

# Dam Repair Assistance Grant Funding Cycle 2

## Questions & Answers

Last updated: 4/1/2026

### Questions answered live during 2/11/26 webinar:

1. Question: What is the title of this Grant? SFY25 Cycle 2 or SF26 Dam Repair Assistance Grant?

Answer: It is simply SC Dam Repair Assistance Grant Funding Cycle 2 (FC2). We're using a funding cycle numbering scheme only for naming the dam repair assistance grant offerings/Notices of Funding Opportunities. Since multiple state fiscal year appropriations are being combined for Funding Cycle 2, and potentially for future funding cycles, we are not referencing the fiscal year in naming the grant offerings.

2. Question: If we've submitted an application previously, where can we get feedback regarding that denial?

Answer: With a denial, we send back limited feedback that includes why the application was denied. If any applicant that received a denial for a grant award, the applicant can contact us to discuss the specifics of the Department's review and decision to deny an award.

3. Question: How can we access the pre-qualified contractors list? How does a contractor get on the list?

Answer: The pre-qualified contractors list doesn't exist yet. As soon as we've completed it will be posted to the grant program's webpage. Contractors cannot begin to establish qualifications at this time. An announcement will be made on South Carolina Business Opportunities (<https://scbo.sc.gov/>) when SCDES is ready to publish the qualification requirements and process to submit qualifications to become a pre-qualified contractor.

4. Question: In the event that Dam owner qualify for grants from grants.gov of a match share, and this State grant cover the cost share required under a Federal Grant assistance?

Answer: It's possible a Federal grant could be used to satisfy the State Dam Repair Assistance Grant cost share requirement, but not knowing the specifics of the grant from grants.gov (i.e., a Federal grant), the Department is hesitant to provide a definitive response. We would prefer to meet and discuss the specifics of the Federal grant and to ensure the Federal and state grants would be compatible and in alignment.

5. Question: I am under contract to buy a piece of land with a dam that meets all requirements. However, it seems the current landowner 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? And what happens if I buy the land and dam while in the process of working on the grant?

Answer: When we make an award, that is a legally binding agreement to the entity that applied for the grant. So, if then the ownership were to change, the agreement would become essentially null and void and we would terminate the agreement. So that would be highly problematic if ownership changes either during the application or project execution phases. If there is a potential buyer, there is no reason that that potential buyer couldn't contribute funds to the project, either for the owner's share or contributed as either donated in-kind materials, services, etc. But again, ownership changing either during the application process or during the project execution period would be grounds to either deny the application or terminate the award.

6. Question: Questions regarding the reimbursement. I believe it was Slide 52. It states 80% and 90%. I did not fully understand that. That's 80% of the 50%? Could you help me understand?

Answer: This slide is referring to the amount held back (known as "retainage") to ensure completion of the project. (Editor's Note: The amount of retainage for non-construction projects was incorrectly stated as 10% when this question was answered during the live webinar. The amount of retainage for non-construction projects is 15% and Slide 52 has been corrected. Corrected slide is shown below.) The Department would calculate the eligible reimbursement amount owed to the awardee based on their Request for Reimbursement and supporting documentation but hold back either 15% (for non-



construction) or 20% (for construction) until the final Request for Reimbursement is submitted and approved. So yes, interim reimbursements would be 80% or 85% of the 50% reimbursement amount, and then with the final reimbursement request, the payment would be the 50% reimbursement plus the accumulated retainage funds.

(Editor's Note: the following is supplemental to what was answered live during the webinar): For Financial Hardship awards, if the simultaneous co-funded payment plan is being used instead of reimbursement, the Department will require that the dam owner also have a retainage requirement in his/her contract with the engineer or contractor, such that the Department will hold back a retainage from its payment directly to engineer (non-construction projects retainage =15%) or contractor (construction projects retainage = 20%).

## Payment via Reimbursement

- To receive funds, recipients must prepare and submit a Request for Reimbursement (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 85% for all other projects.



