

Introduction

Hello, everyone. Thank you for joining us today and welcome to the SCDES Dam Safety Program Dam Repair Assistance Grant Funding Cycle 2 informational webinar. To allow for attendees to join, we will be beginning the webinar in 5 minutes at 10:05.

So again, we want to welcome everyone today to the SCDES Dam Safety Program Dam Repair Assistance Grant Funding Cycle 2 informational webinar. My name is Sam Johnson and I'm with the SCDES Dam Safety Program. Before we begin, I will go through some technical instructions about how this webinar will work.

Now, this webinar is being recorded and the slides, recording and a transcript of the webinar will be posted to the SCDES dam safety program web page for this grant opportunity for future reference and for those unable to view the session live or who experience technical issues. Attendee mics and cameras will be disabled for the entirety of this webinar, but you will have an opportunity to ask questions about this grant opportunity and we will have an answer session for those questions at the end of the main presentation. Now throughout the webinar there is a Q&A feature that will be visible to most of the attendees through Microsoft Teams. You'll in fact see the announcement of the five-minute delay at the start of the webinar was through that Q&A feature. So, there you will be able to submit any questions you have for us. There is also a separate chat feature that we will enable at the end of the main presentation in order to accommodate attendees who are on mobile devices where that Q&A feature is not available.

We will answer questions as time permits at the end of the session, and we will focus on questions that are applicable to all viewers of this webinar both now and in the future once it's posted. For questions that are highly specific to your dam or to a past application for this grant, we will instead contact you separately after the webinar concludes. Questions can also be provided outside of this webinar to our general dams email account DESresponse@des.sc.gov. That address will be shown on slides throughout this presentation for you to record it. You can also contact our program directly by phone. All questions received whether during this presentation or afterwards will be posted to that grants website along with their answers. This is so we can ensure that all potential applicants have the same information available to them and ensure fairness. That website address will be shown at the end of this presentation.

Finally, we want to note that questions should only be about this grant opportunity and this cycle of this grant. We will not be answering questions about other grants our program manages, including the high hazard potential dams or HHPD program, or other non SCDES

grants that you may be looking at pursuing for a dam repair project. With that said, we will now begin our webinar presentation. First, Brittany Felder, the SCDES Dam Safety Program grants manager, will cover the structure and critical information about this grant opportunity. Then, I will spend some time going over tips and advice for potential applicants, including things that were learned from the first cycle of this grant. And as mentioned, after that we will have our answer session. John McCain, manager of the Dam Safety Program, will also be available to assist with those questions as well. With that said, Brittany, please start whenever you're ready.

Thank you, Sam. Good morning and welcome to the South Carolina Department of Environmental Services Dam Safety Program webinar on funding cycle 2 of the dam repair assistance grant program.

Today, we'll be providing an overview of the program requirements for the DAM repair assistance grant, including eligibility, application requirements, and grant project management, as well as providing some tips for potential applicants based on our lessons learned from the grant's first funding cycle

Application Timeline

The notice of funding opportunity, or NOFO, for this funding cycle will be released no later than Monday, March 2nd, 2026. This will also mark the opening of the application period, which will remain open until Monday, May 4th, 2026. Awards are expected to be announced 2 to 4 weeks after the application period closes.

Grant Program Overview

The Dam Repair Assistance Grant was first authorized in the fiscal year 2025 state budget proviso 55.24, which appropriated \$1.5 million in state funds for SCDES to establish a dam repair assistance grant program. The budget for the grant fund was authorized again with the approval of the fiscal year 2026 state budget as budget proviso 55.21 with for another

\$1.5 million. The \$ 1.5 million is recurring funding. So SCDES expects it to be reauthorized for fiscal year 2027 to fund funding cycle 3, but it is not guaranteed.

Of the \$3 million available for awards, \$818,9553 were awarded in the first funding cycle of the grant. This leaves \$2,181,447 available in funds remaining for awards in funding cycle 2. The Dam Repair Assistance Grant program aims to reduce or eliminate risk associated with dams, improve accessibility of financial assistance to dam owners who may not be eligible to apply for other dam safety grants, and provide financial assistance for the rehabilitation or removal of high and significant hazard dams that fail to meet minimum dam safety standards and pose an unacceptable risk to life and property.

Selection Criteria

We use a two-part selection process for application selection. An eligibility screening and a technical ranking. The initial screening aims to identify and advance applications that meet all dam, applicant, and activity eligibility criteria. Meet all grant application requirements, meaning there is no missing, inaccurate or contradictory application content, and correct deficiencies for the entire dam. Incomplete applications will be marked ineligible. So, please use the checklist to make sure you have completed all of the application requirements. If the dam has multiple owners, the project cannot address issues on only one owner's portion. The project must result in a whole dam solution.

