



Wetland Program Funding Options Information for Tribal Wetland Programs



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Securing funding to build and sustain a wetland program can be a major challenge. Tribal wetland programs may have to pay for personnel, monitoring supplies, laboratory analyses, travel, contractual work, data management, mapping, website maintenance, outreach & education, training, permitting (e.g., site visits, applications), vehicles for field work, overhead expenses, grant administration, and other costs. Funding for tribal wetland programs is often a combination of Tribal and Federal sources.

Tribal wetland staff have to be creative and “think outside the box” in order to find funding to build and sustain a wetland program. This fact sheet provides resources and examples of potential funding sources that may be utilized for tribal wetland programs.

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Grants. The EPA identifies a [number of potential sources for funding](#) wetland programs and voluntary restoration, including:

- [Wetland Program Development Grants \(WPDGs\)](#) assist tribal, state, territorial, and local government agencies, as well as intertribal and interstate entities, in developing or refining programs that protect, manage, and restore wetlands. WPDGs are EPA's primary source of financial support for tribal (and state) wetland programs and are competitive grants for projects that can last between two and four years. WPDGs are meant to develop the capacity of tribal governments to increase the quantity and quality of wetlands. These grants cannot be used for implementation activities, which would include ongoing, routine activities. More information is available on [NAWM's webpage here](#).
- [5 Star Wetland and Urban Waters Restoration Grants](#) – used to provide local environmental education and training through projects that restore wetlands and streams.
- [Clean Water State Revolving Fund \(SRF\)](#) – finance projects that improve water quality. Originally funded wastewater treatment, but in recent years states have begun to redirect their funds to help manage nonpoint source and other pollution. As wetlands help trap sediments, nutrients, and certain heavy metals without being degraded, wetlands-focused projects have been funded by the SRF. Eligibility varies from state to state. See also EPA's webpage on [Clean Water SRF and wetlands](#).
- [Water Pollution Control Section 106 Grants](#) – used to develop a variety of water pollution prevention and control programs and activities. Tribes identify the activities and actions necessary to create and sustain a program that best meets their water quality needs. Section 106 funds can be used for a variety of activities, such as developing and implementing a comprehensive monitoring program, implementing wetlands protection programs, conducting water quality assessments, developing and implementing water quality ordinances, developing GIS systems and data management programs, and conducting training and tribal outreach. See also EPA's webpage on [Tribal Grants under Section 106](#).
- [Nonpoint Source Water Pollution Section 319 Grants](#) – used to implement approved nonpoint source management programs. Section 319 grants can be used for a variety of activities, including technical assistance, financial assistance, education, training, technology transfer, demonstration projects and monitoring to assess the success of specific nonpoint source implementation projects.
- [Indian Environmental General Assistance Program \(GAP\)](#) – assists tribes and intertribal consortia in developing the capacity to manage their own environmental protection programs. Funds can be used for planning and program establishment (not program implementation).
- EPA's geographic programs, which focus on specific geographies such as [Puget Sound](#), [Columbia River Basin](#), and the [Great Lakes Restoration Initiative \(GLRI\)](#)

- [National Estuary Program](#) – grants Coastal Watersheds subawards for projects that address threats to estuaries in 28 estuaries across the country.
- [Environmental Justice Small Grants](#) – support and empower communities working on solutions to local environmental and public health issues.
- [Exchange Network Grants](#) – used to support the Environmental Information Exchange Network. Eligible projects may facilitate sharing of environmental data, streamline data collection and exchange, increase the quality of and access to environmental data, and increase data and IT management capabilities needed to fully participate in the Exchange Network.

Other Federal Government Funding Sources:

- BIA’s [Climate Resilience Annual Awards Program](#) can be used to build tribal resilience capacity. BIA regional offices also provide [competitive and non-competitive funding](#) to support tribal program development and natural resource management.
- USFWS provides a number of funding opportunities (see also the [Financial Assistance webpage](#)):
 - [Tribal Wildlife Grants](#) provide technical and financial assistance for the development and implementation of programs that benefit fish and wildlife resources and their habitat.
 - North American Wetlands Conservation Act Grant Program, which awards [U.S. Standard Grants](#) and [U.S. Small Grants](#) for projects that involve protection, restoration, and/or enhancement of wetlands for the benefit of wetlands-associated migratory birds.
 - [National Fish Passage Program](#) provides financial and technical assistance for projects that reconnect habitat for fish or other aquatic species.
- USDA NRCS’s [Agricultural Conservation Easement Program](#) helps with protection, restoration, and enhancement of wetlands through conservation easements. See also the [Getting Assistance webpage](#).
- NOAA Fisheries has [funding opportunities](#) to support restoration projects, education and training.
- FEMA’s [Hazard Mitigation Assistance Grants](#) provide funding for eligible mitigation measures that reduce disaster losses.
- [National Science Foundation](#) has funding opportunities that support research, education, and training.
- Wetland-related work may fall under [CERCLA/Superfund site assessments](#), [Brownfields Program](#) projects, and [Natural Resource Damage Assessments](#).

More Potential Funding Sources:

- State-level grant programs. E.g., New Mexico’s [River Stewardship Program](#) funds projects that enhance water quality and stream habitat.
- Foundations, including national and regional private foundations. Examples of grant programs are:
 - [National Fish and Wildlife Foundation](#) awards competitive grants, including the [America the Beautiful Challenge](#) and various regional programs.
 - [First Nations Development Institute](#) provides financial and technical support to Tribes.
- Other ways to generate revenue, such as permit fees or tribally-owned mitigation banks.

Additional Notes and Resources:

- USACE provides no-cost technical assistance for federally recognized tribes through their [Planning Assistance to States](#) Program.
- [USGS Office of Tribal Relations](#) provides technical training in support of Native American Relations.
- NAWM has a webpage on [Sustainable Financing for States and Tribes](#).
- EPA’s [Protecting Waters and Wetlands in Indian Country: A Guide for Developing Tribal Wetland Management Programs](#) includes “Getting Help” (Section IV) and a Funding Matrix (Appendix C).
- Partnerships and collaborations can be useful to reduce the work of preparing grant applications and managing a grant. In addition, grant reviewers often look for partnerships; consider including your partners (including intratribal partners if working with other departments) in your applications.