7. Question: In the event a permit from the USACE is required, will State Dam Program assist with the necessary permits for a Clean Water 404 grant permit from USACE?

Answer: The Dam Repair Assistance Grant can help pay the costs associated with obtaining other permits that may be required for construction, i.e., these costs are eligible for reimbursement. The Dam Safety Program staff will not assist with obtaining these



permits, however, as that is the responsibility of the dam owner and the dam owner's consulting engineer. Consulting engineer's fees to prepare permit applications and any regulatory agency's permit application fees are all eligible costs for inclusion in the grant application scope of work.

8. Question: Give us the web site address.

Answer: <https://des.sc.gov/programs/bureau-water/dams-reservoirs/dam-repair-assistance-grant>

**Questions received but not answered live during 2/11/2026 webinar:**

9. Question: Do the Owner of the Dam have to enter into a contract with the Engineer before grant is approved?

Answer: It depends on whether that expense is to be included in the grant for reimbursement, as awardee's cost share, or neither. For engineer's costs to be reimbursable, the appropriate procurement requirements must be followed. As shown on Slide 48, if the state share of the contract is expected to be <\$50,000.00, then no procurement is required, and the awardee can contract with any licensed professional engineer registered in South Carolina and contract can be executed at any time. If the state share of the contract is expected to be \$50,000 or greater, then a qualifications-based procurement process must be conducted before entering into a contract. However, even if the appropriate procurement procedure has been followed, the costs incurred are not eligible for reimbursement if they were incurred on a date preceding the award agreement execution date.



## Procurement Thresholds for Professional Services (Engineering, Surveying, etc.)

State Share	Procurement
Less than \$50,000	Requires only a single quote/proposal (SCDES must determine costs are fair and reasonable).
Greater than or equal to \$50,000	Qualifications based procurement required in accordance with SC Code 11-35-3220.

If engineer's costs will not be sought for reimbursement but will be included as in-kind contribution towards awardee's cost share requirement, a contract can be executed at any time and those costs can be incurred within 1-year (365 days) of the award being executed to be considered eligible as awardee's cost share. However, those costs must be clearly identified in the application, specifically identified as eligible in the award agreement, and are still subject to Department review following award agreement execution to verify they are fair, reasonable, and are in alignment with/contributed to/advanced the grant's scope of work.

10. Question: Does exploratory excavation, required as a request of an P.E. to determine a possible subsequent scope of work, qualify. It's expensive to mobilize just for that.

Answer: Yes, exploratory excavation (assumed as part of a geotechnical investigation by a licensed professional engineer registered in South Carolina) is eligible but must be

clearly described in the grant application. Mobilization/demobilization, in situ testing, laboratory testing are all eligible for inclusion in the grant's scope of work.

11. Question: If we are getting ready to post a bid for engineering to repair or replace our dam, should we apply just for construction? We do not have plans yet?

Answer: In general, if the dam owner is at the stage of advertising for bids for engineering services, the cost of said engineering services can only be included for grant reimbursement if 1) the state share will not be  $\geq$  \$50,000 or 2) the advertisement is a Request for Qualifications and a qualifications-based selection process is used to choose the engineer.

Not having engineering plans does not preclude a dam owner applying for a construction grant; however, this would require a Preliminary Engineering Report (PER) for the proposed construction project be prepared by a licensed professional engineer registered in South Carolina and submitted with the grant application.

As stated in #9 above, the costs for engineering can always be included towards the awardee's cost share requirement if cost incurred within 1-year prior to award agreement execution and the costs are in alignment with/contributed to/advanced the grant's scope of work. The determination of whether costs can be included is at the discretion of the Department.

12. Question: Is it possible to attend Procurement Training with Cycle 1 Award participants?

Answer: Certainly. All owners of grant-eligible dams will be invited to attend.

13. Question: Is there an avenue to find the work associated with the dam removal? Is there a bidding process through the state or does a contractor need to find the landowner?

