

Tips on Writing a Great Lakes Basin Program for Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Grant

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This is a guide to writing a GLBP grant. It will take you through each section of the application and explain what we want in those sections. I have offered specific examples on how to phrase problem statements and goals. It is important to be specific in all areas of the application. I also offer a few tips to make your grant more competitive. **APPLY ONLY IF YOUR PROJECT RELATES DIRECTLY TO SUBSTANTIAL SOIL EROSION AND SEDIMENT CONTROL.** Do not waste your time and ours by submitting a grant for animal waste control, habitat improvement, carbon sequestration, air pollution control, land fills or research on any of these topics and other unrelated topics. While these activities may be valuable projects and of benefit to the Great Lakes, they are not authorized by our legislative mandate. I urge you to contact your state's representative on the Great Lakes Commission's Soil Erosion and Sediment Task Force.

Project Title

Keep the title as short as possible while being descriptive. For example "The Pretty County Soil and Water Conservation District Buffer Initiative on the Green Creek Watershed Project" is too long. Try "The Green Creek Sediment Reduction Project." Your project will not get lost in the shuffle if you don't have the organization's name in the title. You will have ample opportunity to describe your project in the body of the text. Don't try to do it all in the title.

Tip: Write a rough draft of your title then cross every word that contains more than seven letters. Add back in only those words that are "really" necessary.

Project Grant Size

You will have to choose between large scale and small scale. Select large scale if your grant amount is over the small scale maximum amount.

Areas of Interest

Select the best fit for your project. This is not used to judge your project but to provide us with information to be used if the project is selected as a funded project.

Contact Information

Enter name of applicant organization, address, city, state (2-letter code) and zip code. The applicant has to be a governmental agency or a legal nonprofit. All correspondence and payments will be sent to this address. Do not enter the name an address of a consulting firm or an individual.

Project Manager

This person will be the main local contact person for the project. This may be a consultant or an individual on the applicant's staff.

Fiscal Contact

Payments will be sent to the applicant's address given above care of this person. It may be the same as the project manager and authorizing officer.

Authorizing Officer

This is the person whose signature commits the applicant entity to conduct the project. This person signs the award letter.

Location of Project

We need to know where your project is located. Applications are reviewed by members from other states. They may not be familiar with the location of the project.

County(ies)

This is self explanatory

Watershed

This is important for demonstration projects but also applies to I & E projects. Every project is within a watershed. Select the smallest (largest numerically) United States Geological Service Hydrologic Unit Codes (HUC) number as possible that covers the area of your project.

U.S. Congressional District

This is very important as your congress person is notified if a grant is awarded in their district.

Project Duration

There are only three choices (12 MONTHS, 18 MONTHS, 24 MONTHS) but when in doubt choose the larger duration.

Budget Totals

You need to be realistic and do your homework. Round to the nearest dollar. It is unlikely you know your budget down to the penny. However, it is amazing how many applicants have budget totals that are exactly the maximum limit.

Estimated Soil Savings

For Demonstration Projects only. An estimate the soil savings is critical and is used when ranking projects. If you do not know how to calculate an estimate, contact a professional for help. Exaggerated estimates usually result in the application not being funded. Small savings amounts for large dollar expenditures are also suspect.

Keywords

If your application is accepted, these keywords will allow the public to search our database of projects. Pick out actual words in your application. Try not to use common words like erosion and sediment.

Problem Statement

This section doesn't need to be very long, four or five sentences. State your problem(s) distinctly. The first sentence in this section should start with: 'The problem is or 'The problems are followed with because For example: "***The problem in Green Creek is excess sedimentation because of severe bank erosion.***"

Tip: If there is more than one problem use bullet points.

Examples of problems are:

- Excess sedimentation because of severe cropland erosion.
- Channel down-cutting because of excess stormwater from a new housing development.
- Lack of knowledge of sediment watershed issues by the landowners.

Project Background

Describe succinctly, the erosion and sediment issues you are dealing with in your project area. Do not go into minutia about the background. The reviewers do not need to know you visited the site five times and met with 100s of people. We assume you have done detailed background work before you applied for this grant. Do not describe the erosion/sediment process – we already know the process. It is no different in your area than in the rest of the Great Lakes basin.

