

## Request for Proposals

### Research, Extension, and Engineering: Water Resources Advancement Program FY 2026-FY 2027

Texas A&M AgriLife Research (AgriLife Research), the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension), and Texas A&M Engineering Experiment Station (TEES) are seeking multidisciplinary proposals for FY 2026 and 2027. This program focuses on key areas of water resources. It is anticipated that an initial investment in these focus areas will result in critical research and outreach needed to advance water resources management in Texas. In addition, this funding is expected to be leveraged through the pursuit of external funding sources, leading to project expansion. This program is administered by the Texas Water Resources Institute (TWRI), which is a part of AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension.

The intention is to support multidisciplinary teams to assist in positioning them to be leaders in emerging fields and successfully secure large, competitive, extramural resources that advance water management in Texas. As such, proposals should consider future needs of water research (and/or technology) and outreach; the trends in state and federal grant programs; and attempt to match project goals with anticipated grant program priorities. Projects may include the development of technology, collection of preliminary data, purchase of equipment necessary for project success, salary support for staff and students, travel, and other expenses allowable by state funds.

Please prepare a full proposal and corresponding budget following the guidelines and format below and submit 1) a PDF of the entire submission package including the budget template (PDF File with the lead PIs last name starting the file name-Proposal), and 2) the completed Excel format budget template to [TWRI\\_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:TWRI_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu) by **5 p.m., July 7, 2025**, with subject line: Water Grant – [lead PI Last Name, short title].

#### Eligibility

**Principal Investigators (PI) and Co-PIs:** Proposals will be accepted from multidisciplinary teams that must include at least one participant from all three agencies — AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension, and TEES. The project PI must hold an appointment with one of the three identified agencies. Individuals with dual appointments (e.g., joint between AgriLife Research and AgriLife Extension) may serve as PI or Co-PI for either agency, but not both. Directories for the agencies are listed here:

- AgriLife Research and Extension – <https://agrilifepeople.tamu.edu/>
- TEES – <https://tees.tamu.edu/people/index.html#All>

**Investigator Submission Restrictions:** Investigators may participate in no more than two cumulative proposal submissions and PIs may lead no more than one proposal.

**Collaborators:** Participants from other entities, colleges, universities, and entities may participate in the project if deemed necessary to the success of the project but are not eligible to receive funding. However, services, such as lab analysis, from external entities are allowed, but services cannot be invoiced from AgriLife Research to another in AgriLife Research.

### Project Focus Areas

Successful proposals will identify a demonstrated need from stakeholders' or potential sponsors' compiled resources that identifies a project in alignment with a defined priority area. Examples of such resources may include, but are not limited to the [2022 State Water Plan](#), [Texas Nonpoint Source Management Program](#), and agency strategic roadmaps, such as, the EPA Per-and Polyfluoroalkyl Substances (PFAS) strategic roadmap. In addition, the demonstration of stakeholder engagement, preliminary data collection, or other measures for better positioning teams to secure external funding are encouraged. Selected projects will be required to submit external, competitive grant proposals requesting a 2:1 match (extramural sources: internal funding) during the project period.

One or more projects for the following water resource research and outreach focus areas may be selected:

- *Agricultural Efficiency and Water Management* – Projects under this focus area will develop new strategies and technologies to increase resiliency and efficiency, make better use of alternative water sources, better understand water availability and usage, manage degraded water quality, or provide science-based evidence to inform policy.
- *Urban Water Management* – Projects under this focus area may, but will not be limited to, mitigating the impacts of flooding and promoting efficient use of current water supplies to meet future demands.
- *Emerging Contaminants* – Projects under this focus area will advance technology to continue to achieve drinking water and wastewater standards through traditional and alternative water sources; address emerging/future contaminants such as PFAS; reduce energy demands; and add value to water and wastewater treatment byproducts.

### Project Funding Limitations

- Each proposal should have one clearly identified PI from AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension or TEES, and at least one Co-PI from each of the other two agencies.
- No participants outside of the three agencies are eligible to receive funding, but they may participate in the project if their contribution is deemed necessary by the project team.
- Fringe benefits, tuition and fees, food (excluding per diem for travel) and indirect costs are **not allowed** in the budget.
- Funding for each project will be incrementally awarded by fiscal year, starting September 1 and ending August 31 of the following year. Due to state funding restrictions, project funds cannot be carried forward from one fiscal year to the next; therefore, extensions will not be granted.

