

U.S. Geological Survey

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) Mine Waste Cooperative Agreements FY2026

Funding Opportunity Number

G26AS00102

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BASIC INFORMATION

Announcement Type: Initial

Funding Opportunity Number: G26AS00102

Assistance Listing Number(s): 15.073

Estimated Total Program Funding: \$5,000,000

Expected Number of Awards: 14

Award Ceiling: \$356,000

Award Floor: \$3,000

The approximate range for an individual award is a minimum of \$3,000.00 up to a maximum of \$356,000.00. In some circumstances, funding may be less than \$3,000.00 or more than \$356,000.00.

Cost Sharing Required?

No

Closing Date Explanation

Proposals received after the deadline will NOT be considered for an award.

The earliest project start dates will be after the USGS receives its FY2026 BIL funding, or July 15, 2026, whichever is later. The latest start date is September 30, 2026. All deliverables are due 90 days following end of agreement performance period.

Maximum award period is 24 months.

OMB Control Number:

Have Questions?

For **NOFO/financial assistance** questions contact:

Margaret Eastman

(703) 283-9642

Email: Margaret_eastman@ios.doi.gov

For **program administration assistance**, contact:

Tina Hamalak

(703) 648-6312

Email: thamalak@usgs.gov

For questions about the MRP-Earth MRI, contact the general Earth MRI email box, earthmri@usgs.gov, or Tina Hamalak, MRP Program Analyst, thamalak@usgs.gov.

For **Grants.gov technical registration and submission, downloading forms and application packages**, contact:

Grants.gov Customer Support

Telephone: 1-800-518-4726

Email: Support@grants.gov

Executive Summary

Proposals are being accepted by the Mineral Resources Program (MRP), Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI) for State geological survey Mine Waste activities. Funds are made available to participating State geological surveys for activities focusing on mine waste

inventory and characterization data compilation and acquisition, sampling and mapping efforts in support of ongoing Earth MRI efforts. State geological surveys may also apply for travel funds to the annual 2026 Earth MRI workshop. In FY 2026, approximately \$5M is available for allocation to USGS Mine Waste cooperative agreements through a competitive proposal process. **All MRP funds must be obligated by Sep 30, 2026.**

ELIGIBILITY

Eligible Applicants

State governments

Additional Information on Eligibility

Only State geological surveys are eligible to apply to this Notice of Funding Opportunity under the – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law: 117-58, Sec. 40201). A university may submit a proposal on behalf of a State geological survey if the State geological survey is organized under a state university system. If a State geological survey is overdue on deliverables or progress reports on ANY previous or ongoing Earth MRI-funded agreements at the time of proposal submission, proposal may not be considered for funding.

Cost Sharing Requirement

Cost Sharing Required?

No

GET READY TO APPLY

Required System Registrations

Unique Entity Identifier and SAM.gov Registration

Before applying, all **applicants** except individuals applying as a natural person **must be registered in SAM.gov**. During the SAM.gov registration the entity will obtain their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI).

The SAM.gov registration process can take several months. If your organization is not already registered in SAM.gov, begin the registration process as soon as possible.

To register in SAM.gov, go to the [SAM.gov website](https://sam.gov) and use the available resources to complete registration.

- **Financial assistance registrants** must review and certify compliance with the SAM.gov “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications”.
- **Already registered?** You already have a Unique Entity ID. Before applying, check that your “Financial Assistance General Representations and Certifications” on SAM.gov is complete. Remember to renew your registration every year to keep it active while you have an award or application in progress. You can update your registration whenever you need, including during renewal.
- **Need help?** For additional information and contact information on the [SAM.gov Help page](#).

Refer to Attachment – Submission Instructions & Tips.

GRANTS.GOV

This program accepts applications through Grants.gov so once you receive your UEI return to Grants.gov to register with Grants.gov. Please allow 30 days to register and set up a Workspace in Grants.gov. See Submission Instructions section below for additional details.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

Program Goals

- Research for mineral resources, with a focus on critical minerals as defined by the USGS in the 2025 List of Critical Minerals, to support improved characterization of mineral resources in the United States.
(<https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/07/2025-19813/final-2025-list-of-critical-minerals>).

Program Description

Guidelines and Requirements

The following guidelines and requirements are provided to help the state geological surveys submit a strong, competitive proposal. The membership of the Review Panel will change from year to year, and applicants should not assume that reviewers will be fully aware of relevant previous work. Following these guidelines will allow the Review Panel to assess the proposed projects efficiently and effectively.