Answer: The dam owner must apply for the grant. A dam removal application will be denied if 1) a specific dam is not identified, and 2) the dam owner (or a dam owner if multiple owners) is not the grant applicant. A potential contractor would need to find a dam owner interested in removing his/her dam to submit the grant application, as well as a licensed professional engineer registered in South Carolina to assist with the grant application.



Dam Repair Assistance Grant projects that must use competitive sealed bidding as a procurement method (i.e. construction contract with state share greater than \$100,000) will be advertised in South Carolina Business Opportunities (SCBO) and also posted on the SCDES Dam Repair Assistance Grant webpage.

14. Question: If using donated materials in the project, such as dirt, stones, would the value be considered in-kind?

Answer: With soils (including sands, silts, clays, rock, gravels, etc.) that must be purchased for the project (i.e. not sourced from on-site borrow areas), if a licensed engineer registered in South Carolina approves the materials as compatible with his/her specifications for the repair, alteration or removal of the dam, then the value of said materials can be considered in-kind contributions. The value of said contribution must be documented via either receipts (if obtained within 1-year prior to award agreement) or quotes for procuring comparable materials in accordance with the procurement policy for goods and non-professional services on Slide 47. Use and inclusion of purchased or donated materials to serve as in-kind contributions must be included in the grant application and also specifically listed as allowable in the award agreement.

## Procurement Thresholds for Goods and Services

State Share	Procurement
Less than \$10,000	No competition required (SCDES must determine costs are fair and reasonable)
Between \$10,000 and \$25,000	A minimum of three written quotes or three documented attempts at solicitation for quotes. Solicitation for quotes must be reviewed and pre-approved by SCDES, and the quotes received must be in identical format. Quotes must be reviewed and pre-approved by SCDES. Please note that the Recipient may select any of these quotes, but SCDES will pay only the lowest quoted price.
Greater than or equal to \$25,000	Must be advertised at least once. The dam owner may select any of these quotes, but SCDES will pay only the lowest quoted price.

15. Question: I put in for the Dam Grant and I have [not] received a yes or no for the funds that our sub division put in for.

Answer: The Dam Safety Program will reach out directly to the poser of this question to discuss why a response was not received on the application that was supposedly submitted to SCDES.

16. Question: Curious if the total funded budget for this loan program is \$1.5m, and \$819k was paid out in the first round, how is there \$2.1 available for second round. Do balances carry forward year to year if unused?

Answer: Yes, the appropriations from the state do not expire and remain available for grants until expended. There was \$3 million available in Funding Cycle 1 from the FY25 and FY26 state appropriations. After making the awards in Funding Cycle 1, there will be approximately \$2.18 million available for Funding Cycle 2. Assuming the state legislature continues authorizing the Dam Repair Assistance Grant in the state's Fiscal Year 2027 appropriations act and at the same level as previous years, Funding Cycle 3 will likely include \$1.5 million in new funds and any remaining funds from Funding Cycle 2.

**Questions received after the 2/11/2026 webinar:**

17. Question: Can this grant opportunity, as discussed today, be coupled with other grant programs from other departments in South Carolina?

Answer: The Dam Repair Assistance Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) states that other state funds (e.g., from a different state grant) cannot be used for the match. Federal grant dollars can be used for the match, provided the project satisfies all Federal grant eligibility requirements and is in alignment with the SCDES Dam Repair

Assistance Grant rules and requirements contained in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.  
(Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

18. Question: Does SC Department of Natural Resources, SC Department of Land Management and SC Forestry Commission, etc. be used in combination with Dam owners grant to protect loss of life and property within the community of a watershed wetlands reservoir recovery? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: See response to #17 above. Also, the SCDES cannot speak to what other state or federal agency's grant programs allow. It is solely up to the dam owner to review and determine eligibility and acceptability requirements of any other grant programs, both state and federal

19. Question: Do you know of any other grant opportunities in the State of South Carolina to be considered for land conditions of wetlands reservoir damages that pose a risk to the adjoining life and property community? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: The circumstances of that specific situation would be needed to answer the question.

