Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Wastewater Planning Grant
Letter of Interest and Rating Form
Fiscal Year 2028

Section I. Project Information

This funding is available only for the development of a planning document (also referred to as a facility plan) in accordance with *IDAPA 58.01.22*. Construction activities are not eligible for planning grant funding. See *Customer Handbook* for additional eligibility requirements.

Provide complete and accurate answers to receive the highest possible rating for your project. When possible, DEQ recommends working closely with your engineering consultant to complete this form. If you would like help completing this form, please contact DEQ at *grants.loans@deq.idaho.gov* to discuss technical assistance opportunities.

A. System Identification

System Name:		
System Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Is the system located wholly within incorporated city limits?		Yes No
What City?	County:	
System Phone:	System Email:	
Population Served:	Owner's Name:	
Owner's Phone:	System Ownership: For Profit Not-for-Profit	
Name/Title of System Contact (if different from owner):		
Contact's Address:		
City:	State:	Zip:
Contact's Phone:	Contact's Email:	

Do you have a licensed and designated responsible charge operator for your system as described in the "Wastewater Rules" (*IDAPA 58.01.16.203*)? Yes No

Name: _____ License Number: _____

Note: *If the facility has a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit, Idaho Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (IPDES) permit, wastewater (WW) reuse permit, or a subsurface discharge permit, the permit number(s) must be provided.*

NPDES/IPDES Permit: _____ WW Reuse Permit: _____ Subsurface Permit: _____

B. Project Readiness

Determine your community's readiness for Clean Water Act funding assistance by answering the following questions. **At a minimum, the planning effort must address problems experienced by your wastewater system. Select all that apply:**

1.	Your system is current with payment of the IPDES permit assessments and State Revolving Fund (SRF) loan repayments.
2.	If interested in receiving a planning grant, you will have the 50% required match funds available.

If you did not select questions 1 and 2, you will not be placed on the new fiscal year's priority list. DEQ will notify you when the grants and loans process begins again next year. Do not complete or submit this form to DEQ.

If you selected questions 1 and 2, complete all applicable sections of this form.

3.	Describe the proposed planning effort and any known problems that need to be addressed:		
4.	If you have already contacted an engineer licensed in the State of Idaho about your planning effort, indicate your status and provide contact information for the engineer (or firm): Discussed with engineer Obtained quote from engineer Signed contract with engineer		
	Engineer:		
	Address:		
	City:	State:	Zip:
	Phone:	Fax:	
	Email:		

C. Project Costs	
1.	What is the estimated cost to prepare your planning document? Total Planning Document Costs: $_____ DEQ Funding Request (50% of planning cost up to $65,000): $_____
2.	If you plan to design or construct a project with SRF dollars, the State Environmental Review Process (SERP) may be required under the DEQ planning grant process. You may choose to opt-out of the SERP if your system plans to avoid using SRF design/construction funds. Contact DEQ's Grants and Loans Bureau for details. Completion of the SERP is considered grant eligible if you wish to prepare it as part of this planning process. You may also choose to defer the SERP until the SRF funding is in place.
	If this planning document will include a SERP, how much of the total planning budget provided above is the estimated cost (DEQ + your match) of preparing for the SERP? $_____
	Note: *Initial SERP costs need not include agency consultations.*

Continue to Section II. Integrated Priority Rating System

Section II. Integrated Priority Rating System

"Rules for Administration of Planning Grants for Drinking Water and Wastewater Facilities" (IDAPA 58.01.22.020). Projects are identified for placement on priority lists by surveying eligible entities directly on an annual basis. Grant funds are awarded to projects based on priority ratings. Projects are rated by the department on a standard priority rating form using public health, sustainability, water quality criteria, and condition of the existing system.

Answer the questions below and provide the requested documentation. Applicants or their consultants are encouraged to contact DEQ prior to the submittal deadline for assistance in answering the questions. **Rating will be determined by the answers and documentation provided.**

A. Regulatory Compliance Issues – Point Source Projects/Conventional Wastewater Projects

IDAPA 58.01.22.020.03.a. Regulatory compliance issues (e.g., noncompliance and resulting legal actions relating to infrastructure deficiencies at a wastewater facility). Up to 100 points.

