



OWEB DROUGHT PROGRAM

OVERVIEW AND GUIDANCE: Statewide Irrigation Modernization Grant *Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board*

Introduction

During the 2021 Oregon Second Special Legislative Session, the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board (OWEB) received funding to provide grants to support irrigation modernization projects statewide. This grant program is supported by General Funds. Funding was provided to support statewide irrigation modernization projects, such as piping or canal lining and associated activities, that protect or restore natural watershed or ecosystem functions in order to improve stream flows.

Program Structure

The funding source for this program is General Funds provided during the 2021 Second Special Legislative Session. The lifespan of these funds is anticipated to end June 30, 2023. All funding must be obligated and fully expended during the 2021-23 biennium.

Irrigation Districts within the state of Oregon are eligible to apply for this funding.

Funding for eligible project activities is retroactive to December 14, 2021.

IMPORTANT: The second grant cycle will allocate the remaining Statewide Irrigation Modernization grant funding. The **remaining funding amount is \$392,104** in total, making this a highly competitive program. The ultimate decision about the funding level for awarded grants will depend on multiple factors, including the number of proposed projects recommended for funding following technical review relative to the total funding available for this grant program.

For additional information about eligible costs and budget development, refer to OWEB's [GoBig document for OWEB Statewide Irrigation Modernization](#)– Drought Grant Program for this grant offering.

For the **Statewide Irrigation Modernization** grant, applicants must demonstrate how the project protects or restores natural watershed or ecosystem functions in order to improve stream flows.

The expectation is that local partners coordinate activities to leverage strengths and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of on-the-ground work.

Eligible activities are divided into two categories: Required and Secondary. Your project must first propose to implement one of the Required Activities before the Secondary Activities may be eligible for funding.

Required Activities:

- Piping irrigation canals, ditches, or laterals
- Lining irrigation canals, ditches or laterals
- Upgrading existing infrastructure such as flumes or pipes

Secondary activities include but are not limited to:

- Pump installation/replacement
- Realignment of conveyance systems
- Diversion consolidation
- Installation of supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) systems
- Installation of flow measurement devices
- Installation of pressure-relief valves and/or hydropower
- Turn-out upgrades
- Contracted services including such as cultural resource surveys, construction services and late-stage design

Applicants must demonstrate the capacity to plan and implement successful actions during a short timeframe (see information above regarding funding lifespan).

A 25% match (cash/in-kind) is encouraged; however less than 25% match will be accepted. Please discuss how this state funding is leveraging other funding sources, including but not limited to the [The Watershed Protection and Flood Prevention Program \(PL-566\)](#).

Post-implementation status reporting will be required for a period of five years once the grant has ended. Post-implementation status reporting requirements will be detailed in the grant agreement and will include documentation of protected instream water savings.

Grant Cycles and Grant-Making Considerations

The Statewide Irrigation Modernization Grant Program application cycle will be timed as follows, with award decisions to be made within approximately 4-6 weeks following the application deadline:

- The second grant cycle will open on December 5, 2022 with a deadline of 5 p.m. on January 9, 2023.

OWEB strongly recommends that applicants submit their grant applications at least 24 hours prior to the application deadline. OWEB's online grant applications include a verification step that will flag missing and incomplete information in the application. Verifying and submitting your grant application at least 24 hours in advance allows time for applicants to correct errors that are found during verification. **All applications must be successfully submitted through OWEB's online grant application system by 5 p.m. on the application deadline. No exceptions will be made.**

Applicants should carefully review all guidance and information (including iButtons) in the online grant applications. This review will help applicants confirm before submission of their application that all questions are answered completely, based on the guidelines included in the application, and all required uploads are provided.

Under this grant program, grantees will be required to complete quarterly billing and reporting and submit a project completion report. Post-implementation status reporting will be required for five years post-grant.

Grant Application Evaluation Process

Evaluation of grant applications will be based upon the OWEB Restoration Grants evaluation criteria. Within that evaluation framework, grant applications will be assessed to ensure proposed activities align with the following expectations:

- Demonstrated need for the proposed activities per the legislative intent.
- Water conservation projects that improve stream flows by protecting or restoring watershed or ecosystem function.
- Projects that apply established approaches to improve stream flows. Use of the Oregon Water Resources Department Allocation of Conserved Water Program is the preferred in-stream protection method for this program, where feasible.
- Organizational capacity to successfully expend the funding on implementation of the proposed project during a limited timeframe, while recognizing that this funding may be paired with other funding sources (e.g., PL-566) for projects with a multi-year timeframe.
- Demonstrated coordination among local partners.

For the purpose of information gathering, the grant application includes questions about tribal coordination and equity and climate considerations by the applicant.

Grant applications will be reviewed by a review team comprising of agency staff who are knowledgeable about drought impacts and irrigation modernization needs, and who have experience with organizational capacity, coordination, and partnership considerations related to planning and implementation of successful irrigation modernization projects and programs. This team will coordinate with agency representatives in the affected area to ensure understanding of local needs.

Additional Resources for Applicants

For additional information about applying for OWEB grants, see OWEB's Online Application Guidance at https://apps.wrd.state.or.us/apps/oweb/oa/Images/Online_Application_GuidanceV3.5.pdf. While not specific to the Drought Grant Program, this general guidance may provide helpful tips.

For information about grant budgets, getting access to OWEB's Grant Management System, understanding insurance requirements, or using OWEB's online applications, see the video resources at <https://www.oregon.gov/oweb/manage-grant/Pages/videos-training.aspx>.

For eligibility questions, or other questions about OWEB's Statewide Irrigation Modernization Grant Program, please contact Heidi Hartman, Drought Program Specialist, heidi.hartman@oweb.oregon.gov or 971-707-0226 .