

# **Applicant's Guide to Idaho's Public Drinking Water Facilities Planning Grant Program**

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**State of Idaho  
Department of Environmental Quality  
Water Quality Division, Grants and Loans Program  
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## List of Forms

- Form A:     *Grant Application Form*
- Form B:     *Authorizing Resolution* (Word document)
- Form C:     *Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement* (Excel format)
- Form 5-A:    *Outline and Checklist for Planning Documents (Eng. Report/Facility Plan)*
- Form 5-B:    *DEQ Environmental Review Procedure for Projects Funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program*
- Form 5-C:    *SERP Scoping Meeting*
- Form 5-D:    *Categorical Exclusion Checklist*
- Form 5-E:    *Outline and Checklist for Environmental Information Documents*

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## Introduction

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provides financial assistance to owners of eligible public drinking water systems in Idaho through its Drinking Water Planning Grant Program. The program funds facility planning projects designed to ensure safe and adequate supplies of drinking water.

DEQ awards grants to develop planning and environmental documents that identify the most cost-effective, environmentally sound method of upgrading public drinking water systems to achieve and maintain compliance with state and federal standards. A planning document may be a facility plan or engineering report.

DEQ determines which prospective planning efforts will best protect public health and promote sustainable infrastructure through a prioritization process. The number of grants offered each year is limited to available funding. The funds are committed to the highest priority projects. Grants provide funding for up to 50% of eligible planning costs, with the grantee providing a matching share.

This guide summarizes drinking water planning grant procedures and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Detailed requirements are given in the "Rules for Administration of Planning Grants for Drinking Water Facilities" (IDAPA 58.01.22).

## Part 1: Eligibility

Drinking water planning grants are available to owners of two types of public water systems: community water systems and nonprofit, noncommunity water systems. A public water system provides water for human consumption through pipes or other conveyances.

- A *community* water system serves at least 15 service connections used by year-round residents or regularly serves at least 25 year-round residents.
- A *noncommunity* water system is a public water system that is not a community water system. This type of system serves the public but does not serve the same people year-round. A noncommunity water system is either transient or nontransient.
  - A *nonprofit, noncommunity* water system is a public drinking water system that is not a community water system and is governed by Section 501 of the Internal Revenue Code and includes, but is not limited to, state agencies, municipalities, and nonprofit organizations such as churches and schools.
  - A *transient noncommunity* water system does not regularly serve at least 25 of the same people for more than 6 months per year (e.g., rest area or campground with its own water supply).
  - A *nontransient, noncommunity* water system is a noncommunity water system that regularly serves at least 25 of the same people more than 6 months per year but not year-round (e.g., a school or hospital with its own water supply).

These classifications include most systems owned by Idaho municipalities, special water districts, and associations.

Owners of the following public drinking water systems are not eligible for project planning grants:

- A system that lacks the financial capability to pay the nongrant share of a planning project.
- A system that is delinquent in payment of the annual state drinking water fee assessment.

## Part 2: Priority List Process

Table 1 presents a step-by-step description of the process by which projects are placed on the state's Drinking Water Planning Grant Priority List and subsequently receive and use planning grant funds. A priority list is prepared in the fiscal year prior to the year it is funded. The state fiscal year runs from July 1 through June 30.

**Table 1. Priority list process.**

Step	Description	Timeline
1	<b>DEQ solicits interest from owners of public water systems.</b> DEQ mails a notice to owners of all eligible community and nonprofit, noncommunity public water system owners in the state to solicit interest in applying for a planning grant and to be included on a priority list. Interested owners are directed to fill out a letter of interest (LOI) form in this notification. The blank LOI form is available on DEQ's website.	Annually in October
2	<b>System owner indicates interest.</b> The system owner completes and returns the LOI form to DEQ (generally by mid-January). Paper or electronic submissions are accepted.	11–12 weeks after receiving solicitation letter
3	<b>DEQ regional engineers evaluate submission of LOIs.</b> The regional offices provide an initial review of LOIs submitted to ensure all the necessary information has been submitted for accurate point allocation. Rating criteria focus on potential public health risks and the status of a system's compliance with state and federal regulations. (See <i>Part 3</i> : for more information on the priority rating system.)	Up to deadline date
4	<b>DEQ State Office and regional offices rate LOIs.</b> The State and Regional Offices review LOIs in a collaborative effort to ensure statewide consistency. The projects are then ranked for inclusion on the next annual priority list.	3-4 weeks following step 3
5	<b>DEQ State Office solicits public review and comment.</b> DEQ publishes notice of the priority list in major newspapers around the state and places the list on DEQ's website, soliciting comments from the public. The comment period lasts approximately 30 days.	4 weeks following step 4
6	<b>DEQ State Office matches priority projects to available funding.</b> Substantive public comments are considered and addressed. Public comments and ratings are used to identify top-ranked priority projects for which funding are available.	Immediately after public comment period
7	<b>DEQ Board acts upon priority list and projects.</b> The Idaho Board of Environmental Quality reviews and acts upon the proposed priority list and proposed fundable projects.	At the next Board meeting after the public comment period ends

