

An aerial photograph of a river with a wooden pier extending into the water. A tree with orange-brown leaves is visible in the foreground. The background shows a dense forest of green trees. The text is overlaid on a dark blue semi-transparent banner in the upper right corner.

# Healthy Watersheds Consortium (HWC) *Grant Program*

EPA Information Session Webinar  
March 28 & April 9, 2024

# Information Session Webinar Agenda

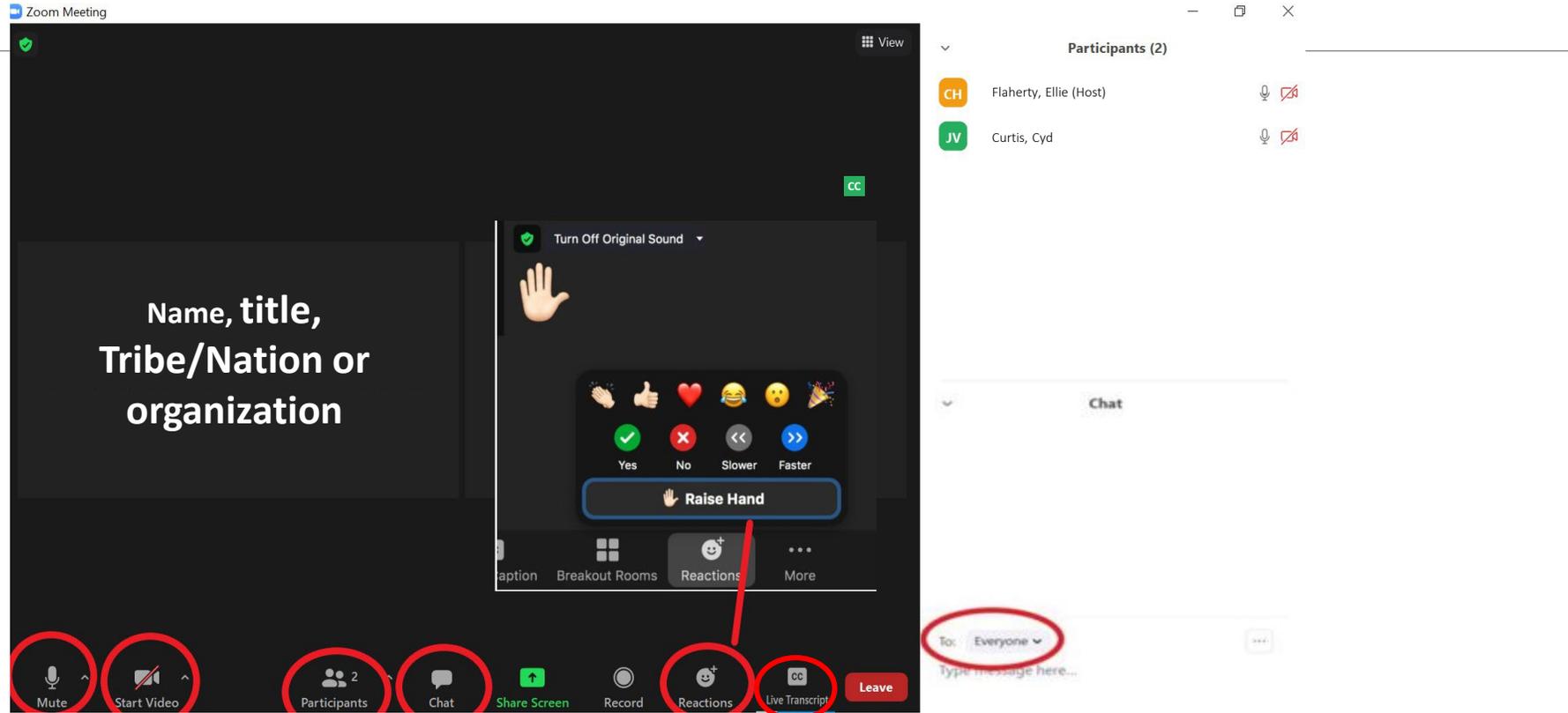
## Intro/Background

- Webinar basics
- EPA Healthy Watersheds Program
- HWC Grant Program
- RFA Need-to-Knows

## Walkthrough of 2024 Request for Applications

## Question & Answer Segment

# A quick how-to on Zoom...



Webinar slides and Q&As posted at:

<https://www.epa.gov/hwp/healthy-watersheds-consortium-grants>

# **Introduction to EPA's Healthy Watersheds Program**

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# EPA Healthy Watersheds Program

