

**WAC 173-322A-340 Area-wide groundwater investigation grants.**

(1) **Purpose.** The purpose of area-wide groundwater investigation grants is to provide funding to local governments that investigate known or suspected areas of area-wide groundwater contamination. The investigations are intended to facilitate the cleanup and redevelopment of properties affected by area-wide groundwater contamination.

(2) **Project eligibility.** For the purposes of this grant, a project consists of an investigation of area-wide groundwater contamination in a single study area. A project may extend over more than one biennium. To be eligible for a grant, a project must meet all of the following requirements:

(a) The applicant must be a local government;

(b) The project must involve the investigation of known or suspected area-wide groundwater contamination;

(c) The applicant must not be required to conduct the investigation under an order or decree;

(d) The applicant must have the necessary access to conduct the investigation or obtain such access in accordance with a schedule in the grant agreement; and

(e) The project must be included in the ten-year financing plan required under RCW 70.105D.030(5).

(3) **Funding priority.** The department will prioritize eligible projects for funding or limit funding for eligible projects based on the priorities in WAC 173-322A-210 and the following factors:

(a) The threat posed by the hazardous waste sites to human health and the environment;

(b) Whether the hazardous waste site is within a redevelopment opportunity zone;

(c) The land reuse potential of the hazardous waste sites;

(d) Whether the hazardous waste sites are located within a highly impacted community;

(e) The readiness of the applicant to start and complete the work to be funded by the grant and the performance of the applicant under prior grant agreements;

(f) The ability of the grant to expedite the cleanup of the hazardous waste sites;

(g) The ability of the grant to leverage other public or private funding for the cleanup and reuse of the hazardous waste sites;

(h) The distribution of grants throughout the state and to various types and sizes of local governments; and

(i) Other factors as determined and published by the department.

(4) **Application process.**

(a) **Project solicitation.** Biennially, the department will solicit project proposals from local governments to develop its budget and update its ten-year financing plan for remedial action grants and loans. The department may update its ten-year financing plan as needed during the biennium. Project proposals must be submitted on forms provided by the department and include sufficient information to make the determinations in (c) of this subsection. To be considered for inclusion in the department's budget for remedial action grants and loans, project proposals should be submitted by the dates published by the department.

(b) **Application submittal.** Applications must be submitted on forms provided by the department and include sufficient information to make the determinations in (c) and (d) of this subsection. Completed applications should be submitted by the dates published by the department.

(c) **Project evaluation and ranking.** Project proposals and applications will be reviewed by the department for completeness and evaluated to determine:

- (i) Project eligibility under subsection (2) of this section; and
- (ii) Funding priority under subsection (3) of this section.

(d) **Agreement development.** The department will make funding decisions only after funds have been appropriated. After deciding to fund an eligible project, the department will negotiate with the applicant the scope of work and budget for the grant and develop the agreement. The department will consider:

- (i) Funding priority under subsection (3) of this section;
- (ii) Cost eligibility under subsections (5) and (6) of this section;
- (iii) Allowable funding under subsections (7) and (8) of this section; and
- (iv) Availability of state funds and other funding sources.

(e) **Fund management.** The department may adjust funding levels or fund additional eligible projects during a biennium if additional funds should become available.

(5) **Cost eligibility.** To be eligible for funding, a project cost must be eligible under this subsection and the terms of the grant agreement and be approved by the department.

(a) **Eligible costs.** Eligible costs for an area-wide groundwater investigation grant include, but are not limited to, the reasonable costs for the following:

- (i) Identifying the sources of the area-wide groundwater contamination;
- (ii) Determining the nature and extent of the area-wide groundwater contamination;
- (iii) Identifying the preferential groundwater contaminant migration pathways;
- (iv) Identifying area-wide geologic and hydrogeologic conditions; and
- (v) Establishing area-wide natural groundwater quality, including aquifer classification under WAC 173-340-720.

(b) **Ineligible costs.** Ineligible costs for an area-wide groundwater investigation grant include, but are not limited to, the following:

- (i) The cost of developing the grant application or negotiating the grant agreement;
- (ii) The cost of dispute resolution under the grant agreement;
- (iii) Retroactive costs, except as provided under subsection (6) of this section;

- (iv) Natural resource damage assessment and restoration costs and liability for natural resource damages under chapter 70.105D RCW or the federal cleanup law;

- (v) Site development and mitigation costs not required as part of the remedial action;

- (vi) Legal costs including, but not limited to, the costs of seeking client advice, pursuing cost recovery, contribution, or insurance claims, participating in administrative hearings, pursuing penalties or civil or criminal actions against persons, penalties incurred by the recipient, the cost of defending actions taken against the recipient, and any attorney fees incurred by the recipient; and

- (vii) In-kind contributions.

(6) **Retroactive cost eligibility.** Retroactive costs are eligible for reimbursement if the costs are incurred during the period of a

prior grant agreement, the costs are eligible under subsection (5) of this section, and the costs have not been reimbursed by the department.

(7) **Limit on eligible costs for a project.** The eligible costs for a project may not exceed five hundred thousand dollars.

(8) **Funding of eligible costs.**

(a) **Department share.** The department may fund up to one hundred percent of the eligible costs.

(b) **Recipient share.** The recipient shall fund the percentage of the eligible costs not funded by the department under (a) of this subsection. The recipient may not use in-kind contributions to meet this requirement.

[Statutory Authority: Chapter 70.105D RCW. WSR 14-18-060 (Order 13-09), § 173-322A-340, filed 8/29/14, effective 9/29/14.]