



EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES PROGRAM PROPOSAL GUIDELINES

August 2016

The Emerging Opportunities Program enables the Water Research Foundation (WRF) to sponsor time-critical research on emergent, high priority subscriber issues. The program also allows WRF to commit co-funding for subscriber-relevant research ideas developed by approved partner organizations.

20 percent of WRF's annual research budget is allocated to the Emerging Opportunities Program. WRF's Board of Trustees obligates funds for the program each January. Individual projects are then funded by the Board's Executive Committee throughout the year, subject to available funding.

The Emerging Opportunities Program provides a defined mechanism for funding research on time-critical subscriber needs. Such projects generally are of relatively short duration (3-12 months) and typically range in value from \$25K - \$200K. Project add-ons are limited to \$25K. WRF often issues Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for Emerging Opportunity projects.

WRF also provides co-funding through the Emerging Opportunities Program for research ideas developed by [Board-approved partner organizations](#).

Proposal Preparation Instructions

Please refer to the RFP as posted on the WRF website for the proposal deadline and other pertinent details. For proposal submission questions please contact Caroline Bruck, Senior Administrative Assistant, at cbruck@WaterRF.org (303-347-6118). Proposals must be submitted in Microsoft Word (.doc, .docx) or Adobe Acrobat (.pdf) format. The Emerging Opportunities Program has unique proposal requirements. Please follow the submission instructions below and do not reference requirements of other research programs. Proposals not adhering to the restrictions below will not be accepted.

The entire proposal, excluding the proposal cover worksheet, resumes, budget form, budget narrative, co-funding support form (when applicable), schedule and references should not exceed the number of pages identified in the RFP. Proposals must include the following components:

- **Proposal Cover Worksheet** – See the Emerging Opportunity Program Worksheets section of the [Proposal Guidelines page](#) of the WRF website. (See Attachment 1.)

- **Background and Statement of Need** - Provide a brief summary of the current state of knowledge for the issue that the proposed research will address, and the drivers for the research. This section should clearly articulate:
 - 1) How this work compares to past or ongoing related research.
 - 2) If the proposed work is duplicative of past research efforts, why this additional work is needed.
- **Objectives** – The proposed research objectives should be clearly identified in one or two sentences.
- **Technical Approach** – Describe how the proposed research will be conducted and the tasks necessary to accomplish the objectives.
- **Benefit to WRF Subscribers** – Identify the practical benefits of the proposed research to water utilities and the water and wastewater community.
- **Research Team and Other Participants** – Identify the key members of the research team and provide brief statements of their qualifications to conduct the proposed research. Identify any other organizations that have committed to collaborate on the proposed research. Curriculum vitae or resumes for research team members are required.
- **Budget**– A detailed budget is required. The researcher should identify the amount of WRF funds requested and any other cost-share or in-kind support for the proposed research. The following items will need to be included with the budget. They can be found this can be found in the Emerging Opportunity Program Worksheets section of the [Proposal Guidelines page](#) of the WRF website.
 - Budget Form for Proposals
 - Budget Narrative
 - Emerging Opportunities Co-Funding Support Form (when applicable) (Attachment 2)
- **Schedule** - A detailed schedule is required.
- **References** (optional) – Detailed citations are not required in the proposal, but may be provided at the discretion of the researcher.

Proposal Review and Funding Decision

WRF will form a Project Advisory Committee (PAC) composed of volunteer professionals with expertise in the research subject area to oversee the project(s) funded through this solicitation. Proposals will be reviewed by WRF staff and the PAC against established evaluation criteria (See Attachment 3.). WRF may request additional information from the researcher based on this review, and interviews may be conducted for the top three proposals. Proposals are treated confidentially and will not be shared outside of WRF.

The proposal review and selection process, from initial submittal through final decision, generally will not exceed 3-4 weeks.

Attachment 1
Water Research Foundation
Emerging Opportunities Program
Proposal Cover Worksheet

Project Title: _____

Organization: *(Legal name as it should appear in the contract)*

Principal _____ Investigator: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Personnel:

Principal _____ Investigator: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Anticipated _____ Co-Principal _____ Investigator: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Anticipated _____ other _____ personnel: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Authorized Representative: *Original Awards and amendments will be sent to this individual for review and acceptance, unless otherwise indicated.*

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

Accounting Contact: *Individual authorized to accept payments.*

Name: _____

Title: _____

Organization: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____

All Other Anticipated Participating Organizations (not listed above):

Organization	City/State/Country

Project Period: _____

WRF Funds Requested: \$ _____

Anticipated In-Kind Contribution(s): \$ _____

Cash Contribution(s): \$ _____

Note: Each co-funding organization providing cash to the project payable directly to WRF must complete a separate Emerging Opportunities Co-Funding Support Form and include it with the proposal package.