Applications that pass the eligibility screening will be reviewed by the dam safety program and evaluated on technical merits of the dam and proposed project using a points-based system. The score will be based primarily on risk and risk reduction as a result of project implementation. If the award total for all eligible applications is less than the total funds available to award, applications will not be ranked and selection will be based solely on eligibility.

The ranking tool will be published to the SCDES dam safety program website as an attachment to the NOFO once the application period has opened. Using this tool, you will be able to view the questions that will be used to rank applications as well as the point values for each answer as you develop your grant application. The ranking tool also

provides points to incentivize certain risk reduction measures. Although not required, applicants should consider incorporating these into their scope of work to improve their ranking.

Some examples of criteria that will be used to rank applications include: what is the hazard classification of the dam? What is the condition rating of the dam? What impacts would there be in the event of dam failure? Does the project decrease the dam's hazard potential? Will the project provide a spillway capacity that meets or exceeds regulations? Is the dam currently under a state issued emergency or inspection and repair order? And is there a high or significant hazard dam downstream that could potentially be impacted from a dam breach?

In addition to the ranking questions, applicants may potentially boost their application's ranking score and make their application more competitive by including some incentive activities, including conducting a tabletop exercise, instrumentation for real-time dam monitoring, such as water level sensors, perform a full hydrologic and hydraulic, or H&H, analysis of the dam to determine the probable maximum precipitation and probable maximum flood and dam breach analysis to result in an improved emergency action plan. Perform a full geotechnical investigation and dam stability analysis, or add or restore the ability to fully control reservoir water level such as a low-level lake drain or permanent siphon system.

Program Eligibilities

If you are a dam owner or regularly work with dams, you should already be familiar with the terms hazard potential classification and condition rating. However, before diving into eligibility, I'd like to take a moment to review these terms for anyone who may be unfamiliar with them. Hazard potential classification is the system used by SCDES that categorizes dams according to the degree of adverse incremental consequences of a failure or misoperation of a dam. The hazard classification does not reflect in any way the current condition of the dam. The three classifications used by SCDES are high hazard, significant hazard, and low hazard. Condition assessment rating is an assessment of the dam's current condition based on preliminary inspection by SCDES comprised of five ratings: satisfactory, fair, unsatisfactory, and not rated.

Applicants must meet eligibility requirements by the date their application is submitted. This is a change from funding cycle one where the eligibility cutoff date for dam condition rating was December 31st. The cutoff is now the date of the grant application.

To be considered eligible for funding, a dam must be regulated by the South Carolina Dam Safety Program, have a hazard classification of high or significant, and have a condition assessment rating of poor or unsatisfactory as identified by SCDES, or a dam safety deficiency that is by been identified by an engineer.

The following types of dams are not eligible for funding. Dams that are not regulated by the dam safety program and low hazard dams. All owners of high and significant hazard dams may apply. All applicants must be able to demonstrate clear ownership of the dam. In addition to deeds and plats, community associations such as homeowners associations must also provide any covenants and/or bylaws with their grant application. Demonstrate that they are not delinquent on any state or federal taxes, which is not applicable to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations. Local governments must demonstrate that they are not listed as delinquent on any audits. And business entities must be in good standing with the South Carolina Secretary of State's office.

In the case of multiple owners, the grant can only be awarded to one owner if the dam has multiple owners. Multiple owners must either form a legally recognized partnership such as a limited partnership or general partnership or decide who will be the applicant/recipient. All dam owners must demonstrate support for the project even if only one or some are funding the project. Multiple applications for the same dam will be taken as a sign that all owners are not in agreement and result in rejection of all applications for said dam. Grants will not be awarded if only part of the dam is addressed. The project must correct deficiencies of the entire dam. For example, dam erosion repairs on half of a dam will not be approved if erosion covers the entire dam.

Eligible activities under this grant fall into the following construction and non-construction categories. Preparedness planning, project planning, preliminary engineering, engineering design, outreach and risk communication, instrumentation, repair or alteration, and removal.

This is a list of categories of the eligible activities under each category. As a reminder, these slides and the presentation will be posted to the grants web page, so you will be able to access them again from there.

