



Washington County Conservation District

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December 14, 2021

Washington County Conservation District
50 Old Hickory Ridge Road, Suite 1
Washington, PA 15301

RE: Policy Letter – Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program Policy

1. Purpose: This policy is intended to outline the restrictions and requirements and provide guidance to the applicants to the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road grant process.
2. Quality Assurance Board (QAB)
 - a. QAB Purpose: The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) is to assist the Washington County Conservation District (WCCD) in carrying out its administrative and financial responsibilities regarding the Dirt, Gravel, and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program. The QAB will establish funding priorities, policies, and procedures to administer this program. It will review grant applications for potential projects, conduct initial site inspections, and make funding and ranking recommendations to the WCCD Board of Directors (BOD).
 - b. QAB Composition: The QAB will be comprised of four (4) members. One (1) voting member nominated by each of the following organizations will be included: Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission, Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Washington County Conservation District. The QAB will also include one (1) nonvoting member nominated by WCCD. If multiple individuals from one organization are present, only one individual from that organization may act as a voting member.
 - c. Alternate: Any member of the QAB may designate an alternate to fill their position if unable to attend a QAB meeting. This designation must be in writing at the District and signed by a representative of the designating organization.
 - d. Meetings: QAB meetings will be held on an as-needed basis. All meetings are subjected to Pennsylvania's Sunshine Law and will be advertised in a local newspaper at least 24 hours in advance of a meeting.
3. Conflict of Interest: No District Manager, QAB Member, or District Employee shall, as a result of his/her affiliation with this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for him/herself, a family member, or a business with which he/she is affiliated. To avoid conflicts of interest by members of the QAB, voting members should abstain from voting on the recommendations of policies or projects where they have a vested interest.

4. Training

- a. Incentives for Training: WCCD does not provide incentives to eligible road-owning entities within the County to attend Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance Training.
- b. The District will try to host semi-annual trainings related to the DGLVR Program geared toward eligible applicants.

5. Applications

- a. Eligible Applicants: All public road-owning entities in Washington County are eligible for funding through the DGLVR Program provided the following: an employee involved in/in charge of work plan development, project implementation, and/or project management is certified through the Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance (ESM) Training Program hosted by the Penn State Center for Dirt and Gravel Road Studies (Center) within the last five years; all other projects previously funded through the DGLVR Program have been completed or are on track to finish as per contract conditions; and eligible work sites have been identified within the applicant's geographical boundaries.
 - b. Equal Access: WCCD will notify all eligible road-owning entities in the County that funding is available and applications are being accepted. All entities will be contacted at the same time and will be provided the same information in a manner deemed appropriate by the District.
 - c. Road Maintenance: The applicant must be in compliance with road maintenance activities related to Chapter 102 and Chapter 105 specifications to maintain program eligibility. If the applicant is found to not be in compliance, they will not be eligible for funding until the specifications are met according to the Clean Streams Law and District satisfaction.
 - d. Previously Funded Projects: Applicants are required to maintain projects previously funded through the DGLVR program. If previous projects are inspected and found to not be meeting Program Specifications, the applicant will not be eligible to apply for grant funding until maintenance is completed to the satisfaction of the District.
 - e. Application Cycle: The application cycle and any associated timelines are defined by WCCD. All eligible road-owning entities in the County will be notified of the cycle and timelines.
 - f. Applications: Applicants must conduct an on-site pre-application meeting with a WCCD representative to determine project eligibility and scope. Applications must be submitted on the Grant Application Packet distributed by the Center. A comprehensive project plan must be submitted to the District with the application; if this is not included, the application will be deemed incomplete and will not be reviewed or ranked.
6. Project Ranking and Criteria: All eligible projects are ranked by WCCD employees and QAB members according to the Grant Application Ranking Sheet approved by the WCCD BOD. The Ranking Sheet is available on the WCCD website for review.

