

Seed Grant Submission Guidelines (FY2026)

Proposal materials can be found on the Water Research Center website at www.wrc.wsu.edu.
Proposal deadline: 5:00 p.m. (PST), Friday, April 10, 2026 to watercenter@wsu.edu

Eligibility:

1. Eligible: Faculty or affiliates at institutions of higher education in Washington State.
2. Ineligible: Applications for research on health effects involving human subjects.
3. Ineligible: Applications for research involving oceanography (estuarine research applications are acceptable).

To submit a proposal to WRC, you must submit the following information according to the instructions below under “Guide for Proposals”:

- Project Narrative
- Budget Breakdown and Budget Justification
- Send your pdf proposal package to watercenter@wsu.edu

Proposals will be selected in consultation with the WRC Science Advisory Committee according to the review rubric at the end of the submission guide below. If your proposal is selected for funding and revisions are needed, revisions will be due to the WRC by 5:00 p.m. April 19, 2025.

If selected for funding, the **start date of your grant funding will be September 1, 2026 and the end date will be August 31, 2027** (tentative dependent on the federal funding acquisition). If funded, you will be expected to generate a brief **project report by September 30, 2027** for website publication and related information for submission to USGS ([details here](#)). Further outreach efforts such as press releases and information about follow-up publications and grants will be requested per RFP.

Note: Congress has not appropriated funding for the FY2026 program. This RFP is released annually in anticipation of funding.

If you have questions, contact the WRC at 509-335-5531 or email to watercenter@wsu.edu.

Guide for proposals and submission

Element 1. Proposal Narrative: 5 pages max. including references plus title page.

The following sections should be included in the proposal narrative:

- 1) **Title page.** Include the following (not counted in the 5-page narrative limit)
 - a) Title: should be precise but descriptive
 - b) Keywords: enter keywords of your choice that describe the proposed research.
 - c) Primary PI: Name, academic rank, e-mail address, and phone number.
 - d) Co-PI's: Name, academic rank, e-mail address, and phone number.
 - e) WRC Priority Research Area (list any that apply to the project):
 - Climate change effects on water supply, demand, and quality.
 - Analysis of policy and law relating to water resource management.
 - Fate and transport of nutrients and emerging contaminants in the environment.
 - Remote sensing and/or AI water systems and management.
 - Equity and justice in water resource access and management.
 - Surface-groundwater interactions and conjunctive use management.
 - f) USGS Focus Area (list a primary focus area and a secondary focus area as applicable from the following list):
 - Water Scarcity and Availability
 - Water-Related Hazards and Climate Variability
 - Water Quality
 - Water Policy, Planning, and Socioeconomics
 - Ecosystem and Drainage Basin Functions
 - Water Technology and Innovation
 - Workforce Development and Water Literacy
 - g) An abstract of your proposed project. 250 words or less on the title page.
- 2) **Proposal Narrative.** 5 page maximum including tables, figures, and references; single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point font.
 - a) Introduction. Background and Statement of regional or state water problem. Include an explanation of the scientific and/or policy value of the work.
 - b) Objectives and Scope. Summarize objectives and scope of work.
 - c) Expected results and/or benefits. Specify the type of information that will be generated and how it can be used.
 - d) Methods, procedures, and facilities. Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objective. Include a timeline of activities.
 - e) Contribution to existing related Research. Compare and contrast the expected contribution of the project to related completed or ongoing research.
 - f) Training potential. Estimate the number of graduate and undergraduate students, by degree level, who are expected to receive training in the project.
 - g) References (Literature Cited). Included in the 5-page narrative limit.
- 3) **Investigator's qualifications.** Resume(s) of the principal investigator(s). Resumes may not exceed two pages. List no more than 10 (pertinent) publications.
- 4) **Evidence of stakeholder support.** Evidence of stakeholder support is not strictly

required but is a review criterion. It may come in the form of supplemental materials such as letters of support from stakeholders, or other evidence of support or interest in your proposed work. For letters of support, scan and include them at the end of the Proposal Narrative pdf file.

