

Request for Concept Papers

Purpose: The Water Quality Research Foundation (WQRF) is issuing this request for concept papers (RFCP) under its research grant program. The grant program allows researchers flexibility for submission of unique study proposals which are topical to WQRF's mission. The concept with the best likelihood to advance knowledge and the science of high quality, sustainable drinking water will be invited to submit a full proposal for further consideration.

Budget: Up to \$100,000 of WQRF funding. The applicant may contribute additional resources (cost share, applicant in-kind, or third-party in-kind) to the project award.

Eligibility Requirements:

1. Proposed concept must be within the scope described by WQRF
2. Be well-qualified and have previous experience working with point-of-use/point-of-entry (POU/POE) drinking water treatment technologies
3. Have the facilities and/or partner organizations to accomplish the research

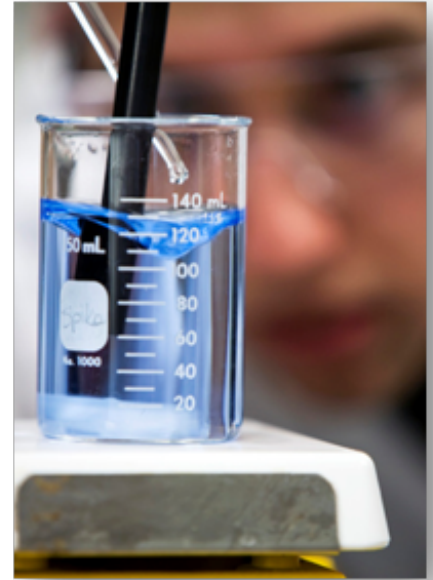
Submission Deadline: **March 29, 2024 by 11:00 AM Central Time**

- Submit proposals via email to foundation@wqrf.org

Who is WQRF?

The [Water Quality Research Foundation](https://www.wqrf.org/) (WQRF) was formed in 1952 to serve as a universally recognized, independent research and education sponsorship organization.

The mission of WQRF is advancing knowledge and the science of high quality, sustainable water. WQRF's vision is water quality improvement through relevant research.



About Our Research

WQRF-funded research provides third-party **validity** and **credibility** for the drinking water treatment industry.

Since inception, WQRF has sponsored numerous research studies which have examined a broad range of water chemistry, technology and environmental impact issues.

These studies generated essential data on water quality and technology, positively impacted legislative change, and helped advance efficiencies in POU/POE product certification testing.

Additionally, in an effort to position the industry for the future, WQRF launched its Research Grant Program in 2017. The purpose of the grant program is to solicit and potentially fund unique and interesting ideas from the research community. This allows academic and independent researchers more flexibility for submission of study proposals which are topical to WQRF's mission, bylaws and research agenda.

Scope

The proposed research concept **must** fit into at least one of the following categories:

- Emerging Contaminants in Private or Community Water Supplies (excluding PFAS)
- POU/POE for Compliance to the Safe Drinking Water Act (SDWA)
- State-Specific Drinking Water Initiatives (e.g., California's SAFER program)
- Lead Abatement in Schools

The scope of work **must** include:

1. Sampling for water quality parameters and contaminant(s) at the point-of-use (e.g., household faucets, school water fountains, etc.)
2. Implementing POU or POE treatment devices for end-users (i.e., outside of the laboratory environment for either private well users or municipal water users)
 - a. Treatment devices **must** be NSF/ANSI certified to reduce the target contaminant(s)



*i. The manufacturer name and model number of the treatment devices **must** be anonymized for the concept paper and any reporting to WQRF, only the specifications of the devices tested can be included.*

b. Installations **must** be conducted by [certified water treatment professionals](#)

Restrictions

The research **must not** be:

- Of a type ordinarily carried on by private enterprises in the course of research and development
- Particularized market or consumer research
- The design, development, or construction of water treatment equipment, products or parts

Researchers are prohibited from having a commercial interest in any products or technologies proposed for inclusion in the study.

Selection Process

All concepts meeting the minimum requirements will be reviewed by WQRF's Research Advisory Committee, which is comprised of WQRF staff and subject matter experts.

Researchers may be contacted during the selection process to: provide written responses to questions, engage with WQRF at a virtual meeting, and/or consider revisions to the proposed methods or deliverables.

The top concept selected by the Research Advisory Committee is presented to the WQRF Board of Directors (BOD) for review, due diligence, and a decision on acceptance. **If accepted by WQRF's BOD, a full proposal shall be prepared with the intent of finalizing methodology prior to awarding funding. This acceptance is anticipated to occur in May 2024.**

WQRF reserves the right to partially fund proposals by awarding portions or phases of proposed projects. If WQRF decides to partially fund a proposal, it will do so in a manner that does not prejudice any applicants or affect the basis upon which the proposal, or portion thereof, was evaluated and selected for award, and therefore maintains the integrity of the competition and selection process.

Selection Criteria

In addition to reviewing the methodology, submissions will also be evaluated by:

- The team's relevant **POU/POE knowledge and experience**.
- If applicable - the **scope of work delegated to students** compared to any planned training and oversight.
- **Uniqueness and complexity** of the research concept.
- **Potential impact of the research and deliverables** to the POU/POE industry.
- The proposed **dissemination plan**.

Confidentiality

All concepts submitted to WQRF will be treated as confidential and will not be shared beyond WQRF, its Research Advisory Committee and its technical staff – all of whom would act on behalf of WQRF under specific confidentiality restrictions.