## Clean Water Act (CWA) §101(a)

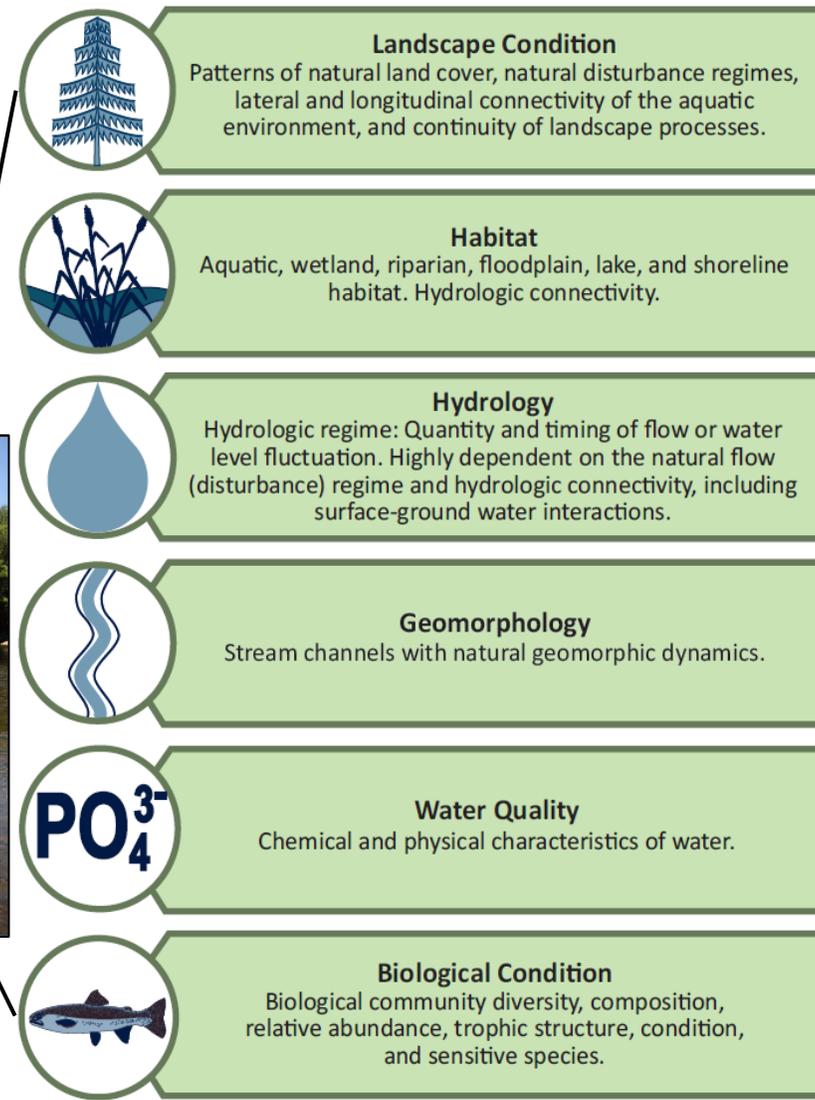
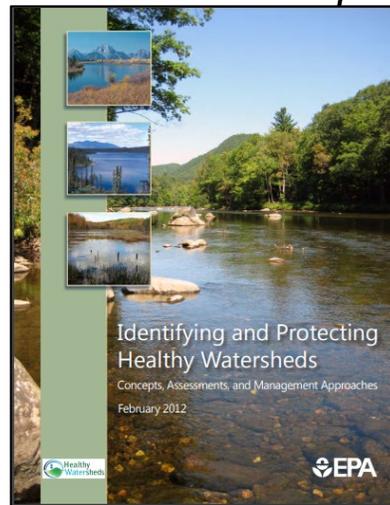
*“The objective of this Act is to restore and maintain the chemical, physical, and biological integrity of the Nation’s waters.”*

**Through the Healthy Watersheds Program, EPA aims to continue progress towards:**

1. Mitigating the need for water quality restoration and helping ensure restoration success.
2. Maintaining the resilience of aquatic ecosystems to climate change.
3. Protecting healthy waters that local communities depend upon, including those disadvantaged, historically marginalized and overburdened.

# Healthy Watersheds

- ✓ Natural land cover supports dynamic hydrologic and geomorphic processes within their natural range of variation (e.g., sediment storage and deposition),
- ✓ Habitat of sufficient size and connectivity to support native aquatic and riparian species,
- ✓ Water quality that supports healthy biological communities.