- 5) **Appendix 1: Report relating to prior WRC proposals or awards** [not included in 5-page narrative limit].
- a) If no PI of this proposal has received prior WRC awards nor have submitted related proposals, note “Not Applicable” in Appendix 1.
 - b) If this proposal is a revision of an unsuccessful prior WRC proposal submission,
 - Provide a reference for all related prior WRC seed grant proposals (PIs, award year, title).
 - Provide a response to prior reviews, stating clearly what has been changed in this proposal, especially in response to review comments.
 - c) If any PI has received a WRC seed grant award previously:
 - Provide a reference for all prior WRC seed grant awards (PIs, award year, title).
 - List products supported by each prior award, including follow-up grant proposals or awards, publications, theses/dissertations, and other pertinent products.
 - d) If this proposal extends the work supported by a prior award, include a statement to differentiate this proposed project from the previously funded project. If they are similar or related, you must provide a strong basis for receiving a WRC seed funding again.

Element 2. Budget Breakdown and Budget Justification

Use the budget form found at [WRC Seed Grant Single Grant Budget](#) and the [Budget Justification Form](#) to provide budget details and justifications.

- 1) *Budget Breakdown*: Enter your budget by cost category on the “Budget Breakdown” sheet, showing both Federal funds and required matching (Non-Federal) funds. **Each federal dollar requested must be matched with one dollar (1:1 match) from non-federal sources.** Matching must be committed when the proposal is submitted: committed means that a letter signed by an official authorized to approve match, or a third party, in-kind contribution signed by an official authorized to commit the third party, will accompany the proposal. *Federal funds cannot be used to pay indirect costs.* Waived indirect costs on both Federal and Non-federal funds can be entered in the Non-federal column and used to meet the required match. Awards may be supplemented through the interagency transfer of funds or other funding sources, as long as they comply with the governing statutes, regulations, and the approved application.
- 2) *Budget Justification*: Enter categorized budget justification in the “Budget Justification” sheet. Provide a budget justification by cost category on the justification form. Enter the justification for Federal Funds first, followed by the justification for Non-Federal Funds (for example, for Salaries and Wages, enter the estimated hours and rate of

compensation for individuals paid on the requested federal funds, followed by individuals contributing matching salaries.). Examples are included of a [good budget justification](#) and [insufficient budget justification](#). USGS reviews these budget justifications and will return your proposal for changes if the justification is not sufficiently detailed. This will slow the approval process for the WRC's overall proposal.

Element 3: Letter of Cost-Share Commitment.

Matching must be committed by submitting a letter signed by an official authorized to approve match, or a third party, in-kind contribution signed by an official authorized to commit the third party. A pdf of this signed commitment letter must accompany the proposal.

If you are awarded a WRC Seed Grant [not required in initial proposal submission]

A data management plan that describes how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. Details to be provided after award announcement.

Proposal PDF Package submission

Email your proposal to watercenter@wsu.edu. The email should include:

1. "FY2026 WRC RFP" and primary PI last name in the subject line.
2. A statement as to whether this proposal, or a significant part of this proposal, has been or will be submitted to another funding agency before September 1, 2026.
3. The email should have three attachments:
 - a. A pdf file with Element 1 (proposal narrative, CVs, evidence of support, results of prior submissions).
 - b. An excel file (or other widely used spreadsheet format) with budget summary and budget justification ([Budget](#) and [Justification Form](#)).
 - c. A pdf file including a signed letter of commitment to satisfy the cost-share requirement.

Proposal review form provided for PI reference: Next page

In your narrative, explicitly highlighting the strength of your proposed project relation to each evaluation criterion will improve the competitiveness of your proposal.

State of Washington Water Research Center
Seed Grant proposal review form FY 2026

The following is the form that will be used to evaluate each proposal. Each lettered element need not necessarily be a strength of any given proposal, but each will be considered for evaluation.

Principal Investigator:

Proposal Title:

Proposal Number:

Evaluation Category [scoring weight w]. Weights sum to 1.	Points possible	Points awarded
1. Significance and contribution of the project [0.3] a. Falls within a WRC priority research category b. Is multidisciplinary and integrative in scope c. Clear and convincing contribution d. Clear, well-structured, and effective proposal e. Relevant to the State of Washington f. Evidence of stakeholder support	10	
2. Involvement of early-career researchers [0.3] a. Assistant professors and related b. Graduate student support	10	
3. Post-project potential [0.2] a. Likelihood of follow-up research b. Dissemination plan c. Likelihood of follow-up funding	10	
4. Administrative & completion capacity [0.2] a. Reasonable budget and clear budget justification b. Likelihood of success given resources and deliverables	10	
Weighted Total Score = $\sum_{i=1}^4 w_i \times p_i$ where w_i and p_i are scoring weight and points awarded for category i .		calculated

Feedback to PIs

Comments for review panel discussion