

Delaware Watershed Research Fund, Frequently Asked Questions

**Updated as of May 26, 2017.

Letter of Intent

What time are the Letters of Intent due by on Friday, June 23rd?

The Letters of Intent are due by 11:59pm EST on Friday, June 23rd, 2017 (not by COB).

To where should the letters of intent be addressed?

Please submit letters of intent electronically to anspgrants@drexel.edu. If you would like, address the letter to Roland Wall, Director of Environmental Initiatives and/or to ANSP Grants, Academy of Natural Sciences.

What is counted toward the page limits? Should the project description include citations to literature, and if so, will a citation list be counted in the page limit?

The only limits are for the cover page and the project description. The **key elements** (see RFP, page 4) of the project outline will be limited to two pages, and the cover page limited to one page. **The budget estimation can be appended with the documentation of capacity and CV (these items do not have page limits, but will be expected in an abbreviated format).**

Please feel free to include citations within the project description. If a citation list is included, it will be counted as an appended item (and therefore will not count toward the 2-page project description limit).

How detailed is the budget expected to be at this stage? Is there a certain format necessary? (Is it required to be in a form, or can it be within the text)? What will be the expected start date for the budget?

The budget can be a fairly basic outline and there is no required format at this stage, but we will provide a template for your use (please see website for example). The minimum budget items to include are:

- Total project cost
- Cost per year
- Project staff (those who will be charging salary or tuition to project) and affiliation (if not under the same organization as PI)

If it is easier to include the budget justification within the project description, feel free to do so. Otherwise, feel free to outline the budget, with brief justification as an appended item to the letter of intent (not included in the project description page limit). The expected start date is January 1st, 2018.

In the Letter of Intent, the "Broader impact" section lists "work with DWRI practitioners." Who are considered the DRWI practitioners?

This simply refers to the fact that a broader impact of funding will be to commence a collaboration between this research and the current practitioners within the DRWI, such as ANS and other partners who work in / are funded by the DRWI. You do not need to outline how you will work with these partners, it is just an inherent broader impact of funding (as one of the requirements after funded is to participate in DRWI-related conferences).

Can letters of support from partnering organizations be provided with the LOI as attachments, i.e., not counted as part of the page limit?

Letters of support are encouraged, and will be considered appended items (will **not** count toward the page limits).

Should CVs be provided for just the PI or for other staff and partners as well?

CVs / resumes are required for the Principal Investigator and any co-PIs, but not for all project staff at this phase. However, please do list the organizational affiliation of all project staff (those who will charge salary hours to the project).

What is expected in the "documentation of capacity" appendix item aside from CVs of PI/coPIs?

Please include a brief summary of the institutional capacity to complete the work proposed, similar to—though not as stringent as—the Facilities Statement required by NSF proposals.

Funding Stipulations and Restrictions:

Is there a minimum or maximum allowable budget amount?

There is no set minimum or maximum, but the goal is to target innovative research questions within the priorities set, and as we've stated within the RFP, we are looking to fund 2 - 4 projects on an approximately one- to two-year time scale, which comes out to a minimum of ~\$250,000 and a maximum of ~\$500,000. Therefore, ideally projects would propose a minimum to perform publishable, significant research. Smaller scale (less than \$250,000) projects may be considered for funding. On the maximum end, if we were to receive a proposed project with multiple collaborators, and significant projected results and leverage potential, it would be permissible to go over \$500,000.

Are there restrictions on the use of the funds? Can it be used for staff hours, graduate student tuition? Research equipment (and what is the allowable limit)?

As stated within the RFP, the only restrictions on the use of funds are on the purchase of equipment or other capital gains over \$500. For example, upgrading a lab within the proposing organization would not be considered legitimate, but the purchase of a field

probe may be legitimate. That cap is to say that, within the grant contract, we will require grantees to consult us before purchasing capital over \$500.

As per any typical research grant, staff hours while working on the proposed project are legitimate uses of the funds. Graduate student tuition is permissible so long as it is in direct relation to the proposed project.

Overhead and indirect. For institutions, such as universities, that may require a higher percentage for indirect, will there be any leeway in the stated 15% indirect limit.

We cannot offer an indirect rate higher than the stated 15%. Researchers will have to negotiate directly with their home institution's grants administration office.

Proposal Review Process

Is WPF involved in selection?

No. A member of the William Penn Foundation will be a part of the re-grant process advisory group, but will not be involved in the choice of the grantees.

Will you have non-academic reviewers?

The reviewers will be chosen based on their expertise and merit within their respective disciplines. Some of these reviewers will include academic researchers, and some will include researchers from non-profit, private or governmental organizations.

Do the peer reviewers weigh in on the LOI, or just the full proposals?

The peer reviewers will only review the full proposals. The Senior Advisory Group of the Delaware Watershed Research Fund and the senior scientists of the ANS DRWI team will review the letter of intents, screening only for coherence with the stated research priorities and for questions to be answered in the full proposal (in addition to the outlined requirements) to enhance the request.