20. Question: Does SC Dam Safety enforce SCDOT to place a safely hydraulic safe State Road in locations of a Natural Resource of a Creek, waters of the United States? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: No, the SCDES Dam Safety Program has no authority over SCDOT's sizing of culverts or bridges for hydraulic capacity.

21. Question: Regarding the required Tax Compliance for applicant eligibility, would the first 6 pages of tax returns be sufficient, or do you require the entire returns to be submitted? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: The application requirements have been revised since the webinar event, and federal and state tax compliance documentation is no longer required as part of the grant application packet. However, tax compliance documentation will be required as a condition of award for grant recipients and must be demonstrated by submitting an IRS Tax Compliance Report. South Carolina residents who are not tax-exempt must also provide a Certificate of Compliance from SCDOR. SCDES will NOT review tax returns to determine an applicant's tax compliance status. Tax returns are only required when seeking to obtain a financial hardship grant, where the non-state match is reduced to 25%.

22. Question: During the webinar this morning, you indicated that there will be some changes in Cycle 2 for the engineer statements. Would you be able to share any information with me regarding how these statements will be recorded - assist with application, cost estimates and narrative? Any other changes? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: The engineer's signed statements will be incorporated into the grant application form.

23. Question: I was signed up for the webinar this morning and had connection issues. Is it possible to watch a recording of this before the March 2, 2026 open application date? (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: The recording of the webinar, slides, and transcript were posted to the SCDES's Dam Repair Assistance Grant website on February 13, 2026.

24. Question: I just realized the webinar for dam repair funding took place this morning and my calendar event did not have a reminder set. Is there a recording of the event or any information you can send me? I believe my dam would definitely qualify for possible funding due to it being considered high risk. (Received 2/11/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: The webinar was indeed recorded and that recording, the presentation slides, and a transcript of the webinar should be posted to our grants page very soon. A formal notice also will be sent out alongside that posting and I've verified that you will receive that notice at your email address. If you have any additional questions about the grant after

viewing the webinar, please email us at [DESresponse@des.sc.gov](mailto:DESresponse@des.sc.gov) and we'll be happy to assist.

25. Would the SC Dam Repair Assistance Grant be compatible to use as non-federal match for FEMA's Rehabilitation of High Hazard Potential Dams (HHPD) Grant? (Received 2/14/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: Yes, the Dam Repair Assistance Grant, if awarded, may be used towards the non-federal match for HHPD. However, there are multiple considerations that should be made as to whether combining the two grants is feasible, as one is a state-funded grant program and one is federal. Some considerations include: Periods of Performance of the awards, eligible activities under the two grant programs, federal requirements that don't apply to the state grant, procurement requirements of the two grant programs, etc.

26. Question: For Homeowners Associations or other community associations, do covenants and by-laws need to be submitted in their entirety or only the sections pertaining to the dam? (Received 2/18/2026 via phone call)

Answer: If covenants and/or by-laws have been indicated on the grant application form as being in effect amongst the association's members, then these documents are required in their entirety as part of the grant application packet.

27. Question: Are there exceptions for High Hazard Dams that receive a "Fair" rating? (Received 2/22/2026 via e-mail)

Answer: If your dam did not receive a Condition Assessment Rating of "Poor" or "Unsatisfactory," your dam is not necessarily ineligible. A dam with a "Fair" Condition Assessment Rating that meets all other eligibility requirements **may** be eligible for funding if a dam safety deficiency has been identified by a registered Professional Engineer licensed in the State of South Carolina.

28. Question: Do you have any information on how to determine grant ownership? Does DES maintain a record of dam owners, and whether there would be a singular or multiple dam owners? (Received 2/24/2026 via email)



Answer: Under state law, a dam "Owner" means *those who own, control, operate, maintain, manage, or propose to construct a dam or reservoir*. Multiple parties may be the owner of the same dam. Please keep in mind the state definition of a 'Dam' includes all appurtenances (spillways, for example) as part of the dam, not just the embankment itself. A dam co-owner may own a significant portion of the embankment, or perhaps just the spillway outlet works, with the rest of the dam on another's property. Also, legal agreements may exist that assign responsibility for the dam to someone other than the property owner (as may be the case with HOAs, for example).

