

NRCS is currently soliciting proposals for new National Water Quality Initiative (NWQI) projects. NWQI aims to accelerate conservation through targeted approaches in small watersheds. Projects are funded in two phases, the Planning Phase and the Implementation Phase. Applications are due to Jill Reinhart by June 20.

Projects applying for Planning Phase projects will need to complete a watershed assessment with priority areas identified within 12-digit hydrologic unit codes (HUCs). Projects should be a minimum size of three 12-digit HUCs. The funding limit to create the plan is \$50,000 and must be completed within a year. An outreach plan to target producers in priority areas is a required part of the assessment plan.

Projects applying for an Implementation Phase project must have an approved watershed assessment plan (may or may not have been completed as part of an NWQI Planning Phase project). Implementation projects can apply for several years of targeted Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) funds that address the resource concerns identified in the assessment plan, and provide funding for targeted conservation practices in identified priority areas.

Please contact Jill Reinhart, Assistant State Conservationist for Partnership at jill.reinhart@usda.gov for application materials and watershed assessment criteria. More information on NWQI can be found online at <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/water/?cid=stelprdb1047761>,