

WATERSHED PLANNING GRANTS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What assistance is available during the grant application process?

The first step in applying for a DNR Watershed Planning Grant is picking up the phone – put a call in to your local Basin Coordinator, who can discuss with you your water quality problems and point you towards the best watershed improvement resources. Your Basin Coordinator can also put you in contact with other DNR staff to answer administrative questions about the application. Staff can also review a draft application before you officially submit it.

Will you review a draft application?

Yes, but the DNR encourages anyone considering applying for a Watershed Planning Grant to contact their Basin Coordinator early in the process. The Basin Coordinator can discuss with you your watershed's problems and how to approach a grant application – potentially addressing issues early on rather than later in the process after a draft has been reviewed.

What's an impaired water? How do I know if our lake or stream is impaired and qualifies for a Planning Grant?

Each lake and stretch of stream or river in Iowa is designated for a specific use, like for contact recreation such as swimming or fishing; for drinking water; or for maintaining a healthy population of fish and other aquatic life. If the water quality in the stream or lake does not allow it to meet its designated use, it does not meet Iowa's water quality standards and is considered "impaired." Visit www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/impaired.html to learn more about impaired waters and view the state's impaired waters list. You can also call your Basin Coordinator to find out if your local waterbody is impaired or if it drains to an impaired lake, stream or river. Either of these conditions may qualify your watershed for a Planning Grant. Contact your Basin Coordinator for more information.

What's a watershed management plan? Why do I need one?

Put simply, a Watershed Management Plan identifies water quality problems in your watershed, proposes solutions, and creates a strategy for putting those solutions in action. Watershed Management Plans take a long-term, comprehensive approach, which has proven to be successful in a number of watersheds. Like a road map directing you from the start to finish of your effort, it helps you create a strategic, targeted plan for making changes in your watershed. That's why having a completed WMP is a requirement for applying for DNR Watershed Implementation Grants, which give you funds, assistance and guidance for putting your plan in action.

Can I use grant funds to hire people to help create the watershed management plan?

Yes, you can use planning grant funds to hire people to create the Watershed Management Plan. This could include someone to assess the watershed for problems, a technical writer to draft the document, or an outreach/communications specialist to craft the outreach plan portion, for example.

I'm looking for money to install conservation practices. Will this grant help me?

Not in the short term, but it can in the long-term. Planning Grant funds are only for developing a Watershed Management Plan. However, once you have a completed plan, you're eligible for DNR Watershed Implementation Grants, which can be used to put that plan in action – including installing conservation practices. And with a Watershed Management Plan, you will have better information on where and how to install those practices to make them the most effective.

How much money does our group need to put up to get planning grant funds?

It depends on how much you are requesting. You can request between \$10,000 and \$50,000 in a Watershed Planning Grant. You need to provide a 50 percent local match of that requested amount, with at least 20 percent of that local match in cash (not in-kind contributions like volunteered labor and materials). For example, if you request \$20,000 in grant funding, your group would need to have a \$10,000 local match. Of that \$10,000, \$2,000 must be in cash, while no more than \$8,000 could be in-kind donations. For more clarification, contact your Basin Coordinator.

Is my group eligible to apply?

The DNR can award Watershed Planning Grants to a number of local and regional, public and private organizations. Contact your Basin Coordinator to discuss if your organization or one of your partners is eligible, or check the list in the application guidance document on our Planning Grants website (www.iowadnr.gov/water/watershed/planning.html). However, Planning Grants can not be awarded to individuals or for-profit businesses and corporations.