## Part 3: DEQ's Priority Rating System

Prospective planning projects are evaluated, rated, and ranked by DEQ (*Part 2*, steps 3 and 4) for inclusion on the next annual priority list based on the intention of the planning effort to address the following criteria:

- *Public health hazards*: any public health emergency or hazard certified by the Idaho Board of Environmental Quality, DEQ, a district health department, or a district board of health
- *Regulatory compliance issues*: noncompliance and resulting legal actions relating to infrastructure deficiencies at a permitted facility
- *Sustainability*: a system's efforts at energy conservation, water conservation, extending the life of capital assets, green building practices, and other environmentally innovative approaches to infrastructure repair, replacement, and improvement

## Part 4: Grant Application Process

Owners of systems on the fundable planning projects priority list are issued invitations to apply for a grant. Invitations are normally issued shortly after Board approval of the priority list each year. Table 2 details the steps in the grant application and award process.

**Table 2. Grant application process.**

Step	Description	Timeline
1	<b>DEQ State Office mails invitations to system owners requesting submittal of a grant application.</b> DEQ mails invitations to submit grant applications to systems in descending order on the Board-approved priority list as long as funding is available.	Prior to start of new fiscal year that begins July 1
2	<b>System owner responds to grant application invitation.</b> The system owner notifies DEQ that it wishes to apply for a planning grant. Systems owners that fail to respond within the allotted time may be bypassed.	Within 30 days of receipt of invitation
3	<b>Preapplication Meeting.</b> DEQ meets with the system owner to provide an overview of the application and requirements for a Facility Plan and environmental review as part of the planning grant (see <i>Error! Reference source not found.</i> for further details).	Within 30 days of receipt of invitation
4	<b>System owner selects a professional engineer.</b> If the applicant has not acquired the services of a licensed professional engineer at this point, then it must contract with or hire such an engineer to assist with completing the planning document. For public agencies and municipalities, the process for selecting an engineer must be consistent with Idaho Code 67-2320. (See <i>Part 6</i> : for guidance on selecting a professional engineer.) The selection process may be completed concurrently with preparing the application package.	Recommend selecting an engineer as early in the process as possible.

5	<p><b>System owner and professional engineer prepare and submit application package.</b></p> <p>The system owner completes the <i>Drinking Water Planning Grant Application</i> and related documents, including a scope of work prepared by a professional engineer. (See <a href="#">Part 5</a>: for a complete listing and explanation of required application documents.)</p> <p>The system owner submits the application package to the DEQ State Office by the scheduled target date. A project that does not meet the target date may be bypassed and replaced by the next highest-ranking project that is ready to proceed.</p>	<p>Within 90 days from date of invite or by specified date set by the DEQ State Office</p>
6	<p><b>DEQ reviews application.</b></p> <p>DEQ reviews the application for eligibility and completeness. DEQ regional office engineers review scope of work and engineering contract.</p>	<p>As scheduled</p>
7	<p><b>DEQ State Office extends grant offer.</b></p> <p>Grant offers are prepared and signed by the DEQ director or the director's designee, executing a grant contract agreement subject to all applicable state laws. The offer is sent to successful applicants by certified mail.</p>	<p>As needed</p>
8	<p><b>System owner reviews and accepts grant offer.</b></p> <p>The system owner or authorized representative reviews and officially accepts the grant offer. To accept, the authorized representative of the qualifying entity signs and returns the grant offer to the DEQ State Office within 60 days of the offer being initially signed by DEQ or by the date specified in the offer. If the system owner does not accept the grant offer within the allotted time period, the offer may be withdrawn, and grant funds may be offered to the next project on the priority list.</p>	<p>Within 60 days of grant offer being signed or before the date specified in the offer</p>

## Part 5: Application Package Requirements

Owners of systems with fundable planning projects on the priority list are issued invitations to apply for a grant. Invitations are normally issued shortly after the Board approves the draft priority list each year.