# Healthy Watersheds Program Focus Areas



**Clean Water Act Program  
Integration**



**Healthy Watersheds  
Assessments**



**Growing Protection  
Partnerships**



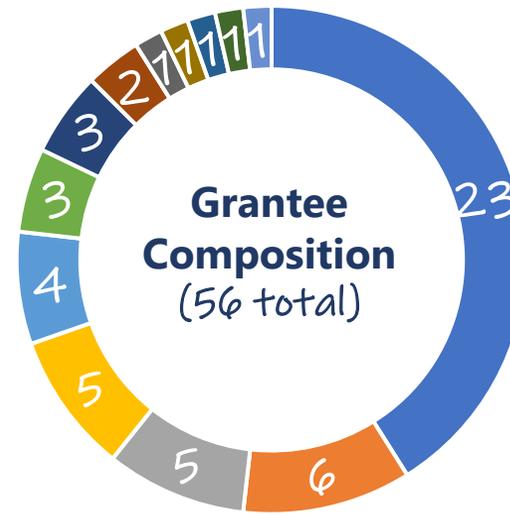
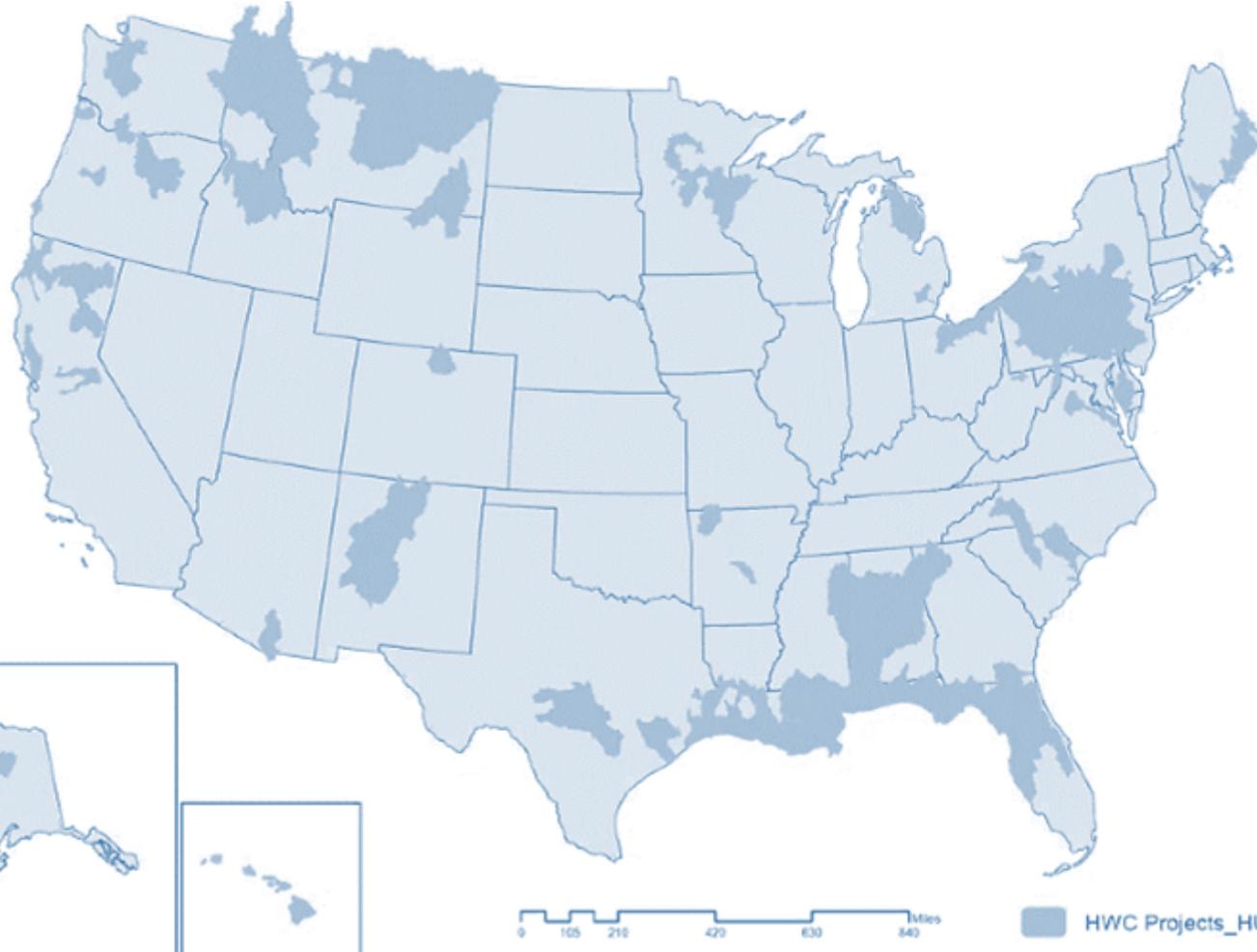
**Protecting Healthy  
Watersheds**

# Healthy Watersheds Consortium (HWC) Grant Program

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# HWC Grant Program 1.0

EPA's first iteration of the program ran from 2015-2022 and supported 56 subawards across the U.S.