The following activities are considered ineligible under this grant. Activities that do not reduce risk posed by the dam. Activities and elements of activities that do not serve a public benefit or hold purely aesthetic function such as driveway paving, private docks, and boat ramps. Routine operation and maintenance activities which include but are not limited to mowing vegetation removal excluding vegetation removal that requires a permit. Addressing superficial or shallow erosion and servicing gates and valves. Purchasing equipment that is not an integral part of the funded project. Establishment of a reserve fund. Payment of principal or interest on existing debt or any interest payments associated with project financing. Any activity that increases the dam's hazard potential, including proposals to increase dam height or storage capacity. Work that would result in unnecessary or duplicative data. For example, data that are freely available from the department or other sources and remain valid, such as geotechnical investigation where past geotechnical investigation already exists. Costs associated with bid protests, litigation, and or appeals of SCDES decisions. Activities that have not been approved in advance by the department's dam safety program, and construction of new dams.

Application Requirements

Applications for construction activities must be prepared with the assistance of a professional engineer licensed in the state of South Carolina and must contain a cost estimate prepared by the engineer. However, applications for planning, engineering, and design only are not required to be prepared with the assistance of a licensed professional engineer.

The following application requirements are required for all applications. A completed SCDES grant application form, project milestones for the proposed scope of work, and a milestones worksheet template will be made available as an attachment to the note. A detailed budget for the proposed scope of work, which should include the project's cost estimate and provide a breakdown of project costs by major category. A detailed

description of the owner's in-kind contributions and estimated value thereof should also be included in the budget. The copy of the property deed or alternative proof of ownership and the completed application checklist. Now, if you attended last year's webinar or applied for funding during the last funding cycle, you may have noticed that the list of application requirements on the previous slide is about half the length of what it used to be. This is because as the funding cycle one applications were reviewed, we noticed a trend in the type of application documents that were missing or failed to meet the application requirements. To remedy this for funding cycle 2, the following documents have been integrated into the application form itself, which means they do not need to be provided as separate documentation. This is the eligibility narrative, the project narrative, a dam deficiency narrative which is replacing the previously required engineers report outlining deficiencies of dams without a poor or unsatisfactory condition rating. And keep in mind that the engineers report is still required for construction applications, a description of match, and the engineer statements.

The following additional application requirements are only applicable to certain applicants. Covenants, easements, and any other incumbrances to title. Current bylaws for HOAs or other community associations. A federal tax compliance which is not applicable to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations. Applicants may submit either an IRS tax compliance report or the past 3 years of federal tax returns. State tax compliance, which is also not applicable to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations. Applicants may submit either an SCDOR certificate of compliance or the past three years of state tax returns, an IRS determinate determination letter or form 990 from the past 3 years and an SCDOR certificate of existence or equivalent for your state which is applicable only to tax exempt nonprofit organizations and a letter stating that all dam owners are in support of the project co-signed by all dam owners which is applicable only to multiple owner situations. But not required for dam removal projects.

Additional requirements for construction, a construction cost estimate prepared by a licensed professional engineer registered in South Carolina and signed by the engineer and a preliminary engineering report also signed by an engineer.

Award Dispersement requirements

Grant recipients are required to register for a state vendor number through the South Carolina Enterprise Information System or SCEIS. This vendor number is the sole mechanism available for grant recipients to receive payments under this grant. Please note that while this registration is not required as part of your application, if your application is selected for funding, you will be required to register and provide your vendor number prior to receiving the award. Without the SCEIS vendor number, the grant award cannot be fully executed and the recipient will be unable to receive grant payments.

While not required at the time of application, recipients must develop an EAP that is both current with all with all information and in the department's current format. SCDES must approve all EAPs prior to dispersing any grant funds. This is not applicable to dam removal projects or projects that result in the exemption of a dam.

Cost Share

The default cost share requirement for this grant program is 50% state match and 50% recipient or non-state match. If you aren't familiar with match, what this generally means is that for every dollar you contribute to the project, the state will contribute the same amount. The 50% non-state match requirement may be met in the form of cash, i.e. your own funds and/or in-kind contributions. The state match can increase based on demonstration of financial hardship. However, activities to address dam deficiencies that are the result of deferred maintenance are eligible for a maximum of 50% cost share, such as tree removal.

If applicants have requested a financial hardship determination in their application upon SCDES verification, the recipient match requirement will be reduced from 50% to 25% for a 75% state match. The financial hardship review by SCDES will test for financial hardship through a review of financial documents in order to determine if the dam owner possesses the assets to afford the required 50% cost share.

The following documentation must be submitted along with your application packet in order for SCDES to process your application for financial hardship determination. A statement of financial hardship. Tax returns from the past 3 years to verify income. For tax-

exempt nonprofit organizations, they may submit their IRS form 990 from the past three years in lieu of individual or business tax returns and financial account statements. Assets and savings statements should include the last 3 months of bank statements and investment account statements or other assets. And business financial information, if applicable, should include balance sheets from the past 3 years and income statements from the past 3 years.