When establishing ownership, state regulations require that we "*shall look first to those entities who hold title to the property on which the dam is constructed and those entities who have acquired some legal responsibility for the dam through covenants or other legal agreements, and secondarily to the other entities who fall under the definition of owner.*" SCDES does maintain a database of dam owners determined by staff based on this guidance. SCDES primarily determines ownership from on a review of publicly-available deeds, plats, covenants/restrictions, or other legally binding documents that address responsibility for the dam (generally sourced from county records). Historical program records and correspondence with those claiming to be dam owners also factor into ownership decisions.

Please note that the ownership determination by SCDES staff does not represent a full and exhaustive title search and our determinations are limited by the information available. Records can be provided to our program at any time to support or question the ownership listing. If records relevant to dam ownership exist but are not publicly available, or if the documents contain errors or unclear language, then the actual owners of a dam may be different from what is on our list. Some complicated ownership questions are beyond the scope of what our program can evaluate and can only be settled through a court judgement. Examples of those include, but are not limited to, making a formal determination of whether an easement exists or a covenant is enforceable, or applying existing SC case law to novel situations related to dam ownership. Those who are unsure if they are a dam owner should not rely solely on SCDES staff determinations and may need to pursue outside legal assistance. We can provide our current understanding of a dam's ownership upon request.

In the context of grant applications, potential applicants are encouraged to submit all documentation they think is relevant to the dam's ownership, even if those documents are publicly available and may have been reviewed by SCDES. We cannot hope to specify every document that is needed for ownership determination of a specific dam by a specific applicant, but in general, the deeds and plats that cover the entirety of the dam, and any relevant legal agreements tied to the same, should be sufficient in most cases.

Documents can also be submitted that do not assign dam ownership, but still serve to clarify any ambiguities with respect to an applicant's claim of ownership. For example, if there are restrictive covenants on relevant property, but no covenant that addresses the dam, then submitting said covenants would only reduce uncertainty whether other dam owners exist.

29. Question: When does the application period close? (Received 2/26/2026 via phone call)

Answer: The application period opens on March 2, 2026, and closes on May 4, 2026.

30. Question: How should we prepare the application documents when the owner is considering both repair/alteration OR removal and the decision cannot be made prior to the application? Should we prepare two sets of documents for one submission? (Received 2/28/2026 via email)

Answer: All applications should have a scope of work that is as specific as possible so that SCDES can fully evaluate the proposed project and associated cost estimates when deciding whether to make an award. Applications with poorly defined or uncertain scopes of work, such as an application for a construction project to either repair or remove the dam, will be rejected. Also, multiple applications for the same dam will result in all applications for that dam being rejected. For example, in the case above where repair and removal are both being considered, submitting separate applications for repair and removal projects would lead to both applications being rejected.

Dam owners considering a construction project but not sure what type of construction project (e.g., repair or removal), or have decided the type but not the full scope, are encouraged to consider pursuing a non-construction/engineering-only project as a first phase of a multi-phase project. The non-construction/engineering-only project funded under this grant would help in defining and then refining the scope of the construction that is needed. A first-phase non-construction/engineering-only project should result in a completed scope of work, design plans, permits, and corresponding detailed cost estimate that will inform a future grant application for construction. Additionally, a first-phase non-construction/engineering-only project could also inform SCDES's assessment of the hazard classification and/or applicable regulatory requirements, which in turn could reduce the cost of the future construction project (e.g., an Incremental Consequences Analysis could result in a reduced Spillway Design Flood requirement, which is one of the biggest cost drivers in dam repair and alteration projects).

31. Question: Will Financial Statements from South Carolina Secretary of State (SCSOS) meet the requirements in regards to yearly financial tax filings? (Received 2/25/2026 via email)

Answer: Proof of status as a non-profit, tax-exempt organization must be in the form of an IRS Determination Letter (i.e., documentation from the IRS that the organization is a 501(C) entity). Financial tax filings are only required as part of an application when an applicant is requesting a financial hardship grant. All other non-governmental entities are required to provide both an IRS Tax Compliance Report and a Certificate of Compliance from SCDOR.

