Applicant's Guide to Idaho's Public Wastewater Facilities Planning Grant Program

State of Idaho
Department of Environmental Quality
Water Quality Division, Grants and Loans Program
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September 2012

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Printed on recycled paper, DEQ September 2012, 9303, 82045. Costs associated with this publication are available from the State of Idaho Department of Environmental Quality in accordance with Section 60-202, Idaho Code.

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Introduction

The Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) provides financial assistance to owners of eligible entities in Idaho through its Wastewater Planning Grant Program. The program funds facility planning projects to upgrade or expand public wastewater facilities to improve the quality of the waters of the state and protect public health.

DEQ awards grants to develop planning documents and an environmental information document (EID) that identify the most cost-effective, environmentally sound method of upgrading or expanding public wastewater systems to achieve and maintain compliance with state and federal standards. A planning document can include 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 provides a summary of wastewater planning grant procedures and is not intended to be all-inclusive. Detailed requirements are given in the "Rules for Administration of Wastewater Treatment Facility Grants" (IDAPA 58.01.04).

Part 1: Eligibility

Wastewater planning grants are available for counties, cities, special service districts, other governmental entities, nonprofit corporations, and combinations thereof that have authority to collect, treat, or dispose of wastewater. Most systems owned by Idaho municipalities, special service districts, and nonprofit corporations are eligible for grants.

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 Wastewater 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	**DEQ solicits interest from owners of wastewater systems.** DEQ mails notice to all eligible wastewater system owners in Idaho to solicit interest in applying for a planning grant and thus be included on the priority list. Interested owners are directed to fill out a letter of interest (LOI) form in this notification. The blank LOI form will be available on the DEQ website.	Annually in October
2	**System owner indicates interest.** The system owner completes and returns the LOI form to DEQ. Submissions are accepted in paper or electronic copy.	8-9 weeks after receiving solicitation letter

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Step	Description	Timeline
3	**DEQ regional offices evaluate projects.** The regional offices review returned LOIs and rate the projects. Rating criteria focus on potential public health risks and the status of a system's compliance with state and federal regulations. (See *Part 3* for more information on the priority rating system.)	3 weeks after receipt of system LOIs
4	**DEQ State Office reviews rating evaluation.** The State Office reviews and adjusts the regional office rating for statewide consistency. The projects are then ranked for inclusion on the next annual priority list.	3 weeks following step 3
5	**DEQ State Office solicits public review and comment.** DEQ publishes the priority list and solicits comments from the public in major newspapers around the state and on DEQ's website. The comment period lasts approximately 30 days.	4 weeks following step 4
6	**DEQ State Office matches priority projects to available funding.** Substantive public comments are considered and addressed. Public comments and ratings are used to identify top-ranked priority projects for which funding is available.	Immediately after public comment period
7	**DEQ Board acts upon priority list and projects.** 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 point source facility
- *Watershed restoration:* implementation of best management practices or initiation of construction at wastewater collection and treatment facilities as part of an approved total maximum daily load or implementation of nonpoint source management actions in protection of threatened water or as part of a special water quality effort
- *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

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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	**DEQ State Office mails invitations to system owners requesting submittal of a grant application.** 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	**System owner responds to grant application invitation.** 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	**System owner selects a professional engineer.** 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 *Part 6* for guidance on selecting a professional engineer.) The selection process may be completed concurrently with preparation of the application package.	Recommend no later than receipt of invitation
4	**System owner and professional engineer prepare and submit application package.** The system owner completes the *Wastewater Planning Grant Application* and related documents, including a scope of work prepared by a professional engineer. (See *Part 5* for a complete listing and explanation of required application documents.) The system owner must submit 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.	Within 90 days from date of invite or by specified date set by the DEQ State Office
5	**DEQ reviews application.** DEQ reviews the application for eligibility and completeness. DEQ regional office engineers will review scope of work and engineering contract.	As scheduled
6	**DEQ State Office extends grant offer.** 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.	As needed

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7	**System owner reviews and accepts grant offer.** 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 or the specified date. 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 another the next project on the Priority List.	Within 60 days of receipt of grant offer or before the end of the fiscal year, whichever comes first

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 Board approval of the draft priority list each year.

