

Water Resilience Collaborative

Call for Proposals for Graduate Student Grants

The Water Resilience Collaborative is a group of interdisciplinary researchers and extension leaders at Iowa State University collectively working towards advancing water security and resilience throughout the urban-rural continuum. The Collaborative has grown out of the Water Security Initiative with the aim of supporting world-class research, extension, and education in water sustainability that ensures safe and healthy water for people and care for natural and managed ecosystems. We are supported by ISU donors, ISU Extension and Outreach, and the College of Engineering.

A competitive grants program is open for graduate students at Iowa State University to promote student research and engagement related to water security and resilience. We are interested in supporting student-initiated research that enhances graduate student learning and expands the impact of their work. Eligible graduate students may come from any department on campus conducting research activities that support the goals and focus of the WRC. We encourage you to apply for the category that is most supportive of your goals as we will fund only one type per student.

1. **Research:** Students may apply for up to \$5,000 for one-year student-initiated projects. To encourage interdisciplinary collaboration, a pair or team of graduate students may apply for up to \$10,000 for a one-year project. Grant recipients will submit a mid-year report of their activities, and at the end of the project, they will provide a short description of their project's outcomes and present their research at the Iowa Water Conference or similar.

Proposal due date: October 31, 2025.

Duration: 1 Year

2. **Travel:** Students may apply for up to \$1000 for travel to a national or international conference where they are presenting their research. This travel grant aims to support graduate students presenting their research and allow them to participate in academic and professional development and collaboration within the research community. We encourage you to apply even if you have not yet been accepted. You can submit a copy of your accepted abstract at the time of application or when available.

Proposal due date: October 31, 2025.

Travel dates: October 2025 – May 2026

Eligibility: The applicant must be a currently enrolled, full-time graduate student in good standing at Iowa State University. For travel grants, the applicant must present their research (oral or poster) at the identified conference.

Research Proposal Guidelines: Please include the following information in your proposal, which should not exceed 4 single-spaced pages in 11-point font. Proposals must follow the guidelines for the selected category and be submitted via email to Dr. Sara McMillan (swmcmill@iastate.edu). Please reach out with any questions regarding scope, relevance, or eligible travel.

1. Title
2. Graduate Student Principal Investigator(s): Name, email address
3. Faculty Advisor(s): Name, email address
4. Abstract: Provide a brief (250 words) description of the problem, objectives, and methods.

5. Plain language summary (250 words).
6. Keywords: Include keywords that are descriptive of the work.
7. Justification: Explain the significance and need of the project and its relevance to water resilience. Identify and support the project need through peer-reviewed literature
8. Goal and objectives of the project: These must be clearly defined and measurable.
9. Methods, procedures, and facilities: Provide enough information to permit evaluation of the technical adequacy of the approach to satisfy the objectives.
10. Timeline of activities.
11. Professional development statement: Explain how the proposed project will enhance the student's research experience and describe any plans for professional development, such as conference travel or technical training.
12. Budget and justification not included in the 4-page limit): Provide a brief (1 page limit) summary of anticipated expenses. Allowable expenses include materials and supplies, support for hourly student workers, service lab or analysis fees, and equipment rental; up to 20% of the total budget can be allocated toward travel. PI salary or stipend, benefits, and tuition awards are not allowed. Do not include indirect costs.
13. References (not included in the 4-page limit)
14. Investigator's qualifications (not included in the 4-page limit): Include resumes of the graduate PI(s) and faculty mentor(s). Each resume must not exceed 2 pages.
15. Letter of support (not included in the 4-page limit): Letter from the faculty advisor stating, "I support the project proposed by [graduate PI's name(s)] and confirm that the student(s) has written this proposal on their own." The advisor(s) must sign the letter.

Travel Proposal Guidelines: Please include the following information in your proposal, which should not exceed 2 single-spaced pages in 11-point font.

1. Graduate Student: Name, email address
2. Faculty Advisor(s): Name, email address
3. Conference: Provide conference details, including dates, location, and a link to the conference website (if available).
4. Professional development statement: Explain the significance of attending the conference, how it benefits your research and career, and your plans for knowledge dissemination upon your return (300-500 words)
5. Budget and justification: Provide a brief summary of anticipated expenses. Allowable expenses include conference registration fees, travel (economy airfare or mileage reimbursement), accommodations, or per diem for meals per university policies.
6. Confirmation of acceptance (if available)
7. Investigator's qualifications (not included in the 2-page limit): Provide a 2-page resume.
8. Letter of support (not included in the 2-page limit): Letter from the faculty advisor stating, "I support the travel proposed by [graduate PI's names] and confirm that their participation will enhance their graduate experience and learning." The advisor must sign the letter.

Travel will be reimbursed in accordance with [university travel policies](#). Reimbursements must be completed within 1 month from the last date of travel and will only be approved for \$500 of actual expenses incurred.