well integrity testing.

New or replacement wells that will be added to the Water-Level Subnetwork must be equipped with continuous water-level monitoring equipment and put into the 'Trend' Monitoring Frequency category. Purchase and installation of continuous water level monitoring equipment (as outlined under Objective 6) can also be done under Objective 5 for the new wells constructed

under this objective.

For replacement of NGWMN sites that are owned by the agency, proper abandonment of the well being replaced is encouraged to be included as part of the project. Work to abandon the wells being replaced is eligible for funding under Objective 5. All state requirements for proper well closure and abandonment must be met.

Data collection and quality assurance techniques for data collected under this objective should be described in the Data Management Plan submitted with the proposal.

Reasonable costs for cultural surveys, supplies, equipment rental, and travel costs needed for well drilling may be included under this objective. Software purchases needed to analyze data collected during drilling are supported.

Objective 6: Purchase of equipment to support continuous water-level data collection

This objective supports the purchase and installation of water-level monitoring equipment and supplies for NGWMN continuous water-level monitoring at Trend sites. Once every five years, replacement equipment may be purchased at current NGWMN sites with continuous data collection. Equipment may also be purchased under Objective 6 to upgrade the water-level monitoring frequency at existing NGWMN sites from discrete to continuous data collection. This could be for NGWMN Trend sites with only quarterly or monthly discrete data collected or to equip an existing NGWMN Surveillance site to be a Trend monitoring site. Cellular modems and satellite telemetry equipment may also be purchased under Objective 6.

Equipment that is at least 5 years old at the time of the proposed project start date qualifies for equipment replacement funding. Sites where equipment is to be replaced under this objective must be in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry on the closing date of the funding opportunity.

Equipment and supplies purchases can include data loggers, pressure transducers, cables, cellular modems, telemetry systems, and other equipment required to collect continuous water-level data. Vented cables may be purchased for each well. Alternatively, barometric pressure logging equipment may be installed at select sites to provide the barometric data needed to correct the data when using non-vented transducers. Ideally, barometric pressure logging equipment should be installed in locations where the data can be used to do corrections on multiple wells located nearby.

Funding for this objective is subject to per well limits on equipment purchases. These limits cover the total cost of the pressure transducer, datalogger, cables, telemetry systems, and related equipment. The equipment and supply limit is set at \$4,000 per well before the addition of indirect costs. Costs for equipment and supplies that exceeds the limits above can be used as in-kind match. Actual costs for equipment and supplies must be justified. Any proposed equipment purchase that equals or exceeds \$10,000 must include a manufacturer's quote showing the description of the item and the cost.

This objective can be used to cover equipment and supply purchase costs. Funding for cell service or satellite service fees to obtain telemetered data is not eligible under this objective but can be included as in-kind match under this objective.

Federal funds for Objective 6 can only be requested for equipment and supplies. Travel and salary costs are not supported for work under Objective 6.

Legislative Authority

Legal authority for this opportunity is provided under Public Law 111-11, Subtitle F—Secure Water: Section 9507 “Water Data Enhancement by the United States Geological Survey,” as amended in 2024 by Public Law 118-174. Funds will be used to support connecting new data providers to the Network and to support existing data providers to maintain persistent data service and to enhance the NGWMN.

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through CA (Cooperative Agreement).

Recipient should expect the Federal agency to have substantial involvement in the project.

Substantial involvement of the USGS is anticipated to provide support to new data providers during the site selection and classification process and to establish web services that interact with the NGWMN Data Portal. USGS will provide guidance to existing data providers on techniques for collection of site information, on well maintenance activities, and on well drilling to support development of the NGWMN.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative’s signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424C: Budget Information – Construction Programs	Required for well drilling construction projects only
SF-424D: Budget Information – Assurances for Construction Programs	Required for well drilling construction projects only
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Current and Pending (Other) Support Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Biographical Sketch Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.

Project Narrative

The items described below in items A through I should be included in the application package as the ‘Project Narrative Attachment Form.’ Failure to comply with the required application components listed below may result in the proposal being rejected.

The proposal (item B below) shall not exceed 20 single-spaced pages, and the type size shall not be smaller than 12 points. All pages of the application shall be numbered. All text, figures, and tables shall be sized to fit on 8½” by 11” paper with 1-inch margins. Items A through I as described below shall **be combined in one document, in the order noted below**, and submitted through Grants.gov in **Adobe PDF format. The figures, tables, required maps, overall project budget, detailed budgets for objectives, timelines for objectives, data management plan, staff qualifications, letters of support, the NGWMN proposal checklist, and the negotiated rate agreement (if required) should also be included in the combined document but do not count toward the page limit.** Figures and tables should have numbers and captions.

The items described below in items A through I below should be included in the application package as the ‘Project Narrative Attachment Form.’

- A. Proposal Information Summary
- B. Proposal
- C. Overall Project Budget
- D. Detailed Budget for each objective
- E. Timeline for each objective

- F. Data Management Plan
- G. Staff Qualifications
- H. Supporting Letters
- I. NGWMN Proposal Checklist

A. Proposal Information Summary

Provide a summary of the proposal using the format shown in Attachment A-Proposal Information Summary Format. The project title should not exceed 80 characters. The project title should be the same as that used in the title box of Form SF-424. List a single Technical Contact/Principal Investigator for the proposed work. Provide a start date for the proposed work sometime in the period from September 1st, 2026, through September 30th, 2026.

B. Proposal

The proposal should include background information about your agency and network, a summary of your planned project, and a detailed description of the project with a separate section for each objective that is part of the project (see guidance below).

The page limit for the proposal section is 20 pages. Maps and tables in proposal should be numbered and referenced in the text. Tables and figures can appear in the proposal, at the end of the proposal, or in an appendix. Maps and tables do not count towards the page limit.

Tables of sites at which fieldwork is proposed must be included and should include the NGWMN site number, the Principal Aquifer, and the well depth. A listing of specific work proposed at each well and the estimated cost is recommended.

