



INDIANA WATER RESOURCES RESEACH CENTER

ANNUAL RESEARCH GRANTS PROGRAM

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS FY2026

The Indiana Water Resources Research Center (IWRRC) invites faculty and affiliates from *Indiana's colleges and universities* to submit water related proposals for possible funding. The IWRRC grant program is supported via an annual base grant from the U.S. Department of Interior, U.S. Geological Survey, as part of the federal Water Resources Research Act of 1964 (Program 104b). This program provides a base of support for Indiana's water resource research needs.

Research Areas

The IWRRC grant program supports research in all areas of water research, especially identified Indiana water priorities which include (in alphabetical order) contaminants of emerging concern, downstream impacts of excess water extraction and water quality after water withdrawal, effects of Best Management Practices, emerging regional community threats, greenhouse gas emissions from built aquatic infrastructure, green infrastructure, Harmful Algal Blooms, hydrologic alteration in a changing climate, industrial capacity demand, invasive species, nutrient loading, water availability, and water reuse for data centers and industrial applications.

Project Title and Reviewers due to IWRRC
Wednesday, January 21, 2026 by 5PM Eastern

Full Proposal Due to IWRRC
Wednesday, January 28, 2026 by 5PM Eastern

For FY2026, the IWRRC is collaborating with the Indiana Water Resources Association and their focus on drinking water infrastructure and water demand changes. Therefore, the IWRRC anticipates funding at least one proposal focused on research related to water infrastructure and demand changes.

Projects that also incorporate concepts of water equity, including environmental justice and socioeconomic drivers related to water, such as identifying causes and impacts of water-related disparities, developing or evaluating tools or strategies to improve water quality or evaluate environmental justice, or providing scientific information to benefit underserved communities are also sought.

Funding Information:

We anticipate funding 3-4 research projects this year (each up to \$30,000), depending on the level of monetary requests. Each project will be subject to the following stipulations:

- Funds will be administered through the Indiana Water Resources Research Center
- All awards will be subject to the availability of federal funds. We have not received official notification for the levels of federal support in the 2026 program. As a result, the loss of the entire program, reductions in funding levels, and funding delays are possible.

Applicants must provide a **1:1 match in non-federal funds**. All indirect funds (F&A) must be waived but may be counted as match. Salaries, benefits, and other project-related expenses covered by other state or private sources may also be counted as match.

Project Period:

Grants will support one-year projects (Note that project extensions are not allowed by USGS for this program). The project year typically extends from **September 1, 2026 to August 31, 2027**. However, the start date has varied in recent years due to delays in funding from the U.S. Department of Interior.

Eligibility:

Researchers at any institution of higher education in Indiana are eligible for this annual grant competition.

Proposal Selection Criteria:

Research proposals will be competitively reviewed using an external peer review process. The reviewers will use the following criteria in assigning a final rank:

- 1) Technical merit, proposal quality, and feasibility (50%);
- 2) Applicability to Indiana's needs (15%);
- 3) Involvement of students (undergraduate/graduate) in research (20%); and
- 4) Capability of the PI(s) (15%).

Highly valued research projects will also include activities to disseminate information and results to the public.

Reporting Requirements:

All outputs of your 104b supported research must acknowledge both the USGS and IWRRC for the 104b grant opportunity. The IWRRC will provide you with the appropriate logos, upon request. Please use the following language to acknowledge IWRRC as a funding source:

This research was funded under the provisions of section 104 of the Water Resources Research Act of 1984, as amended, annual base (104B) grant award through the United States Geological Survey and distributed through the Indiana Water Resources Research Center, www.iwrirc.org.

Grant recipients are expected to contribute towards a fact sheet detailing their study findings and participate in the annual Indiana Water Resources Association Symposium. Grant recipients may also be asked to give a presentation during an IWRRC sponsored webinar.

Grant recipients will be required to provide annual performance reports that consist of the following components (a template will be provided):

- A project summary (around 250 words) describing major findings and implications/impact of the project.
- Publications - a list of reports, journal articles, data sets, and other products published during the reporting period.
- Information Transfer - a description of activities including, education and outreach workshops, citizen science, conference presentations, social media, or other activities.

Annual performance report components, continued...

- Student Support - the number of students within each category (undergraduate, MS, PhD, post-doc) supported by the project funding and those supported by non-federal (match) funds.
- Interaction with USGS - a summary of your project's direct collaboration with USGS staff.
- Notable Achievements and Awards a description of awards, grants, and/or achievements resulting from work with project funds and non-federal matching funds.
- One or more publication quality photo(s) of project-related work (and/or student(s) performing such work).

Follow-up reporting will be requested to collect information on publications and other outcomes that result from this project in subsequent years.

