



Emerging Opportunities FAQ

Question: What is the Emerging Opportunities Program?

The Emerging Opportunities Program is a Water Research Foundation research program that was adopted by the Board of Trustees in 2011. It was formed to enable WRF to sponsor time-critical research on emergent, high priority subscriber issues, and to collaborate on research ideas developed by approved WRF partners.

Question: What types of projects are funded under the Emerging Opportunities Program?

Two primary types of projects are funded through the Emerging Opportunities Program: 1) Research projects that respond to time-critical, broadly relevant needs or opportunities for WRF subscribers; and 2) Subscriber-relevant research ideas developed by WRF partner organizations and co-funded by WRF.

Question: Where do ideas for these projects come from?

Emerging Opportunities program research needs and ideas can come from any stakeholder in the drinking water community, including WRF subscribers, volunteers and staff, partner organizations, researchers, and regulators.

Question: How are Emerging Opportunities projects selected for funding?

WRF staff, often with input from our stakeholders, identifies and develops Emerging Opportunities project ideas that respond to time-critical subscriber needs. Partnership project ideas submitted to WRF for co-funding consideration are developed by the partner organizations. Project add-on proposals are gathered and evaluated by WRF staff. The Board of Trustees' Executive Committee has final funding authority for all Emerging Opportunities projects and add-ons.

Question: How are Emerging Opportunity project ideas evaluated?

WRF staff evaluate ideas and project add-ons using the Emerging Opportunities Evaluation Criteria.

Question: How are researchers for these projects selected?

Once a project is approved by the Board's Executive Committee, WRF may select a researcher through a competitive request for proposals (RFP) or, in some instances, through a sole-source award. WRF may also issue a call for researchers to submit research proposals relevant to a particular topic and select one or more of these proposals for funding. For co-funded partnership projects, the partner organization may conduct the research themselves or may select a researcher through their own established procurement processes.



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Question: When are project funding decisions made?

Emerging Opportunities Program projects are funded throughout the year as needs and opportunities are identified, subject to available funding. Project add-on proposals are gathered and evaluated every 10-12 weeks.

Question: How much funding is committed to the Emerging Opportunities Program?

Our Board of Trustees allocates 20 percent of WRF's annual research budget to the Emerging Opportunities Program.

Question: Is there a size limit to the projects funded under the program?

While there are no absolute limits to the size, scope, and duration of Emerging Opportunities Program projects, projects are typically short in duration (3–12 months) and range in value from \$25K – \$250K. Project add-ons are limited to \$25K.

Question: I have an idea for the Emerging Opportunities Program. How do I submit it?

You can submit research needs and ideas to WRF in a number of ways. Ideas can be submitted to any WRF staff member via phone or email. WRF utility subscribers are urged to discuss your ideas with your utility's Senior Account Manager. You can also make suggestions by using the Research Suggestion Form. It is important to note that ideas submitted to the Emerging Opportunities Program may be developed into competitive RFPs. WRF retains sole discretion for funding, development and procurement of Emerging Opportunities Program projects.

Question: As a researcher, what funding opportunities exist through the program?

Emerging Opportunities Program RFPs are posted on the Requests for Proposals page and are advertised through email announcements and Water Current, our monthly e-newsletter. Researchers may also identify an approved partner organization that is interested in sponsoring their idea and request WRF co-funding through the partner. A list of approved partner organizations is available on the Research Partners page.

Question: Who do I contact if I have additional questions?

For additional information about the Emerging Opportunities, you may also contact John Albert, WRF's Chief Research Officer (303.734.3413, jalbert@WRF.org), with any additional questions.