Maps of sites where specific work is proposed need to be included. If maps do not show the entire state, include an inset map. All maps should include a north arrow, scale bar, explanation, and figure caption. Label the sites on the map using NGWMN site number or index number if possible. Include [USGS Principal Aquifers](#) on the map(s). Data layers with the Principal Aquifers and Aquifers of Alluvial and Glacial Origin are available at:

[Principal Aquifers of the United States](#)

[Aquifers of Alluvial and Glacial Origin](#)

Do not include links to data or information on a website as part of your proposal. If the content is important, include it in the proposal. We will not consider any information from referenced websites as part of the proposal evaluation process. The only exception to this is that you may include links to references for methods you propose to use as part of your proposal.

Include references for methods used to perform work on NGWMN sites or describe the methods you will be using in detail. You may include links to the references for the methods used.

There should be a consistency between the workplan, detailed budget, and timeline for each objective. Tasks described in the workplan should be included in the detailed budget and the timeline for each objective.

The proposal should be thoroughly proofread and reviewed by a staff member other than the author to ensure the proposal is free of errors and is complete.

a. Background information

Provide supporting information about your agency, monitoring networks, and your database and IT infrastructure. Because membership on the NGWMN Program Board that evaluates the proposals may change from year to year, all proposals should have this information included so that it is available during proposal review. Describe your network and your involvement with the NGWMN in enough detail so that new Board members have the necessary background to evaluate your current proposal. Each proposal should stand on its own and not rely on background information included in previous proposals. The following items should be addressed:

- Description of Agency primary purpose. Give a brief description (1-2 paragraphs) of your agency and its primary purpose.
- Description of the Agency’s existing monitoring networks. Provide a detailed description of existing monitoring networks relevant to the needs of the NGWMN. Describe how the data are used to support your agency monitoring goals. Identify the USGS principal or major aquifers that are monitored.
- Describe projects with the NGWMN. Describe recent (past 5 years) and currently active projects with the NGWMN, if any. Summarize your involvement with the Network. Indicate the number of sites your agency is currently providing to the NGWMN. Provide a table listing funding for recent projects. Indicate if the project has been completed or will be active during the performance period of the proposed work.

Format for Recent and Active Projects table (below).

Year	Award Number	Objectives						Completed or Active	Other Relevant Information	Funding Amount
		1	2A	2B	3	4	5			

- Description of Information Technology (IT) Infrastructure. Describe the databases used to store data at your agency and the web server infrastructure if applicable. Briefly describe current data sharing applications, services, or websites. Discuss security requirements or limitations.
- Description of data provided through another agency. Agencies that provide data to the NGWMN by supplying it through another agency for delivery should provide details on: What data is collected, the agreement for how data is shared, how the data is collected and quality assured by the providing agency, how the data is supplied to the delivering agency, and contact information for the agency providing the data. A letter of support from the providing agency is required and should include the elements listed above.

b. Project Summary

Provide a concise summary of the project that includes the following:

- Statement of the overall purpose of the project. List the objectives that are included as part of the project.
- Briefly list the work to be performed under each objective (1-2 sentences per objective)
- Briefly describe the project deliverables and expected outcomes (one paragraph)
- Describe work that will be done by contractors or performed by another agency

c. Project Description

Provide a workplan with details on each objective for which you are applying. Describe the need for the proposed work and the benefits to the NGWMN. List all tasks required to complete the work. For each task, justify the need for the work, the methods that will be used to do the work, and the staff that will be doing the work. Include either detailed descriptions of the methods that are proposed or provide references for the methods you will be using. For field work, indicate the number of staff that will be in the field each day for each task.

- Describe the need for the work
- State the benefits of the work to the NGWMN
- Provide a detailed list of tasks needed to complete the work
 - Describe the need for each task
 - Describe the work that needs to be done
 - Provide methods/approach to complete the work (if applicable), provide references if possible
 - Indicate who will be doing the work
- The list of tasks should be the same as that shown in the detailed budget and timeline for the objective
- Task descriptions should include details on staffing, travel, contracts, etc. to explain or support items in the detailed budget

The workplan should include the items listed below for each applicable objective.

Objective 1: Support to become a new data provider

Include a map of the potential sites that new NGWMN sites will be selected from. This map should include existing sites in the NGWMN (those contributed by other agencies) and the Principal Aquifers of the United States. If some of the wells are in glacial aquifers, include the ‘Aquifer of Alluvial and Glacial Origin’ as well.

The following tasks should be included in the workplan for this objective for a new data provider. For each task indicate who will be doing the work:

- Select sites for the NGWMN. Describe the available sites and why they are appropriate for the NGWMN. Select appropriate sites for the NGWMN according to criteria in the NGWMN Framework document, the [Well Selection Criteria for Water Levels](#) and [Well Selection Criteria for Water Quality](#) tip sheets, the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet, and the [Well Density Table](#).
- Classify sites into Subnetworks and Monitoring Categories: Classify sites as described in the NGWMN Framework document and [Defining the Subnetwork](#) and [Defining Monitoring Categories](#) tip sheets

- Provide required data elements for selected sites. Data are provided either in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry or through web services. The required data elements are listed and the source of data for each element is described in the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet
- Identify gaps in required data elements for sites that are selected
- Populate the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry with site and network information. See the [Populating the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry](#) tip sheet. This can be done interactively in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry or by populating the site and network data in a NGMWN provided template spreadsheet and uploading that spreadsheet into the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry
- Connect agency databases to the NGWMN Portal using web services. Separate web services will be required for water-level data, well construction data, and lithology data. If water-quality data are to be served, a water-quality data web service will also be needed unless otherwise available from the USEPA Water Quality Exchange (<http://www.waterqualitydata.us/>). Guidance for setting up the web services is available in the [Web Service Development](#) tip sheet. Specific guidance for water-quality web services is given in the [Water-Quality Services tip sheet](#)
- Document data collection and data management protocols. This is needed so that the NGWMN can provide users of the NGWMN data an understanding of the quality of the data. Our goal is to provide water-level and water-quality data of known quality
- Prepare a brief report. Document the work done for the tasks above. This should include: the criteria used to select and classify wells, a description of web services set up for the project and the underlying supporting IT infrastructure, a description of the field data collection, and a description of data management practices. This report will be used to populate a Data Provider page that includes information on site selection, classification, data collection, data management, and general information about the data provider and their networks. Examples of Data Provider pages are available at:
 - [Kansas Geological Survey \(KSGS\) - National Ground Water Monitoring Network](#)
 - [Oregon Water Resources Department \(OWRD\) - National Ground Water Monitoring Network](#)

Agencies proposing to become a new data provider may not include work under Objectives 4, 5, or 6 in their initial proposal.