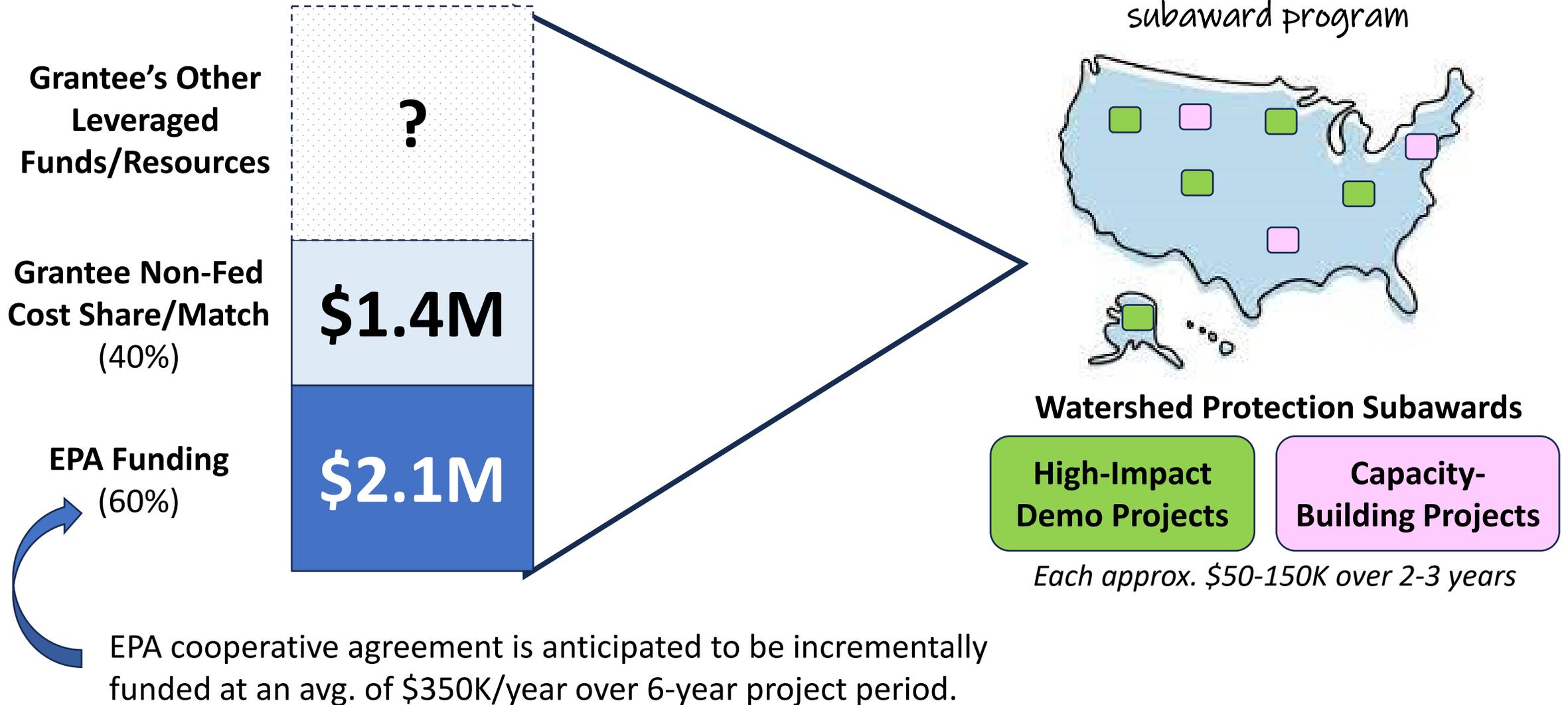


- Land trusts
- Large non-profits
- Watershed groups
- Networks
- State government agencies
- Small non-profits
- Water utilities
- Conservation Districts
- Local governments
- Tribes
- NEPs
- Private
- Conservation Corps

## Subaward Types

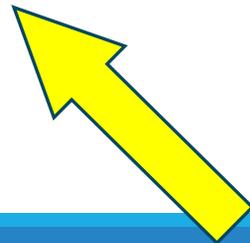


# HWC Grant Program 2.0



# Eligible HWC Grantee Applicants

<b>Eligible</b>	<i>Ineligible</i>
<p>Non-profit organizations, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and inter-tribal consortia.</p> <p>Note: Coalition Coverage Groups of two or more eligible applicants may choose to form a coalition and submit a single application under this RFA.</p>	<p>Universities and colleges and institutions of higher education are not eligible under this announcement. Individual states, U.S. Territories, Tribes, local governments, and for-profit organizations are also not eligible under this announcement.</p>



*\*See page 12 of RFA*



*\*See 'Programmatic Capability Ranking Criterion (#7)', as described on page 24 and 29 of RFA*

## Programmatic Capability -

- ✓ **Organizational Experience**
- ✓ **Staff expertise/qualifications** → Annotated resumes (*see supporting materials*) of applicant's key staff are encouraged
- ✓ **Specialized Experience** developing and implementing partnership-based programs, including with those disadvantaged, historically marginalized and overburdened communities, consistent with the goals of the **Justice40 Initiative**
  - For example, describe an approach for using tools like the **Climate and Economic Justice Screening Tool (CEJST)** to solicit subaward applications from organizations seeking to protect healthy watersheds

*\*See page 13 of RFA*

# Non-federal cost share/match

Applicants are required to contribute 40% of the total project cost via non-federal cost share/match. e.g., Grantee: \$1.4 million (40%), EPA: \$2.1 million (60%).