All completed application packages shall include the following documents:

- Signed Drinking Water Planning Grant Application (Form A)
- Authorizing Resolution (Form B)
- Signed engineering contract
- Engineering scope of work
- Engineer's professional liability declaration page
- If a grant administrator or outside consultant is used to conduct the environmental review, a copy of the contract must be included.

The following information must also be attached from incorporated applicants:

- Articles of incorporation and/or certificate of incorporation
- By-laws
- Certificate of existence from the Idaho Secretary of State



Forms A and B must be filled out by applicants and included with the application package. Three forms are used by grantees (successful applicants are now referred to as grantees) and their consultants after the grant has been awarded:

- Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement (Form C)
- Outline and Checklist for Planning Documents (Form 5-A of the *Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook*)
- DEQ Environmental Review Procedure for Projects Funded through the Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) Loan Program (Form 5-B of the *Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook*)

**The following directions are provided to assist owners of systems in properly completing the documents required as part of the application package. The headings below correspond to those found on Form A.**

## **Drinking Water Planning Grant Application (Form A)**

Use Form A to provide the following information:

### **Preapplication Meeting Date**

The preapplication meeting provides grant applicants and DEQ an opportunity to discuss the grant program and its requirements. This recommended meeting can be face-to-face or by conference call. A DEQ regional project officer and other DEQ representatives, the grant applicant, and the applicant's consulting engineer should participate in the meeting to discuss the following topics:

- Drinking water grant program
- Grant application process
- Roles and responsibilities of all parties
- Purpose of the planning documents and environmental review
- Key environmental issues and the types of documentation appropriate for the project

### **Section I: Background Information**

- **Applicant**
  - Full name of the community or nonprofit, noncommunity water system
  - Public water system identification number
  - System mailing address
- **Presiding Official**
  - Full name and title of the authorized signatory
  - Authorized signatory's mailing address
- **Clerk/Treasurer**
  - Name and title of a contact person in the community who is able to answer questions about the proposed project (can be someone other than city clerk or treasurer)
- **Consulting Engineer**
  - Name and title of the project engineer and engineering firm
  - If the applicant changes engineers at any time throughout the project, promptly notify DEQ.

- **Environmental Document Preparer (if different than the Consulting Engineer)**
  - Name of the EID preparer and company
  - If the environmental documentation is prepared by a firm other than the engineering firm, include a copy of the contract with the application.
- **Grant Administrator (if different than the Consulting Engineer)**
  - Name of the grant firm and grant administrator
  - If a grant administrator is used, include a copy of the grant administrator contract with the application.
- **Description of Project**
- **Public Water System Type**
  - Only systems eligible under IDAPA 58.01.22.010.26 will be approved for funding.

## **Section II: Budget Information**

### **A. Calculation of Total Eligible Planning Cost**

Segregate grant-eligible costs into appropriate categories and indicate project-specific amounts in the right-hand column of the budget sheet. Engineering fees generally comprise the major cost of planning grants.

- Grant-related local administrative costs incurred after the grant contract agreement is executed may be eligible for reimbursement. Grant-related local (i.e., the steps necessary to complete the application process) administrative costs incurred prior to execution of the grant contract agreement are ineligible for reimbursement. Three examples of ineligible costs are the costs associated with acquiring funding; the ordinary operating expenses of local government, such as salaries and expenses of a mayor, city council members, or city attorney; and the costs to prepare a grant application. See *Part 7*: for a complete list of eligible and ineligible costs.

### **B. Proposed Financing of Total Planning Cost**

Provide a breakdown of the funding sources to be used to finance the entire planning effort.

### **C. Proposed Methods of Financing of Nonstate Share**

Explain how the owner's share of project costs will be financed, including financing methods and amounts. If applicable, also identify other sources of funding.

## **Section III: Environmental Review**

State whether the review will be included in the planning process.

- If "yes," the applicant must input how much of the planning cost will be used to develop the environmental documentation.
- If "no," the applicant must initial three informational statements.

If the environmental review has been waived, the grant funds may still be used for conducting an environmental assessment. If the applicant intends to apply for federal funding for improvements to their system, the environmental review is necessary to qualify.

## **Section IV: Engineering**

### **A. Engineering Contract**

Attach a copy of the engineering contract between the engineering firm and applicant. The contract must be signed and accepted by the applicant. Check the appropriate boxes under item 2. All boxes should be checked. Note: the last two boxes may remain unchecked if the grant applicant did not claim sustainability efforts as part of submitted letter of interest or if environmental documentation will not be completed.