An important change to note is that with Funding Cycle 2, the above-referenced documents are not required to be submitted with the application – we are now allowing these to be provided as a condition of award. In other words, if your application is selected for an award, then you will be required to provide tax compliance documentation (or tax-exempt documentation) prior to execution of the award agreement.

32. Question: I am experiencing a technical issue accessing the grant NOFO and/or its attachments.

Answer: Please let us know if you experience technical difficulties accessing the NOFO or any of its attachments from the grant's webpage, and we will send the documents to you as email attachments by request. The NOFO and application-related documents can also be sent via mail or picked up at SCDES offices upon request. The Department will not accept responsibility or provide a grace period for applications from any delayed or failed deliveries of documents sent via mail.

33. Question: Regarding the applicant eligibility requirement for business entities that the applicant must be in good standing with the SC Secretary of State's office, does a simple statement of good standing in the application Form D-25-0005 suffice for the grant application, or is any other documentation required and when? (Received 3/19/2026 via email)

Answer: Yes, if the applicant is a private company (corporation, LLC, etc.), selecting "Yes" for #10 on the grant application form D-25-0005 is sufficient and no other additional documentation is required to show that the entity is in good standing with the SC Secretary of State. However, please note that entity status may still be checked as part



of the application review process, and any discrepancies between what is stated on the application and what is reported by the SC Secretary of State may result in the application being deemed ineligible.

34. Question: How do I use Incentives to improve my application's ranking score?

Answer: Attachment B of the NOFO for Funding Cycle 2 lists six "Incentives" that can be included in a grant application scope of work for applications to receive additional points in the ranking process. These Incentives include:

1. Conduct an EAP tabletop exercise;
2. Add instrumentation for real-time dam monitoring;
3. Perform full Hydrologic and Hydraulic (H&H) modeling and dam breach analysis;
4. Perform full geotechnical investigation and seismic stability analysis;
5. Project adds or restores owner/operator's ability to control water level; and
6. Project adds or restores owner/operator's ability to completely drain reservoir.

To gain points, the Incentive must be explicitly identified as part of the scope of work to be performed during the grant Period of Performance. The costs associated with the Incentive are eligible for reimbursement at the applicable cost share percentage. Performing these Incentives prior to the Period of Performance or not explicitly identifying them as Incentives in the proposed Scope of Work will result in no incentive points being awarded. Grant applications should explicitly identify Incentives in their Proposed Scope of Work and provide sufficient detail on how the applicant intends on accomplishing the Incentive(s) (e.g., cost estimate, use of contractor(s), technical details, etc.). The Department reserves the right to deny Incentive points if it is determined the Incentive would not serve to reduce risk posed by the dam, or if there is insufficient detail to make such a determination.

35. Question: What are the parameters that need to be evaluated in an EAP Tabletop Exercise? (Received 3/31/2026 via email)

Answer: For the EAP Tabletop Exercise incentive, please reference FEMA Publication 64 titled "Federal Guidelines for Dam Safety: Emergency Action Planning for Dams," specifically Appendix H: <https://damtoolbox.org/images/2/2d/FEMA64document.pdf>

SCDES requires an exercise planning meeting, with SCDES invited to attend, prior to the actual Tabletop Exercise.

36. Question: Do out-of-state business entities need to be registered and in good standing with the SC Secretary of State's office?

Answer: Yes, per the NOFO Revision 1, all business entities, including out-of-state, must be registered and in good standing with the SC Secretary of State's office as a condition of award. This does not mean business entities must be registered and in good standing at the time of application, but should a notice of award be issued, the awardee must demonstrate it is registered and in good standing *before* the Department will provide a subaward agreement for execution. The grant application form, Form D-25-0005, contains a question (Question 10) regarding status with the SC Secretary of State's office – a "No" response to this question does not disqualify applicants from consideration for awards.