



Unassessed Waters Initiative

Grant Guidelines 2026

I. Program Overview

The Unassessed Waters Initiative provides annual grant funding to support stream sampling under the direction of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PFBC).

This program is **not part of FPW's publicly advertised competitive grant cycle**. Funding is provided through private funds.

For this cycle, FPW intends to use a **single-step application process** (no LOI phase). A final report to FPW is required.

II. Important Dates

April 17: Applications due

Mid-May: Awards and first payments issued

June 1: First day for sampling

Sept. 30: Last day for sampling

Nov. 1: Deliverables due to PFBC

Nov. 30: Final reports due

Mid-December: Second payment issued

III. Eligibility & Definitions

A. Collaborator

“Collaborator” is the term used to describe the grantee providing services under the Unassessed Waters Program.



B. Multiple Applications

- Multiple faculty members or teams from the same institution may apply.
- One faculty member may oversee multiple teams if approved by PFBC.
- Each unique team must submit a separate application with a clearly identified Project Leader, which may be different from the Grant Contact.

Merged universities or institutions may not submit a single consolidated application for multiple teams.

IV. Funding Structure & Grant Terms

A. Grant Amounts

Total grant amounts are based on the number of streams sampled:

- **20 Streams** – \$5,500
- **40 Streams** – \$11,000
- **75 Streams** – \$22,000

B. Payment Schedule

- 50% of the grant amount is provided upfront.
- The remaining balance is provided upon **approved final deliverables** by both FPW and PFBC.
- FPW reserves the right to adjust payments based on work performance.

Funds paid in advance are subject to forfeiture or repayment if PFBC determines that work does not comply with established protocols.



V. Deliverables & Reporting

A. Deliverables

Deliverables are defined as the agreed-upon number of streams sampled in accordance with PFBC protocols.

B. Final Deliverables

Collaborators must submit:

1. All datasheets and an approved final report to PFBC.
2. A separate report to FPW's grants portal (apply.fpwgrants.org).

Final payment is contingent upon approval of deliverables.

VI. Allowable & Non-Allowable Expenses

A. Administrative Costs

Administrative costs are capped at **10%** of the total grant amount, as required by FPW's funders.

Administrative costs include expenses not allocated on a time-and-materials basis, such as:

- Paper
- Rent
- Internet
- Auditing costs
- General organizational operating costs



Example: For a 20-stream grant (\$5,500), up to \$550 may be used for undocumented administrative expenses. The remaining \$4,950 must be justified through time and materials.

B. Personnel Costs

Faculty time may be reimbursed for **direct billable hours** related to sampling.

Administrative oversight not directly tied to billable hours is not reimbursable.

Collaborators must comply with all applicable state and federal rules governing fair and lawful compensation of students, interns, and other workers.

C. Equipment

Collaborators must possess required field equipment. PFBC cannot provide or reimburse for these items. FPW may consider assistance on a case-by-case basis.

If collaborators have alternative funding to cover full or partial personnel costs, grant funds may also be used to purchase equipment directly related to the Unassessed Waters Program.

Allowable equipment may include:

- D-nets
- Measuring tapes
- Waders
- Thermometers
- Wader repair kits
- Electrofishing equipment parts

Ineligible equipment includes:

- HACH kits
- HACH reagents
- Sampling bottles



- eDNA kits
- Sample storage coolers

These items are considered ineligible because they are designed to collect data that PFBC does not directly require for this program or does not track in general.

Collaborators must seek approval with FPW before equipment purchases are made. This can be done via the application process, particularly in the budget outline.

VII. Compliance & Grounds for Termination

Participation requires strict adherence to PFBC protocols and all applicable laws and regulations.

A. Equipment Requirements

Collaborators must possess required field equipment. PFBC cannot provide or reimburse for these items. FPW may consider assistance on a case-by-case basis.

B. Grounds for Exclusion or Termination

Termination may result from:

- Disregard for established protocols
- Unresolved infractions
- Unaddressed PFBC concerns
- Sampling without proper permits
- Dangerous or inappropriate conduct
- Noncompliance with local, state, or federal laws
- Violations of workplace laws
- Violations of PFBC regulations
- Sampling procedures resulting in incomplete or inaccurate data
- Excessive mortality or injury



- Conducting unrelated research concurrently without coordination with PFBC

If PFBC identifies grievances:

1. PFBC will notify the collaborator and FPW.
2. A Corrective Action Plan (CAP) will be issued.
3. The collaborator must acknowledge and address the CAP.
4. Continued infractions constitute grounds for termination.

C. Payment Implications of Termination

- Grants terminated during the sampling season are not subject to reimbursement and may require repayment of advanced funds.
- End-of-season termination may result in partial or complete payment at the direction of PFBC.