Wetland Program Development Grants (WPDGs) are assistance agreements awarded to state, tribal, territorial, and local government agencies and interstate/intertribal entities to develop or refine programs that protect, manage, and restore wetlands. WPDGs are EPA's primary source of financial support for tribal (and state) wetland programs and are competitive grants for projects that can last between two and four years. EPA Regions issue regional Requests for Applications (RFAs) every two years, typically in the spring of odd numbered years. EPA Headquarters issues a tribal-only RFA in alternating years (i.e., in even numbered years). RFAs are posted on EPA's WPDG webpage. Tribes can apply for both the Regional RFA and the Headquarters tribal-only RFA. EPA HQ also issues a national RFA to which non-profit, non-governmental organizations, interstate agencies, and intertribal consortia may apply; individual Tribes are not eligible for this RFA.

WPDG RFAs include two tracks:
- Track One is for Tribes, states, and local governments that have or are developing/refining a Wetlands Program Plan (WPP).
- Track Two (non-WPP) is open to intertribal consortia, Tribes, and states, as well as local governments, interstate agencies, and eligible colleges and universities that are agencies of a state government.

WPDGs are meant to develop the capacity of tribal governments to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands. These grants *cannot be used for implementation activities* (i.e., ongoing, routine activities).

In order to be eligible for a WPDG, the proposal needs to demonstrate a linkage with the Core Elements Framework and must use one or more of the "Core Elements" to achieve the project goals. If a Tribe has an approved WPP, grant-eligible actions from the plan can be included in the proposal. Tribes can also apply for a WPDG to develop their WPP under Track One. Examples of eligible activities are listed for each Core Element on this EPA webpage.

The contents of a WPDG application must comply with the requirements listed in the RFA. A checklist is available on NAWM's website to aid in developing WPDG applications, although the RFA is the most current source for information on the specific funding opportunity, instructions, required forms and sections, review criteria, and deadlines. The RFA will also provide the most up-to-date requirements, such as the need to link a proposal to climate change or information on the Justice40 Initiative.

WPDG applications require a detailed budget with estimated funding amounts for each project task. EPA has provided Budget Development Guidance that may be used when preparing a proposed budget, as well as a free online training course on How to Develop a Budget. Individual WPDGs require a cost share, or matching funds, of 25% of the total project cost. However, the required cost share can be waived for Tribes and intertribal consortia if the funds are put into a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG). The PPG will be amended to accommodate this funding. If a cost share will be included in a proposal, EPA's WPDG Grant Match Calculator can be used to determine the appropriate matching amount.

WPDGs are highly competitive as limited funding is available for each RFA. In addition, the turnaround time from release of an RFA to the application due date is relatively quick. For these reasons, it is best to start preparing a grant application as early as possible, including before the release of the RFA. Page 2 of this fact sheet provides tips for developing and submitting a strong grant application. Additional "Tips and Tricks" on applying for WPDGs are available in this PowerPoint from EPA. More resources on funding and grant applications are available on NAWM's Tribal Wetland Program Funding webpage.

Top Tips for Successful Grant Writing for Wetland Programs

1. **Start early** in planning the project(s) you want to include in your grant application. Think about your program goals, eligible projects, and potential partners. Reach out to EPA Regional staff to discuss your ideas before the RFA is announced.

2. Once the RFA is released, **read the entire RFA carefully** to know what items are required, when applications are due, and confirm you are eligible to apply.

3. **Follow all requirements in the RFA**, such as page limits, word or character limits, required forms, required sections, and formatting (e.g., font size and type, headings, etc.). Be sure to include page numbers.

4. To facilitate review of your proposal, **format the proposal to match the RFA**. Follow the order of sections as laid out in the RFA and match section headers in the proposal to the RFA sections.

5. Understand the focus of the grant program and eligibility criteria. Read the selection criteria and point structure carefully to **understand how your proposal will be evaluated and scored**.

6. If allowed under the RFA, **ask questions** of the funding source to clarify the requirements and ensure you are filling out the application correctly and completely. There may also be FAQs available that you can review.

7. **Start preparing your grant application early.** Applications can take quite a while to prepare, and often require coordinating with others for letters of support, budget approvals, and final review. Develop a template that partners can use to aid them in writing their letters of support; this saves time for project partners and ensures that important content is included in the letters.

8. The project narrative is an opportunity to tell your story and share how the project outcomes would benefit your community. Use this as a chance to **demonstrate the need for the proposed actions**. This can include linking your project to existing plans, activities, and program goals, as well as ongoing regional initiatives.

9. Support your proposal with **specific project tasks and outputs/deliverables**. Include a breakdown of tasks and a timeline to show you have thought through how you will achieve the project goals.

10. Develop a project budget that will allow you to accomplish the project and provide enough detail to **show the budget is reasonable and allowable**. Note the match requirement and make sure your proposal meets this requirement.

11. **Leave time for review** and know ahead of time who will need to review and approve your application. Ask someone not familiar with the application to read it over and provide feedback.

12. **Check that the proposal is complete**, meets the page limits, and includes all required sections and forms in the order specified in the RFA. Check over spelling and calculations.

13. **Understand how, when, and where to submit** ahead of time to avoid a rush at the last minute. Prior to submittal, review EPA's Grants Overview webpage and How to Register to Apply for Grants. Submit early and get confirmation that your application has been received.

14. If unsuccessful, follow up with EPA staff to **request feedback** on why your proposal was not selected. This feedback can be used to increase your chance of success the next time you apply.