



Clean Water Indiana 2026 Competitive Grants Guidance

Executive Summary

The Clean Water Indiana (CWI) Grant Program (IC 14-32-8-5) utilizes the Clean Water Indiana Fund to Support Indiana conservation groups (nonprofits or units or subdivisions of government), in cooperation with local Soil and Water Conservation Districts, in efforts to address the priority concerns of the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) business plan. The SSCB is accepting competitive proposals for targeted projects up to three years in length. The Clean Water Indiana fund is administered by the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA) under the direction of the SSCB (IC 14-32-8-6).

Application Process

Applications are submitted online through the Indiana Grant Management System (GMS). A request for a GMS account is required. Please visit:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/898f6ffc7f794f80abda15c5b773ba93> to request a GMS account for a CWI grant access.

All applications will be scored and ranked for CWI funding consideration. The SSCB CWI grants committee's funding recommendations will be presented to the full SSCB at their October meeting.

Applicants who are not a local Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) must be working with a SWCD as a partner.

Applicants should request the amount of funds that are needed for the project to the nearest whole dollar. It is not the goal of the SSCB to fund partial applications. Partially funded applications will be made only in special situations.

Attachments

No more than three attachments, with a total maximum of six pages, may be uploaded with the application. Anything over six pages will not be included in the grant committee's review. Only the first six pages will be available. The letters of commitment documents will not count against your six-page maximum.

Applicants must provide a letter of commitment signed by each board/partners involved outlining financial or in-kind commitment and roles. The lead applicant does not need a letter of commitment.

Each applicant must have a letter of acknowledgement from an ISDA Resource Specialist.

Also, the attachments of the bids will not count against the number of attachments.

Examples of attachments: Cost share outreach and forms, job descriptions, justification of grant completion of active CWI grants, map of grant focus area.

Application Deadline: September 4, 2025 by 12p.m. EST

Late applications will not be accepted.

By submitting the application, the lead applicant certifies that each partner has agreed to the terms outlined in the application. The designated signatory of the lead applicant must have prior approval from their boards, managers, etc. Upon submission of the application, if a pdf copy is needed please request a copy here:

<https://survey123.arcgis.com/share/2a1a2557c61b4e688b028032c37697a4>

Project Dates

All 2025 Clean Water Indiana Grant projects shall take no longer than three full years to complete. Projects will start in 2026 after a fully executed contract between the lead applicant and the Indiana State Department of Agriculture is signed. Grant All funds must be spent by December 31, 2028.

Proposal Logistics

This grant opportunity is competitive. Proposals can be for any amount that would accomplish the project described. A lead district must be selected to serve as the grantee to receive and administer the grant. **However, grant funds can be shared between districts through cooperative agreements locally.** The grant proposal must document how the grant funds will address at least two of the State priority resource concerns referenced in the State Soil Conservation Board's (SSCB's) 2020-2024 Business Plan. Proposals that outline how CWI funds will leverage additional funding from other sources as well as engage other partners are strongly encouraged. CWI project proposals that will be in tandem with ongoing projects are encouraged. *Example: CWI funds might be used to add technical assistance to help implement sediment and nutrient reduction practices cost-shared through a LARE or 319 project.*

Eligible Applicants

- Any SWCD or natural resources related conservation groups in the State of Indiana.
- One application is permitted per project and must be submitted by a lead applicant.
- Lead applicants must be up to date on all awarded CWI grant reporting.
- Lead applicants may be lead on up to two active CWI contracts as of January 2026. The SSCB has the authority to approve special circumstances.
- Applicants are not limited to the number of applications they can be partners on.
- Projects relating to urban practices that will reduce sediment and nutrient are eligible.
- Conservation practices and lab analysis of soil and water that are components of research projects are eligible.
- Equipment purchases to own and make available to landowners is allowable.
- All large equipment purchases require multiple bids and must be cited in the grant application or as attachments. The attachments of bids will not count against the number of attachments.
- All grant deadlines and reporting requirements have been met. (if applicable)

Funding Restrictions

Proposals must fall within the funding context allowed under the Clean Water Indiana Law (IC 14-32-8).