- Spend-down plans will be due May 15 of each fiscal year, and all funds must be encumbered by June 30 of each year otherwise they will be swept and reallocated.

**Maximum Funding:** Funding should not exceed \$150,000 per year for a two-year funding period from September 1, 2025, to August 31, 2027, for a total funding request not to exceed \$300,000 per project. Any unencumbered funds will be swept 7/1 of each year unless the PI/Co-PI has communicated a clear strategy of utilizing funds. Funds are internal; budgets should **NOT** route through SRS.

**Graduate Student Tuition and Fees:** Since graduate student tuition and fees are not allowed to be paid with state funds, PIs and Co-PIs are encouraged to work with their department heads or unit leaders to identify alternative sources of funds for tuition and fees if graduate students are included in the project.

### **Timeline and Deadlines**

The completed application package must be e-mailed to [TWRI\\_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:TWRI_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu) by **5 p.m. on July 7, 2025**, with subject line: Water Grant – [lead PI Last Name, short title] for consideration. Please submit 1) a **single PDF** containing all requirements including the budget template, and 2) the completed **budget template in Excel format**. Both file names should start with the last name of the lead PI then the file type (-Proposal or -Budget). The start date of projects will be September 1, 2025. One- or two-year projects are allowable, but each year's funds must be spent during that fiscal year; no extensions will be granted. Proposals that do not meet the submission deadline will not be considered for funding.

### **Award Recipient Expectations**

Award recipients are expected to communicate with TWRI and TEES to discuss project objectives and timelines, beginning with a kickoff meeting in September 2025. Awardees will be provided with a quarterly report template that is due on the 15<sup>th</sup> day of December, March, June and September during the project period. Quarterly meetings should be held to discuss progress that quarter and upcoming activities. Funding in FY 2027 will be contingent on satisfactory progress being made on project objectives and deliverables and timely submission of updated progress reports in FY 2026. Prior to the biennium end date, each awardee will submit a final report, using a template provided, detailing project outputs, outcomes, impacts, dollars leveraged, and how the project advanced water management in Texas.

Additionally, each awardee will prepare and submit grant proposals such that there will be two extramural dollars requested for every \$1 received. For example, if a project team receives the full \$300,000, then the team must submit grant proposals to extramural sources requesting at least \$600,000. This requirement can be satisfied through a single large grant application or through several smaller grant applications. Extramural grant applications may include the awarded PI/Co-PIs and additional collaborators. Grant applications must be submitted before August 31, 2027, and proof of submission provided to TWRI and included in the final report. Potential sources of funding shall be identified in the proposal as directed below.

## Selection Criteria

Proposals will be selected based on the criteria below.

- Evidence of a demonstrated need.
- Clearly articulate how the research is innovative, uses new methodologies or technologies, or offers novel solutions to existing challenges in water management.
- The proposal should demonstrate how the collaboration among team members will leverage each discipline's strengths to create synergies that wouldn't be possible in siloed efforts.
- Clear roles, responsibilities, and complementary expertise of team members (including AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension, and TEES) should be highlighted. If applicable, collaborations with other institutions or private-sector partners should be outlined.
- The proposal should clearly identify how the research could scale beyond the initial funding period, and what steps will be taken to ensure the sustainability of the project's outcomes, both scientifically and financially. This could include transitioning from grant funding to self-sustaining models or industry partnerships.
- The proposal should not only detail how external funds will be leveraged but also the likelihood of success in obtaining those funds. This includes aligning the project's objectives with the priorities of funding agencies and demonstrating a strong track record of attracting such funding.
- A comprehensive strategy for engaging with external stakeholders (e.g., government agencies, foundations, industry, and academic institutions) to address specific pain points as well as secure funding and additional resources.
- The objectives should be specific, measurable, and achievable within the proposed timeframe. The proposal should provide a well-defined methodology, timelines, and milestones, as well as risk management strategies for overcoming potential challenges.
- If previously funded, all deliverables and requirements were satisfactorily completed.
- Detailed budget with justification for use of funds (see budget guidelines below)

## Review Process

Each proposal will be reviewed by at least three peers through written reviews and a panel review ranking session with representation from AgriLife Research, AgriLife Extension and TEES.

