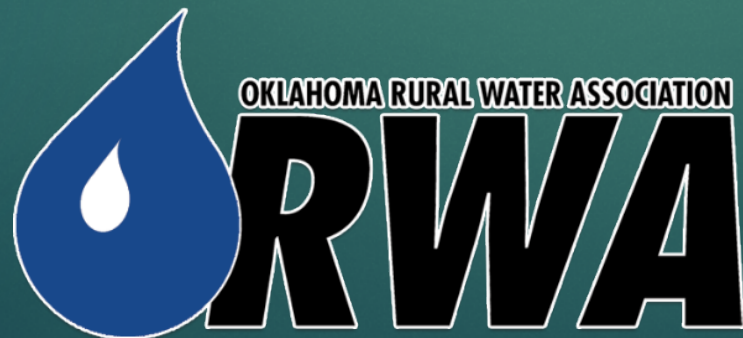


Rural Infrastructure Grant Applications and the Committee Review Process



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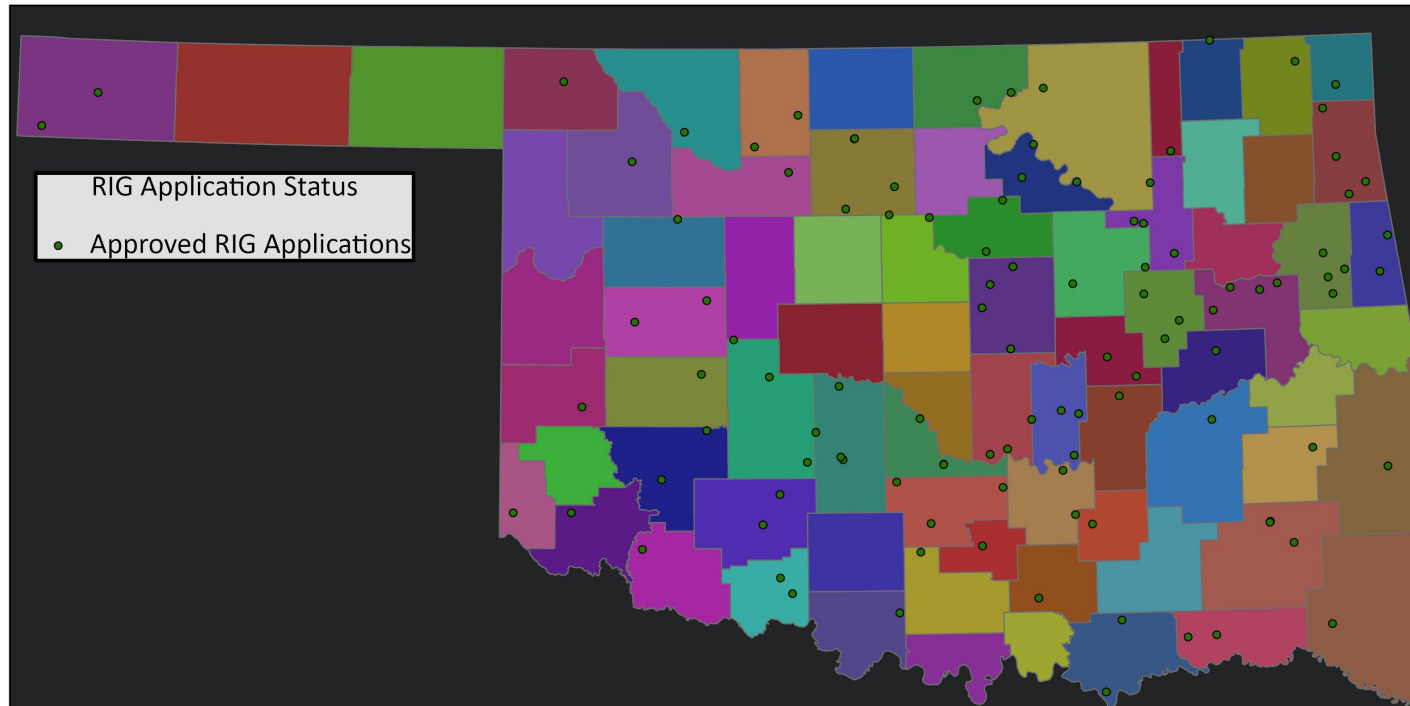
Rural Infrastructure Grant Program

RIG Program Snapshot

Applications Received	197
Applications Reviewed	171
Applications Approved	113
RIG Application Funding Requests to Date	\$16,381,587
RIG Funds Approved to Date	\$9,438,859