Attach a copy of the engineering scope of work. The scope of work should address all applicable items listed in Forms 5-A and 5-B, as outlined on the application form.

### **B. Certification of Negotiations**

If the system is owned by a public agency or a political subdivision, as defined in Idaho Code 67-2320, certify full compliance for securing said professional services and the scope of work for the planning effort by initialing the three statements.

### **C. Proof of Professional Liability**

Attach a copy of the engineering firm's affidavit of professional liability. This document verifies indemnification in the aggregate amount of at least \$100,000 or twice the amount of the engineering firm's fee, whichever is greater, and covers all services rendered for all project steps funded by the state, system, or other entity during the entire period the engineer is working for the system.

## **Section V: Incorporated Nonprofit Applicants**

Municipalities may skip this section. All other applicants must check the box to indicate they are a nonprofit applicant. If applicants mark "yes," they must provide a copy of their by-laws, articles of incorporation or certificate of incorporation, and certificate of existence. A certificate of existence can be ordered on the Idaho Secretary of State's website under the applicant's business filing.

## **Section VI: Assurances**

Provide assurances of compliance, legal authority, and funding with signature by an authorized representative.

### **Authorizing Resolution (Form B)**

Submit an authorizing resolution approved by the applicant's governing body according to its by-laws, empowering an elected official or board member to commit matching funds and to sign all documents related to the DEQ grant for the planning project. Form B is a sample authorizing resolution that may be used to meet this requirement. If the authorizing signer changes during the planning effort, a new Form B must be sent to the DEQ State Office. DEQ recommends allowing more than one person to sign documents in the event of an absence by the primary signatory.

## Part 6: Professional Engineer Selection

The grant applicant must select a licensed professional engineer to conduct drinking water planning projects funded by DEQ planning grants ([http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/956395-how\\_to\\_hire\\_engineer\\_pws\\_pwws\\_design\\_modification.pdf](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/media/956395-how_to_hire_engineer_pws_pwws_design_modification.pdf)). This section summarizes the procedures and requirements for selecting a professional engineer and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Detailed requirements for public agencies and municipalities are given in Idaho Code 67-2320. To meet federal funding requirements, Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) firms should be solicited. Consult with DEQ about this requirement. DEQ recommends that entities not governed by Idaho Code 67-2320 (i.e., nonprofit corporations) use a competitive selection process. If any professional services are being provided by DBEs, additional reporting at the loan stage is required.

The grant applicant may prefer to have the environmental review conducted by someone other than the engineering firm. In that case, this process should be followed separately for both the planning document and environmental document (unless the consulting engineer subcontracts the environmental effort).

### Step 1: When to begin

DEQ recommends system owners begin the engineering selection process immediately upon receiving the invitation to submit a grant application, if they have not previously engaged the services of an engineer. It may be advantageous to complete the selection process before submitting the application package, to provide the opportunity for the selected engineer to assist in completing the Letter of Interest and application package.

### Step 2: Competitive process

The standard method of selecting a professional service provider is to develop a request for qualifications (RFQ) and solicit a statement of qualifications from prospective engineers. Engineering candidates should submit qualifications directly to the applicant. To ensure a competitive process, qualifications from at least two engineers should be considered (when a competitive process is required).

### Step 3: Minimum qualifications

In addition to their technical capabilities, the engineer and the engineering firm selected by the grant applicant must meet **all** of the following minimum qualifications to be considered for work on a DEQ planning grant project:

- Must be registered as a professional engineer and currently licensed by the Idaho Board of Licensure of Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors
- Cannot be debarred or otherwise prevented from providing services under another federal or state financial assistance program
- Must be covered by professional liability insurance for errors and omissions in the aggregate amount of at least \$100,000 or twice the amount of the engineering firm's fee, whichever is greater, and for indemnifying services rendered for all project steps funded by the state, system, or other entity during the entire period the engineer is working for the system

System owners may require prospective engineers to document compliance with the minimum qualifications by submitting photocopies of licensure documents and signed statements of professional status. The professional status of an engineer also may be verified through the Idaho Board of Licensure of Professional Engineers and Professional Land Surveyors at <http://ipels.idaho.gov/rostersearch.cfm>.

Prospective engineers should also provide certificates of insurance.

