



IOWA DEPARTMENT OF
**AGRICULTURE &
LAND STEWARDSHIP**

Request for Proposals

**Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship
Division of Soil Conservation and Water Quality**

Soil and Water Innovation Grants

**Proposals are Due:
NO LATER THAN 4:30 PM
Friday, May 22, 2026**

PROJECT OBJECTIVES AND DESIRED OUTCOMES

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) is issuing this request for proposals (RFP) to provide funding for innovative soil and water conservation delivery or program ideas. Proposals must be targeted towards improving the understanding and enhancement of conservation, sustainability and nonpoint source pollution reduction initiatives in Iowa.

Specific outcomes for these projects should focus on issues relating to water quality, conservation practice delivery and soil health. However, additional related focus areas may be considered. Examples of successful projects have focused on subject matters including:

- Exploring innovative ideas, delivery methods, or removing barriers to conservation implementation
- Sustaining and improving the environmental quality and natural resources in agricultural systems
- Documenting, assessing, reporting, promoting and/or communicating information as related to the focus area, or
- Enhancing access to conservation programs for targeted groups or demographics.

Project efforts should be paired with outreach and/or education components when possible to disseminate and communicate information on project outcomes in order to more broadly promote these efforts within the targeted audience and across Iowa.

Proposals should clearly explain:

- What are the scope and deliverables of the project and why is it an important effort that merits funding consideration
- Whether your project is exploring innovative ideas or building upon an existing effort or technology
- Expected outcomes for the project and how they will assist achieving the desired goals as related to the project objectives
- How project outcomes and deliverables will be evaluated, and
- What impact and benefits will the project have on conservation programs or delivery.

There are no limits on the scale or focus area for proposed projects, but proposals should be managed accordingly in order to achieve the stated outcomes within the timeframe and budget as proposed by the applicant. Quarterly reports will be required to document project progress in alignment with work plan objectives.

ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Collaborative teams of scientists, farmers, educators, cities, counties, county conservation boards, Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCDs) or other units of government, not-for-profit non-governmental organizations (NGO's) authorized by the secretary of state, FFA or 4H chapters (with an eligible applicant), public water supply utilities or watershed management authorities are eligible to submit applications. If applicable, applicants must be able to demonstrate legal authority to construct and maintain practices in the intended location prior to submittal of applications.

FUNDING & ELIGIBLE EXPENSES

The funding level for the grants is dependent upon appropriations and budget decisions by the Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship, but we anticipate roughly \$150,000 in total funding available through this request, with individual grants ranging from \$10,000 to \$50,000 total.

Eligible expenses may include: salaries, equipment, supplies, travel, or other payments to project participants (other than those included in salaries). Please note that indirect costs are not allowed under the this grant.

This grant does not have a matching funds requirement, but it is a consideration of the reviewers. There are also no specific limits on project budgets that can be spent on personnel costs but note that budget efficiency in relation to the project goals is an evaluation criterion. As such, specific roles for people whose costs are included in the budget must be clear in the proposal.

PROJECT DURATION

Project funding duration is for a maximum of three years. Priority will be given to applications that can demonstrate the ability to efficiently and effectively implement the project components funded under this grant. Project funds will be available upon execution of a funding contract with IDALS (applicants will be notified of award status by July 1). Projects cannot incur reimbursable expenses or document match contributions before the funding contract is executed.

DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS

The Primary Grantee will be responsible for submitting payment requests to IDALS. Expense payments will be made on a cost reimbursable basis. The Grantee will submit invoices and/or other required documentation to IDALS for the disbursement of funds. An explanation of the process and the required documentation will be provided to the Grantee by IDALS during the contract implementation process.

FISCAL MANAGEMENT

The Primary Grantee must include documentation of their ability to provide appropriate fiscal management of the funds requested in the project application. If the group is unable to meet this requirement themselves, they may include documentation of their partnership with an entity that has an appropriate fiscal management structure in place in order to be considered an eligible applicant.

PROPOSAL APPLICATION DETAILS

Proposals must be submitted following the format and page limits provided. Maps and letters of support will not count against stated page limits. Letters of support are not required but an indication of primary partners and their roles/contribution to the project should be provided. Please note that letters of support and/or additional documentation of partner's roles/contributions may be requested at the discretion of the review committee and prior to funding approval.

