

IOWA'S WATER INFRASTRUCTURE FUND: WATERSHED PROTECTION PROJECTS

On Dec. 8, 2021, Gov. Kim Reynolds announced a historic \$100 million investment of federal American Rescue Plan Act funds for water infrastructure and water quality efforts. Of that, \$5 million was made available for nonpoint source Watershed Protection Projects that address water quality, and focus on green infrastructure and measures to control nonpoint source pollution from hydromodification. Applications for the program opened Dec. 15, 2021.

The maximum award per project is \$500,000 with a required 5% match, either financial or in-kind. Awards will be in the form of a non-recourse grant, and projects must be completed by June 30, 2026.

Applications will be reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis, and those that meet a minimum threshold score will be automatically funded. Thus, interested applicants should prioritize getting applications in as soon as possible.



Potential Projects

Focused on green infrastructure and controlling nonpoint source pollution from hydromodification (alteration of the natural flow of water), Watershed Protection Projects may include a number of structural practices. According to the Iowa Finance Authority and Environmental Protection Agency, such projects could include:

Hydromodification:

- Restoration of riparian buffers and flood plains
- Wetland or riparian area protection or restoration
- Conservation easements
- Swales
- Filter strips
- Shore erosion control
- Wetland development or restoration
- Bank or channel (grade) stabilization

Green Infrastructure:

- Bioretention
- Stormwater wetlands
- Permeable pavement
- Rain gardens
- Green roofs
- Vegetated swales

Terraces or agricultural drainage projects are not eligible for this funding.

Application Process

The application can be accessed at iowafinance.com/WaterInfrastructure in a PDF format. Completed applications can be sent by mail to: Iowa Finance Authority, Attn: Water Infrastructure Fund, 1963 Bell Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50315 or emailed to: WaterInfrastructure@IowaFinance.com

The application will require information such as:

- Contact information
- Estimated project costs
- Description of project
- Waterbody information
- If the project addresses a cause of an Impaired Water
- Any collaborators or partners involved

Attachments may include:

- Preliminary Engineering Report or Plans/Designs
- Maps
- Detailed project cost estimate, including source(s) of other funding
- Estimated project schedule/construction timeline
- Financial statements

Scoring Criteria

Applications will be scored on a variety of criteria, such as project readiness, if the project implements an existing Watershed Management or Source Water Protection Plan project, and if the project addresses public health or safety needs.

Projects scoring minimum of 100 points out of 150 will be funded on a rolling basis. For more information on scoring criteria, see the Iowa Finance Authority's scoring matrix on the next page.

Eligibility

Eligible applicants include both public and private entities, so long as they have control over the land on which the project will be implemented. For an entity such as a Watershed Management Authority (WMA), the WMA could apply for a watershed-wide project (such as a project blitz) with each jurisdiction that will host an individual project signing on, or jurisdictions within the WMA could apply for projects individually.

Eligible costs for reimbursement can include technical assessment, engineering/design, and construction costs.

Grant funds can only cover the State Revolving Fund-eligible water or sewer infrastructure costs of a project. For further information, refer to the Environment Protection Agency's (EPA) Clean Water State Revolving Fund and Drinking Water State Revolving Fund websites.

Funds can be used in conjunction with other sources, but only for the eligible part of the project; most Water Infrastructure Fund projects will not be eligible in conjunction with a State Revolving Loan Fund-funded infrastructure project. Generally, eligible infrastructure projects will not be subject to the Davis-Bacon Act, unless funds used in conjunction with other funds are subject to requirements.

Reporting

Grant recipients will be required to provide quarterly updates on project status, and to submit a final report to the Iowa Finance Authority when the project is finished and in operation.

More program information is available at iowafinance.com/WaterInfrastructure.

Water Infrastructure Fund

Scoring Matrix – Watershed Protection Projects



Applicant:

Project Name:

Eligible Clean Water SRF or Drinking Water SRF Project? Yes No

Scoring Criteria:	Points Possible	Project Score
Project readiness (40 points total)		
Project design completed	10	
Applicant has control of land//property required to complete the Project	10	
All funding sources have been identified/secured in order to complete the Project	10	
Construction is reasonably expected to begin within 6 months	10	
Project utilizes a practice identified in the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual (ISWMM) and designed according to the ISWMM guidelines OR practices in the Iowa Nutrient Reduction Strategy and designed according to Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) field office technical guide standards and specifications	20	
Project implements an existing Watershed Management or Source Water Protection Plan project	20	
Project restores existing habitat	10	
Project addresses public health and/or safety need(s)	10	
	100	0

Bonus Scoring Criteria:	Points Possible	Project Score
Application supporting documentation (design/plans, technical analysis, financials, etc.)	10	
More than 50% of funding from other sources (identify as part of application)	10	
Collaboration with stakeholder group(s) (identify/describe in application)	10	
Project is fully-compliant with unified sizing criteria in the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual to manage the Water Quality Volume, Channel Protection Volume, Overbank Flood Protection and Extreme Flood Protection*	10	
Project is located within a state-funded priority watershed**	10	
	50	0

TOTAL SCORE	Points Possible	Project Score
	0	0

* Pursuant to Section "3.01-4 Compliance" from pages 22-24 of the Iowa Stormwater Management Manual (https://www.iowadnr.gov/Portals/0/Portals/0/Downloads/water/stormwater/manual/iswmm_newchapter03-1.pdf)

** As maintained by Iowa Department of Natural Resources and Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (<https://iowaagriculture.gov/water-resources-bureau/iowa-watershed-projects>).