Work under this objective does not require agency in-kind services match.

Objective 2: Support persistent data service from existing data providers

Work under Objective 2 can consist of two parts. Part 2A is basic work to provide persistent data service to the NGWMN. Work allowable under Part 2A is described in the “Program Description” under Objective 2. Work under Objective 2A can be funded at a maximum of \$20,000 per year for agencies serving less than 500 sites. However, agencies serving more than 500 sites may apply for up to \$40,000 for work under Objective 2A. Part 2B consists of special tasks that occasionally will be needed to upgrade the sites or connection to the NGWMN Data Portal. Work allowable under Part 2B is described in Section A2 under Objective 2. There is no set funding limit for this work other than the per project limit that applies to all projects.

Purchase of software or software maintenance license fees that are used for database storage or routine processing of water-level or water-quality data are not supported. Work to upgrade databases or transfer data to a new database are not supported.

Prepare a separate workplan and budget for work proposed under Part 2A and Part 2B. Work proposed under Part 2A and Part 2B will be evaluated and scored separately.

Part 2A: The following tasks should be included in the workplan for work under Part 2A for this objective. For each task, indicate who will be doing the work.

- Keep the list of sites in NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry up to date. See the [Populating the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry](#) tip sheet. Add new qualified sites to the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry and remove sites that are no longer active
- Classify new sites according to Subnetwork and Monitoring Categories as described in the NGWMN Framework document and the [Defining the Subnetwork](#) and [Defining Monitoring Categories](#) tip sheets. Review classification of existing sites to see if they are still appropriate
- Populate data elements for new sites in agency databases and the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry. See the [Populating the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry](#) tip sheet
- Keep site information on existing sites updated in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry as new data becomes available
- Maintain web services connections to the NGWMN Portal. NGWMN Portal staff will be in communication with the agency staff if the web services are not providing data for several days
- Verify that data is flowing from your agency database to the NGWMN properly at least once every 3 months
- In conjunction with the NGWMN Portal staff, update web services to serve new required elements. New required elements will be occasionally added to the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet
- Review NGWMN Data Portal Data Provider pages for your agency and provide updates to the NGWMN, as needed
- Document persistent data services activities in final report for the project

Part 2B: The following tasks should be included in the workplan for work underpart 2B for this objective. For each task indicate who will be doing the work.

The following tasks should be included in the workplan for this objective for a data provider who will be adding twenty or more new sites:

- Select sites for the NGWMN. Describe the new sites to be added and why they would benefit the NGWMN. Select appropriate sites for the NGWMN according to criteria in the NGWMN Framework document, the [Well Selection Criteria for Water Levels](#) and [Well Selection Criteria for Water Quality](#) tip sheets, the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet, and the [Well Density Table](#).
- Provide a map showing potential new sites, active NGWMN sites (including those from other agencies) and the Principal Aquifer

- Classify sites into Subnetworks and Monitoring Categories: Classify sites as described in the NGWMN Framework document and [Defining the Subnetwork](#) and [Defining Monitoring Categories](#) tip sheets
- Provide required data elements for selected sites. Data are provided either in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry or through web services. The required data elements are listed and the source of data for each element is described in the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet
- Populate the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry with site and network information. See the [Populating the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry](#) tip sheet. This can be done by populating the site and network data in a NGWMN provided template spreadsheet and uploading that spreadsheet into the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry
- Prepare a brief report. Document the work done for the tasks above. This should include the criteria used to select and classify wells

The following tasks should be included in the workplan for this objective for a data provider who will adding web services:

- Connect agency databases to the NGWMN Portal using web services. Describe the new web services that are to be added to the NGWMN. Explain why they were not included in the original project and why they would benefit the network now. Guidance for setting up the web services is available in the [Web Service Development](#) tip sheet
- If applicable, set up the Water-quality web services using guidance given in the [Water-Quality Services tip sheet](#)
- Prepare a brief report. Document the work done for the tasks above. This should include a description of web services set up for the project

Other work can also be included in this objective. This can include updates to existing services, adding new fields to existing services, and upgrading existing services to XML standards. This can also cover modifications to existing databases to store fields required as Minimum Data Elements by the NGWMN and the modifications to existing web services to serve these new fields. For each work item proposed, include the following:

- Describe the need for the work, the planned approach, and the benefit to the NGWMN
- Describe the tasks needed to accomplish the work
- Document work in the final report for the project

If you have work proposed for both Part 2A and Part 2B in the same proposal, provide separate workplans and budgets for Part 2A and 2B.

Work under this objective does not require agency in-kind services match.

Objective 3: Filling gaps in information at NGWMN sites

Multiple site information gaps can be addressed as part of this objective. Make sure to provide background information, specific work needed, and the cost for each gap.

Include a timeline that shows all the site information gaps and a planned time frame for all tasks required for each gap.

A Data Management Plan is required for data collected or added to agency databases. All projects that are proposing work under Objective 3 should include this work in their Data Management Plan.