Proposal Format Guidelines:

Each proposal must contain the information outlined in the Proposal Narrative and Attachments 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5. Please note page number, font and margin limits in the Proposal Narrative. All research proposals must have each section identified in the Proposal Narrative and be in the same order. Any research proposal that is not formatted correctly will not be eligible for funding. All other Attachments should be included.

Submission Requirements:

Title and Reviewers: For research proposals, please send your project title and a list of names and email addresses for four reviewers within your field of expertise to **Ms. Laura Esman** (lesman@purdue.edu) **no later than 5:00PM Eastern on Wednesday, January 21, 2026**. Your four reviewers should include: (1) out of state academic, (2) in state academic, and (3) two reviewers of your choice. Please include their title (e.g., Dr., Mr., Ms., etc.).

Proposal Submission:

Please send an electronic copy of the completed research proposal (MS-Word document only, not in PDF format) to **Dr. Keith Cherkauer** (cherkaue@purdue.edu) and **Ms. Laura Esman** (lesman@purdue.edu) **no later than 5:00PM Eastern on Wednesday, January 28, 2026**. (Indicate the PI's NAME- IWRRC 2025 proposal in the header.) We will respond with an email once we receive your submission. If you do not receive a confirmation email within 24 hours of your submission, please contact Laura Esman (email or phone) to let her know.

More information:

IWRRC: <https://iwrrc.org/>

USGS: <https://water.usgs.gov/wrri/index.php>

Questions:

Laura Esman, Managing Director

lesman@purdue.edu; 765.496.3135

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

Each proposal must fit on no more than 5 pages including figures and graphs, but not including references. Use 1-inch margins all around and 12 pt font. The proposal narrative must include (please also include the heading for each section):

Title: Concise but descriptive

Principal Investigator(s): Provide name(s) and university of any PI(s)

Project Title: IN_2026_enter last name of PI

Project Type: (Choose one) Research, Information Transfer, Education, Other (please specify).

Congressional District: The district of the university where the work is to be conducted

WRI Science Priorities: Choose from the following the one category that most closely applies - Water Scarcity and Availability, Water Hazards and Climate Variability, Water Quality, Water Policy, Planning, and Socioeconomics, Watershed and Ecosystem Function, Water Technology and Innovation, or Workforce Development and Water Literacy.

USGS Cross-Discipline Landscape and Science Descriptors:

Landscapes (choose one): Great Lakes, Upper Mississippi Basin, None.

Science Topic (choose one): Climate, Energy, HABs, Indiana Water Rights, Natural Hazards, Oceans/Coastal/Great Lakes, STEM, Water Challenges, Other.

Keywords: Choose a maximum of three focus categories from Attachment 1.

Training Potential: Estimate the number of graduate and undergraduate students, by degree level, who are expected to receive training from this project.

Principal Investigator(s): Provide name, academic rank, university, email address, and phone number of the principal investigator(s).

Project Start Date: September 1, 2026

Project End Date: August 31, 2027

Abstract: Provide a brief (300 word) description of the problem, methods, and objectives.

Plain Language Summary: Provide a brief (150 word) description of the study that is understandable to the public.

Statement of regional or state water problem: Include explanation of the need for the project, who wants it, and why.

Statement of results or benefits: Specify the type of information that is to be gained and how it will be used.

PROPOSAL NARRATIVE (CONTINUED)

Nature, scope, and objectives of the project, including a timeline of activities.

Methods, procedures, and facilities: Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objectives.

Related research: (*Research projects only*) Provide context for the proposed work in terms of previous and ongoing research, including citations.

Expected deliverables: Include information dissemination plan.

Past IWRRC funding: If you have received IWRRC funds in the past, how have you leveraged the projects/funds that were supported by IWRRC and what were your accomplishments?

ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED: (not included in 5 page limit)

References cited.

Investigator's qualifications: Include short (no more than 2 pages) biographical sketches of the principal investigator(s).

Budget Summary—Attachment 2

Budget Justification—Attachment 3 (see example of well detailed budget justification)

Data Management Plan—Attachment 4

Required Statements and copy of your institution's rate agreement—Attachment 5

Documentation of institutional approval of the proposal (submit as .pdf)

Matching fund commitment letter signed by authorized institutional official (submit as .pdf)

SF-424 (submit as .pdf)

FISCAL GUIDELINES. The proposal budgets must reflect a \$1 non-federal match for each federal dollar requested. Please contact your college pre-award for details but the match may include actual contributions, in-kind contributions and overhead costs. (Indirect costs may not be charged on the *federal* funding request in this program, although the match may include the indirect costs forgiven on the federal dollars.)