#### **Step 4: Evaluation of qualifications**

System owners evaluate and rank engineering firms according to their qualifications. A public agency or political subdivision is forbidden by Idaho Code 67-2320(2)(i) from using information about an engineering firm's rates, overhead, or multipliers in ranking the firms.

#### **Step 5: Negotiations with selected engineer**

The grant applicants/system owners may consider the following items when selecting the engineering candidate (or top-rated candidates):

- Scope and extent of work and other essential requirements
- Personnel and facilities necessary to accomplish the work within the required time, including employment of additional personnel when needed
- Technical services required to complete the project according to regulations and criteria established for the project
- A fair and reasonable price for the required work, considering the estimated value, scope, complexity, and nature of the engineering services to be provided

## **Part 7: Project Funding (Eligible Costs)**

Grant funds awarded under this program must be used entirely to prepare a planning document identifying the most cost-effective drinking water system alternative to achieve or maintain compliance with the "Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems" (IDAPA 58.01.08) and the federal Safe Drinking Water Act.

Grants are limited to 50% of total eligible project costs. Eligible costs may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Salaries, benefits, and expendable material that the qualified entity incurs during the project except for ordinary expenses of local government such as salaries and expenses of a mayor, city council members, board, or a city, district, or board attorney
- Professional and consulting services using any type of contract for engineering services directly related to planning public drinking water treatment, storage, and distribution facilities including, but not limited to, preparing a planning document and environmental review
- Financial, technical, and management capability analyses
- Public participation during alternative selection process
- Site acquisition services, which may include legal fees, appraisals, and surveys for land associated with the cost-effective alternative for future land purchases but does not include the cost of the land itself. Related costs must be incurred through dealings with a willing seller.

- Closed-circuit television inspection of pipelines
- Source water protection activities

The following costs are ineligible for funding:

- Basin- or area-wide planning not directly related to the project
- Personal injury compensation or damages arising out of the project
- Fines or penalties due to violations of, or failure to comply with, federal, state, or local laws
- Costs outside the scope of the approved project
- Ordinary operating expenses of local government, such as salaries and expenses of a mayor, city council members, or city attorney
- Grant application preparation and other costs associated with acquiring funding
- All costs related to assessment, defense, and settlement of disputes (unless specifically allowed by DEQ)
- Costs of supplying required permits or waivers
- Costs incurred prior to award of the grant unless specifically approved in writing as eligible preaward costs by DEQ
- Engineering costs incurred prior to approval of the engineering contract or in excess of the contract ceiling unless preapproved in writing by DEQ
- Land acquisition and associated costs other than those listed as eligible above
- Pilot test wells

## Part 8: Planning Document Process

An applicant will prepare the planning document after receiving and accepting a grant offer. Table 3 describes the planning document process.

**Table 3. Planning document preparation process.**

Step	Description	Timeline
1	<p><b>DEQ, the system owner, and the engineer consult on drafting of planning document.</b></p> <p>The appropriate DEQ regional staff consults with the system owner and system owner's engineer on planning document content. Consultations continue throughout planning document preparation.</p>	As scheduled
2	<p><b>System engineer prepares the draft planning document.</b></p> <p>System owners must complete a planning document conforming with IDAPA 58.01.08 and 58.01.22 et seq. and Chapter 5 of the <i>Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook</i>. System owners should also refer to the Outline and Checklist for Planning Documents (Form 5-A) to ensure compliance. A DEQ regional office engineer reviews and approves (once all the conditions have been met) this technical planning document for public comment to prepare for step 3 while the system owner is also developing the environmental documentation. Environmental documentation is not required when the owner elects to opt out of the environmental review. This is an option when SRF or federal funding is not pursued. In this instance, the technically approved planning document is considered complete. See <a href="#">Part 9</a> for additional details on preparing the draft planning document.</p>	Within 2 years of the grant offer unless extension approved

Step	Description	Timeline
3	<b>Scoping meeting with Environmental Review Process.</b> For applicants looking to go forward with SRF or federal funding, an environmental review on the selected alternatives should be completed. See <i>Part 10</i> : for additional details on the scoping meeting.	Prior to public comment period
4	<b>System owner solicits public review and comment (only if they are also developing environmental documentation).</b> For applicants developing an environmental document, at least one public informational meeting must be held within the system's jurisdiction. See <i>Part 10</i> : step 2, for details on public review of and comment on the planning document for system owners developing the environmental document. System owners that are not preparing an environmental documentation are not held to public participation requirements.	As scheduled
5	<b>System owner revises the technical planning document.</b> After incorporating public comment, where appropriate and if applicable revising the final planning document, it is then submitted to the DEQ regional office engineer for review and approval. In most cases, no technical revisions are needed. Contact DEQ if a revision is needed.	As scheduled

## Part 9: Preparing the Planning Document

As noted in Table 3, system owners must complete a planning document to conform with IDAPA 58.01.22 et seq. and Chapter 5 of the *Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook*. If a project does not include environmental documentation, then the planning document is reviewed consistent with the “Idaho Rules for Public Drinking Water Systems” (IDAPA 58.01.08) with the goal of producing an approved planning document. No public input is required.