Pre-award costs are not eligible for reimbursement or co-funded payment under this grant program. However, pre-award in-kind contributions may be used to meet the recipient match requirement if these costs were incurred within one year prior to the execution of the award. In kind match may include previously acquired goods and materials, donated goods and materials, previously acquired/performed professional services, donated services, and force account labor.

Period of Performance

The period of performance, or POP, for planning and engineering projects is one year and three years for construction projects. Extensions to the POP are allowable but cannot be guaranteed. POP extension requests should be submitted in writing to SCDES at least 90 days prior to the POP end date.

Procurement

Political subdivisions are required to follow their own procurement rules. However, non-governmental entities must follow program specific state procurement requirements. Additional training on procurement requirements under this grant program will occur at a later date, but we'll go over the general procurement rules briefly on the following slides so you can get an idea of what is required.

Procurement thresholds for goods and services. For procurements of less than \$10,000, no competition is required, but SCDES must determine if the costs are fair and reasonable. For procurements between \$10,000 and \$25,000, a minimum of three written quotes or

three documented attempts at solicitation for quotes is required. Solicitation for quotes must be reviewed and pre-approved by SCDES and the quotes received must be in identical format. Please note that the recipient may select any of these quotes, but SCDES will pay only the lowest quoted price. For procurements greater than \$25,000, the procurement must be advertised at least once. Once again, the dam owner may select any of these quotes, but SCDES will pay only the lowest quoted price.

Procurement thresholds for professional services such as engineering and surveying. Procurements of less than \$50,000 require only a single quote, and procurements of greater than \$50,000 require a qualifications based procurement in accordance with the South Carolina procurement code.

Procurement thresholds for construction projects. Procurements of less than \$10,000 require only a single quote from a single vendor. Procurements between \$10,000 and \$100,000 require a minimum of three quotes or three documented attempts at solicitation for quotes from three different qualified sources. Procurements of greater than \$100,000 require the use of formal competitive sealed bidding in accordance with the South Carolina procurement code. As a reminder, these slides and the recording will be posted to the grant's dedicated web page for reference, and the procurement requirements will be outlined in detail in the upcoming NOFO that will be released on March 2nd.

Payments

There are two types of payments under this grant. Reimbursement, which is the default payment method, and simultaneous co-funded payment. To receive funds, recipients must prepare and submit a request for reimbursement, or RFR, to SCDES for review and processing. No more than 80% of the grant funds will be paid before the final RFR for construction projects and no more than 90% for all other projects.

The simultaneous co-funded payment option is available only to recipients with a financial hardship determination from SCDES. After the recipient submits documentation of approved, eligible incurred costs and proof of payment of the non-state share, SCDES will pay the state's share to the contractor/vender directly.

Recordkeeping and Monitoring

The recipient must retain grant records, including documentation of costs and supporting documents for a period of three years. Office visits, site visits, and/or document requests by SCDES for the purpose of monitoring compliance may occur at any time during the period of performance. SCDES will perform construction monitoring visits at set intervals.

Recipients will be required to submit quarterly progress reports summarizing activities that occurred during the quarter that advance the project towards completion. Late reports will result in a pause in grant payment/reimbursements. So quarterly reporting must be kept up to date in order for recipients to receive grant payments.

Appeals and Non-Compliance

This is the process for recipients to appeal any staff-made decisions regarding this grant. Dispute procedures have been made available to any applicant that objects to any requirement as outlined in the NOFO, amendment to the NOFO, or does not receive a distribution of funding as a recipient. Please see the NOFO attachment procedures for dispute resolution.

Recipients that are found to be out of compliance with grant program policies and procedures will be given an opportunity to return to compliance. If that cannot be accomplished, remedies may include immediate termination of the grant agreement, cost recovery, and disqualification from future grant consideration.

Amendments

The grant award agreement will be considered a legal contract and as such an amendment process is required for budget scope of work and period of performance changes. The

recipient must formally request an amendment to the award agreement at least 90 days prior to the end of the POP. SCDES will either approve or deny the request.

We'll send it over back over to Sam.

Tips for Applying

Thank you for all that excellent information. With that we conclude the background portion of this grant opportunity. In the next portion we're going to cover some general tips that will help you determine if this opportunity is a good fit and what you need to keep in mind so that you have the strongest possible application. Much of what we're going to cover are issues that prevented otherwise eligible applications from receiving an award during the last funding cycle. Besides the requirements covered in the NOFO, these tips are intended as very general advice for your grant project. Now, first and most importantly, please read the NOFO in its entirety once it is posted on March 2nd. And as a reminder, the version currently on our website is from cycle one and is just there for reference. There will be a different NOFO on March 2nd that you'll need to know forward and backwards. Once you're done reading it, read it again and again. Continue to do so throughout the entire grant application process and beyond. The NOFO contains all of the requirements for this grant. It also explains how awards will be made and how successful projects are to be managed. You need to know it in as much depth as possible and keep a copy on hand for reference as it will be your primary resource.