The following information should be provided for each proposed site information gap filling activity:

- Describe the information gap and how filling the gap will benefit the NGWMN. Refer to the [Minimum Data Requirements](#) tip sheet as needed
- Describe your planned approach to fill the gap
- Describe field techniques and equipment you will be using to collect data. Provide references for methods or describe your methods in the proposal
- Provide a table of the proposed data-collection activities at each site including the NGWMN site number and the approximate cost of the work
- Include a map of sites where work is proposed. The map should include the Principal Aquifer
- Describe your plan to perform quality assurance on new data as it is collected and entered into databases
- If GPS work is proposed, specify the equipment and methods to be used and the expected vertical and horizontal accuracy
- Document gap filling activities in the final report for the project

Work under Objective 3 can be done under a New Data Provider Project. If all potential sites have missing data, work can be proposed to correct this for the approximate number of sites that are expected to be selected. If only some potential sites are missing required elements, propose work for the approximate number of sites. In this case, a table of sites for which work is to be done is not required.

Work under this objective does not require agency in-kind services match.

Objective 4: Site maintenance

Multiple maintenance activities can be addressed as part of this objective. Make sure to provide background information, specific work needed, and the cost for each activity. Include a timeline that shows all the well maintenance activities and a planned time frame for all tasks required for each activity. Photographs of wells needing maintenance can be helpful.

A table of sites showing proposed maintenance is required. Specific maintenance activities to be performed at each site must be listed. Show the cost of work to be conducted at each site. Include a map of the sites for proposed maintenance activities in relation to existing NGWMN sites.

A Data Management Plan is required for data collected or added to agency databases. Data collected as part of these maintenance activities should be entered into agency databases and included in the Data Management Plan.

The following information should be provided for each proposed maintenance activity: Describe the need for the maintenance activity and how the work will benefit the NGWMN:

- Describe the approach that will be used for the activity. Provide references or describe your methods in the proposal

- Provide a table of the proposed maintenance activities at each site that includes the NGWMN site number and the approximate cost of the work. This table should be included as an appendix to the proposal and will not count against the page limit for the proposal. All sites for which maintenance work is proposed need to be in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry by the closing date of the funding opportunity
- Include a map of sites where work is proposed. The map should include the Principal Aquifer
- Summarize the total cost of the proposed maintenance work
- For well rehabilitation/repair or redevelopment activities include a paragraph for each site for which work is proposed that includes:
 - Background and history of the site
 - The benefit of the site to the NGWMN
 - Evidence of impairment
 - Explanation of how the planned approach will resolve the impairment. Describe experience with the method
 - For repairs, provide details on the current construction and describe the proposed construction after the repair
 - Cost of the proposed work
- For periodic pumping of wells to maintain connection to the aquifer, specify the planned pumping frequency (e.g., every 5 years). Well pumping work should be as quantitative as possible so that results through time can be used to assess changes in the connection to the aquifer. At a minimum, drawdown measurement and calculation of specific capacity is suggested
- For more detailed well integrity testing a quantitative method such as a slug test or aquifer test is preferred. These allow determination of properties that can help assess changes in the well integrity after repeated measurement. Include references for slug or aquifer test methods and planned analysis techniques
- For periodic pumping or well integrity testing, include a paragraph describing the need for the work and the planned approach for collection and analysis. A separate paragraph for each well is not required for well integrity testing or periodic pumping of wells. For slug tests include details on the slug testing work. This should include the type of slug test (physical slug or air slug), the diameter of the slug, data recording interval, and the proposed method for data analysis

The following tasks should be included in the workplan for this objective. Indicate who will be doing the work, their position title, and their qualifications:

- For each maintenance activity, describe the tasks needed to complete the work
- Describe plans to enter and perform quality assurance on data collected during site maintenance in your database
- Document maintenance work in the final project report

Work is not allowed under Objective 4 in a proposal for a new data provider project.

Because of uncertainties related to contracting work, a maximum of 10% contingency cost may be incorporated into the Objective 4 budget for contracted work to account for inflation.

While no specific match rate is required, a match of agency in-kind services to USGS funding of at least 25% is suggested to indicate applicant's commitment to a project by showing that it has invested its own resources.

Objective 5: Well drilling

Provide a summary of the proposed well drilling work. Indicate if the proposed well to be drilled is a new well or a replacement well. Justify new monitoring wells and describe how they fill NGWMN data gaps. Reference NGWMN well density guidelines when proposing new wells.

Provide a table of all proposed new or replacement wells. Include the proposed depth, Principal Aquifer, and approximate cost of each well. If the well is to be a replacement for an existing NGWMN site, list the existing site name, NGWMN number, and the period of record.

Include a map showing proposed new or replacement wells. The map should include existing NGWMN sites (including sites from other agencies) and the Principal Aquifer.

All new wells that will be entered into the Water-Level Monitoring Network must be equipped with continuous water-level monitoring equipment.

Provide the following information on your well drilling plans:

- Describe proposed drilling methods and the reason for their use. Justify the use of advanced drilling methods such as sonic drilling
- A well construction diagram is beneficial. For proposals with multiple wells, a generic construction diagram is acceptable. However, detailed well construction diagrams that indicate the expected stratigraphy and well construction details are appreciated
- Explain how you will meet state drilling requirements
- Describe who you plan to have drill the wells. If the wells are to be drilled by agency staff, they must possess required permits or licenses
- Ensure that all wells drilled for the NGWMN are entered in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry. This includes wells drilled as in-kind services. When a replacement well is proposed, the original well can remain in the NGWMN Data Portal to provide historic data but no longer needs to be measured
- **Include a signed copy of SF-424D** (Assurances – Construction Programs) when submitting the proposal through Grants.gov
- Total cost of each well should include well drilling costs (either in-house or contracted), supplies, equipment, travel, and salaries of agency staff for planning and installing the well. This allows partial funding of select wells, if necessary
- If a well is a replacement well, describe how you will be abandoning the existing well

The following information should be provided for each proposed new well or replacement well. Wells drilled as part of in-kind services should be described with the same level of detail.