- The law prohibits funds from being used for food, food related paper products, office equipment or district self-promotional materials (i.e. mugs, t-shirts, pens, etc.)
- CWI grant dollars shall not be utilized to pay directly for employee benefits, such as retirement, health insurance, paid time off, taxes, etc.
- Cannot be used to fund research equipment.
- Cost-sharing is also not allowed on specific practices that an entity is required to install to comply with a state or local rule or ordinance. *Example: CWI funds cannot be used to meet MS4 requirements unless the proposed use of funds goes above and beyond the requirement outlined in the MS4 permit's Storm Water Quality Management Plan.*
- Cost share programs for the modification or purchasing of equipment to enhance assets to a landowner are not allowable for a grant request.
- Recycling grants and collections are not eligible.
- River clean ups should be justified as part of a larger system of efforts.

Funding Staff

CWI grant dollars shall follow all funding restrictions listed under funding restrictions. If CWI competitive grant dollars are being utilized to fund a staff position, once the funds are disbursed to a staff person, they may utilize their stipend/wages as they see fit. This only pertains to CWI competitive grant dollars and not to the \$10,000 CWI statutory match that SWCD's are eligible.

The grant may ask for no more than 10% of the total grant funds for administrative support of the grant. Administrative support would include staff time implementing the grant.

Partnerships

Each application must

- Clearly state what each partner will be contributing to the proposed project (i.e. outreach, professional assistance, estimated funds, etc.
- All partners must be identified with a point of contact for the project, their contact information, and an explanation of any anticipated cash or in-kind match from the partner.
- A letter of commitment is required to show each board or partner's approval for all match and project contributions listed in the grant application.

Conservation Practices

- Conservation planning and practices and structural measures shall follow NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, if practices installed are not applicable, please work with your DSS and RS. New technologies not currently in the technical guide may be implemented if reviewed and concurred in by a technical representative of the Conservation Implementation Teams (CIT) or their designee.
- Pollinator plantings must be free of species that are noxious, invasive, and/or all amaranth. To verify that seed mixes are free of these species, a district MUST request the seed lab card from the distributor.
- For all cost share programs, CWI funds may be used to pay up to a maximum of 75% of the total conservation final practice cost.
- For cover crop cost share programs, the maximum cost share is 75% of the total final cost of the practice, with 25% of the cost being the responsibility of the landowner, and a maximum dollar cap at \$30/ac.
- Any CWI funded applications that have cost share funds for livestock alternative watering systems, MUST fence out the existing watering sources that have a natural resource concern.
- If applying for cost share, please describe the process you will implement to select grant recipients. Priority will be given to projects who demonstrate a strategic process for managing cost share dollars and prioritizing first-time users and new acreage.
- Priority will be given to practices that are part of an on-the-ground systems approach.
- Cost share practices must have an application on file with the grantee before the practice is installed and funds are paid to the landowner.
- ISDA Resource Specialists are to review and sign off on all cost share applications.
- All cost share applications must use the ISDA approved cost share application, with the availability to add additional information.

Match Requirements

- A 50 percent cash and/or in-kind match is required. Match contributions can be federal, state, and/or local sources including such things as landowner costs, staff time, supervisor time, equipment use, purchase, rental, etc.
- Proposals that request funds for staffing require 25% cash or in-kind match for the staffing component. *Example: District A submits a \$10,000 for solely a staff position. District A's proposal requires a match of \$2,500. District B submits a \$10,000 proposal that includes \$5,000 for staff and \$5,000 for cost share. Proposal B is required to have \$3,750 match.*
- Each grantee must track in-kind/ cash match for all partners and be able to provide documentation. Grantee's may not count match that is already being counted in another grant.
- Grant proposals must use the match standards outlined below to develop their project budget. All state employee time and any staff paid by CWI funds may not be counted as match.
- The match is applicable only if directly related to the purpose of the proposed project. The grants committee may give preference to cash match rather than in kind during the scoring process.
- All in-kind must be reported in full for each grant update. In-kind cannot be accounted for in a later report.

Match Standards (all figures are per hour of project work)

ICP Staff/SWCD supervisors (including associates) \$35*

Landowner Time: \$35

Professional Services: \$35

Student/Intern/Volunteer: \$15

*ICP match rates were calculated from publicly available data in Gateway and public transparency portals.

Any landowner contribution toward the remaining portion of cost share practices should be counted as cash match.

In general, time spent working on the project should be considered in-kind match, whereas money would be considered cash match.

Match is not to be counted for anyone under 18, unless signed approval by a guardian.

Leveraging Funds

Applicants are encouraged to partner with traditional and non-traditional organizations/agencies at the local, state, and federal level to leverage additional funds for their project/initiative.