Select the level of noncompliance this project is addressing:

1.	**Select the level of noncompliance this project is addressing:**		
	a.	**Low-Level Noncompliance:** Includes minor or inconsequential permit violations that will be addressed by the planning effort. *10 points*	
	b.	**Moderate-Level Noncompliance:** Includes a first state or US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) warning letter, notice of violation, or equivalent that will be addressed by the planning effort. *25 points*	
	c.	**High-Level Noncompliance:** Includes a second state or EPA warning letter, compliance agreement schedule, consent order, or equivalent that will be addressed by the planning effort. *50 points*	
		i.	**If High-Level Noncompliance:** The system has avoided formal litigation actions, court filings, or civil or federal court orders by negotiating compliance actions described in A.1 with DEQ and/or a federal agency to address violations that are directly related to the planning effort. *20 points*
		ii.	**If High-Level Noncompliance:** The system has satisfied all deadlines, milestones, and submittals to date associated with the compliance actions described in A.1. *20 points*
2.	The system has received a draft permit with new or more stringent limits and compliance will be addressed by the planning effort. *50 points*		
3.	The system has an unpermitted direct discharge to surface water that is documented and ongoing. (This does not include emergency or one time discharge to surface water, or an indirect nexus to surface water through groundwater or other mechanisms). 50 *points*		

B. Watershed Restoration – All Projects		
IDAPA 58.01.22.020.03.b. Watershed restoration (e.g., implementation of best management practices or initiation of construction at wastewater collection and treatment facilities as part of an approved total maximum daily load (TMDL) plan, implementation of nonpoint source management actions in protection of threatened water or is part of a special water quality effort). Up to 100 points.		
Select all that apply:		
1.	**Surface Water:**	
	a.	Your planning study will reduce impacts to surface water. *10 points*
		Describe current impacts and how the project will reduce impacts:
	b.	Existing facility discharges to, or is documented to be impacting a § 303(d) water body. *10 points* Water Body Name: _____
		Note: View the *§ 303(d)-listed streams. Locate the discharging stream for your planning study and select status to view category. The § 303(d)-listed streams are classified as Category 4 or 5 on the map. Contact your regional DEQ office if you are within tribal boundaries to determine impaired status.*
	c.	Planning study is for a point source and is expected to reduce a pollutant of concern in the § 303(d)-listed water body. *10 points* List Pollutant: _____
	d.	Planning study is for a point source that is exceeding the waste load allocation (WLA) listed in the approved TMDL. *10 points* List TMDL Name and WLA: _____
	e.	Planning study is for a nonpoint source (NPS) and is expected to reduce a pollutant of concern in the § 303(d)-listed water body. *10 points* List Pollutant: _____
2.	**Groundwater:** Planning efforts will reduce impacts to groundwater by:	
	a.	Reducing pollutant concentrations in a designated sole-source aquifer: the Eastern Snake River Plain, Spokane Valley Rathdrum Prairie, or Lewiston Basin. *10 points* (*Designated Sole Source Aquifers in EPA Region 10*)
	b.	Reducing nitrate concentrations in a designated Nitrate Priority Area. *10 points* (*§ 303(d)-Listed Waters by Subbasin*)
	c.	Reducing nitrate concentrations in a critical groundwater area. *10 points* (*Critical Groundwater Area Maps*)
3.	**Point source applicants:** Your system owners are willing and able to sponsor an NPS project. *10 points*	

	See *Nonpoint Source Subgrants in Idaho* or contact the Grants and Loans Bureau for details. Sponsorships are structured so that there is no rate impact to system users.
4.	**Nonpoint Source Projects – Watershed Load Reduction:** Points are awarded according to the expected effectiveness of the project and transferability of the demonstrated technologies to other parts of Idaho. The planning effort will analyze restoring designated or existing beneficial uses, reducing the severity of NPS impacts, or promoting statewide nonpoint pollution reduction or remediation. Examples might include streambank stabilization, surface water restoration, wetland restoration, or agricultural best practices such as no-till.
	Will the proposed planning effort analyze the NPS impact on overall pollutant loading to the watershed? *25 points* List the 8-digit hydraulic unit code name and number: _____
	Provide description:

C. Watershed Protection from Impacts – All Projects		
IDAPA 58.01.22.020.03.c. Preventing impacts to uses (all projects) Watershed protection from impacts (e.g., improvement of beneficial use(s) in a given water body, evidence of community support, or recognition of the special status of the affected water body). Up to 100 points.		
Select all that apply:		
1.	Your planning effort will analyze:	
	a.	Implementing a new recycled water system or refurbishing an existing system in accordance with "Recycled Water Rules" (*IDAPA 58.01.17*). *50 points*
	b.	Converting individual septic systems to centralized treatment. *25 points*
	c.	Refurbishing an existing lagoon. *10 points*
	d.	Removing and disposing biosolids or seepage testing existing lagoon. *10 points*

