



Request for Pre-proposals

Montana Water Center Faculty Seed Grants

Funding cycle 9/1/2024– 8/31/2025

Deadline for pre-proposals Feb 14, 2024



Overview

The Montana Water Center invites pre-proposals for the Montana Water Center Faculty Seed Grants. This program allocates US Geological Survey (USGS) 104b funds awarded to the Montana Water Center. The goal of this program is to help address water resource problems of significance to Montana and the region by stimulating cutting-edge, water-related research among faculty and students across the Montana University System.

This RFP contains information for both pre-proposal submission and full proposals. Additional information will be provided with invitations to submit full proposals. **We anticipate that our total available funding will be \$50,000; we will fund two to three proposals with a maximum total request of \$25,000.** For a description of past awardees, see: <http://www.montanawatercenter.org/facultyresearch/>.

Proposals must be relevant to water resource issues in Montana. This may include proposed research on the effects of climate change, water management for agriculture, relationships between water quality and quantity, water's role in socio-ecological systems, water policy, economics of water use and management, and ecological restoration. The Montana Water Center encourages collaboration with state and federal agencies in proposed research, particularly with USGS.

Proposals must:

- (a) have high intellectual merit and the potential to advance knowledge of Montana water resources
- (b) clearly identify the relevance of the research to MT water stakeholders
- (c) foster student training and involvement
- (d) demonstrate a compelling and realistic plan for how the seed funding will be leveraged to obtain additional external funding

Proposals that meet the following criteria will be given priority:

- (a) early-career faculty member as PI
- (b) incorporate collaborative research with USGS scientists
- (c) Research that provides key information needed by state agencies, watershed groups or other entities across the state focused on water resources.

Pre-Proposal Information

Format

Pre-proposals should have the following format (with an 11-point font and 1-inch margin minimum):

Pages 1-2:

- Project Title
- Duration of the Project
- Principal and Co-Principal Investigators (include affiliations, phone, and email addresses)
- Project Description:
 - background and problem statement,
 - research approach,
 - anticipated outcomes for Montana,
 - plan for leveraging the seed grant for future funding,
 - student involvement.
- Selected References (may be brief and in smaller font)

Page 3: Estimated Budget (rough estimate for the pre-proposal).

Budget Categories	Federal	Non-Federal Match	Total
1. Salaries and benefits			
2. Supplies, equipment, services			
3. Travel			
4. Other direct costs			
5. Total direct costs			
6. Indirect costs (foregone)	XXXXXXXXXXXX		
7. Total estimated cost			

Non-Federal Match and Indirect Costs

Applicants must match each federal dollar requested with one non-federal dollar. No indirect costs (IDCs) may be charged to these grants. The amount of foregone IDC returns for both the federal and non-federal match portions of the funding must be considered as part of the match.

Timeline

The planned start date for these projects is September 1, 2024, pending the timing of the Congressional budget approval process for the federal fiscal year.

Year	Date	Action
2024	17 Jan	Request for pre-proposals
2024	14 Feb	Pre-proposals due electronically to the Montana Water Center by 5 pm MST.
2024	1 March	Successful candidates notified to submit full proposal
2024	29 March	Full proposals due
2024	15 April	Notification of awards
2024	Sept-Oct	Subcontracts issued by MSU Office of Sponsored Programs
2025	31 August	Final date for grant spending
2025	1 October	Report due to the Water Center

Applicant Eligibility and Conflicts of Interest

Eligible applicants must have academic or research faculty appointments at one of the Montana Institutions of Higher Education. An applicant may not permit a federal employee to use his or her position for a purpose that is, or gives the appearance of being, in conflict of interest, either by giving the applicant an unfair advantage or by a desire for private financial gain.

Pre-proposal submission

Complete pre-proposals must be sent as email attachments to Whitney Lonsdale: whitney.lonsdale@montana.edu. Pre-proposals must arrive by 5:00 p.m. MST on Feb 14, 2024.

For questions about budgets, match requirements, or any other requirements of this RFP, please contact Whitney Lonsdale, whitney.lonsdale@montana.edu.

Full Proposal Information

If invited to submit a full proposal, you will be notified on or before March 1. **The proposal and budget requirements listed below are for full proposals only.**

Format

Full proposals should not exceed eight single-spaced pages, with 12-point font and at least 1-inch margins. These eight pages must include all of the categories below except items 17-21.

Page 1:

1. Title. Concise but descriptive
2. Project Type. Choose from the following: Research, Information Transfer, Information Management System, Education, or Other (please specify).
3. Focus Categories. Choose a maximum of three focus categories from the list provided (attached document), with the most preferred focus category first.
4. Research Category. Choose from the following the one category that most closely applies: Social Sciences, Ground-water Flow and Transport, Water Quality, Biological Sciences, Engineering, or Climate and Hydrologic Processes.
5. Keywords. Enter keywords of your choice descriptive of the work.
6. Start Date. Enter the actual beginning date for the project.
7. End Date. Enter the estimated end date for the project.
8. Principal Investigator(s). Provide name, academic rank, university, email address and phone number of the principal investigators.
9. Congressional District of the university where the work is to be conducted.