Will you be making attempts to diversify the investment of funds (i.e., awards specifically to different types of projects) or simply awarding on greatest merit?

Awards will be made based on merit through the peer review. The only attempt at diversification is through setting the relatively broad research priorities.

Are any of the senior advisors who are reviewing the LOIs allowed to apply for funding?

Senior advisors and peer reviewers are chosen based on either their lack of ability to apply, or based on their agreement that they would not apply if they were to advise the process.

Peer reviewers will not have applied for funding and will be vetted for conflict of interest. Reviewers and advisors will be recused from weighing in on any proposals for which they may hold a conflict of interest.

If an LOI is accepted, will you also provide comments to improve it?

Yes.

Research Specifications

Can the proposed work include application of the research?

Yes. Application-based proposals will need to have realistic expectations of implementation within the grant period.

Where do you define the downstream end of the Delaware River for the Initiative? (I.e. Is the Delaware Bay included?)

The Delaware Bay is of interest to the extent that fits into the research priorities. There are many areas within the research priorities that may have interesting questions in the Bay, but this funding is not intended to simply continue a specific question a researcher is already exploring that only loosely connects to the stated research priorities.

Will projects in DRWI clusters be prioritized?

No. The research is prioritized to be focused within the Delaware River Watershed, but will not be prioritized within the DRWI-delineated clusters.

What scale (geographically) of research is appropriate for the grant?

We have left the research priorities broad for the purpose of allowing flexibility in scale (geographically). The higher resolution priorities may generally be associated with high resolution scale, while the multidisciplinary priorities may generally have a more broad scale approach and application.

Would work in a neighboring basin be permissible under this grant, particularly if it were to aid in leveraging funds?

It is permissible to include work outside the Delaware, particularly if it is paired with work within the Delaware, so long as it both directly relates to the stated research priorities and, as stated in the RFP, it is work that is directly transferable to the conditions of the Delaware.

Would research about drinking water quality be appropriate for this Fund? Or is focus more on 'natural' waterways?

Healthy drinking water is an important aspect of the Delaware River Watershed Initiative, and research in that area is highly encouraged to the extent that it fits within the research priorities (many of which it could fit into).

Collaboration

Are partnerships between and among organizations required as they are with WPF DRWI funding? How important is the leveraging of existing data / information of ongoing projects in the DRB?

Partnerships are not required.
Leveraging existing DRWI data may be interesting, but will in no way be prioritized.

Can an organization submit more than one Letter of Intent? Can a PI be on multiple proposals as collaborators?

An organization can submit more than one letter of intent, but with the knowledge that the proposal would have more weight with collaboration within that organization.

A PI can offer to be a collaborator on another proposal, but with the knowledge that they will not be double funded under this grant.

Do you expect to know about potential collaborations at the LOI stage or full proposal?

It would be ideal to know about potential collaborators before the full proposals, particularly in the case of PI's applying to multiple proposals as collaborators. However, collaborators can change between the LOI and full proposal stages, particularly to meet the restriction of double funding.

Do you have any recommendations for fostering collaboration among interested researchers?

If you know of others in your field who perform similar work, or who may be submitting a similar proposal, it would be highly recommended to begin collaborating with them early in the process to leverage the proposal and project. However, we will not provide these connections.

Are private, for-profit organizations ineligible for funding? Can these organizations be involved if not acting as the PI of the project?

It is permissible for a private, for-profit firm to be involved in a proposal for funding so long as it is on a consultant basis, rather than as the PI or co-PI. The PI and co-PIs must be from an academic, non-profit or governmental agency.

Drexel Affiliations

Are Drexel University staff eligible for funding?

No, but they are eligible for the Drexel Watershed Consortium funding, which, for this round of funding, can be used in conjunction with a DWRF project.

Does an adjunct teacher association with Drexel University preclude submitting a proposal as either a PI or co-PI if permanent / full time status is elsewhere?

It should not be an issue if it is purely adjunct, and there is no research currently performed at Drexel University, and none of the research proposed will be performed there.

Can a non-Drexel lead include a Drexel collaborator on a proposal?

Drexel faculty cannot be funded directly under the Delaware Watershed Research Fund. Collaboration is permissible, so long as Drexel faculty members do not charge the time to this fund. Because the general focus of the Delaware Watershed Research Fund and the Drexel Watershed Consortium are fairly similar for this round of sub-awards, it is permissible that a Drexel-based collaborator could apply for their portion of funding under the DWC, and the remainder of the project could be funded under the DWRF. If this is done, the DWC proposal will be evaluated in conjunction with the DWRF proposal.

Is the general focus for the Drexel Watershed Consortium generally the same as it is for the DWRF with the major exception being that the former is internal and the latter external?

Yes, for this year's awards, the focus is fairly similar for the DWRF and the DWC.