2.	Beneficial uses are designated by the "Water Quality Standards" (*IDAPA 58.01.02.100*). To which of the following listed beneficial uses will the planning effort analyze for reducing current impacts or preventing future impacts? A sufficient description would describe each beneficial use designation as listed in IDAPA 58.01.02, 110, 120, 130, 140, 150, and 160 and explain how the planning effort will address impacts or improve beneficial uses designations. **Failure to provide sufficient description(s) will result in no points awarded.**	
	Select all that apply:	
	a.	**Aquatic life** *25 points* Designation (COLD, SS, SC, WARM, or MOD): _____ Describe impacts prevented or improved:
	b.	**Recreation** *15 points* Designation (PCR or SCR): _____ Describe impacts prevented or improved:
	c.	**Other** *10 points* Designation (DWS): _____ Describe impacts prevented or improved:
3.	**State Priorities:** Preference is given to projects based on recognition of the special status of waters or uses of those waters.	
	a.	Planning document will analyze impacts to a water body listed in Idaho Code § 67-43. *10 points*
	b.	Planning document will analyze impacts to a designated wild and scenic river segment. (*National Wild and Scenic Rivers System—Idaho*) *10 points*
	c.	Other: Describe and attach documentation of special status or uses that deem the project a state priority. **Failure to provide sufficient documentation will result in no points being awarded**. *10 points*
		Description:

4.	Planning document will analyze one or more of the following:	
	a.	Removal of stormwater outlets. *5 points*
	b.	Conversion of combined sewer to separate stormwater system. *5 points*
	c.	Or similar projects (contact DEQ first). *5 points* Indicate type of project(s): _____

D. Sustainability (Green) Infrastructure Efforts

*IDAPA 58.01.22.020.03.e. Sustainability Efforts (e.g., prospective efforts towards energy conservation, water conservation, extending the life of capital assets, green building practices, and other environmentally innovative approaches to infrastructure repair, replacement, and improvement)***.** *Up to 50 points.*

Answers to the following questions can improve your overall rating. If you earn Priority List points for your responses in this section, you or your project engineer will need to evaluate or complete each item under the terms of the planning grant agreement.

Although only 50 points maximum can be awarded under Section II.D, DEQ will incorporate all sustainability items selected below into the scope of the grant agreement for inclusion in the planning document. All the items selected shall be addressed in the planning document.

Select all that apply – 5 points each (unless otherwise noted), up to a maximum of 50 points.

1.	**Management-based/innovative efforts:** Management-based/innovative efforts could include the following:	
	a.	As part of the planning effort, cyber-informed engineering (CIE) principles will be incorporated, critical systems will be identified and plans to integrate the CIE methodology in future projects will be developed. CIE resources can be found in the *Grants and Loans Program Customer Handbook* or at the *Idaho National Laboratory page for Cyber-Informed Engineering*. *20 points*
	b.	As part of the planning effort, an ongoing capital improvement plan will be developed or updated and supported by a capital improvement plan budget.
		Note: *If you are interested in receiving technical assistance to help develop a capital improvement plan, please reach out to DEQ at grants.loans@deq.gov.idaho to discuss possible opportunities.*
	c.	As part of the planning effort, a rate study will be completed or updated. A rate study is based on consumption-based full-cost pricing for wastewater supported by a capital budget (submit documentation). This means (1) utility rates must be based on the flow and strength of the wastewater treated, and (2) utility rates must generate revenue sufficient to cover both operating and capital costs. Identify the professional (or organization) preparing the rate study: _____
		Note: *If you are interested in receiving technical assistance to help develop a rate study, please reach out to DEQ at grants.loans@deq.gov.idaho to discuss possible opportunities.*

	d.	A formal asset management system/plan has been or will be implemented and updated routinely.
		Provide a description:
	e.	System is currently an EPA Green Power Partner (submit certification). **OR** System will evaluate becoming an EPA Green Power Partner as part of the planning effort. **Submit documentation that the system uses a minimum 100,000 kilowatts annually or points will not be awarded.** (*EPA Green Power website*)
	f.	System will evaluate consolidation with another wastewater system. The system must be reasonably nearby (normally within five miles), and analysis should consider the flows of each system, the cost of merging, and any administrative or operational changes that would result. At least one inquiry must be made to the other system. Identify which system(s) will be evaluated: _____
	g.	System will conduct a professional energy audit and intends to implement its findings. Identify the auditor: _____
	h.	Planning effort will aid in preparing for adaptation to the long-term effects of climate variation, extreme weather, and drought.
		Provide a description:
	i.	Planning effort will evaluate recovery of phosphorus for beneficial reuse.
	j.	Planning effort will evaluate significantly reducing or eliminating the use of chemicals in treatment.
	k.	Planning effort will evaluate significantly reducing or minimizing the volume or toxicity of residuals.
	l.	Planning effort will evaluate groundwater recharge by land application of effluent for where there are other cost-effective discharge alternatives.