7. Funding

- a. **In-Kind Funds:** In-kind funds are not an application requirement; however, the more in-kind funds that are provided by the applicant, the higher the ranking of the application. In-kind funds can include equipment, labor, and material costs. All in-kind funds must meet DGLVR Program requirements defined in the Administrative Manual (July 1, 2019).
- b. **Funding Restrictions:** Program funds can be used to cover “engineering, permitting, or similar consultant costs, but such costs are limited to a maximum of ten percent (10%) of the total contract between the District and the grant recipient.” The District will not pay for any contingency without an Exception to Policy Request to the QAB and WCCD BOD. Funds cannot be used to pave or otherwise seal a dirt or gravel road. In addition, funding to cover the expenses of guiderail and paving will be at the sole discretion of the WCCD BOD.
- c. **Non-Pollution Standards:** Any products “with the potential ability to leach off the road (such as dust suppressants or road stabilizers) must meet Commission requirements for non-pollution. “The Center maintains a list of approved products” on the website at dirtandgravel.psu.edu.
- d. **DSA:** The District will not fund Driving Surface Aggregate (DSA) for projects due to the expense and difficulty in obtaining DSA that meets DGLVR Program specifications. If a project requires the use of DSA and the applicant will not fund it as in-kind, the applicant must submit an Exception to Policy Request to both the QAB and WCCD BOD. DSA funding is solely at the discretion of the Board.
- e. **Funding Advancement:** Advance funding will be provided to applicants at WCCD QAB and WCCD BOD discretion up to, but not exceeding, 50% of the total grant award. 30% of the total grant award will be withheld until successful completion of the project and a Completion Report recorded in District files. Any funding advance decisions will be based on completeness of project timeline and benchmarks in the form of a Plan of Action and Milestones (PoAM) submitted for the current project, as well as adherence to program standards and continued maintenance of past projects completed by the applicant. A PoAM example is available on the WCCD website.
- f. **Payments:** Up to 70% of the grant total may be paid before the Completion Report is signed. Any payment to the applicant is solely the decision of the WCCD BOD and will be approved or disapproved at the regularly scheduled WCCD BOD meetings on the second Tuesday of each month. If approved, payments will be disbursed in the week following the meeting. Any additional payments above advance funding is made strictly on a reimbursement basis and receipts must be submitted to the District when payment is requested. Refer to Contract Attachment E for Schedule of Payments. The remaining funds (no less than 30% of the total grant award) will be disbursed upon completion of the Completion Report, available on the WCCD website.
- g. **Spending Requirements:** Grant recipients must begin spending the grant funds within one year of the grant award. If funds are not spent, the DGLVR contract will be rescinded, and funds distributed to other eligible entities.

- h. Final Payments: The municipality must have all their receipts, completion reports, expense trackers, and any other supporting documents to WCCD for review on the day the contract expires to receive final payments for their project. An Exception to Policy Request to the QAB and WCCD BOD can be submitted for an extension for an additional 30 days.

8. Project Requirements

- a. Project Requirements: The grant recipient must conduct a pre-construction meeting with a representative of WCCD. WCCD must be notified no less than 7 days before construction begins on the funded project. The applicant must also notify the District any time scope of work changes on the project. This could include, but is not limited to, beginning excavation, drainage installation, culvert construction and/or installation, backfill, etc.
- b. Operation and Maintenance: The municipality awarded to receive grant money must have a Long-Term Operation and Maintenance plan submitted to WCCD before the contract is signed. The WCCD DGLVR technician will be conducting a one-time site inspection of closed projects from the previous year's cycle between the months of June to August to ensure that the responsibility of Long-Term Operation and Maintenance is being conducted by the Municipality on their previous projects.
- c. Completion Report: The Completion Report must be completed on-site by two (2) or more District representatives and a representative of the grant recipient. It must be signed by a representative of WCCD and the grant recipient representative.

9. Amendments

- a. Grant recipients are eligible for Contract Amendments at the discretion of the District. If a time extension is requested, the DGLVR Technician in agreement with the District Manager may extend the contract deadline up to one month. Any time extensions longer than one month must be approved by the WCCD BOD. Any and all monetary amendments must be approved by the WCCD BOD, up to but not exceeding 20% of the original grant award. If more than 20% is requested, a new contract may be signed at the Board's discretion if funds are available.

10. Marcellus Shale: Provide WCCD with Marcellus shale drilling activity information if necessary.

11. If there is a request for an exception to this policy, submit a formal memorandum to the DGLVR Program technician with the following information: which paragraph and topic for the exception, why it is an exception to policy and why does the municipality require this exception, and will it affect timeline or funding of the project contract.

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12. Any questions or comments to this policy letter, please contact the DGLVR Technician at 724-705-7098 or via email jwhitmer@pawccd.org.



Todd Thornburg

Executive Director/District Manager

Washington County Conservation District

☐ Quality Assurance Board Approval

Date: 12/6/2021

☐ WCCD Board of Directors Approval

Date: 12/14/2021