**Emerging Opportunities Program
CO-FUNDING SUPPORT FORM**

Note: Each co-funding organization providing cash to the project payable directly to WRF must complete a separate Emerging Opportunities Co-Funding Support Form and include it in the proposal.

Co-Funding Organization: _____

Type of Organization: _____ partner organization _____ water utility _____ consulting firm _____ manufacturer _____ other
(describe)

Cash co-funding amount being provided by your organization (in USD) \$ _____

Person responsible for contract matters for your organization:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Physical Address (no P.O. boxes please): _____

Phone: _____ E-

mail: _____

Person responsible for accounting matters for your organization:

Name: _____

Title: _____

Physical Address (no P.O. boxes please): _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

What approvals, if any, will be required in order for your funds to be released to WRF? (e.g., Board, City Council, Board of Commissioners)

Have these approvals been obtained? _____ Yes _____ No

Can approvals be obtained and co-funding agreements be signed within 120 days of award? _____ Yes _____ No
(**Note:** 120 days after award notification WRF may cancel the award if funding has not been received.)

Does the co-funding expire? _____ Yes _____ No If yes, what date does the co-funding expire? _____

Does your organization require a Purchase Order (PO) number on the invoice in order to pay this co-funding? Yes
_____ No (Note: this question must be answered by the appropriate financial contact for your organization. Provide the
point of contact information below.

Name: _____

Phone _____

Email: _____

Are there any conditions of WRF project funding agreement that would prevent you from signing it as it is currently
worded? _____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please explain: (attach additional pages if required)

Has your organization's legal counsel reviewed the agreement template? Yes No

The person signing below acknowledges they are authorized to commit their organization to the proposed work.

Signature_____Print Name_____

Title_____Organization_____

Date_____Phone_____

Mailing Address_____

Attachment 3
Emerging Opportunities Program
Proposal Selection
Evaluation Criteria
For Information Only – Do Not Submit with Proposal

- A. **Responsiveness**
Is the research approach scientifically/technically defensible? Is the proposal itself well prepared with supportive information? Is there a good probability that the project objectives can be achieved? Has the researcher provided an adequate explanation of QA/QC procedures to be used in the project?
- B. **Scientific/Technical Merit**
Is the research approach scientifically/technically reasonable? Is the proposal well prepared with supportive information? Is there a good probability that the project objectives can be achieved? Has the researcher provided an adequate explanation of QA/QC procedures to be used in the project? Does the research approach include criteria and/or performance metrics/targets that can be used to evaluate the progress of each project objective?
- C. **Qualifications**
Do the principal investigator and key project personnel have experience in the proposed research area? Will all key project personnel contribute a significant time commitment to the project? Does the research team have adequate resources (e.g., laboratory space, field sites, staff, etc.) available to achieve the project objectives?
- E. **Communications**
Is the overall communications plan consistent with subscriber communications needs for this project? Are any innovative communications methods proposed that would increase value to subscribers? Does the communications plan promote timely delivery of the findings? Does the communications plan convey the applicability of the project findings to subscribers?
- E. **Budget**
Is the budget reasonable for the amount and type of work proposed? Are personnel rates, overhead, indirect costs, cost of laboratory analysis, etc. reasonable? Are travel funds justifiable? Do the total labor and other category costs appear reasonable and appropriate for the amount and type of work proposed? Have cost-share and in-kind contributions been satisfactorily documented?
- F. **Schedule**
Is the schedule reasonable for the amount and type of work proposed? Is the budget competitive compared to other proposals, given the scope of work?
- G. **Relevance and Benefits to Utility**
Has the research team addressed the future applications potential that could result from the research? Is the project responsive to the water community's needs of the future? Has the research team addressed the practical applications of the research? Will the project yield a product that is beneficial to the water community? Does the scope of work support an applicable research project?
- H. **Originality**
Does the proposal/pre-proposal reflect creativity or other special qualities that lend weight to its attractiveness and potential usefulness? Has the applicant displayed an innovative approach?