All completed application packages shall include the following documents:

- Wastewater Planning Grant Application (Form A)
- Authorizing Resolution (Form B)
- A signed engineering contract
- Engineering scope of work
- Engineer's professional liability declaration page

The following information must also be attached from nonprofit corporations:

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

Forms A and B are to be filled out by applicants and included with the application package. The following three forms are for use by grantees (at this point the successful applicant has shifted to being referred to as the grantee) and their consultants after the grant has been awarded:

- "Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement" (Form C)
- "Planning Document Outline and Checklist" (Form 5-A of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Handbook)*
- "Outline and Checklist for Environmental Information Documents" (Form 5-B of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan 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.

Wastewater Planning Grant Application (Form A).

Use Form A to provide the following information:

Preapplication Meeting Date

The purpose of the preapplication meeting is to provide grant applicants and DEQ an opportunity to discuss the grant program and its requirements. This is a recommended meeting that can be

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face-to-face or by conference call. A DEQ regional project officer and other DEQ representatives, the grant applicant, and the applicant's consulting engineers should participate in the meeting to discuss the following topics:

- Wastewater grant program
- Grant application process
- Roles and responsibilities of all parties
- Purpose of the planning documents and EIDs
- Key environmental issues and whether a categorical exclusion, EID, or environmental impact statement (EIS) is appropriate for the project

Applicants who attended a preapplication meeting should indicate the date the meeting was held in the box provided.

Section I: Background Information

- **Applicant**
  - Full name of the wastewater system
  - Mailing address of the system
- **Presiding Official**
  - Full name and title of the authorized signatory
  - Mailing address to reach authorized signatory
- **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 of the engineering firm
  - Please note that if the applicant changes engineers at any time throughout the project, DEQ should be notified promptly
- **Environmental Information Document Preparer (if different than the Consulting Engineer)**
  - Name of the EID preparer and company
  - Please note that if the EID is prepared by a firm other than the engineering firm, a copy of the contract must be included with the application
- **Grant Administrator (if different than the Consulting Engineer)**
  - Name of the grant firm and grant administrator
  - Please note that if a grant administrator is used, a copy of the grant administrator contract must be included with the application
- **Description of Project**
- **Wastewater System Type**
  - Only systems eligible under IDAPA 58.01.04.007.24 will be approved for funding

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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 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* of this document for a more complete listing 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 Non-State 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 Information Document

Please state whether the EID 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 EID.
- If "no," the applicant must initial three informational statements.

If no EID will be developed, please note that grant funds may still be used for conducting an environmental. If the applicant's intention is to apply for federal funding for improvements to their system, an EID 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 box may remain unchecked if the grant applicant did not claim sustainability efforts as part of its letter of interest.

Attach a copy of the engineering scope of work. The scope of work should address 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.

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C. Proof of Professional Liability

Attach a copy of the engineering firm's affidavit of professional liability. This document is to verify indemnification in the aggregate amount of at least $100,000 or twice the amount of the engineering firm's fee, whichever is greater, and cover 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 in accordance with 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 will need to be sent to the DEQ State Office.

Part 6: Professional Engineer Selection

The grant applicant must select a professional engineer to conduct wastewater planning projects funded by DEQ planning grants. This section provides a summary of 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. DEQ recommends that entities not governed by Idaho Code 67-2320 use a competitive selection process.

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

Step 1: When to begin

DEQ recommends that system owners begin the engineering selection process immediately upon receipt of 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 application package.

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Step 2: The competitive process

The engineering selection process by public agencies and political subdivisions must be conducted consistent with Idaho Code 67-2320. The standard method to select 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 in accordance with 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

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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 wastewater system alternative to achieve or maintain compliance with the "Water Quality Standards" (IDAPA 58.01.02), the "Wastewater Rules" (IDAPA 58.01.16), and the Clean Water Act (33 USC §1251 et seq.).