- For proposed new NGWMN wells, include a paragraph for each well that clearly describes the need for the well in the NGWMN. Describe the NGWMN data gap in terms of the NGWMN Well Density guidelines and the [Well Density Table](#). Demonstrate to the greatest extent possible, that no other existing wells are available to fill the gap. Describe reconnaissance work that you have done on the site and efforts made to obtain landowner permission to drill the well. Describe the Principal Aquifer which will be

monitored and what gaps will be filled by the well. Include the estimated depth of the well and proposed well construction plans. Provide the estimated cost to drill the well.

- For proposed replacement wells include a paragraph for each well. Provide the history of the well. Explain how the well fills a gap in the NGWMN. Explain why the well is unsuitable. Explain why rehabilitation of the existing NGWMN well is not possible or cost-effective. Explain why the replacement well is needed for the NGWMN. Provide the construction details for the well to be replaced and for the proposed well. This should show that the proposed well will monitor the same aquifer as the well it is replacing. Provide the estimated cost to drill the well. Describe efforts to establish a correlation between the water levels in the existing and replacement well.

The following items are examples of what might be included in the workplan for this objective:

- Planning and preparation for well drilling
- Site reconnaissance
- Obtaining landowner permission for drilling and access
- Well drilling
- Abandonment of existing well when drilling a replacement NGWMN well. This should be done according to state requirements for proper well closure and abandonment
- Data collection at the new well to obtain minimum data elements for the NGWMN. This can include geophysical logging, GPS surveys, and well integrity testing
- Purchase and installation of continuous water-level monitoring equipment according to the guidelines listed under Objective 6
- Classifying new wells according to Tip Sheets
- Entry of well-construction details on new well into agency database and NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry
- Documenting well-drilling activities in the final report for the project. All data collected on the new well must be publicly available either through the portal, in the project report, or online

Work is not allowed under Objective 5 in a proposal for a new data provider project. Funding cannot be used to purchase land or obtain easements for drilling.

Because of uncertainties related to contracting work, a maximum of 10% contingency cost may be incorporated into the Objective 5 budget for contracted work to account for inflation.

While no specific match rate is required, a match of agency in-kind services to USGS funding of at least 25% is suggested to indicate applicant's commitment to a project by showing that it has invested its own resources.

Objective 6: Purchase equipment to support continuous water-level data collection

Provide a narrative on the need for the equipment and supply purchase. Describe if the equipment will be used to replace equipment at current NGWMN sites or to upgrade current NGWMN sites to continuous water-level data collection. Describe how the equipment will help fill gaps in the NGWMN Trend Monitoring Network. Describe equipment and supplies that will be purchased under this objective. Include the manufacturer, model number, per unit cost, per foot cost for transducer cable, and your reason for selecting the equipment. If you are replacing

existing equipment, make sure to demonstrate that the existing equipment will be at least 5 years old by the proposed start date of the project.

Include a table showing each well for which equipment and supplies will be purchased. This table should include: the NGWMN Site Number, the Principal Aquifer, the current monitoring frequency of the site (continuous, monthly, quarterly, annually, etc.), the current monitoring category of the site (Trend, Surveillance), the well depth, age of equipment (of replacement sites), datalogger model, transducer model, cable per foot costs, the length of cable required, cellular modems, telemetry systems, and other equipment and supplies.

The workplan must contain a description of the equipment and supplies to be purchased and a detailed breakdown of costs. This should include the manufacturer's name, model number, and a justification for the selection of the equipment.

Equipment and supplies purchase limits are placed on all proposed wells. These limits include the cost of pressure transducers, data loggers, cables, cellular modems, telemetry systems, and other equipment and supplies required to install the equipment. The purchase limit is \$4,000 per well prior to the addition of indirect costs.

Equipment and supply costs above these limits should be documented and can be used as in-kind match.

The final report should provide a summary of the equipment purchases and a list of each well showing the equipment purchased and the date the equipment was installed.

While no specific match rate is required, an agency in-kind match to USGS funding of at least 25% is suggested to indicate the applicant's commitment to a project by showing that it has invested its own resources. In-kind match for Objective 6 is limited to supplies and equipment only. Salary and travel are not considered as part of the in-kind match for Objective 6.

C. Overall Project Budget

An overall summary budget for the entire project should be provided using the following format. Example budget summaries are included in Attachment B, 'Example Budgets'. Proposals that do not use the format shown in the example budgets will be scored lower during proposal evaluation.

Format for Budget Summary

Indirect cost rate: xx%

Category	Federal Funding	Agency In-Kind Funding	Total Funding
1a. Salary			

1b. Fringe			
2. Supplies			
3. Equipment			
4. Travel			
5. Contracts			
6. Total Direct (sum of items 1-5)			
7. Indirect Cost			
8. Total Cost (sum of items 6-7)			

D. Detailed Budget for Each Objective

A detailed budget for each objective in the proposal must be provided. Detailed budgets must follow the guidelines presented in the section entitled 'Detailed Budget Narrative' below and shown in the example budget summaries in Attachment B, 'Example Budgets'. Objectives that do not have a detailed budget included will not be considered for funding. Proposals that do not use the format shown in the example budgets will be scored lower during proposal evaluation.

- Provide a detailed budget for each Objective in the proposal
- Make sure to include the Objective summary information as show in the example budgets. This includes the overhead/indirect rate and the Federal, Match, and Total funding for each Objective
- Do not include budget details for categories that are not a part of the Objective in the detailed budget for any Objective
- Make sure the items in the budget match the tasks listed in the proposal for the Objective and those shown in the timeline
- For salary work, do not group tasks under a single staff person. Each staff member should have a separate entry in the budget for each task to which they are assigned
- The workplan corresponding to each detail budget should provide details explaining need for high staff hours, large mileage or travel estimates, equipment costs, and large expenses. Provide adequate justification for high-cost items
- Detailed budgets need to be included as “embedded tables.” Embedded tables are defined as copies of the budget template that can be later extracted for review assessment as an excel file. Screen shots of the budget tables in the narrative are not acceptable because they cannot be extracted for the review process

Format for Detailed Budgets for each Objective

A detailed budget is required for each proposed objective. Budget tables shall be imbedded in the submissions as individual Excel files (not screenshots). Separate budgets will allow the

NGWMN to fund objectives in proposals independently based on NGWMN priorities. The cost for the objective should include the work to be funded by the USGS and agency in-kind services. The in-kind services can include agency work to collect and maintain their sites that are part of the NGWMN if the work takes place during the performance period of the project. The in-kind services work to collect data at NGWMN sites should be included in the detailed budget for the objective and should include details on the number of sites for which data is collected. This data collection work can include both salaries and travel to collect NGWMN data. Examples of a detailed budget for each objective are provided in Attachment B, 'Example Budgets'. Provide a detailed budget for each objective in a similar format.

