

CALL FOR PROPOSALS

New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute Fiscal Year-2026 Grants Program

Project Period: September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2027

DEADLINE: FRIDAY, MAY 1, 2026 at 12PM, NOON

Introduction: The New Jersey Water Resources Research Institute (NJWRRI) invites proposals for research addressing water resources issues in the state of New Jersey. We expect to fund up to three larger research projects conducted by junior faculty (i.e., assistant professor level) and up to four grants-in-aid to graduate students (i.e., masters and doctoral students) to support thesis research.

The mission of the NJWRRI is to fund research that addresses critical water resources problems in New Jersey, and by so doing, to produce the water resources professionals needed to protect and manage water in our increasingly crowded state. To this end, the Institute *especially encourages proposals from junior faculty* to develop research programs targeting priority water resources issues and from graduate students to develop thesis research projects on these issues.

Eligibility: Academic faculty and researchers employed by any accredited university located in New Jersey are invited to submit proposals. Faculty and permanent research personnel (e.g., research professor or extension specialist) may serve as PI or co-PI if they have official status to lead proposals as determined by their sponsored programs office.

Program Priorities: The NJWRRI invites proposals for: 1) research projects that address unanswered questions related to water resources; and/or, 2) education and information transfer projects that make research-based information available to user communities. Projects should focus primarily on *fresh* waters, not estuaries or marine waters. Highest priority will be given to projects associated with **contemporary water issues in New Jersey and the mid-Atlantic/northeast regions, framed in the context of national program focus areas for 2020-2030** (<https://pubs.er.usgs.gov/publication/cir1488>):

- Water Scarcity and Availability
- Water-Related Hazards and Climate Variability
- Water Quality
- Water Policy, Planning, and Socioeconomics
- Ecosystem and Drainage Basin Functions
- Water Technology and Innovation
- Workforce Development and Water Literacy

We encourage projects that assist early career faculty and researchers (i.e., assistant professor level) in developing a water research program; engage students; inform or work with partners (e.g., agencies, civil society, and/or community stakeholders); and/or develop products (e.g., peer-reviewed research publications, effective outreach materials).

Award Dates: The anticipated period of performance is September 1, 2026 – August 31, 2027.

Award Amounts:

- **JUNIOR FACULTY-INITIATED PROJECTS (i.e., assistant professor level):** Up to three (3) projects to be funded at a level of **up to \$30,000 per project**
- **GRADUATE STUDENT GRANTS-IN-AID (i.e., masters or doctoral level):** Up to four (4) awards to be funded at a level of **up to \$10,000 per project**
- **A minimum 1:1 nonfederal match is required.** Final 104B awards via the NJWRRRI are contingent upon Congressional approval of 104B program funding and the availability of these appropriated funds to Rutgers University via USGS.

Federal Funds: The requested federal funds can be used to support relevant project activities (e.g., salaries, wages, travel, supplies, water analyses, events). Federal funds cannot be used to support participant costs, food, or drinks.

Nonfederal Matching Funds: Each proposed budget must match each federal dollar requested with at least one dollar from nonfederal sources. These matching funds must be obligated during the project period and can be provided from any nonfederal source. Because the USGS 104B program doesn't allow universities to charge indirect F&A costs on these projects, matching funds may contain this overhead. Matching funds can also include salary, wage, or tuition contributed by the investigators, graduate students, or undergraduate students, and the fringe benefits associated with this. Matching funds commitment letters verifying the amount & sources of the nonfederal match exactly as shown in the budget template must be included with the proposal and signed by an appropriate authorized organizational representative (AOR) from a corresponding Office of Research and Sponsored Programs. Expenditures for matching funds must be made within the project period and tracked officially in post-award accounting. Further documentation of the nonfederal matching funds will be required in all post-award accounting invoices.

Expectations: Given the congressional funding for the 104B program, PIs should expect that the proposals selected for funding, data stemming from the project, and final reports of the projects may be publicly available. Each funded project will be required to submit a final report within 30 days from the project end date using a prescribed format. So that we can evaluate the impact of the grants program, investigators must be willing to provide updates on research, achievements and awards, student support, and publications that stemmed, at least in part, from this grant for five (5) years after the project ends.

Submission Requirements: Proposals are **due firmly by 12PM, NOON EST on Friday, May 1, 2026.**

- Submit an electronic copy by email to: **Christopher C. Obropta, Director, NJWRRRI at njwrrri@njaes.rutgers.edu.**
- Proposals must be submitted (in Microsoft Word, not PDF) using the **proposal template** (*project-proposal-template.docx*); a completed version of the **budget template** (*104b-*

budget-single-project.xlsx); a completed version of the **budget justification** (*budget-justification-form.docx*); if relevant, proposals also must include a completed assessment guide for determining whether a candidate unmanned aircraft system (UAS) meets the definition of a “Covered UAS” (*doi-covered-uas-assessment-guide-v3.0.pdf*), following Department of Interior guidelines; a matching funds commitment letter verifying the amount and sources of the non-federal match exactly as shown in the budget template must be included and signed by an appropriate authorized organizational representative from an Office of Research and Sponsored Programs; and a completed and signed Rutgers Subrecipient Commitment Form (*Rutgers Subrecipient Commitment Form.pdf*).

- The elements in the templates are required for all USGS 104B proposals to enable our entering them into a federal system, thus *proposals not adhering to the templates will not be considered for funding*.
- There is a 5-page limit for proposals. Efficient writing and brevity are encouraged. It also should be noted that reviewers have diverse areas of expertise, so proposals should avoid terminology and details that are highly discipline specific. All submissions will receive an automated confirmation.
- Proposals will be evaluated according to criteria of 1) scientific merit, 2) promise for future scientific productivity (e.g., follow-on funding), and 3) relevance to New Jersey’s water resources needs.

For questions about the proposal please contact:

Lisa Galloway Evrard, Research Project Manager, at njwrri@njaes.rutgers.edu.