## Cost share/match:

- Must be for eligible and allowable project costs
- May be provided by the applicant or partner organization or institution (subawardees).
- May be provided in cash or by in-kind contributions (e.g., salaries).

**\*Must be included in applicant's proposed budget\***

Note: Applicants should not propose and include in their budget a **voluntary non-federal cost share above the required 40% non-federal cost share.**

*\*See page 14 of RFA*

# Leveraging (beyond non-federal match)

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*Leveraging is generally when an applicant proposes to provide its own additional funds/resources or those from third party sources to support or complement the project they are awarded under the competition which are above and beyond the EPA federal grant funds awarded and the required non-federal cost share/match.*

- Do not need to meet eligibility requirements of EPA and match funds.
- May be met by funding from another federal grant, from an applicant's own resources, or resources from other third-party sources.
- EPA will consider during scoring of 'Leveraging' ranking criterion (5 out of 100 points)

**\*Must be included in your application. But do not include in your proposed budget.**

## Expected HWC Grantee Project Activities

*\*See 'Project Approach', as described on page 5 and 21 of RFA*

- I. Prepare and advertise a subaward competition with criteria for evaluating strong subawardee applications
- II. Oversee and monitor subawardees for successful completion of projects
- III. Provide technical support to subawardees
- IV. Develop a strategy to promote, grow, and sustain the HWC Grant Program through program development and partnerships
- V. Collaborate with the EPA in highlighting the HWC Grant Program to clean water partners
- VI. Communicate the successes of the subaward projects through written materials
- VII. Qualitatively and quantitatively measure and report on the outputs and outcomes of environmental results of the healthy watersheds projects accomplished through subawards

*\*See page 6 of RFA*

# HWC Subawards

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- ❖ Each subaward approx. **\$50K - \$150K** and **2-3 years** in project period.
- ❖ All subawards should:
  - ❖ Include a variety of **partner organizations**;
  - ❖ **Advance a new or existing plan or strategy** intended to protect healthy watersheds, or some other prioritization scheme based on a healthy watersheds assessment; and
  - ❖ **Include a plan for tracking and communicating** the **successes** of the subaward project.
- ❖ **Eligible entities for the subawards** include public and private nonprofit institutions/organizations, federally recognized Indian tribal governments, states, local governments, U.S. territories or possessions, and interstate agencies.

*\*See page 6 of RFA*

# HWC Subaward Project Types

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## **#1: Healthy Watershed Protection High-Impact Demonstration Projects**

- ✓ Advance components of a new or existing plan or strategy, such as leveraging funding to protect a particular property, that will directly result in the protection of a healthy watershed.
- ✓ Leverage HWC Grant subaward many times over for maximum results.
- ✓ Demonstrate a new or experimental protection technique or approach that has the potential to be replicated and scaled to advance healthy watersheds protection regionally or nationally.



# Grantee Spotlight

\$350K/3 years



## Drinking water – a “Maine” goal



**Highstead Foundation**  
Sebago Clean Water Initiative  
*Forests. Faucets. Forever.*

HF/SCWI worked closely with the Portland Water District to structure its 1st & 2nd-ever Drinking Water State Revolving Fund loans to finance land protection for \$375K & \$600K, respectively, establishing a small new principle-forgiveness program.

### [Using SRF for Land Acquisition](#)



April 28, 2021

Co-moderated by Jeff Lerner, [Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program](#), we will be hearing about two collaborative efforts to acquire land for the protection of water resources. First, we will explore work in the Sebago Lake watershed in Maine which utilized DWSRF and other funds for source water protection to maintain Portland’s water supply. Second, we will be hopping to the west coast to hear about an effort by the Western Rivers Conservancy in partnership with the Yurok Tribe in California to use CWSRF in combination with other funds to protect thousands of acres, establishing a sustainable community forest and habitat sanctuary in the Blue Creek watershed.