Page 2:

10. Abstract. Provide a brief (one-page maximum) description of the problem, methods, and objectives.

Pages 3-8:

11. Statement of regional or state water problem. Include an explanation of the need for the project, who wants it, and why.
12. Statement of results or benefits. Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used.
13. Nature, scope, and objectives of the project, including a timeline of activities.

14. Methods, procedures, and facilities. Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objectives.
15. Related research. Show by literature and communication citations the similarities and dissimilarities of the proposed project to completed or on-going work on the same topic.
16. Training potential. Estimate the number of graduate and undergraduate students, by degree level, who are expected to receive training in the project.

Supplemental Pages:

17. Literature Cited.
18. Budget Breakdown, fillable form (Attachment A)
19. Budget Justification fillable form (See Attachment B)
20. Investigator's qualifications. Include resume(s) of the principal investigator(s). No resume shall exceed two pages or list more than 15 pertinent publications.
21. Data Management Plan. Include description of how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. (more detail will be provided with invitation for full proposal)

Reporting and Engagement Requirements

Faculty grantees will be required to:

- Submit a short report (generally 250-500 words) to the Montana Water Center 30 days after the close of the funding cycle.
- Notify the Montana Water Center of any research or educational products or activities, generated from or related to the seed grant funding, for five years following the close of the funding cycle (e.g., conference presentations, peer-reviewed articles, theses/dissertations, educational materials).
- Acknowledge the Montana Water Center in any products or activities generated from or related to the seed grant funding.

Grantees are strongly encouraged to present their work at the Montana Section of the American Water Resources Association (MT AWRA) Annual Conference.

Match Considerations

Successful pre-proposal applicants will need to submit one or more letters of match commitment at the time they submit their full proposals, and those who are issued awards will be required to track and document their match expenditures. Selected final proposals will be forwarded to the USGS for review and approval. Awards will be made to the Montana Water Center, and then from the Montana Water Center to grantees. Grantees and their departments will be responsible for their own budget tracking. *Additional match information and guidelines will be provided with the invitation to submit a full proposal.*

Budget Categories

Below are descriptions of the budget categories for the funding request and matching funds to be provided. *Additional budget information, guidelines, and forms will be provided with the invitation to submit a full proposal.*

1. **Salaries and Wages**. Identify the individuals and categories of salaries and wages, estimated hours or percentage of time, and the compensation rate. Tuition remission and other forms of compensation paid as or in lieu of wages to students are allowable provided that the tuition or other payments are reasonable compensation for the work performed and are conditioned explicitly upon the performance of necessary work.

2. Fringe Benefits. Calculate rates/amounts in conformity with the university's current standard. Show the basis of the rate computation.
3. Supplies. Indicate estimates for office, laboratory, computing, and field supplies. Provide information on any specific item that represents a significant portion of the proposed amount.
4. Equipment. Identify nonexpendable personal property having a useful life of more than one year and an acquisition cost of more than \$5,000 per unit. Anything shorter-lived or less expensive than this should be considered 'supplies'.
5. Services or consultants. Identify the project tasks for which these services would be used. List the anticipated consultants, the estimated amount of time required, and the quoted rate per day or hour.
6. Travel. Show the number of trips, type of trip (field, scientific meeting, or conference attendance), destinations, number of travelers, per diem and local reimbursement rates allowed by the applicant, estimated miles and mileage costs, hotel costs per night, airline travel costs, and any miscellaneous expenses for each trip.
7. Other direct costs. Itemize the costs not included elsewhere; e.g., shipping, telemetry, computing, equipment-use charges, or other expenses. Provide breakdowns showing how the cost was estimated.

Background Information on 104b and 104g funding

The Water Resources Research Act of 1964 (WRRRA) established a network of 54 water resource research institutes located at land grant institutions in each of the U.S. states and territories. This network, the National Institutes of Water Resources, receives federal funding each year through USGS to address critical regional and state water issues.

104b (Annual Base Grants) funding is allocated the individual institutes to support water-related research, education, and outreach in each state. The Montana Water Center uses 104b funds to provide faculty seed grants and graduate student fellowships across the MUS system. In our 104b funding program, our primary goal is to address important state needs, and we value alignment with national USGS priorities. 104b funding decisions are made by a panel of reviewers with diverse expertise convened by the Water Center.

104g (National Competitive Grants) funding addresses priorities set by national USGS leadership. These grants are open to faculty at institutes of higher education and require USGS collaboration. Proposals are reviewed and selected at the national level, but proposals must be submitted through state water institutes.

More information on the 104b and 104g grants can be found here:

<http://www.montanawatercenter.org/opportunities>

This request is issued under the authority of the Water Resources Act, section 104b, administered by the US Department of Interior through the Water Resources Division of the US Geological Survey.

Administering this competitive grant program is the responsibility of the Montana Water Center.

Information requests may be directed to:

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