

Illinois Water Resources Center Annual Research Grants 2023 Call for Proposals

Notification of Intent Due to IWRC
Monday, January 23, 2023– 5pm CST

Full Proposal Due to IWRC
Monday, February 13, 2023 – 5pm CST

The Illinois Water Resources Center (IWRC) requests proposals to fund exploratory research or educational projects that enhance water sciences research and higher education throughout Illinois. While we are interested in all **water resources issues** that impact Illinois, our **2023 priority topics are agriculture, climate, ecosystem structure and function, per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), urban resilience, water-energy nexus, and water equity**. We are particularly interested in supporting projects that will help grow the body of research in Illinois, including proof-of-concept projects that may help researchers attract larger grants. Proposals continuing the work of previous IWRC Annual Research Grants will **not** be accepted. This is an open call contingent on funding availability.

Mission of the IWRC

IWRC is a Federal–State partnership that plans, facilitates, and conducts research to help resolve Illinois and regional water problems; promotes technology transfer; disseminates research applications; trains scientists through participation in research; and awards competitive grants under the Water Resources Research Act. We conduct and facilitate novel and interdisciplinary water sciences research that benefits the people, economy, and environment of Illinois, the Mississippi River basin, and the Great Lakes region. IWRC is dedicated to transformative research and technology in water sciences using team-based strategies to tackle grand societal challenges by the collaboration on national and international scales.

Funding Eligibility and Requirements

The advancement of full proposals to review is contingent upon the submission of a Notification of Intent by the designated deadline. Proposals must be submitted by faculty members or professionals affiliated with four-year institutions as principal investigator (PI). Students can be listed as co- PIs. Funds must be used to support a student’s project, not a student worker on a PI’s project. PIs will be required to provide documentation of committed matching funds. The U.S. Geological Survey **requires a 2:1 nonfederal to federal funds match**. The PIs’ salaries may, and is often, used for the match as long as they are not federal employees. The sponsor will **not** pay indirect costs; researchers are encouraged to use forfeited indirect costs as a portion of the required match.

Funding is for 12 months and the expected project period is **September 1, 2023, to August 31, 2024**. Funding availability and the funding timeline are determined by the U.S. Congress allocations process and may vary from year to year.

Federal employees may, and are encouraged to, collaborate with college or university investigators in this program. Federal employees may not serve as a PI, but may serve as a Co-PI. Federal employees and agencies may not receive federal funds for any purpose under these awards. Federal employees and agencies may not serve as a source of matching funds under these awards.

This program is designed as support for graduate students performing innovative research on water resources. Eligible expenses include salaries, research supplies, research travels, and publication costs.

Application Contents

Eligibility for submission of the full application is contingent upon submission of a Notification of Intent (NOI - 1 page and 4,000 character maximum) by the specified due date and time. The NOI will be used by IWRC to improve the review process for full applications. The NOI will not be used for application selection purposes, and does not commit an applicant to a full submission.

IWRC will not accept Notifications of Intent submitted after the deadline. Full proposals related to a late NOI or non-existent NOI will not be accepted or reviewed.

Each applicant must provide the following information as part of the Notification of Intent:

- Project Title
- Lead Organization
- Principal Investigator
- Priority Topic Area
- Abstract – The abstract provided should be limited to 200 words in length, and should provide a truncated explanation of the proposed project.

The form to complete a Notification of Intent can be found [here](#).

Full proposals can be submitted [here](#) and must consist of the following elements:

1. Basic Information

The cover page should:

- Include a title concisely describing the project.
- Identify one or more primary topics related to water resources including justification for the exploratory research/educational project from the following (in alphabetic order):
 - Agriculture
 - Climate and Hydrologic Processes
 - Ecosystem
 - Environmental Sustainability
 - Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS)
 - Urban Resilience
 - Water-Energy Nexus
 - *Water Equity** (research that examines the causes and impacts of water-related disparities, develops or evaluates tools or strategies to improve water equity, or provides scientific information to benefit underserved communities)

** Researchers involved in funded projects with an equity focus will be invited to join a Great Lakes Water Equity Research working group coordinated by the Water Resources Research Institutes in the Great Lakes region. The working group will organize member-driven activities that may include, but are not limited to: grant development workshops, conference special sessions, mini-conferences, special issue journal proposals, and coordinated communications to amplify research impacts. Funding for these activities will be provided directly by the Illinois Water Resources Center and should not be included in the project budget.*

- Choose up to 3 focus categories and 1 research category from [Attachment 1](#).
- Provide the names, academic rank, university/organization, email address, and phone numbers of the principal investigators.
- Identify the congressional district of the university/organization where the work will be conducted (e.g. IL-015).
- Provide a short, 300 word maximum, abstract.
- Provide a short summary (150 words or less) to describe the project to a lay audience.