Rural Infrastructure Grant Program

RIG Status April 2023 - OK House Districts



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Texas Parks & Wildlife, Esri, HERE, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, EPA, NPS

Author: Lindsay Roland

Applications that didn't make it through Committee Review

- ▶ 6 were ineligible for the RIG due to population limit of the community served
- ▶ Some were ineligible due to their status as a private water system
- ▶ 14 voluntarily withdrew and submitted new applications
- ▶ About 6 applications were put on hold pending necessary documents, and were never reviewed by the committee
- ▶ Out of the 197 applications received, 25 were either tabled or scored too low in committee review

Tabled Applications

- Tabled applications are those that the committee doesn't feel they have enough information to score

- ▶ This usually happened when the committee had too many questions about the projects proposals in the application -The RIG Committee will take time with each application, but generally if the group couldn't narrow down answers to these questions within 5 minutes, they'd table the application and move on.
 - ▶ What is the need for this project?
 - ▶ Does this/How does this project address their NOVs and COs?
 - ▶ Where are the supporting documents? (quotes, bids, engineering reports, NOVs, COs)
 - ▶ What is the timeline for this project? Has it already started?
 - ▶ Where is the other funding coming from for this applicant's projects?
 - ▶ How much does this project cost?

Tabled Applications

- ▶ If trusting one of your vendors/contractors to place your grant application, know that it makes it very difficult for the committee to follow up with *you*, the applicant, and could result in a conflict of interest that does not benefit you.
- ▶ Some projects, such as standpipe rehabs, repair projects, and the purchase/installation of meters or valves, do not require an engineer to complete
 - ▶ The RIG Committee often tabled these applications or pass on them entirely because the engineering fees associated with the projects were viewed as an unnecessary expenditure

Tabled Applications

- ▶ Some projects or applications didn't have cost estimates that aligned with what industry professionals on the committee were familiar with
- ▶ Some projects proposed seemed inappropriate for the water system, such as an oversized water tower or a reverse-osmosis treatment system
- ▶ Red flags to the committee with cost estimates don't line up
 - ▶ No matter how many items are added or removed from the cost estimate, the estimate comes in at the same number every time
 - ▶ Cost estimates that come in at exactly the number needed to max out on the 80/20 grant

Low-Scoring Applications

- ▶ Applications for utilities with Notices of Violation or Consent Orders (regulatory actions by DEQ) scored higher where the NOV or CO was related to the proposed projects
- ▶ Projects requiring engineering reports were docked points if the engineering report was not complete or had not yet been approved by DEQ
- ▶ On the RIG application, multiple projects could be selected and funded on a single application
 - ▶ In scoring, each project is worth a certain number of points, so applications with multiple projects scored higher

Low-Scoring Applications

Do you feel that our committee's scoring system is stupid? Unfair? Leaving out critical infrastructure projects?

I actually really appreciate this kind of feedback – especially if provided in writing to the email address I use to administer the RIG Program!

- ▶ Providing feedback in writing gives me a record I can show the committee, including the number of a certain type of complaint
- ▶ I've been successful at getting the committee to change the scores assigned to project types – ensuring applicants with worthy and popular projects aren't overlooked by the program
- ▶ I've successfully advocated that other scoring policies be changed when they resulted in unfairness among applicants
- ▶ Each of these changes resulted from well-documented complaints and made it possible for more applications to be approved – we also re-evaluated previously rejected applications so that updated scoring policies worked to their benefit

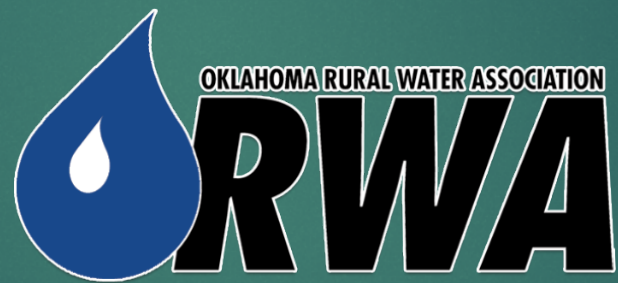
Successful Applications

- ▶ Double-check the eligibility requirements for your utility ahead of applying
- ▶ Get applications in as soon as you can
- ▶ Make sure the math is right on your project cost totals
- ▶ All referenced documents attached to application
 - ▶ If an engineering report is necessary for your project and you say it's complete? Attach it.
 - ▶ NOVs or COs referenced in your application? Include with application
 - ▶ Cost estimates? The committee needs some supporting documents for your project costs – attach bids, quotes, project proposals, even bid tabs from similar recent projects or an email from your contractor will work

Questions???



Scan this QR code
to save my
contact
information!!!



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