#### [Below-Market Financing for Land Conservation](#)

Alison Souders, US EPA

#### [Sebago Clean Waters: The Future is Clear](#)

Paul Hunt, Portland Water District, and Spencer Meyer, Highstead Foundation

#### [The Making of the Blue Creek Salmon Sanctuary and Yurok Tribal Community Forest](#)

Zach Spector and Mik McKee, Western Rivers Conservancy

[Link to webinar](#)

*\*See page 6 of RFA*

# HWC Subaward Project Types

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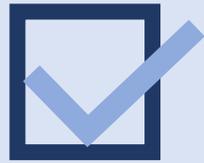
## #2: Healthy Watershed Protection Capacity Building Projects

- ✓ Grow the organizational capacity needed for large-scale, long-term healthy watershed protection.
- ✓ Identify existing or proposed funding or strategies to be deployed with increased capacity for project implementation.
- ✓ Leverage participation from multiple agencies responsible for aquatic ecosystem, land, habitat, and water resource protection/management as well as other appropriate partners.



**Grantee  
Spotlight**

\$220K/2 years

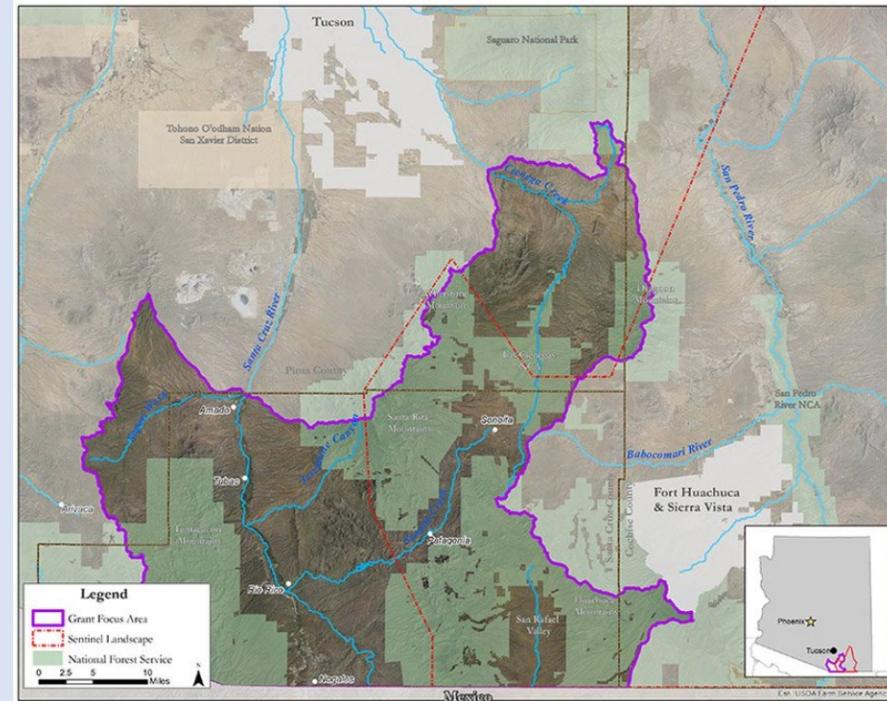


# Building Watershed Protection Capacity – Identifying Conservation Priorities in the Upper Santa Cruz Watershed



## Arizona Land & Water Trust

HWC Grant allowed the Trust to assess land use and water supply linkages in the Upper Santa Cruz River Watershed. \$\$\$ allowed for more direct work with landowners to identify best areas where land conservation efforts would protect river flow, groundwater supplies and riparian health.