As Brittany covered earlier, not all requirements in the NOFO apply to all projects. For example, construction projects have additional requirements compared to initial design. So, you need to make sure that you're devoting time and resources only to what's needed for your project. Now, we're going to come back in this and look at it in depth later, but if you include construction specific language and documents in your application, that means we would expect to see construction activities in your scope of work. If we don't, then the application could be deemed ineligible, even if it was intended to be design only.

Now that said, you do need to make sure that you're meeting all of the requirements and providing all the documentation for the type of project that you're pursuing. Some requirements and documents covered by the NOFO are so critical that just missing that one thing can make the entire application ineligible.

Something that we really want to emphasize that we've learned from the first grant cycle is that the application checklist must be filled out in its entirety and submitted as part of your

application materials. This checklist is intended to help you ensure that your application is complete and that you're meeting all of the eligibility requirements. So, we need to see that in your final application. The checklist also helps our reviewers evaluate whether the applicant understands the requirements of the project they're proposing. Inconsistencies between the checklist and the application documents can be a red flag in our review. For example, if we receive an application with a construction cost estimate box checked, but the project proposed in the scope of work does not appear to describe the construction project, that can create an issue as we don't know if a required document is missing, if that box was checked in error, or if the applicant has not described the project very well. Now, we'll come back to this topic later, but all applications should be consistent across documents and they should be as detailed as possible. Don't leave it up to us to try and interpret what you meant.

We cannot state this enough. If you intend to apply for this grant, then please get started as soon as possible. While we cannot provide specific instructions on what kinds of projects you should pursue, we can answer grant questions and provide general guidance prior to the application window opening on March 2nd. Answers to all the questions, including those provided during this webinar today, will be posted publicly on our grant website so that every potential applicant can benefit from them. That will include anything we also receive from our email address, **DESresponse@des.sc.gov** or by phone. After that date, we cannot answer most questions about the grant. Instead, all we can do is point you to the relevant part of the NOFO where you can find that information for yourself. Now, SCDES can still communicate with dam owners on other questions about their dam, including routine inspections, enforcement actions, permits, etc., as long as those discussions don't involve this grant. This restriction is so that we're consistent with the principles of the SC Ethics Act that prevent the creation of an unfair competitive advantage for any particular applicant.

Establish the Scope and Scale of Your Project As Soon as Possible

Potential applicants should determine the scope and scale of their proposed project as early as possible. Now, we understand this grant may seem very complicated and be very overwhelming. Please keep in mind a project can be as large or as small scale as you want it to be based on what you're willing to manage. You should also keep in mind that a smaller scale initial project to conduct studies on your dam may actually save you money down the road. For example, an investigation into your dam's actual volume and the flooding potential downstream may result in better data that you can then provide to SCDES. That could lead to us reducing the hazard classification for the dam, which would then reduce

the engineering requirements and associated expense for a follow-up spillway design and construction project. Or an engineer's evaluation of how altering the dam's height or even removing the dam would change that downstream impact versus repairing the dam as is could save the dam owner a huge amount of money down the line when applying to do that construction in a future grant cycle.

Smaller scale projects can also provide a dam owner experience in applying for or managing this grant that they can then use in future cycles. I really want to emphasize that receiving a grant from one cycle does not guarantee that applicant will receive any future awards. But going through the process once may provide you with an advantage on the other applicants in the future cycles because now you know how the process works. You shouldn't rush into submitting an application and we recommend you take as much of the application period as possible to put one together. But yet another reminder, prior to March 2nd when the NOFO is published is when you can ask us the more specific questions. Without a strong sense of what kind of project you want to pursue up front, it will be harder to determine the right questions to ask us and what steps you need to prioritize before the end of the application window. As a reminder, only one application can be submitted per dam. So, you will not be able to submit multiple applications that cover alternative potential plans for fixing your dam and then decide which one you want to follow up on later.