1. Objective name and type

2. Overall budget summary

Provide the cost of the federally funded portion cost of the objective, the cost of in-kind services provided as match, and the total cost of the objective.

Provide the overhead rate used to calculate the indirect costs (See note on indirect costs in section below budget).

3. Budget

Definitions of the columns in each budget category of the example budget tables are described below. Use the format specified in Attachment B for the detailed project budgets.

a. Salary: Provide a table with the following items for each staff member that will provide services on the objective. Include work that will be done as in-kind services.

1. Employee name and position title

2. Task

3. Hourly rate of compensation

4. Hourly rate of fringe benefit

5. Total hourly rate (a3+a4)

6. Number of hours

7. Salary cost (a5 x a6)

8. Indirect cost (a7 x indirect rate)

9. Total cost (a7 + a8)

10. Federal funds

11. Agency in-kind funds

b. Supplies: For each major type of supply, enter a description and the cost of supplies. Also include supplies that will be purchased as in-kind services.

1. Type,

2. Cost per unit,

3. Number,
4. Cost of supplies (b2 x b3),
5. Indirect cost (b4 x indirect rate),
6. Total cost (b4 + b5),
7. Federal funds,
8. Agency in-kind funds.

c. **Equipment:** Enter a description and the cost for each piece of equipment needed. List computer purchases separately. If possible, computer purchases should be as in-kind match to avoid property ownership issues. Equipment should be described in detail in the workplan. Include equipment that will be purchased as in-kind match. If equipment purchases will not be exclusively used on the project or at NGWMN sites, the cost of the equipment should be pro-rated based on how much the equipment will be used for the NGWMN during the performance period of the project. Equipment with a single item cost of \$10,000 or more will need a quote submitted with the proposal.

1. Type,
2. Cost per unit,
3. Number,
4. Cost of equipment (b2 x b3),
5. Indirect cost (b4 x indirect rate),
6. Total cost (b4 + b5),
7. Federal funds,
8. Agency in-kind funds.

d. **Travel:** Provide detailed information on proposed travel (i.e., where to, why, how many, how long, per diem, and lodging rates, etc.). Include travel costs that will be used as in-kind services.

1. Traveler name/reason for travel,
2. Number of nights of lodging,
3. Lodging cost per night,
4. Number of days of meals,
5. Meal cost per day,
6. Meal and lodging cost ((d2 x d3) + (d4 x d5)),
7. Miles traveled,
8. Cost per mile,
9. Mileage cost (d7 x d8),
10. Travel cost (d6 + d9),

11. Indirect cost (d10 x indirect rate).
12. Total cost (d10 + d11),
13. Federal funds.
14. Agency in-kind funds.

e. Contracts: Describe contractual activity planned to accomplish the work. Include contracting work that will be done as in-kind services. A maximum 10% contingency can be added for contract work under Objectives 4 or 5. List any contingency as a separate item under 'Contract-Well Drilling' or 'Contract- Well Maintenance' for each well for which work is proposed. Contingencies can include contracted costs for salary, supplies, equipment, travel, and well drilling or well maintenance.

Contracts- Salary

1. Description of work,
2. Hourly rate of compensation,
3. Hourly rate of fringe benefit,
4. Total hourly rate (col 2 + col 3),
5. Number of hours,
6. Salary cost (col 4 x col 5),
7. Federal funds,
8. Agency in-kind funds.

Contracts- Supplies

1. Type,
2. Unit type,
3. Cost per unit,
4. Number,
5. Cost of supplies (col 3 x col 4)
6. Federal funds,
7. Agency in-kind funds.

Contracts- Equipment

1. Description,
2. Unit Type (each or per day, etc.),
3. Cost per unit,
4. Number
5. Cost of equipment (col 3 x col 4),

6. Federal funds,
7. Agency in-kind funds,

Contracts- Travel

1. Traveler name/reason for travel,
2. Number of nights of lodging,
3. Lodging cost per night,
4. Number of days of meals,
5. Meal cost per day,
6. Meal and lodging cost ((col 2 x col 3) + (col 4 x col 5)),
7. Miles traveled,
8. Cost per mile,
9. Mileage cost (col 7 x col 8),
10. Travel cost (col 6 + col 9),
11. Federal funds,
12. Agency in-kind funds.

Contracts- Well Drilling or Well Maintenance

1. Description,
2. Unit type (per foot or each),
3. Cost per unit,
4. Number,
5. Cost (col 3 x col 4),
6. Federal funds,
7. Agency in-kind funds

Indirect Cost/General and Administrative (G&A) Cost: Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the cost principles applicable to the Applicant's organization. If the Applicant has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and G&A costs, each charge should be shown. Explain the distinction between items included in the two cost pools. The Applicant should propose rates for evaluation purposes, which they are also willing to establish as fixed or ceiling rates in any resulting award. NOTE: A copy of the indirect negotiated cost agreement with the Federal Government must be provided with the application package as an appendix (this will not count towards the page limit on the proposal). Pursuant to the Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards, Section 200.414, in the absence of a negotiated rate agreement non-Federal entities may use a de minimis rate of 15% of modified total direct costs (MTDC), which should be applied to items a-d above (Salary, Supplies, Equipment, and Travel).