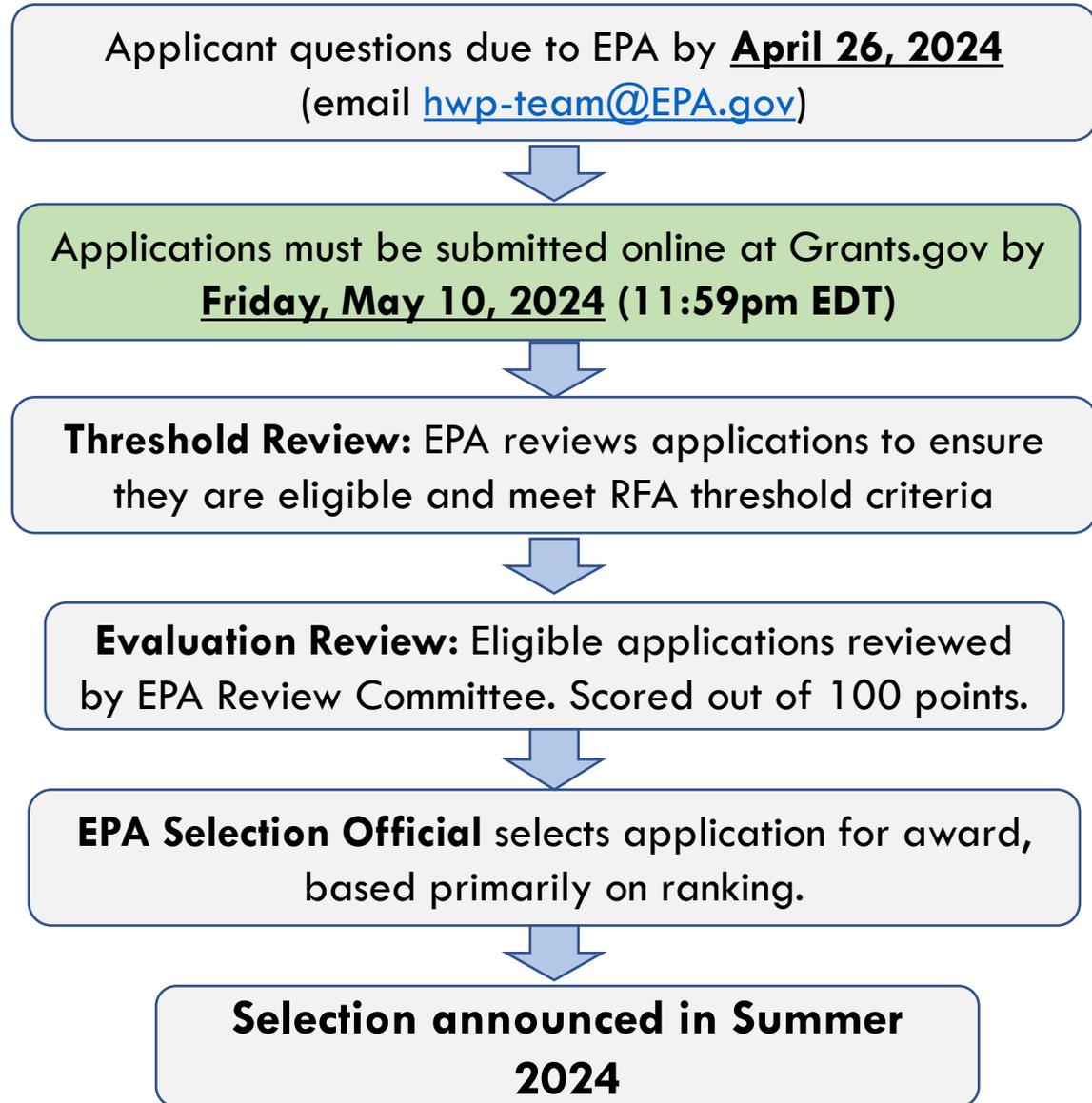


[Link to Blog](#)

**Other key information as you  
prepare and submit your  
application**

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# EPA Competitive Grant Process



# Threshold Eligibility Criteria

*\*See page 15 of RFA*

1. An applicant **must meet the eligibility requirements** from the knowledge gained in the demonstration project
2. Applicants must demonstrate in their application how they will meet the **required 40% non-federal cost share/match requirements**
3. Applications must address how the applicant **will establish and manage a competitive subaward program on a national scale**
4. Applications must be for **projects that protect or improve water quality, consistent with CWA 104(b)(3)**
5. **Demonstration projects** must involve new or experimental technologies, methods, or approaches, **where the results of the project will be disseminated so that others can benefit**
6. Applications must **substantially comply with the application submission instructions** and requirements set forth in Section IV of this announcement, or else they will be rejected
7. **Initial applications must be submitted through Grants.gov**
8. **Only limited circumstances when applications can be submitted outside Grants.gov**
9. Applicants may request up to **\$2,100,000**
10. If an application is submitted that **includes any ineligible tasks or activities, that portion of the application will be ineligible for funding** and may, render the entire application ineligible for funding.
  - a) The purchase of land or conservation easements are **not** eligible for funding because they are implementation tasks.
  - b) Application project tasks that are required by a previous or pending permit or government regulatory requirement(s) are **not** eligible for funding
  - c) Purchase of vehicles and office furniture is **not** eligible for funding under this program.
  - d) Projects must be performed entirely within the United States, Tribal Lands, the District of Columbia, and the U.S. Territories.

# Ranking Criteria

*\*See page 27 of RFA*

Points (100 total)	Criteria
10	Environmental Results & Tracking Progress
35	Project Approach
5	Milestone Schedule
10	Project Budget
10	Project Partnerships
5	Leveraging
15	Programmatic Capability (5 each) <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Organizational Experience</li><li>• Staff Expertise/Qualifications</li><li>• Specialized Experience and Expertise</li></ul>
10	Past Performance

*\*See page 20 of RFA*

# Application Package

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## Mandatory documents:

1. SF-424 – “signed application for federal assistance”
2. SF-424A – “budget information for non-construction programs”
3. EPA key contacts form 5700-54
4. EPA form 4700-4 – preaward compliance review report
5. \*Project narrative work plan (i.e., 15-page application)\*

**Cover Page + Address each  
of the 8 ranking criteria**



## Optional documents:

6. Supporting materials (e.g., partner commitment letters, annotated resumes)
7. Negotiated indirect cost rate agreement, if applicable