If a project does include environmental documentation, then the requirements are different. The purpose of a planning document that includes the environmental evaluation is not only to evaluate feasible treatment and collection alternatives for the system but also to determine the cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative (generally as a precondition to obtaining federal funding).

A planning document that includes an environmental evaluation is considered completed after the planning document has been technically approved for public comment. Before the alternatives have been determined (during the planning document process), the consulting engineer will contact the DEQ State Environmental Review Process (SERP) coordinator for a scoping meeting. During the scoping meeting, the level of agency consultation and documentation for each alternative will be discussed and may be settled upon. If the affected community includes a population identified with Limited English Proficiency (LEP), then a second public notice will also inform the engineer of the public review and comment requirements. At the end of the public review, the city council, board, or association officially selects an alternative. At this point, environmental documentation development will have begun. See *Part 10*: for details on formal selection of the final alternative upon the detailed environmental evaluation will be performed.

The technically approved planning document will be amended according to the public comment, and the environmental review information will be added to form the final planning document.

The system owner and their engineer should refer to the Outline and Checklist for Planning Documents (Form 5-A) as guidance when developing the planning document. At a minimum, the draft planning document should include the following:

- Description of existing conditions for the proposed project area
- Description of future conditions for the proposed project area
- Development and initial screening of alternatives
- Planning period of 20 years for all facilities except collection systems, which must be for 40 years
- Evaluation of principal alternatives and recommendation of final alternative
- Recommended alternative description and implementation arrangements
- Relevant engineering data supporting the recommended alternative

If the system owner stated they would address a sustainability component in their Letter of Interest, then the planning document must address those factors. Sustainability can include efforts for energy and water conservation, extending the life of the capital assets, green building practices, and other environmentally innovative approaches to infrastructure repair, replacement, and improvement.

Completing the planning document typically takes approximately 2 years; however, it can take longer. If a deadline extension is needed to complete the planning document and/or environmental documentation, a written request for an extension must be submitted explaining action items to be completed and time frames for completing those items. The additional time should not exceed 2 years from the initial deadline.



## Part 10: Environmental Review and Determination

Table 4 describes the steps for completing the process resulting in an environmental determination. This table is a general guide for the environmental review. For additional information and a more detailed process, see Form 5-B.

**Table 4. Environmental information document preparation process.**

Step	Description	Timeline
1	<p><b>Consultation with DEQ = Scoping meeting</b></p> <p>When the Draft Facility Plan is completed or in review, contact DEQ to discuss environmental review requirements.</p> <p>The applicant shall initiate the environmental review process early in the planning document development process with DEQ to identify important environmental issues, avoid delays, and discuss direction.</p> <p>An important benefit of early consultation with DEQ is the possible determination that a <b>categorical exclusion</b> is appropriate without additional substantive environmental review or supporting documentation. In cases where a categorical exclusion with no supporting documentation is determined to be appropriate early in the planning process, the planning document need only include the minimum environmental information called for in the engineering report outline.</p> <p>The scoping meeting is held with the following in mind:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What alternatives are being considered?</li> <li>• What agencies have been or will be funding the project? If other agencies are involved, what will be required?</li> <li>• Will this project be funded with DEQ recapitalization dollars?</li> <li>• Screening-level environmental data</li> <li>• Public participation—when will the public meeting be held?</li> <li>• Timelines (if known)</li> </ul>	Prior to the selection of an alternative
2	<p><b>Public Meeting and Selection of Alternative</b></p> <p>Loan applicants conduct a <b>public meeting</b> prior to formal adoption of a facility plan to discuss the proposed facility, the selected alternative, environmental impacts, and any needed mitigation measures.</p> <p>The minimum required public participation activities include broadly disseminated public notice, at least a 14-day public comment period for the list of alternatives identified in the planning document and a public meeting. One public meeting can satisfy the public participation requirements for both the environmental review and the planning document if properly coordinated.</p> <p>At the end of the comment period, the city council, board, or association officially selects an alternative.</p> <p>For specific public participation guidance, see the Outline and Checklist for Environmental Information Documents (Form 5-E of the <i>Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook</i> and Form 5-B, section L).</p>	As scheduled
3	<p><b>Agency Consultation</b></p> <p>If agency consultation is deemed necessary, DEQ can provide a list of all agency officials to be provided project information to request input (<a href="http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/grants-loans/environmental-review/">http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/grants-loans/environmental-review/</a>). Agencies have no more than 30 days to provide comment.</p>	24 months of execution of grant contract agreement