When considering what type of project to apply for, you should decide if it will involve any activities that require an engineer's involvement, including creating the application itself. Per the NOFO, construction projects will also need an engineering report identifying deficiencies to be eligible. As a reminder, any pre-award costs are not eligible for reimbursement. So securing an engineer to assist with putting the application together is going to be entirely at the dam owner's expense. Applications for planning, design, and some other activities may be completed without the assistance of an engineer. However, applications for construction projects must be prepared with the assistance of an engineer. So if you're going to pursue a project that will require an engineer's involvement, you should look to secure one as soon as possible and determine if you're going to be able to cover that cost. Next, please keep in mind that a lot of different time frames are going to be involved in these projects. Now, as Brittany covered, those include the amount of time you have to put this application together for this cycle, the time it will take for us to announce the awards and get the paperwork signed, and the period of performance for using those funds if you receive an award, depending on the type of project that you're pursuing. Now, remember that this grant gets new funding every fiscal year, so there will be future cycles. Now, we'll look at time frames a little bit more in depth later on, but again, potential applicants should consider what they can handle right now and what the most immediate

needs are. Applicants should honestly assess if they feel capable of managing the application award themselves or they will need the assistance of others. For projects involving an engineer, that engineer may be able to help with a lot of the documentation and reporting, but it's not guaranteed. For organizations, there may be specific individuals who specialize in managing funding, for example, an HOA treasurer, but applicants need to ensure that everyone potentially involved in administering this grant feels comfortable in doing so. Also, depending on your project timeline, applicants should keep in mind the possibility of personnel turnover and needing to maintain records and continuity for longer-term projects.

Applicants also need to sort out the proposed match funding that Brittany discussed or other in-kind services as soon as possible. Setting up those resources can take time if the applicant is going to ask for that increased 75% cost share and you will need additional time to provide the documentation for that. Finally, we want to reiterate that applicant should evaluate whether they want to take on a major project all at once or potentially spread it across multiple funding cycles. Again, there is no guarantee of future awards, so it may be in your interest to go for everything at once for this cycle. But if that leads to an overwhelming project and a higher chance of missing those one or two pieces that make the entire application ineligible, that could be counterproductive. Applicants should take this time to honestly reflect on what they're comfortable applying for and what they're comfortable managing if they get an award.

Now, this funding cycle has around \$2.2 million available for award. That's a significant amount of money, but that can certainly be eaten up by just a few major eligible projects. SCDES certainly wants to improve the safety of as many eligible dams as possible. If the full set of eligible applications ask for more than that total, we, as Britney discussed, then use that risk-based ranking to determine which projects get funded. So, if there are one or two high-scoring dams that get a significant chunk of that funding, the next projects in line that are eligible may not be able to be covered in full. Partial funding may be possible, but it would be up to the dam owner to decide if they can accept that based on what we offer.

As discussed earlier, awarded grants can be amended later on as circumstances change. That can include extensions to deadlines or even changes in the scope of work. However, applicants should not go into this application cycle assuming that big changes can be made later on. Also, we do not guarantee that any amendments will be granted. So, this is the time to lock in a real plan for fixing your dam.

We discussed handling different timetables and deadlines in prior slides, but I want to remind everyone that what we're talking about today is in reference to this grant only. Some of our dams are already under a permit or they're under enforcement deadlines. Receiving a grant does not automatically mean that those deadlines will be extended or waived. So, for example, while this grant has one or three-year periods of performance based on the type of work and your scope of work, receiving a grant does not mean that you automatically have the same amount of time to meet the requirements of a previously issued SCDES Inspection and Repair Order. Also, if you've already gotten a permit from us to do work on your dam, you may still need to request an extension to that permit or a revision and reissuance or maybe even a new permit entirely if it does not cover the new activities proposed in your Scope of Work. Please coordinate with SCDES staff to ensure that you're in compliance with all deadlines and requirements.

Provide Yourself Enough Time

We cannot emphasize this enough. Get started on your planning and pulling documents together as soon as possible. If you intend to apply for the cycle, many of the required documents are going to be outside of you as the dam owner's control. If your dam has a complicated ownership structure and you need a consensus before applying, start getting those permissions now. So, for example, if your dam is owned by an HOA and your bylaws state that you need a full meeting with 2/3 agreement to authorize one application be submitted, go ahead and get something on the calendar. Go ahead and request documents as early as you can as there could be unexpected delays in getting a response from the state or federal agencies that Brittany covered earlier in terms of required documentation. Determine what your cost match or in-kind services will be and how long it will take to secure those resources. If you're doing a construction project, you'll need the assistance of a registered Professional Engineer and your project could be just one of many others that they're working on. So, be sure to leave enough time for them to put together whatever is needed for your application. The same goes for getting project quotes.

Determine your Dam's Eligibility and Potential for Receiving an Award

Before you apply and spend time and money putting an application together, please make sure that your dam is even eligible for this program. You can reach out to SCDES at any time to receive basic information about your dam, including the items listed here. And again, we cannot answer specific grant project questions after March 2nd, but we can provide that basic information about your dam that is then used to determine eligibility at any time at

request. However, some of that may need to go through the Freedom of Information Act or the FOIA process.