Responsibilities

In support of an accepted research project, WQRF ordinarily will:

- Provide the researcher with any background information needed, such as a list of industry and other interested parties and stakeholders.
- Take an active role in the technical review of progress reports and acceptance of the final report.
- Track progress and provide any necessary coordination with, and supply technical input from, industry stakeholders.
- Provide public access to the full report and an executive summary. Ordinarily, upon release or publication, the researcher will be permitted to make the report available as best determined.

The researcher will enter into a research sponsorship agreement with WQRF, the terms of which broadly will include the following commitments from the researcher:

- Undertake, manage and perform all aspects of the contracted research and any necessary support activities.
- Complete the work in a timely manner according to the contracted project schedule.
- Engage with WQRF, its Research Task Force and its technical staff, and provide responses to questions/comments relating to progress reports.
- Agree that all intellectual property will be owned by WQRF or perpetually licensed to it without royalty or charge.

Intellectual Property & Publication

Generally, WQRF will own the entire right, title, and interests, including all copyrights and other intellectual property rights, in and to all Project Intellectual Property developed by WQRF personnel. Project Intellectual Property that is jointly developed by the researcher and WQRF personnel will be jointly owned by the researcher and WQRF.

Generally, WQRF will reserve the intellectual property associated with the final report submitted to WQRF, including the copyright thereof, and all rights to distribute the final report. WQRF will make publicly available the research funded and knowledge gained through research, and the researcher ordinarily will be permitted to make available and publish sponsored research and use the knowledge gained to further its own research. However, no research results can be published by the researcher without prior review by WQRF.

It is WQRF's preference that after review and acceptance of the final report, the researcher will seek to publish the study in a peer-reviewed publication.

Whenever referencing or publishing the study, or information and/or data derived from the study, researchers must cite as its source to the report delivered to WQRF. The study should be submitted for peer-review publication within 6 months from the date that WQRF accepted the final report. WQRF does not commit that the research will be withheld from the public during the 6-month period.

Format Requirements

Concepts **must not** be password protected to restrict editing. Upon receipt, WQRF watermarks the document to identify it as confidential prior to its internal distribution. Concept papers **must** include the following sections, and if desired, others may be added.

Four (4) is the maximum number of pages allowed (references and curricula vitae are excluded from the page limit).

Abstract - Summarize the research project plan, timeline and objectives.

Project Rationale - Concisely state the:

- Specific objectives
- Importance to WQRF and the POU/POE water treatment industry
- Current state-of-knowledge regarding the proposed project
- Potential impact upon successful completion

Methodology - Briefly describe the proposed experiment(s), including any equipment (**excluding manufacturer information and POU/POE brand/device names**) and methods which will be used. Address how you will analyze, interpret, normalize the findings, and present the results.

Deliverables - Describe all deliverables to be provided for this project. The **required deliverables** are:

1. **Ongoing progress reports:** Note that for each progress report, WQRF will organize a virtual meeting during which, the researchers are asked to present the progress made and respond to questions from WQRF.
2. **Drafts of the final report, and a 1-3-page executive summary**
3. **The final report, and executive summary**

Additional deliverables might include articles in an industry magazine, raw data, infographics, hosting a workshop, an interactive data tool, webinar and/or conference presentations, etc.

Format Requirements

Timeline - [Download the template](#), edit it based on the requirements described below to fit your specific project timeline, and incorporate the table into the concept paper.

- This **must** be completed based on an unidentified start date (e.g., the first progress report will be submitted 3 months from the research start date).
- The total project timeline (excluding communication/dissemination efforts) **shall not exceed 2 years** from the start date.

Dissemination of research results - Describe how the results will be communicated to the appropriate audience(s) and include an **estimated timeframe** for completing the dissemination plan (**use the timeline template linked above**)

Budget - **Total budget shall not exceed \$100,000 of WQRF's funds.** At a minimum, the budget should be segmented by the following categories (as applicable): Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Equipment (including materials & supplies), Travel, Subcontract Fees, and Indirect Costs. Indirect costs only need to be included in the budget if this is something that the bidding organization ordinarily tracks through its financials. **Upon invitation to submit a full proposal, a detailed invoice timeline will be requested for WQRF's review.** It is WQRF's policy that all invoices must be linked to the delivery of a deliverable or milestone.

It is WQRF's policy that indirect costs shall not exceed 13% of total direct costs.

[OPTIONAL SECTION] Future Opportunities - Describe efforts that are beyond the scope of this project, but could potentially be completed in the future to further the impact of the current proposed research project.

Format Requirements

Potential conflict statement and disclosure of any additional organizations who would potentially contribute to this project

- Include a statement reporting any direct or indirect circumstances which could potentially create a conflict of interest. For example, if the results could further the interests of a company which the researcher or the research organization has a financial interest or relationship (including any contractual agreement or practice to provide testing, certification, consulting or other services (or is negotiating such an agreement), that is to be disclosed as a potential conflict. WQRF has final authority in its sole discretion over whether a potential conflict represents a disqualifying Conflict of Interest. Please also disclose the name(s) of any organizations who you have contacted to potentially contribute to this project (in-kind or monetary contribution).

Credentials and qualifications - Include the names, qualifications, previous POU/POE experience, and curricula vitae of primary and supporting investigators involved in this project.

Project management - Address the following, where applicable:

- Frequency that the project team will meet
- Responsible party for reviewing the work before submission to WQRF
- Student involvement
 - Number of undergraduate, graduate, and/or doctoral student(s) needed
 - Recruitment process and ideal timeline
 - Primary responsibilities
 - Training and oversight plan

References - Cite any references used.

QUESTIONS?



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