Project Activities

Project goals and tasks need to be **measurable**; therefore, the goal/task must contain some numeric component.

Tip: Your goals should relate to your problem statements. Too often the stated project activities only peripherally addresses in the stated problem.

Examples of typical goal/tasks that are not specific enough and cannot be measured:

- “Build a coalition of interested landowners in the Green Creek Watershed” – What does this mean, have two landowners talked to one another?
- “Reduce the amount of sediment in Green Creek.” This is a lofty goal but how much are you reducing sediment? If you reduce sediment by one pound or even one gram have you met your goal?

- “Hold landowner meetings to increase awareness among Green Creek landowners.” What is awareness and how do you measure it? How many meetings?
- “Publish a brochure on the Green Creek Watershed.” What is the topic, to whom is it directed and how many and what kind?

Here are some examples of goal/tasks with measurable components:

- “Hold **seven** workshops to increase awareness.
- Build a coalition of people and organizations interested in the Green Creek Watershed by **holding an organizational meeting and electing a slate of officers.**”
- Reduce the amount of sedimentation entering Green Creek from **4000 tons to 3000 tons.**
- “Hold **three one-day meetings** on bio-engineering for county officials to increase understanding”
- “Mail a **four color tri-fold** informational brochure on buffers to **every** landowner along the stream to increase awareness of the benefits of riparian buffer.”
- We have **three** goals for this project:
 1. Increase the amount of wetland filters **by five** acres.
 2. Have **three** landowner **meetings** on the benefits of conservation tillage.
 3. Publish and distribute **10,000** four-color tri-fold brochures on sediment reduction.

Tip: It is not unusual to redefine or refine goal/tasks as you complete this section.

Tip: One way to work your way through this section is to actually answer the: who, what, where, when, how and why questions individually, then combine into sentences.

Who – Pretty County SWCD.

What – Hold three meetings.

Where – Around the county/watershed.

When - October 2002, January 2003 and April 2003.

How – Invited speakers with a luncheon and a tour of the demo site.

Why – To inform county officials on bio-engineering.

The Pretty County SWCD (who) will hold three one-day meetings (what) at three different places (locations TBA) around the county/watershed (where). They will be held in October 2002, January 2003 and April 2003 (when). The format will be invited speakers with a luncheon and a tour of the bio-engineering demonstration site. Each contractor and engineering firm that the SWCD has worked with will receive a special invitation. Local landowners will receive an invitation in the newsletter. (how)

Project Personnel

List only those individuals that are going to be directly involved. List name, title, job responsibilities on the project, and experience with project type activities.

Budget

Care should be taken to include all costs especially match. Be sure to calculate your match correctly.

Don't underestimate the cost of doing a specific goal item. You cannot produce 10,000 four-color glossy brochures for \$300. Take the time to get good cost estimates.

Take a realistic look at your time line. Our projects normally start on July 1st. Although one-year projects are normal, an eighteen or twenty four-month projects may better fit the construction seasons.

Tip: The grant money is paid out over the life of the project in three separate payments, one-third at the beginning, and one-third at the mid point after receipt of the interim report and one third after the receipt of the final report. Your expenses may not match up with this cash flow. Make sure you have cash to cover your expenses until you receive the grant funding.

Collaboration

What organizations can or are assisting you with your project?

Other Funding Sources

Identify other funding sources that have been or will be contacted for project support, and the status of that contact. **This is extremely important.** Failure to disclose alternate funding sources that have been or will be contacted is considered grounds for disqualification under the Great Lakes Basin Program.

Many groups apply to multiple sources for funding in hopes of broadening their chances to obtain funding. However, no project should receive double funding for a project and no funding organization wants to find out some other organization has also funded the same project.

Tip: If you want to apply to more than one funding source, break your project into components and apply to the funding organization that “best fits” those individual components. This means contacting the funding the organization, before you write your grant and physically communicate with the staff person assigned to your topic.

Map/Description of Project Location

The map page allows us to locate where your project is located. Try to use a map that can be used to locate your project easily. If you use road names or other identifying descriptive terms in your application try to make sure they are on the map. For example, if you say the buffer strips are going to be located from Main Road to Park Road along Green Creek make sure Green Creek and Main and Park Roads are shown and named on the map.