PROPOSAL REVIEW & SELECTION

IDALS professionals will review and evaluate all proposals. The review committee will consider the following factors in evaluating proposals (*100 points possible*):

- Relevance of project goals in alignment with stated objectives (*20*)
- Innovative focus of project (New or building on existing efforts) (*20*)
- Feasibility of proposed methods for achieving stated outcomes (*20*)
- Impacts and benefits of project (*10*)
- Outreach and Evaluation plan (*10*)
- Efficiency of proposed budget in alignment with project objectives (*10*)
- Compliance with formatting requirements and guidelines (*10*)

In addition to the evaluation criteria above, the review committee may choose to reject proposals from applicants who have delinquent reports for projects funded previously through this grant.

PROPOSAL ASSISTANCE

For proposal assistance, please contact Nicky McEuen, 515-281-5851 or Nicole.McEuen@iowaagriculture.gov.

SPECIAL NOTES

The Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS) prohibits discrimination in its programs on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs and marital or familial status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.)

Distribution of applications is limited to people involved in the review process but note that all applications and subsequent reports and related information are in the public domain. All reports related to funded projects will be made available to all interested parties in printed, electronic, or other means of communication, without discrimination.

Names, addresses and telephone numbers of the project's primary point of contact (from funded projects) may be provided to interested news entities, potential project participants, or organizations for subsequent inquiries. Applications are used in the peer review process and submission of an application establishes consent by the author for appropriate distribution to fulfill review requirements.

Proposals approved for funding will be required to enter into a project agreement with IDALS. Sponsors of approved projects will be required to submit quarterly reports utilizing forms and guidance provided by IDALS. Grantees will also be required to submit a final report and possibly a short presentation to the SSCWQ Committee.

PROCEDURE FOR SUBMITTING PROPOSAL APPLICATIONS

Submit one electronic copy of your project application to IDALS. Hard copies of the application will not be accepted without an electronic copy. Arrival date and time of the electronic copy will be used to determine whether an application has been submitted on time. Applications must be received by 4:30 PM on May 22 2026.

Applications will be accepted by the following method:

1. Submit the electronic file containing your application in an attachment by e-mail addressed to Nicole.McEuen@iowaagriculture.gov. The file size limit for submission of applications by e-mail is 15MB in size. Please follow up via phone to ensure that your application has been received prior to the application deadline. If you need assistance submitting your proposal application, please contact Nicky McEuen at 515-281-5851 or Nicole.McEuen@iowaagriculture.gov.
2. All applicants submitting applications will be sent an email confirmation as listed on the proposal form acknowledging receipt of the proposal.

IOWA DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE & LAND STEWARDSHIP
SOIL AND WATER INNOVATION GRANT
APPLICATION FOR FUNDING ASSISTANCE

Proposal Cover Sheet: *(1 page maximum)*

Provide the following information on the Proposal Cover Sheet. Additionally, include the title, printed name, and signature of the Project Coordinator (*as applicable*) authorizing submission of the proposal.

1. Project Title:

Applicant Entity (Primary Grantee):

Project Coordinator:

Address:

Phone:

E-mail:

Project Coordinator Signature: _____

The Project Coordinator is the person responsible for the project and will be the primary contact for the project.

2. List any project partners at the time of application:

3. Please indicate if any of these partner organizations or individuals will receive project funds through this project grant and the respective roles and responsibilities.

4. Provide a summary of the project duration and budget utilizing the format shown here:

Project Duration (36-month maximum): _____

Proposed Start Date: _____ Proposed End Date: _____

TOTAL BUDGET (\$50,000 maximum):

First Year Funding	\$
Second Year Funding	\$
Third Year Funding	\$
Total Funding	\$

Proposal Narrative: *(2 page maximum)*

Provide a brief narrative on the following items:

Executive Summary *(max 200 words):*

Project Description:

- Describe whether the project will be exploring innovative ideas or building upon an existing effort or technology.
- Describe the scope and deliverables of the project and why is it an important effort that merits funding consideration.

Project Outcomes and Deliverables:

- Describe the expected outcomes for the project and how they will assist achieving the desired goals as related to the focus area.
- Describe how project outcomes and deliverables will be evaluated, and
- Describe the anticipated impact and benefits the project will have on conservation programs or delivery.
- Describe how the project will be evaluated to determine if anticipated benefits are realized.
- Describe the education/information program that will be implemented as part of the project and anticipated budget.
- If there will be other / future phases of this project or if the things that would be funded by this application are part of a larger scale project, describe the larger project and how this application fits in or complements other aspects of a larger project.

Project Timeline:

- Please include a project implementation timeframe including anticipated deliverables for each phase or milestone.