Revised August 2026

A Primer for Fitting Charges within Budget Categories in the Conservation District Watershed Specialist Grant

Reimbursement will be made only for project expenditures which occur within the grant period of performance. If the final report is not received on an annual basis, it may affect the renewal of the grant for the following year.

1. Salaries/Benefits

The Salary includes the actual amount paid to the Watershed Specialist to fulfill the grant deliverables. Program funds are based on a Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) and may include salaries and benefits to the staff acting as the Watershed Specialist. This equivalent can be divided between one or more Watershed Specialists or for staff filling the Watershed Specialist position during a vacancy.

The reimbursements are requested and paid on a quarterly basis; therefore, every effort should be made to determine the number of hours worked and/or payment made within the exact quarter start and end dates. Documentation of salary and benefits may be provided in one of two formats:

- **Quarterly payroll report** from the county or conservation district showing the actual salary and the actual benefits paid out to the Watershed Specialist for the entire quarter. Be sure to redact all other employees if using this form of documentation.

- **Paystubs** are usually bi-weekly, show the number of hours worked and hourly rate, and, sometimes, include a breakdown of benefits paid out to the employee from the employer. If the paystubs do not include a benefits breakdown, provide the breakdown of the benefits and hourly benefits rate separately. Maintain back up documentation showing how the rate is calculated in case of potential audit. *If using paystubs as the form of documentation, there are two methods for providing either the hours & rate or the actual salary expenses given that the pay periods do not usually align with the quarter:*

    - Count the actual number of days paid during the quarter and multiply this number by the rate provided on the paystubs. If using this method, marking up the paystubs and compiling a summary table (hours, rate, pay, benefits) expedites a quicker review.

    - Total up the actual salary expense for the 6 or 7 paystubs. If using this method, there is no need to include the hours or rate on the Supplemental Sheet. However, there can be no reimbursement for work in a future quarter. Dates falling in a previous quarter on the first paystub may be included (unless from the prior state fiscal year), but dates falling in the next quarter on the last paystub may not be included. Be mindful that pay periods may shift over time from one quarter to another. All work must have been performed within the state fiscal year as this grant is renewed each July 1st. Therefore, this method is not recommended unless the conservation district plans to exclude a paystub from reimbursement each late June/early July. If using this method, ensure that a single paystub is not being counted in two invoice periods.

This category cannot include any mark-up above the salary actually paid to the Watershed Specialist for regular hours worked, compensatory time/overtime, paid leave, and holidays, as documented by paystubs or a payroll report.

Benefits claimed commonly include: health insurance, retirement, FICA withholding, workers compensation, and unemployment compensation. An annual bonus or stipend may be claimed with prior approval.

Items of overhead are covered under "administrative costs" below.

2. Travel and Lodging

These costs must be directly associated with job duties of the Watershed Specialist.

Any out of state travel / trainings and associated expenses to be charged to this grant need to receive prior approval by the DEP Project Advisor.

Some typical examples of allowable items follow:

- Hotel/motel rooms (limited to current GSA rate)
- Food **(only for overnight trips and limited to current GSA rate)**
- Car expenses **(limited to current GSA rate)**, taxi, bus, train, tolls, parking

Current GSA rates can be found at U.S. General Services Administration website.

3. Equipment & Supplies

a. Equipment

Reimbursement for any single item cannot exceed $5,000

Individual items of equipment costing $500 or more must be approved by the DEP Project Advisor prior to purchase. If any item purchased is not exclusively for use by the Watershed Specialist, bill only his or her pro rata share of the cost based on use. Some typical examples of allowable items follow.

- Field equipment
- Office equipment (computers only if none billed to either the current or previous CDWS grant in the preceding four years)
- Small tools

b. Supplies

Supplies not purchased exclusively for use by the Watershed Specialist are to be charged under administrative costs.

Some typical examples of allowable supply items follow:

- Office supplies
- Educational materials
    - Brochures
    - Printing and copying costs
- Postage for position related mailings
- Cell Phone purchase (not monthly charges)
-
- Materials that can travel from site to site
- Clothing and other items necessary for the safe performance of work
    - Hard hats
    - Safety glasses
    - Waders
    - Vaccinations related to work

4. Administrative Costs

Administrative costs for projects funded through Environmental Stewardship Fund are limited by law to a maximum of 5% of the grant amount.