Step	Description	Timeline
4	<p><b>Documentation</b></p> <p>The environmental documentation can be developed as a chapter or appendix of the planning document or as a stand-alone document. This document is developed after the public comment period for the technically approved planning document has been completed, and the community has officially selected an alternative.</p> <p>In cases where a categorical exclusion is determined to be the most likely decision, but supporting documentation was needed to verify that determination, the planning document needs to include appropriate documentation as specified by DEQ.</p> <p>In cases when a categorical exclusion is not appropriate, the applicant shall begin scoping the content of an Environmental Information Document (EID) early in the planning document development process.</p> <p>If the project is complex and it appears there will be significant impacts, then an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) may be required. (See Form 5-B).</p>	24 months of execution of grant contract agreement
5	<p><b>DEQ State Office Review</b></p> <p>The environmental documentation (where required) is submitted to the DEQ State Office SERP coordinator to review and issue an environmental determination. DEQ reviews the potentially significant environmental impacts, environmental consequences, and mitigation efforts related to the selected project alternative.</p>	As scheduled
6	<p><b>DEQ State Office Issues Determination and Solicits Public Comment.</b></p> <p>Each type of environmental determination has different public participation requirements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Concurrence with another agency's finding—no public comment requirement; public notice in the newspaper of record.</li> <li>• Categorical Exclusion—public notice published one time in the newspaper of record (no public comment required).</li> <li>• Finding of No Significant Impact—public notice of a one-time publication in the newspaper of record and a 30-day public comment period.</li> <li>• Where significant impacts are identified, DEQ will evaluate.</li> </ul> <p>Public notice is defined for the purpose of the environmental review process as publication in a newspaper of community-wide circulation. Public notice will also be made by direct mailing to affected persons and agencies on the project mailing list.</p>	1–5 weeks
7	<p><b>DEQ State Office Issues Final Determination.</b></p> <p>The decision verifying the final environmental determination is issued following the end of the public comment period (if applicable) and the incorporation or consideration of substantive comments received from the public. The technical planning document approved for public comment and the final environmental determination together become the final planning document.</p>	As scheduled

## Part 11: Preparing the Environmental Information Document

When a system owner is receiving and/or anticipating federal funding from DEQ and a project has been reviewed and determined ineligible for categorical exclusion, an EID is required as part of the planning grant. The purpose of the EID is to determine if construction of the proposed project as planned is likely to substantively impact sensitive environmental resources. The EID must be completed in compliance with IDAPA 58.01.22 et seq. and should be completed following the referenced Form 5-E of the *Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook*.

The selected alternative will determine what direction or type of determination will be needed for the documentation. The scoping meeting held during the planning document process will lay the groundwork for the documentation required. Any outstanding or irregular environmental issues (need for surveys or consultations) or LEP barriers would have been discussed and incorporated into the final environmental documentation.

Once the community has selected an alternative, the system owner or the EID preparer may need to consult with the appropriate state and/or federal agencies having official jurisdiction over the environmental resources. If negative impacts to sensitive environmental resources are identified that are not addressed via an independent permitting or regulatory authority, the level of environmental review required will increase accordingly. Adverse impacts resulting from the project and associated mitigation measures must be included in the EID submittal to DEQ.