2. Project Narrative

The two-page, single-spaced narrative should include a:

- Statement of exploratory research or educational needs and how the project will enhance water sciences research and higher education in Illinois.

- Statement of expected results or benefits specifying the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used. Include plans for dissemination of findings. Dissemination of findings targeting communities are of particular interest.
- Description of the nature, scope, and objectives of the project.
- Description of the methods, procedures, and facilities. Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objectives.
- List of students, in addition to the student listed as co-PI, who will receive training/education from this project. Please include degree level and briefly detail any training the students will receive.

Note: Literature citations are not included in the two-page limit.

3. Data Management Plan

Proposals must include a supplementary document of no more than two pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP). Attachment A may be used for guidance. This supplementary document should describe how the proposal will conform to U.S. Geological Survey policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. A valid DMP may include only a statement if no detailed plan is needed (e.g. "No data are expected to be produced from this project"), but such a statement must be accompanied by a clear justification.

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the U.S. Geological Survey Data Management website here: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans>

4. Budget and Justification

Please use the template accessible [here](#) to complete the budget breakdown.

Federal funds will pay up to \$15,000 for graduate students for work completed between **September 1, 2023, and August 31, 2024**. USGS does not allow federal dollars to pay indirect costs. However, the indirect costs on both the federal and state totals may be shown as match. IWRC grants require a match of two non-federal dollars for each federal dollar.

Please provide detailed justifications using this [template](#) of how money will be spent, including separate breakdowns for the federal request and the cost share portions of wage rates and fringe benefits for each category of personnel supported by the proposal (e.g. separate numbers for faculty members, post-docs, graduate students, and undergraduate students), cost of equipment, travel, and so on.

5. Investigators' Qualifications

The lead PI must be a faculty member or professional affiliated with a four-year institution in Illinois. Project participants, including undergraduate and graduate students, should include CVs. They should be included with the project narrative and are in addition to the two-page limit. CVs are limited to two pages per investigator and can list no more than 15 pertinent publications.

6. Matching Fund Commitment Letters and University Confirmation

A matching fund commitment letter signed by the PI's department or sponsored program's office should be submitted to verify that the matching funds will be supplied should the project be funded. See [Example](#).

Deliverables

- Grant recipients are automatically qualified as IWRC Fellows, which entitles them to promotion of research findings through the IWRC website (<https://iwrc.illinois.edu>), a part of the National Institutes for Water Resources network (<https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/index.php>).
- Grant recipients are expected to provide appropriate information needed to produce outreach materials such as a webinar or blog posts about the completed research. The type of information needed will be determined by the recipients and IWRC staff members.
- Publications, reports, and presentations resulting from this funding should be cited as follows:

This research was funded under the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act annual base grants (104b) program made possible and distributed through the Illinois Water Resources Center and United States Geological Survey.

- The grant recipient will be required to submit a final report by October 31, 2024. IWRC will post the report on the Center's website (<https://iwrc.illinois.edu>). **Failing to submit a timely report can disqualify PIs from receiving future funding from the National Institute of Water Resources and the U.S. Geological Survey.**

Selection Criteria

External technical reviewers will comment on the merit of proposals as outlined below. The IWRC director will consult members of the advisory board and IWRC staff to make final funding decisions based on reviewer scores and topical and geographic diversity of funded projects.

- **Technical and scholarly merit (25%):** The proposed project should reflect current research in the subject area. Proposals should indicate how the proposed work fits into and advances the current body of knowledge. Work that is likely to produce peer-reviewed publications or be presented at professional conferences or that is part of a larger body of work that will have scholarly application is desired for the graduate-level projects.
- **Research design (25%):** The experimental design should be sound and reasonable given budget and time constraints. If the proposed work is intended to start or complete a part of a larger body of work with other funding sources, those connections should be identified.
- **Importance to Illinois water and community resilience issues (25%):** Proposals should justify how and why the project addresses important environmental, economic, or societal community resilience issues in Illinois. Proposals should identify how management practices, policies, or other larger issues might be impacted by this work.
- **Development and leadership of young scientists (15%):** A key goal of IWRC funding is the education of young scientists. All projects should identify how students have and will contribute.
- **Preparation and knowledge of PI and partners (10%):** Research partners should have the technical and scientific skills to complete the proposed work.

Submission

Submit proposals by completing this [form](#) and uploading your proposal as a single PDF with a file name that includes the PI's last name. Original matching fund commitment letters must be included in the submission. The review process by IWRC is expected to be completed by early April 2023. Grant recipients will be notified via email.

Questions:

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