## Contacts

For technical questions regarding the proposal and content, please contact Allen Berthold, Ph.D., at [taberhold@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:taberhold@ag.tamu.edu).

For budgetary or submission questions, email [TWRI\\_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu](mailto:TWRI_Proposals@ag.tamu.edu) with subject line starting with "Water Grant Question."

## FY2026-2027 Research, Extension, and Engineering: Water Research Investment Program Application

**Title:** Enter full title of the project.

**Keywords.** Enter keywords of your choice descriptive of the work.

ROLE	NAME	EMAIL	AFFILIATION <i>Research, Extension or TEES and Department/Unit</i>
<b>PI</b>			
<b>Business Contact</b>			
<b>Co-PI/I</b>			
<b>Business Contact</b>			
<b>Co-PI/I</b>			
<b>Business Contact</b>			

Add additional table cells if needed for more Co-PI/Is.

**Amount Requested** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **FY26** \$ \_\_\_\_\_ **FY27**

### Proposal Requirements

- Maximum of FIVE pages, including the above information. Qualifications for each investigator and budget template are not part of the five-page limit. Proposals should be single-spaced, 12-point font with 1-inch margins.
- \*\*If you have previously requested funding through the Water Research Investment Program, explain how this project is different than those proposals.\*\*
- Please submit 1) a **single PDF** containing the full proposal, additional information required and the budget and budget narrative, and 2) the **budget as an Excel file** using the provided template.
  - Both file names should start with lead PI's last name followed by item type.
- Italicized instructions including this section can be deleted from final proposal.

**Introduction** – A brief overview of the issue being addressed and how the proposed research will impact this major issue and provide new opportunities.

**Background** – Pertinent literature review (published manuscripts, patents, etc.) and prior work by team members that help identify the issues to be addressed and the potential solutions being proposed.

**Plan and scope of work** – A comprehensive description of the proposed work with associated timelines and corresponding responsibilities of tasks within the team. Include the **statement of**

**water management problem.** Explain the need for the project, and how the proposed project will advance water management in Texas.

**Anticipated source(s) of extramural funding planned to be pursued and project fit.** Please provide the agency, name of the program within the agency, anticipated release date of the request, maximum total amount of the request and relevant information about the program(s) you anticipate submitting to, such as a web link to more information about the program(s). Recipients can change the program(s) they submit to, but dollar amounts should be similar, and awardees will first consult with TWRI and TEES. Proposals developed as part of this program should not already be in progress but will be new proposals developed by the project team during the performance period that aligns with the project work. In addition, describe how your proposal will fit the priority area(s) identified in these source(s) of extramural funding. How will successful acquisition and submission of externally funded grants advance water management in Texas?

**Statement of results or benefits.** Specify how a successful project will position the team for leveraging large, competitive state and federal grants. How will the results of the completion of this project advance water management in Texas?

**Milestones and deliverables.** Provide a description of the project goals, objectives, milestones and deliverables as well as the approach that will be used to achieve them, including a timeline of activities. Bullet format is preferred.

**References cited.** Please list any references cited within your proposal. (Does not count toward the 5-page limit.)

**Additional Information** (Does not count toward the 5-page limit.):

1. **Investigator's qualifications.** Include resumes of the principal and co-investigators. Limit each resume to two pages including no more than five relevant publications. (2 pages maximum per investigator)
2. **Investigator Current and Pending.** Include a table of current and pending support for each principal and co-investigator to include: 1) project dates; 2) project title; 3) project sponsor; and 4) amount awarded/requested.
3. **Leveraging on-going research activities.** If these funds will leverage an on-going research activity, please provide a single paragraph statement summarizing: the existing project title, amount of funding for the existing project, the agency funding the existing project and a brief narrative of how this research activity links to the existing project. (1 page maximum)

**Project budgets.** (Does not count toward the 5-page limit.) **Budgets should NOT be routed through SRS as these are internal funds.** Requested project budgets should be prepared using the [Excel Budget and Narrative Template](#) linked here or on our [webpage](#). Each principal investigator and co-investigator should provide an individually completed budget and budget narrative in their respective tab. The Summary tab will automatically populate from the details entered on the individual tabs.