As yet another reminder, if the full list of eligible applications for this cycle adds up to a request of less than ~\$2.2 million, all those projects will be funded. That's what happened in cycle one and is why we had additional money to roll over to cycle two. We never want to discourage any dam owner from applying for this grant. But dam owners should be aware of how the risk-based ranking system works in case more is requested. The NOFO will cover this in detail, but dams with dozens or hundreds of downstream structures at risk will always score higher than dams with just one or two impacts. Other points are available for the Condition Rating as well as some other factors not covered here, but downstream impact has by far the greatest impact on the score sheet. As noted on the prior slide, we can provide our inundation map showing downstream risk to dam owners on request. Now, while those maps are not specifically what's used in determining the downstream impact score for eligible projects, they can give dam owners a general sense of where you stand.

Dams with a Poor or Unsatisfactory condition rating get more points in the ranking system for that field than ones in other condition. We want to fund projects that comprehensively address issues with your dam and leave them in the safest condition possible. But as projects increase in complexity, then the possibility of forgetting a key document also increases. Also, the more expensive a project becomes, the lower the chances that project can be funded in full, especially if the dam is a lower risk and therefore a lower score site. Please keep that in mind if you will be picking up that additional expense and putting a large project together. So, this is the time to collect information on your dam if you don't have it already to make sure that it's eligible for this program and to assess what its condition and downstream risk are. I want to make this very clear. Any High or Significant Hazard dam is eligible for this grant regardless of how healthy the structure is. Any owner of one of those dams can freely apply for this grant and receive funding. From the first cycle, we did not receive enough complete and eligible applications to use all of the money. So even the dam in good shape with not much of it downstream could get funded. That can certainly happen again in this cycle. But we do hope that for this cycle we will receive enough complete and eligible applications to award all the available funding and maximize the assistance we can provide dam owners across the state. No owner is discouraged from applying. We just want everyone to understand how we make decisions on what projects to fund. Now, only you as a dam owner can answer this for yourself, but it may not be worth it to invest a lot of time and money up front in applying for a dam that is low risk and in excellent condition.

Make Applications As Clear as Possible

Our final tip is also the one that besides the basic paperwork issues was the main reason that applications in the first cycle were marked ineligible. Applications should be as clear as possible. As noted earlier, everything the NOFO requires for the type of project that you're proposing should be seen clearly in the final application. Fill out the relevant forms completely. Even if it seems to you that something asked for in one section or field of a form was already answered somewhere else on the form, fill it in anyway. Repeat things as often as you need to. Make sure your applications clearly state what it is you want to do.

Technical terms are better than general ones. So just saying, "I want to fix the spillway" in your Scope of Work may not be enough. If your dam has multiple spillways of different types and we can't figure out which one you're referring to, your application may be disqualified. Saying, "We will remove the existing rising riser structure located in a specific location and replace it with one having a particular design..." that then goes on to reference an attached engineer's report is better. Even if you copy and paste, that's fine. The same goes for something like in your Scope of Work, "I want to remove trees and vegetation". Some of that work could be maintenance that's actually not covered by this grant, but some could be, depending on the size of the trees and vegetation that you're talking about. So without specific diagrams, reports, arborist assessments identifying which trees meet those requirements, etc. we may not be able to fund that project or we may have to reduce the funding available as we can't be certain that what you're proposing is eligible or not. You should also be detailed with your project timelines. Don't just write "we will do 100% of the work by 3 years from now". It's perfectly okay if an attached engineer's report proposes or recommends steps be done that go beyond what your actual Scope of Work is asking for, especially if you intend to apply for this grant across multiple cycles. But if the Scope of Work is brief or vague, we will not try and interpret what we think you meant your project to be. We will take it as written, and if we cannot figure out what you're proposing and how much funding you're requesting, the application will be rejected.

We can't say this enough. Your Scope of Work and other documents should be consistent within your application. The same goes for cost estimates. If you describe a Scope of Work that's identical to the recommendations of an attached engineer's assessment, but the cost estimate in that report is less than the amount you're asking for on the application form, that inconsistency could lead to the application being determined ineligible. Because

eligible projects can take many forms, we don't have the time to cover specific examples of what to do and what not to do. As a general principle, don't leave it to us to try and figure out what it was you meant to say. State it as clearly as possible. Always assume that the reviewer does not know anything about your dam and its condition, even if your dam is already under SCDES orders, has an active permit, or you're just in regular correspondence with our dams program staff. Overexplaining and being repetitive is far better than not saying enough, as long as what you want to say is consistent with itself.