## VIEW GRANT OPPORTUNITY

EPA-OW-OWOW-24-02

Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program

Environmental Protection Agency

Environmental Protection Agency

Apply

Subscribe

SYNOPSIS

VERSION HISTORY

RELATED DOCUMENTS

PACKAGE

### General Information

**Document Type:** Grants Notice

**Funding Opportunity Number:** EPA-OW-OWOW-24-02

**Funding Opportunity Title:** Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program

**Opportunity Category:** Discretionary

**Opportunity Category Explanation:**

**Funding Instrument Type:** Cooperative Agreement

**Category of Funding Activity:** Environment

**Category Explanation:**

**Expected Number of Awards:** 1

**CFDA Number(s):** 66.441 -- Healthy Watersheds Consortium Grant Program

**Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:** Yes

**Version:** Synopsis 1

**Posted Date:** Mar 12, 2024

**Last Updated Date:** Mar 12, 2024

**Original Closing Date for Applications:** May 10, 2024

**Current Closing Date for Applications:** May 10, 2024

**Archive Date:** Jun 09, 2024

**Estimated Total Program Funding:** \$ 2,100,000

**Award Ceiling:** \$2,100,000

**Award Floor:** \$

# Grants.gov Resources

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Support center available 24/7 (closed on federal holidays)

Email: [support@grants.gov](mailto:support@grants.gov) | Phone: 1-800-518-4726 (toll-free) | 1-606-545-5035 (international)

## Resources

- Workspace overview: <https://www.Grants.Gov/web/grants/applicants/workspace-overview.Html>
- **\*New\* Guide to help you register and apply for grants:** <https://www.grants.gov/quick-start-guide/applicants>
- YouTube training & webinar videos: <https://www.Youtube.Com/user/grantsgovus/featured>
- Online user guide: [https://www.Grants.Gov/help/html/help/getstarted/get\\_started.Htm](https://www.Grants.Gov/help/html/help/getstarted/get_started.Htm)
- FAQs: <http://www.Grants.Gov/web/grants/applicants/applicant-faqs.Html>
- Grants.gov self-service web portal: <https://grants-portal.Psc.Gov>
- Blog: <https://blog.Grants.Gov/>
- EPA's grant support resources: <https://www.epa.gov/grants/how-apply-grants>

# Key RFA Dates

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- **April 26, 2024:** last day to submit questions ([hwp-team@epa.gov](mailto:hwp-team@epa.gov))
- **\*May 10, 2024\*:** application deadline
  - Submissions via Grants.gov – by 11:59pm EDT
  - Late applications will not be considered for funding
- **Summer 2024:** EPA announces selection
- **Fall 2024:** final award package to grantee

# RFA Overview

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Available at:

<https://www.epa.gov/hwp/healthy-watersheds-consortium-grants>

Submit your grant application at:

<https://www.grants.gov/search-results-detail/352919>

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*\*See page 9 of RFA*

# Examples of Environmental Outputs (i.e., deliverables)

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Development of national consortium of partners, including co-funders, to support healthy watersheds protection efforts.



Development of healthy watersheds protection partnerships to align and leverage resources among subawardees and partners to achieve coordinated protection goals.



Demonstrated innovative and replicable approaches for protecting healthy watersheds (e.g., via land use planning or protection demonstration/training projects).



Meetings hosted for subawardees and project partners to share strategies and support national and regional-based communities of practice for healthy watersheds protection.

# Examples of Environmental Outcomes

*\*See page 9 of RFA*

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Increased number of stream miles, acres of lakes and wetlands protected (i.e., in which water quality degradation has been avoided) as a result of HWC Grant subaward projects.

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Increased understanding of and support/funding for healthy watersheds protection among clean water programs (e.g., CWA funding programs, drinking and wastewater communities).

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Accelerated protection of critical areas within healthy watersheds, identified using existing assessments, plans, and strategies.

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Establishment of enduring networks among partners that result in the sustained protection of healthy watersheds.

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Increased protection of an integrated aquatic ecological network of hubs and corridors providing ecosystem functions at state and regional scales.

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Maintained and increased resiliency of healthy watersheds, contributing to reduced impacts of flooding and other natural hazards exacerbated by climate change.

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# Important Reminders

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- You must apply through Grants.gov
- Maximum federal request amount: \$2.1 million
- 15-page (single-spaced) limit on the project narrative
  - Additional pages allowed for supporting materials (project partner commitment letters, annotated resumes, etc.)

[hwp-team@epa.gov](mailto:hwp-team@epa.gov)

<https://www.epa.gov/hwp/healthy-watersheds-consortium-grants>

# We'll now take questions!

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[hwp-team@epa.gov](mailto:hwp-team@epa.gov)

<https://www.epa.gov/hwp/healthy-watersheds-consortium-grants>