Projects which add to the percent cost-share/incentive rate offered through another program are prohibited. *Example: A project where CWI funds are used for cost share and 319 funds for technical assistance are acceptable. A project where CWI and 319 funds are both used to give producers a larger cost share amount is prohibited.*

All applicants are encouraged to work with county officials or other organizations to retain staff hired through staffing grants at the completion of any CWI grant funding. We recommend having discussions with your county board's or other potential funding sources while applying for the grant to make them aware of potential new employees and retainment options once grant has ended.

CWI Promotion

Any CWI funded programs will be required to have a CWI logo for equipment, handouts, and presentations.

Process of Payments

All funded applicants are required to register as a bidder with the State of Indiana. Instructions for registration can be obtained from the Indiana State Department of Agriculture (ISDA). Once the proposal is approved by the SSCB, ISDA will issue an electronic contract to the grantee.

Grantees must return their electronically signed contract to ISDA within 30 days of receipt to receive their funds. Funds must be utilized in a timely manner. Up to 50 percent of grant funding may be disbursed at the beginning of the grant. All other payments, after 50% is spent, will be made as reimbursement 45 days in arrears upon receipt of an updated report and claim that is submitted on GMS. *Please note that reimbursement claims require updated financial reporting, and proof of expenses showing that requested funds have been paid by the lead entity.*

10% of the total grant funds will be withheld until the final report is completed.

All funds must be spent at the end of the grant. Applicants need to make sure all cost share or incentive payments are made to the landowner by the December 31st deadline.

Reporting Requirements

- Financial and project status reports will be required for the duration of the grant and a cumulative final report will be due at the end of the grant. The grant updating form will be provided on GMS.
- The report must be completed semi-annually (every 6 months) and summarize the outcomes and achievements of the project for the 6 months. The total match and in-kind for each report are cumulative.
- Tracking of conservation practice implementation (following FOTG standards) must be reported through Conservation Link: conservation project tracking system (CPT) spreadsheet shall be completed by the 1st Friday of the quarter.
- The final report of the grant is a cumulative report; 10% of the total grant funds will be withheld in the state account before submitting the final report.
- All in-kind must be reported in full for each grant update. In-kind cannot be accounted for in a later report.
- Grantees are expected to meet all deadlines. If reporting deadlines are not met on the due date

For one deadline missed: a grant audit review is conducted and no claims can be made until the review is complete

For two or more deadlines missed: the grant audit review is conducted, no claims can be made until the review is complete, a full audit review report to the State Soil Conservation Board (SSCB) will be provided, and the grantee must appear in person at a designated SSCB meeting.

- If special circumstances prevent a deadline being met, communication before the deadline must be made by writing to the ISDA District Support Specialist or Grants and Training Coordinator.
- Photo(s) required for grant final report and saved to ISDA Conservation Link or emailed to ISDA staff.

Reporting Deadlines

Grant updates due in GMS annually: January 31st, July 31^s

Conservation Project Tracking in Conservation Link: 1st Friday of January, April, July, and October

Grant Audits

ISDA and the LG Grant Services team routinely visit its grantees to ensure projects and grants are proceeding as intended and offer guidance and support if needed. Each year, ISDA will strategically select grants to review. These reviews can include open grants and grants that have been completed in the last three years. Upon completion of a review, ISDA will send a summary of results to all involved in the project and their board(s).

If found during audit, failure to make progress on the project or report progress as specified in the grant contract no grant payment will occur until the grantee corrects any grant failures upon approval of ISDA and LG Grant Services. Grant audits must take place or be scheduled within 90 days of being contacted by ISDA through email notification, or the lead applicant will be ineligible for future grants for two years. Exceptions may be made (e.g. FMLA).

Modifications

Modifications should not be made lightly. These grants were awarded based upon merit. Largely changing the program of a grant could be seen as favoring some applicants over others. Other applicants may have submitted similar applications to the proposed modification but were not funded. No modification requests will be accepted following the last SSCB meeting in the final year of the grant term. All modifications will be considered for an audit. Please contact the DSS team before submitting a modification.

Questions

For assistance for SWCDs please contact your ISDA District Support Specialist (DSS).

<i>North</i>	Sandra Hoffarth	shoffarth@isda.in.gov	(317) 460--0428
<i>Central:</i>	Geneva Tyler	gt Tyler@isda.in.gov	(317) 518-4036
<i>South:</i>	Laura Fribley	lfribley@isda.in.gov	(812) 595-5641
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For assistance for non-SWCDs please contact:

<i>Tara Wesseler-Henry</i>	twesseler@isda.in.gov	(765) 745-0306
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