The system owner and their consulting engineer should refer to Form 5-E of the *Drinking Water Loan Account Handbook* as guidance. The documentation may include all of the following:

- Purpose and need for proposed action
- Alternatives identified in the planning document
- Comparison of alternatives, including (1) the cursory broad-brush environmental screening level analysis and (2) cost comparisons of each alternative
- Detailed information on the recommended alternative
- Description of the affected environment
- Discussion of environmental impacts of the proposed action
- Findings regarding possible adverse effects and recommendations regarding resolution and mitigation as made by consulting agencies, if necessary
- Means to mitigate adverse environmental impacts, if necessary
- Discussion and supporting documentation of the public participation process
- List of referenced documents
- List of agencies consulted
- Mailing list of interested parties, including e-mails (if available)

## Part 12: Environmental Determinations

Approval of the final alternative and final planning document are contingent upon DEQ issuing an environmental determination according to the state environmental review process. DEQ will make one of the following environmental determinations:

- **Issue a categorical exclusion**—Upon completing the scoping meeting and public participation activities, DEQ may issue a categorical exclusion when the project is found to qualify, and no additional documentation is needed.
- **Issue a categorical exclusion with supporting documentation**—When the scoping meeting identifies the need for agency consultation and/or further technical studies, DEQ may issue a categorical exclusion when consultation shows that the proposed actions individually or cumulatively will have no significant effect on the environment.
- **Issue a finding of no significant impact (FONSI)**—DEQ issues a FONSI when, based on an environmental assessment, an action, not otherwise excluded, will have no significant effect on the environment. The document explains why no significant effect is anticipated and includes the environmental assessment or a summary of it and other related documents. An EIS is not required when a FONSI is issued.

The draft FONSI is subject to a 30-day public comment period, after which it is finalized by DEQ or an EIS process is started.

- **Consider preparing an EIS**—For a project to receive federal funding, an EIS is required when DEQ determines that the proposed project would significantly affect the environment. The EIS describes the project's potentially significant environmental impacts and explains how the impacts can be either avoided or mitigated. The cost to prepare an EIS would likely exceed DEQ's ability to provide funding support. The draft EIS is subject to a 30-day public comment period and a public hearing, after which it may be finalized by the system and submitted to DEQ for approval.
- **Adopt an environmental determination made by another agency**—DEQ may issue its own determination by adopting the environmental determination previously made by another state, federal, or local agency on the same project. Adoption of another agency's determination relieves DEQ from conducting a full environmental review of the project. Contact the DEQ SERP coordinator to see if any additional items will be needed to occur with the other agencies determination.

## Part 13: Payments

Systems owners should use the Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement form (Form C) as provided by DEQ to submit requests for payment. Reimbursement is limited to eligible costs. Reimbursement may be requested any time after entering into a grant contract agreement. Disbursement of funds is subject to DEQ determining that the grantee has complied with all agreement conditions and has prudently managed the project.

If actual planning costs exceed the grant award amount, systems owners may request a grant increase, approval of which will be subject to available funding. Documentation and justification for an increase must be submitted *before* additional costs are incurred. The increase requests will be collected throughout the year and reviewed twice yearly for possible approval pending availability of funds. If multiple increase requests are pending, we will refer to the applicants rating form, and place those with the greater public health emergence or public health hazard at the top of the list awaiting increase approval.

If actual planning costs are lower than the grant award amount, DEQ grant reimbursements will be reduced accordingly. DEQ may conduct a final project review to determine actual eligible costs. The system owner's financial records may be reviewed by DEQ.

Payment of the final installment (5% of the total grant) is subject to verifying valid system operators, final DEQ approval of the planning document, and completing the environmental review process. If a final invoice is not received within 2 months of the final technical approval, DEQ will close the grant assuming the most recently submitted invoice was the final invoice.

## Part 14: Loan Preparedness

For those grant recipients moving forward with SRF funding from DEQ, the following list of items should be prepared for submission:

- Three most current annual audits
- Current year's operating budget
- Sewer Use Ordinance
- Facility plan or other planning documents
- Legal authority to incur debt (for a municipal entity) or a resolution by the governing board authorizing the incurrence of debt and authorizing a representative to sign reimbursement requests
- Engineering request for proposals (RFP) certification
- Proposed engineering agreement
- Cost summary of engineering agreements
- Bond election/judicial confirmation opinion letter prepared by bond counsel
- Signed and stamped Certificate of Compliance

## For More Information

- Contact DEQ Loan Officer Charlie Parkins (208) 373-0577 or [Charlie.parkins@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:Charlie.parkins@deq.idaho.gov) with questions about the Drinking Water Planning Grant Program.
- Contact DEQ SERP coordinator Aimee Hill (208) 373-0406 or [Aimee.Hill@deq.idaho.gov](mailto:Aimee.Hill@deq.idaho.gov) with questions on environmental reviews or preparing environmental information documents.
- Visit DEQ's grants and loans website for more information and access to all drinking water planning grant forms: <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/grants-loans/water-system-planning-grants.aspx>.