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 the planning of public wastewater treatment, storage, and collection facilities including, but not limited to, preparation of a planning document and EID
- Financial, technical, and management capability analyses
- Public participation during the alternative selection process
- Site acquisition services, which may include legal fees, appraisals, and surveys 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

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
- Preparation of a grant application 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 pre-award 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

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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	**DEQ, the system owner, and the engineer consult on drafting of planning document.** The appropriate DEQ regional office consults with system and system's engineer on content of the planning document. Consultations continue throughout preparation of planning document.	As scheduled
2	**System engineer prepares the draft planning document.** Systems owners must complete a planning document in conformance with IDAPA 58.01.04 et seq. and Chapter 5 of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Handbook.* Systems owners should also refer to the "Planning Document Outline and Checklist" (Form 5-A) to help ensure compliance. A DEQ regional office engineer will review and eventually approve this technical planning document for public comment in preparation for step 3 if the system owner is also developing an EID. See *Part 9* for additional details on preparing the draft planning document.	Within 12–18 months of execution of grant contract agreement
3	**System owner solicits public review and comment (only if they are also developing an EID).** For applicants developing an EID, at least one public informational meeting must be held within the system's jurisdiction. See *Part 10*, step 1, for details on public review of and comment on the planning document for system owners developing an EID. System owners that are not preparing an EID have no public participation requirements.	As scheduled
4	**System owner revises the technical planning document.** 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 required.	As scheduled

Part 9: Preparation of the Planning Document

As noted in Table 3, system owners must complete a planning document in conformance with IDAPA 58.01.04 et seq. and Chapter 5 of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Handbook.* If a project does not include an EID, then the planning document is reviewed consistent with the "Wastewater Rules" (IDAPA 58.01.16) with the goal of producing an approved planning document. No public input is required.

If the project does include an EID, then the scope is different. The purpose of a planning document that includes an EID is not only to evaluate feasible treatment and collection alternatives for the system but also to determine the cost-effective and environmentally sound alternative.

A planning document that includes an EID is normally completed in two steps. However, there are a few cases in which a system may opt to complete an environmental review as part of and in

conjunction with a planning document as one step. In these cases, please contact a DEQ SERP coordinator for instruction on how to proceed. Otherwise the system owner may complete the environmental review in two steps: (1) complete a technical planning document approved for public comment, and (2) complete an EID, after which DEQ will issue an environmental determination.

The public comment period and processes may vary according to the statutes, rules, ordinances, or by-laws applicable to a particular system but must not be less than 14 days. The grant recipient shall provide broadly disseminated written notice of the public comment period for the public within the jurisdiction of the grant recipient. The public may provide input on the alternatives developed in the planning document technically approved for public comment. The grant recipient must hold at least one public meeting during the public comment period. At the public meeting, an explanation of the alternatives identified must be presented with opportunity for input on those alternatives.

After the public meeting and public comment period, the final alternative will be selected and the EID may be prepared. The final environmental determination together with the technically approved planning document becomes the final planning document.

The system owner and their engineer should refer to the "Planning Document Outline and Checklist" (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 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.

See *Part 10* for details on formal selection of the final alternative upon which the detailed environmental evaluation will be performed.

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Part 10: Environmental Information Document and Environmental Determination Process

Table 4 describes the "two-steps process" for preparing an EID and the subsequent environmental determination.

Table 4. Environmental information document preparation process.

Step	Description	Timeline
1	**System owner solicits public review and comment leading to selection of an alternative for the development of an EID.** After the DEQ regional engineer has technically approved the facility planning document, the public must be provided with an opportunity to comment on the list of proposed alternatives identified in the document. Upon the end of the comment period, the city council, board, or association officially selects an alternative. At this point, the development of the EID can begin unless the EID was developed in a single step. The minimum required public participation EID activities include broadly disseminated public notice and should be 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. For specific EID public participation guidance, see the "Outline and Checklist for Environmental Information Documents" (Form 5-B of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Handbook* and Form 5-C, section L).	As scheduled
2	**System engineer completes the EID.** The EID should be developed either as a chapter or appendix of the planning document or as a stand-alone document. The EID is developed after the public comment period for the technically approved planning document has been completed and the community has officially selected an alternative. The consulting engineer shall work with the DEQ environmental reviewer when preparing the EID to clearly determine the level of analysis. If the project is complex and it appears there will be significant impacts, then an EIS may be required. (See *Part 12* for an explanation of potential DEQ environmental determinations.)	Within 18–24 months of execution of grant contract agreement
3	**DEQ State Office reviews final EID and makes environmental determination.** The final EID is submitted to the DEQ State Office environmental reviewer for review and issuance of an environmental determination. DEQ reviews the potentially significant environmental impacts, environmental consequences, and mitigation efforts related to the selected project alternative and issues one of four possible environmental determinations. Refer to *Part 12* for more information on environmental determinations.	As scheduled