Thank you, Sam. This concludes our presentation slides and we'll take the opportunity now to answer some questions that have come in through the Q&A. And I do want to re-emphasize as Sam said, the Q&A will be posted to the grants dedicated web page and we will be regularly adding to the Q&A between now and March 2nd. So make sure you check the web page often. And also if you don't have access to the Q&A through Microsoft Teams, we've enabled the chat function as well and you can enter your questions there.

All right.

So what is the title of this grant? So this is we're using funding cycle or the dam repair assistance grant funding cycle 2. Since there the chance that there could be multiple funding cycles within a single fiscal year, we've opted not to use fiscal year in the actual title of the grant for per funding cycle.

Alright. So, if we've submitted an application previously, where can we get feedback regarding that denial? So with the with the denial we do send back the feedback that includes why the application was denied. But if you would like to you can contact us separately and we can schedule a time to meet and discuss.

How can we access the pre-qualified contractor's list? This so the contractor's list is in development. It doesn't exist yet. But that will be that will be posted as soon as that does as soon as we've completed it.

Okay. Hey folks. This is John McCain. And when we got a question about, I think it's about utilizing both federal grants and the state grant together to satisfy both the, the two the different match or cost share requirements. Um, and that is I mean there that that is possible. I'm a little hesitant to say you know to answer that that for sure that is possible due to not knowing the specifics. I think we would need to meet and discuss with that applicant before March 2nd regarding which federal grant we're talking about making sure that the federal grant and our state grant would be compatible and are in alignment and that there would be no complications. So that is a very difficult question with the wide range of federal grants out there. But again it's not impossible that they could be used to satisfy each other's match requirements, but we would like to talk specifics to that to anyone thinking of using a federal grant as your cost share for this program.

That's so I'm under a contract to buy a piece of land with a dam that meets all requirements. However, it seems the current land owner would need to apply for the grant and manage funding received. How would that work if I plan to pay for dam repair costs associated with the grant? Also, what happens if I buy the land in and dam while in the process of working on the grant? So, the applicant does need to be the dam owner. So if the current dam owner applies for and receives the grant and then the land use changes during that or during that process then the agreement would need to be terminated.

I think that is a very complex situation where ownership is going to potentially change during the grant either the application or under the award that would be a very complicated thing. When we make an award that is a legally binding agreement to an individual, to the entity that applied. So if ownership were to change that agreement would become essentially null and void, we would essentially terminate the agreement. So that would be highly problematic if ownership changes during either the application or the award process. Now I will say if there is a potential buyer it would that there's no reason that that potential buyer couldn't contribute funds to the project for that for the owner's share or could contribute as either donated or in-kind services. But yeah, ownership changing during either the application or the grant would be grounds to either deny the application or terminate the award.

So question regarding the reimbursement on slide 52 states the 80% and 90%. So this is referring to the amount that's held back to ensure completion of the project and then it's

added to the final request for reimbursement. You're still required to pay the 50% cost share.

Okay. We are about out of time. We're going to address one more question and then the remainder of the questions we'll include those in our Q&A that's going to be posted to the website with all the answers to your questions.

Yeah, we got one more question. Well, we got many more questions that we're not going to have time to address, but I did want to answer one more. And then we we'll make sure to address all of these questions and post to our Q&A section of our grant web page. But this is a question about if other permits are needed to complete the work such as from the US Army Corps of Engineers. Will the state dam program assist with the necessary permits for a clean water permit from the US Army Corps of Engineers? So the grant can help can pay the cost associated with other permits is eligible for grant reimbursement. The dam safety program staff will not assist with obtaining those permits. That's where a consulting engineer comes into play. But the costs both for the consulting engineer and any permit fees etc. are eligible for grant reimbursement. That hopefully that answers the question but we are again we're very sorry we don't want to keep folks longer than the hour. Someone has asked for the website address. I think that's the last thing we can do and that is on this the last slide that you see now. The QR code will take you to that website which you can scan with your phone. But it's also the link is shown but again I think that's the end of our time. Please reach out to us, any additional questions that come up. You can submit, we prefer you submit questions to our desresponse@des.sc.gov email address. That will be the best way to submit questions during this period between now and March 2nd. With that, I'll let Brittany close us out.

All right, so that concludes today's webinar and thank you everyone who attended the live webinar for SCDES's upcoming dam repair assistance grant funding cycle 2. You can, as John said, you can continue to submit additional grant questions by email to desresponse@des.sc.gov. Thank you everyone and have a wonderful day.