



U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
Pacific Southwest / Region 9

Wetland Program Development Grants

Water Division
Tribal Water Section • October 2024

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What Are Wetlands?

Wetlands are areas where water covers the soil, or is present either at or near the surface of the soil all year or for varying periods of time during the year.

Why Are Wetlands Important?

Wetlands are important features in the landscape that provide numerous beneficial services for people and for fish and wildlife. Some of these services, or functions, include protecting and improving water quality, providing fish and wildlife habitats, sustaining cultural uses to tribes, and storing floodwaters.

What Funding Is Available?

Wetland Program Development Grants is a competitive program for tribes, states, local governments, and non-profit organizations. EPA Region 9 expects a total allocation of approximately \$3,000,000 every two years, with individual awards between \$50,000 and \$500,000. **Funding is available every other year under a Region 9 Request for Applications (RFA) open to tribes, states, local governments, and non-profit organizations. Funding through a Tribal National Set-Aside will be available on alternative years for tribes and tribal consortia.**



What Types of Projects Can Be Funded?

- Developing a Tribal Wetland Program Plan
- Creating training materials and tools for wetland protection and watershed planning
- Assessing criteria to identify wetland restoration and protection priorities
- Building a wetland restoration/protection prioritization process that considers whether climate change may impact project success
- Developing monitoring protocols and assessment criteria that can be used to report the condition of wetland resources
- Incorporating methods or strategies to include wetland water quality standards in EPA-approved tribal water quality standards
- Research, investigations, experiments, trainings, studies, surveys and demonstration projects

What Are Core Elements of a Tribal Wetland Program?

EPA identifies four core elements that comprise and strengthen effective wetlands programs. The core elements are basic program functions that form the foundation of wetlands management and protection in a state or tribe. These include:

- Monitoring and assessment
- Regulatory activities including 401 certification
- Voluntary restoration and protection
- Water quality standards for wetlands

More information on core elements can be found at www.epa.gov/wetlands/core-elements-effective-state-and-tribal-wetlands-programs.



What Are Wetland Program Plans?

EPA believes that Wetland Program Plans are useful documents for guiding and focusing efforts to build an effective wetland program. A Wetland Program Plan may be a concise identification of planned actions to help create a focused and sustainable wetland program. Plans should include the following minimum components:

- An overall goal statement for the program over the time period covered by the plan
- An overall timeframe for the plan, with a minimum timeframe of three years and a maximum of six years, starting from the time of plan submittal to EPA
- A list of actions consistent with the Core Elements Framework that the program intends to carry out over the plan timeframe, and which, if collectively met, will accomplish the overall plan goal(s)
- An intended schedule for the achievement of each action
- A listing of more specific activities to be accomplished under each action

More information on Wetland Program Plans can be found at www.epa.gov/wetlands/developing-wetland-program-plan.

When and How Does One Apply?

Tribes interested in applying for wetland grants must submit their applications through www.grants.gov. Beginning in FY2017, EPA set aside 10% of total wetland grant funding to conduct a separate tribal-only national competition, which occurred subsequent to the regional competition that is open to states, tribes, local governments, inter-tribal consortia, and state universities. Tribes were able to submit applications to both competitions, resulting in a net increase of tribes selected for grant funding. **The next regional competition will be posted in early 2025 and the next Tribal set aside competition will occur in the fall of 2026.**

How to apply and other information will be available under the Wetlands tab at www.epa.gov/tribal/r9tribalcwa.

- The application requires an application with a detailed workplan and budget describing how the requested funds will be used and target dates for accomplishing specific milestones.
- Grant applicants are required to match 25% of the total project costs. The match may be reduced to 0% of the total project costs if included in a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG).
- The funding announcement includes a section on the competitive grant selection criteria for the proposal and how they are ranked. It is anticipated that the 2026 Request for Applications will be similar to 2024, which can be found at www.epa.gov/wetlands/tribal-wetland-program-development-grant-request-proposals.
- There are two funding tracks in each competition: Track One is for applicants to develop a Wetlands Program Plan, Track Two is for applicants to build or refine core elements of their existing Wetlands Program Plan.

Contact Information

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