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4	**DEQ State Office solicits public participation on the environmental determination.** Each type of environmental determination has different public participation requirements. A concurrence with another agency's finding has no public comment requirement but does require a public notice in the newspaper covering the area where the system is located. A categorical exclusion requires a public notice to be published one time in the newspaper covering the area where the system is located. A finding of no significant impact requires a one-time publication in the newspaper in the system area and a 30-day public comment period. If significant impact will result DEQ will request the grantee prepare an EIS, the public comment period will take place after the EIS has been developed.	1–5 weeks
5	**DEQ State Office issues final environmental determination.** The record of 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.	As scheduled

Part 11: Preparation of the Environmental Information Document

As part of the planning document, if a system owner is receiving and/or anticipating federal funding, 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 negatively impact sensitive environmental resources. The EID must be completed in compliance with IDAPA 58.01.04 et seq. and should be completed following Forms 5-B and 5-C of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Handbook.*

System owners are advised to consult with the DEQ State Office environmental reviewer early on in the preparation of the planning document to discuss the EID process and determine the most likely level of environmental review that may be required for the proposed project. Once the community has selected an alternative, the system owner or the EID preparer will 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, 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-B and Form 5-C of the *Clean Water State Revolving Fund Loan Handbook* as guidance while developing the EID. At a minimum, the EID should 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

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- 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

Throughout development of the planning document, DEQ staff engineers work closely with the system owners and system owner's engineer to ensure that the document is of the highest quality, resolves problems with the wastewater system, and is acceptable to the public. Approval of the final alternative and approval of the final planning document are contingent upon DEQ issuing an environmental determination in accordance with the state environmental review process. DEQ will make one of the following environmental determinations:

- **Issue a categorical exclusion with supporting documentation.**

  DEQ issues a categorical exclusion when the proposed actions individually or cumulatively will have no significant effect on the human environment; therefore, neither a finding of no significant impact nor an EIS is required.

- **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 human 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.

- **Request the grantee prepare 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 purpose of the EIS is to describe the project's potentially significant environmental impacts and to explain 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

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of another agency's determination relieves DEQ from conducting a full environmental review of the project.

Part 13: Payments

System 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 a finding by DEQ that the grantee has complied with all agreement conditions and has prudently managed the project.

If actual planning costs exceed the grant award amount, system 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.

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. The final project review may be deferred until a review of the design/construction loan has been completed.

Payment of the final installment (5% of the total grant) is subject to verification of valid system operators, final DEQ approval of the planning document, and completion of the environmental review process.

For More Information

- Contact DEQ Loan Program Coordinator MaryAnna Peavey at (208) 373-0122 or *maryanna.peavey@deq.idaho.gov mailto:*with questions about the Wastewater Planning Grant Program.
- Contact DEQ Environmental Reviewer Ester Ceja at (208) 373-0585 or *ester.ceja@deq.idaho.gov* for questions on environmental reviews or preparing environmental information documents.
- Visit DEQ's grants and loans website for more information and access to all wastewater planning grant forms: *http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/grants-loans/wastewater-system-planning-grants.aspx.*

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Attachments: Forms A through 5-B

Form A: Application Form and Checklist

Form B: Authorizing Resolution

Form C: Outlay Report and Request for Reimbursement

Form 5-A: Planning Document Outline and Checklist

Form 5-B: Outline and Checklist for Environmental Information Documents

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