2.	**Green Efforts:** Green efforts could include, but are not limited to, the following**:**	
	a.	Planning effort includes wetlands to improve water quality and/or support sustainable infrastructure efforts. Includes constructed wetlands as integrated into a wastewater treatment unit process.
	b.	Establishment or restoration of permanent riparian buffers, floodplains, wetlands, and other natural features, including vegetated buffers or soft bioengineered streambanks.
	c.	Downspout disconnection to remove stormwater from sanitary sewers and separate storm sewers.
	d.	Fee simple purchase of land or easements on land that has a direct benefit to water quality, such as riparian and wetland protection or restoration.
3.	**Water Conservation Efforts:** Water conservation efforts could include, but are not limited to, the following:	
	a.	New wastewater reuse when other alternatives have been considered in the facility planning process, including a reclaimed water distribution system (i.e., “purple pipe”).
	b.	Nonpoint source project will utilize the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s best management practices.
	c.	Retrofit or replacement of existing irrigation systems with more efficient irrigation systems.
4.	**Energy Conservation Efforts:** Attach documentation supporting the energy conservation efforts. Energy conservation efforts could include, but are not limited to, the following:	
	a.	Variable frequency drive (VFD) pumps.
	b.	Energy-efficient motors that meet National Electrical Manufacturers Association Premium specifications.
	c.	Heat pumps that reclaim heat from treated effluent.
	d.	High-efficiency lighting/lighting controls.
	e.	On-site energy generation such as methane clean combustion, fuel cells, solar, or wind.
	f.	Efficient replacements for vacuum dewatering systems.
	g.	Aeration improvements such as fine bubble aeration, VFD blowers, or automated dissolved oxygen control.
	h.	Tertiary filtration that reduces ultraviolet disinfection power requirements.
	i.	Pressure transmission line replacement resulting in reduced pumping costs.
	j.	Supervisory control and data acquisition system installation.
	k.	Infrastructure improvements that significantly reduce infiltration/inflow or eliminate lift station(s).
	l.	Collection system infiltration/inflow detection equipment.
Examples that have been accepted for Idaho projects are found in the *Grants and Loans Program Customer Handbook*.		

E. Affordability / Disadvantaged Status			
IDAPA 58.01.22.020.03.f. Affordability. Points shall be given when current system user charges exceed state affordability guidelines. Up to 50 points.			
Provide information for Section II.E If you qualify as a disadvantaged community, you will receive 10 points.			
1.	How many equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) connections does your system serve? _____		
2.	What is the current average user rate? $/month/EDU_____ Type of rate structure: Flat Fee - Fee amount: $_____ Consumptive Use - Description: _____ Other: _____		
3.	What is the most recent date that user rates have been increased: _____		
4.	**Disadvantaged Community:**		
	This section is intended to assist lower-income communities. Principal forgiveness and other potential loan adjustments are available to communities that demonstrate that they are disadvantaged according to *IDAPA 58.01.12.021.01*. Contact the DEQ's Grants and Loans staff if you have any questions.		
	a.	Median household income calculation instructions:	
		i.	Go to the Census Reporter website.
		ii.	Either select "Use your current location" or enter an address for any residence or location in your community and select the choice provided by the application.
		iii.	Hover your cursor over each item in the list on the left of the screen and view the corresponding green area represented on the map.
		iv.	Click on the smallest and most representative area for your community either on the map or in the list for the data.
		v.	Scroll down to economics and enter the MHI: $_____ **If there was N/A for median income, choose the next largest area from the list.**
		vi.	Provide the data to DEQ. Either take a screenshot of the data (label attached documents as "Section II.F, part number(s)") and include it with your application or provide the citation (scroll to the bottom of the page and copy/paste the information after "Citation") here:
	b.	Income Survey Results: If the MHI listed above in Section E.4.a.v does not reflect your community's income, provide alternative MHI based on DEQ approved income survey. Income Survey MHI: $_____	
		Note: *To conduct an income survey, contact the DEQ Grants and Loans Bureau (grants.loans@deq.idaho.gov) for additional information prior to submitting this LOI.*	

	c.	If the system's MHI is at or below the state MHI listed on censusreporter.org/profiles/04000US16-idaho as of January 8, 2027, the system will qualify as disadvantaged. **Or** if the system's MHI is equal to or less than 125% of the state MHI it may still be deemed disadvantaged if at least one of the following also apply: • System's poverty rate is higher than state average • Unemployment rate is above state average • Has stagnant or declining population\User rates exceed 1.5% of MHI • User rates exceed 1.5% of MHI
Label attached documents as "Section II.E, part number(s)".		

Continue to Section III. Authorized Submitter

Section III. Authorized Submitter	
Are you willing to allow us to share your LOI with other federal funding agencies? Yes No	
	I understand that if awarded funding, costs incurred prior to the award are not eligible for reimbursement unless a written request and justification are submitted to and approved by DEQ.
I certify that, to the best of my knowledge, all information provided here is valid and correct: Submitter Name: _____ Title: _____ Company: _____ Date: _____	
If the submitter is different from the system contact, does the submitter have the authority to submit this LOI on behalf of the system contact? N/A Yes No	

Return completed form by January 8, 2027, to:

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality
Attn: Katelyn Faretra
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