Some typical examples of allowable administrative costs follow:

- Salaries and benefits for managers, accountants, secretaries and other staff for time spent in administering the grant and other time related to the grant in only a managerial role.
- Office costs not used exclusively by the Watershed Specialist, billed on a pro-rated basis (itemized costs totaled and divided by the number of employees), e.g.:
    - Rent
    - Utilities
    - Insurance (excludes employee benefit insurance)
    - Monthly telephone/cellphone charges
    - Internet provider fees
    - Computer and copier maintenance
    - Office supplies (paper, pencils, pens)
    - Postage for general purposes
    - Audit fees

5. Other

This category should be used to a minimum extent and must be identified in the approved budget.

Some typical examples of allowable items follow (if any item purchased is not exclusively for use of the Watershed Specialist, bill only his or her pro rata share of the cost based on use):

- Conference registration fees
- Fishing license, if necessary for collection of macroinvertebrates and fish and used only to carry out job responsibilities
- Membership costs for business/professional organizations, if necessary for performance of job duties. PACD dues are not an eligible expense.
- Short-term project- specific insurance coverage needed to perform job tasks

Conservation District Watershed Specialist
Education and Outreach Mini-Grant Guidelines

PROGRAM OVERVIEW:
On an annual basis, DEP is offering up to $5,000 through the Conservation District Watershed Specialist (CDWS) grant for each conservation district to implement education and outreach workshops, demonstration projects, field days, etc. To receive these funds, conservation districts need to submit a proposal (brief summary and budget) in the CDWS Task and Deliverable Budget Worksheet (T&DBW) that accompanies your CDWS renewal request. Each project that is proposed to be completed with these funds will have its own sheet within the CDWS T&DBW.

These education and outreach projects should support the implementation of water quality and pollution prevention education programs **for adult audiences**. *Mini-grant funds cannot be used for supporting the Watershed Specialist position.* Below is a list of options for types of projects that these funds will be allocated toward:

- Offer strategies for reducing and preventing local nonpoint source (NPS) pollution;
- Target Environmental Justice (EJ) areas, farmers, local government officials, contractors, homeowners, and other adult audiences;
- Educate the target audience on how their activities can impact water quality and/or improve climate resilience within their community and/or county;
- Provide information regarding the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) and other riparian buffer programs;
- Educate the target audience on the value of stream and wetland restoration, enhancement (such as invasive species removal), and ecosystem services.

FUNDING INFORMATION:
This funding is being made available to the county conservation districts through their annual Watershed Specialist allocation contracts and is to be included in the "Mini-Grant" category of the grant budget. Conservation Districts are eligible for agreements up to $5,000 per county which is accounted for separately from and in addition to the $50,250 for the Watershed Specialist position. There is **no match** requirement for the Mini-Grant.

Funding is provided on a quarterly reimbursement basis. All activities must be completed by the end of each state fiscal year (June 30th) with executive summary and supporting materials submitted to DEP by July 15th.

Budget Categories:
- **Salaries/Benefits**: May be used for non-Watershed Specialist staff members time implementing the Mini-Grant project.
- **Travel – Meals**: If a meal, snacks, or refreshments are needed to encourage participation, those expenses must be detailed under "Meals" and may not exceed 15% of the total Mini-Grant.
- **Administration**: Expenses incurred through the Mini-Grant are to be counted for under the Watershed Specialist position.
- **Equipment & Supplies:** Itemize expenses.
- **Contractual:** Identify any contractors and their role/tasks.
- **Construction:** Itemize materials and labor costs.

MINI-GRANT INITIATION AND REPORTING

- Any changes to project and cost must be approved by project advisor prior to implementation.
- A One-Page Final Mini-Grant Project Summary is required utilizing the template.
- Funding is for actual expenses related to the project and accompanied by receipts.

Project Examples:

- Tours, field days, or workshops related to nonpoint source projects and outcomes
- CREP and other riparian buffer program outreach
- Demonstration projects (for example: stream restoration, wetland restoration, agriculture BMPs, rain gardens)
- Outreach and demonstration projects targeting EJ areas and Climate Resilience
- Demonstration of water quality sampling for local officials