E. Timeline for Each Objective

Provide a separate timeline for each objective showing the planned timing of all tasks. This is required for most Objectives that include multiple tasks. Timelines should include all tasks for the Objective and should include preparation and delivery of both the annual progress report (if needed) and the final project report.

Timelines are especially critical for Objectives involving contracted work. These timelines should include the time required for the contracting process.

The example below shows an example timeline for a new data provider project. Objective 1 to become a new data provider is completed in the first year of the project. Objective 2A to provide persistent data service is planned for the second year of the project. Provide a timeline for each objective in a similar format.

Example timeline for Objective 1, Year 1

Task	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Select wells	X	X										
Classify wells			X	X	X							
Add sites to NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry						X	X					
Establish web services								X	X	X		
Progress Report											X	X

Example timeline for Objective 2A, Year 2 (optional)

Task	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun
Review network sites	X	X										
Add sites to NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry			X									
Maintain web services	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Final Report											X	X

F. Data Management Plan

Proposals submitted to USGS must include a supplementary document labeled "Data Management Plan". This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. The plan should also document the data collection and data quality assurance used on data collected for the NGWMN. Data Management Plans should include all water-level and/or water-

quality data collected by the agency and supplied to the NGWMN. The Data Management Plan should also describe data collection and quality assurance for other data collected as part of the project.

Note: The Data Management Plan does not count toward the 20-page limit.

Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposals submitted to USGS must include a supplementary document of no more than four pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP). This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. A valid DMP may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed (e.g. "No data are expected to be produced from this project"), as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. This supplementary document may include:

- the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
- the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies)
- policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;
- provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives; and
- plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of free public access to them.

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management web site here: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans>. Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined DMP by the lead PI that also addresses all subaward data management needs, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

The Data Management Plan should include the following elements:

- **Type of Data:** Describe the types of data to be produced during the project. This should include any water-level or water-quality data that is provided to the NGWMN. This should also include any data collection proposed under Objectives 3-5. Methods used to collect and quality assure the data should be briefly described.
- **Data and Metadata Standards:** Describe the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies).
- **Policies for Access and Sharing:** Describe policies for access and sharing of data including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements. Data collected should be available through the NGWMN Data Portal.

- Provisions for Re-use and Re-distribution: Discuss how the data can be re-used or re-distributed. Note that NGWMN data must be available to the public without restriction through the NGWMN Data Portal.
- Plans for Archiving and Preservation of Access: Discuss plans to archive and preserve any data, samples, and other research products and provide free public access to them.
- Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management website: <https://www.usgs.gov/data-management/data-management-plans>. An example Data Management Plan for a data provider with both water-level and water-quality data is available here.
- The Data Management Plan should include methods used to collect data proposed in the project. These can be references or links to a document that describe the methods. It should also describe the quality assurance processes that will be used on data collected for the project.

G. Staff Qualifications

Provide a short paragraph describing the qualifications of each staff member who will be working on the project. The qualifications should include the position title, and a brief background focused on education and experience related to the tasks they will be working on. The staff qualifications should be no more than 300 words for each staff member listed.

H. Supporting Letters

Proposals that include work done by another agency as part of the project or that require cooperation with another agency must include a letter of support/concurrence from the cooperating agency. The letter does not need to be detailed but should indicate that the agency is aware of the project and the letter should briefly describe their part of the proposed work, if any. If part of the project is to enter data into a cooperating agency's database, the letter of support should indicate the agency's awareness of and willingness to do the proposed work and supply the data to the NGWMN. Agencies that are data providers through a Cooperative Matching Funds project with the local USGS Water Science Center must include a letter of concurrence from a Water Science Center representative (Specialist, Data Chief, or Center Director) that they are aware of the work. If part of the project is to enter data into the USGS NWIS database, the letter should indicate the Center's awareness of and willingness to do the proposed work.

Letters of support from other agencies that demonstrate the value of the work to their agency are also appreciated.

Letters of support do not count towards the page limit.

I. NGWMN Proposal Checklist

A proposal checklist should be submitted along with the proposal. This checklist contains items that should be verified prior to submission of the proposal. The checklist must be completed by the Principal Investigator listed for the proposal. The checklist should be included in the project proposal. The Proposal Checklist is included in Attachment C.

Light grey boxes in the checklist indicate items that must be marked. Appropriate responses for green boxes are 'Y' or 'NA'.

Dark grey boxes do not need to be completed.

The Overall Proposal column indicates items that must be completed (items in light grey) for all proposals. The Objectives columns list items that must be completed (items in light grey) for any objectives that are included in the proposal.

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

Other Required Information

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

Program Website Link

<https://www.usgs.gov/apps/ngwmn/learnmore.jsp>

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

First Name:

Sara

Last Name:

Roser

Address:

12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, Mailstop 205, Reston, Virginia, 20192

Telephone:

703-648-7357

Email:

sroser@usgs.gov

Email contact is preferred.

For **program technical assistance**, contact:

First Name:

Rod

Last Name:

Caldwell

Address:

3162 Bozeman Avenue, Helena, Montana, 59601

Telephone:

406-461-6931

Email:

caldwell@usgs.gov

Email contact is preferred.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 03/26/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Electronically submitted applications must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., ET, on the listed application due date.

Submission Instructions

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

Specific details below:

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

<p>All proposed objectives will be evaluated individually in accordance with the criteria below.</p> <p>Proposal Quality</p>	<p>Maximum Points: 10</p>
<p>This factor considers the overall quality of the proposal. This criterion will apply to the overall proposal. This score will be applied to each objective in the proposal. The maximum score for this criterion is 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The proposal is well written and adequately proofread• The proposal follows guidelines for page limits and font size• Required elements are present and meet guidelines in the Program Announcement	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Proposal Information Summary ○ Table of recent NGWMN projects ○ Overall project budget ○ Detailed budget for each objective ○ Timeline for each objective ○ Data Management Plan ○ Staff qualifications ○ Supporting letters ○ NGWMN proposal checklist <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Maps meet the guidelines in the Program Announcement ● Tables meet the guidelines in the Program Announcement ● As described in objectives 3, 4, 5, and 6 in “Program Description”, any proposed work related to existing NGWMN sites are required to be in the NGWMN Monitoring Location Registry on the closing date of the funding opportunity. This will be verified by the NGWMN program coordinator.
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Relevance	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This factor considers the relevance and importance of the activity as it relates to the USGS NGWMN Program goals. Each objective included in the proposal receives a separate score for Relevance. The maximum score for this criterion is 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The proposed work helps fill gaps in the NGWMN or enhances the data available to the NGWMN ● The proposed work supports the long-term goals of the NGWMN ● The proposal states the benefits of the work to the NGWMN ● Well density guidelines are cited when proposing gap filling work 	

Technical Quality	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This factor considers the merit of the proposed approach, the chance of success, attention to NGWMN requirements, and completion of required products. Each objective included in the proposal receives a separate score for Technical Quality. The maximum score for this criterion is 10.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The workplan adequately describes the need for the work ● The approach to complete the work is clearly defined and reasonable ● The workplan follows the requirements of the Program Announcement for the objective ● Techniques are adequately described and referenced ● Includes consideration of requirements from the NGWMN Framework Document and/or Tip Sheets 	

- Workplan includes detailed Tasks which are included in the Detailed Budget and Timeline for the Objective
- Data collection methods and quality assurance for work under the objective is described in the Data Management Plan
- Workplan includes task to document work in final report

Budget	Maximum Points: 10
<p>This factor considers whether the proposed budget reflects the level of effort required to accomplish the work. Also considers whether the budget use the prescribed formats and contain adequate detail on tasks. Each objective included in the proposal receives a separate score for the Budget. The maximum score for this criterion is 10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget formats shown in the Program Announcement are used • Detailed budgets include the objective summary table • Specific tasks in the workplan are included in the detailed budget • Budget items are separated out by individual task and staff member • The detailed budget contains adequate detail on both Federally funded work and in-kind services • Costs and hours for the work are reasonable and justified • Costs for work done under contracts are itemized • Work proposed under Objectives 4-6 that does not provide at least 25% match will be scored lower. In-kind match for Objective 6 is limited to supplies and equipment only. 	

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

Program Board Review of Proposals

Applications will be reviewed by the USGS NGWMN staff and the NGWMN Program Board. The NGWMN Program Board members consist of six NGWMN data providers and four representatives from organizations involved with the NGWMN. The NGWMN Program Board will review all proposals prior to a Program Board meeting. During the review meeting, each proposal will be discussed, and each Program Board member will score each objective according to the evaluation criteria.

Rejection of Applications after Initial Review

If an application does not meet eligibility requirements, as determined by the Grants Specialist in consultation with the USGS NGWMN Program Office, the applicant will be promptly notified that the proposal will not be reviewed and told the reason for its ineligibility.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 09/01/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 08/31/2028

Announcement of proposal selections and funding recommendations will be made to the Program Administration Assistance Contact and Program Technical Assistance Contact shown in the Submission Requirements and Deadlines section through email. This should occur within two to three months after the closing date of the funding opportunity. Federal awards will be likely be made between September 1st and September 30, 2026, depending on the requested start date. Unsuccessful applicants will likely be notified in July or August for this application year.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), 2 CFR §1402.315:

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including

textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

Full Terms and Conditions are presented in Attachment D, 'Terms and Conditions'.

USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

Geospatial Data

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), recipient must follow these rules for geospatial data:

Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at [43 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2811](#)).

Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality.

Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data.

These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,
- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),

- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation through SAM.gov and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts, and consortiums over \$30,000 to the [FFATA Subaward Reporting System \(FSRS\)](#).

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The only exception to the interim financial reporting requirement is if the recipient is required to use the SF 270/271 to request payment and requests payment at least once annually through the entire award period of performance. We will describe all financial reporting requirements in the Notice of Award.

Recipient specific reporting requirements, including the required reports, reporting frequency, and report due dates will be included in all Notices of Award, as applicable. Only interim financial reporting on awards to ASAP-waived entities using the SF-270/271 and requesting payment at least once annually throughout the entire award period of performance may be waived. In the text field below enter any program specific reporting requirements.

Details on deadlines and how to submit the Financial Report are included in the Terms and Conditions shown in Attachment D, Section 5, Reporting Requirements.

Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

In the text below reflect the program's performance reporting requirements. For awards that include construction, onsite technical inspections and certified percentage of completion data may be relied on to monitor progress for construction. Additional performance reports for construction activities may be required only when considered necessary. Awards that include both construction and non-construction activities should require performance reporting for the non-construction activities. See [2 CFR 200.328](#) for more information. We may only waive performance reporting for awards to individuals for which we have another way of assessing and documenting recipient performance at least annually.

Details on deadlines and how to submit the Final Project Report are included in the Terms and Conditions shown in Attachment D, Section 5, Reporting Requirements.

Significant Development Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify USGS in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. USGS will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, USGS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies USGS may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity

and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

Other Information

Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the USGS program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1028-0114, Expiration Date: September 30, 2028

The Paperwork Reduction Act says that the agency must tell you why we are collecting this information, how we will use it, and whether you have to give it to us. This information is being collected to determine the eligibility of the applicant and as a basis for approval or disapproval of the proposed project. The purpose of the program is to support data providers to the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network. The Network provides groundwater data from Principal Aquifers at a regional or National scale to assist in assessing ground water resources. Response to this request is required to obtain and retain a cooperative agreement under the National Ground-Water Monitoring Network. Public report burden for this collection is estimated to average 31 hours per agreement. The OMB Control Number is 1028-0114 for this information collection; the expiration date is September 30, 2028. Direct comments regarding this collection of information may be sent to the Bureau Clearance Officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS807, Reston VA 20192.