- Provide a clear justification for proposed mine waste activities. Explain how the results of the project meet the priorities of the program, applicant's organization, benefit stakeholders, and society. Please be specific and provide examples.
- Request funding for one, two, and/or three Program Priorities: Priority 1) national mine waste inventory; Priority 2) mine waste characterization, and Priority 3) travel to the annual Earth MRI workshop. All three priorities are independent of each other.
- Describe the project and the process expected to be followed (**workflows, including methods and level of effort**) to complete the required objectives. If proposing multiple activities to complete the project, clearly state the work that will be accomplished for each activity. Please note that if reduced funds are awarded, the scope of work may require modification.
- Briefly describe previous work or pilot projects that have informed estimates of the level of effort and/or expertise needed to successfully complete the proposed work. If a state survey has ongoing Earth MRI mine waste agreements or previously completed projects, then please describe.
- A Data Management Plan (DMP) must be provided to conform with the Executive Order of February 22, 2013, "Increasing Access to the Results of Federally Funded Scientific Research". An example template is found in Attachment C.
- **State matching funds are not required.** However, if a state geological survey would like to leverage matching funds, please specify in the Budget (for example, list any match and make note of in-kind support if provided). Priority activities must be budgeted separately and within the itemized budget for that Priority. **Review and verify budget numbers prior to proposal submission.**

- Include descriptions of project personnel and their experience and skills relevant to completing the proposed tasks. Extended supervisory hours performed by senior staff or other management activities for which funding is requested must be well justified. For each staff member give a brief statement of their background or curriculum vita (CV) and indicate whether the person works for the state geological survey or elsewhere (contractor or volunteer). (CVs do not count toward the proposal page limit, but please keep each CV to a 2-page limit).
- Nonexpendable equipment funding requests are acceptable if the equipment is reasonable and necessary for the successful completion of the work funded by the MRP. A full justification and a dealer or manufacturer quote are required for any proposed equipment purchase. If no justification is included the cost will be disallowed. MRP will not fund computers, database software systems, or equipment required for an organization's IT infrastructure, operation, and maintenance. Funding requests for software may be allowed if prorated for the proposed work and a quote is provided.
- Non-allowable expenses under this opportunity include tuition, computer maintenance or travel to any other conference or workshop except the Earth MRI workshop. **Awarded funds may not be used to pay for USGS or other Federal services.**
- If collaborating with staff from partner agencies (for example, universities), or contractors please detail their roles and project hours as funded through the proposal or as representing optional state matching funds.
- If a state geological survey is overdue on deliverables or progress reports on ANY previous or ongoing Earth MRI-funded agreements at the time of proposal submission, the proposal may not be considered for funding.
- Begin submitting proposals to Grants.gov well in advance of the due date as **no late submissions will be accepted**. See Submission Requirements and Deadlines for more information on proposal submission.

Please contact the Contracting Officer, Margaret Eastman (margaret_eastman@ios.doi.gov) with any questions. However, questions specific to what will or will not be funded cannot be addressed.

Program Priorities

PLEASE NOTE: Proposals that do not specifically address Earth MRI mine waste fiscal year (FY) 2026 priorities will NOT be considered for an award.

A proposal must address at least one of three FY 2026 mine waste priorities and describe activities accordingly. States that have received funding via this opportunity in previous years may request new funding as long as the proposed project scope for Priority 1 and/or Priority 2 is different. It is possible for proposed projects to receive reduced or no funding.

FY 2026 Priority 1 – National Mine Waste Inventory

One goal of the USGS mine waste effort is to build a national mine waste inventory that will support other state, federal, and tribal agencies that are responsible for land management planning and remediation decisions. Mine wastes at legacy mine sites are potential sources of many by-product commodities that are currently critical but that were previously discarded or overlooked. To date, there has been no comprehensive inventory of these mine wastes, their

compositions, and the critical minerals they may contain. The inventory will be developed in conjunction with stakeholders to answer outstanding questions including:

- How many mine waste sites are there in the United States, and where are they located?
- How much material is available that may contain critical mineral resources, and what is the tonnage and grade of that material?
- What are the characteristics of that material (geological, geochemical, mineralogical) that may influence recovery of the commodities of interest and environmental impacts?

In FY 2026, state geological surveys may request funding up to \$50,000.00 to compile and populate an ArcGIS geodatabase documenting the location of mine waste materials within the applicant's state. The database should also include associated geology and known (identified) resources of those mine waste features. Note that perpetual waters are excluded. The 2025 List of Critical Minerals includes minerals that were not included on the previous list, including metallurgical coal and uranium. Waste materials from these, as well as from all other critical minerals, may now be included. To qualify for entry into the database, mine waste features must have an areal extent exceeding 2,000 m².

The database consists of two feature classes: points and polygons; and three tables: geology, resources, and references (see Attachment_Figures1and2). Records must be populated according to the schema provided in the Inventory Supporting Documentation (USGS_mine_waste_dd_ver_6.5.xlsx and USGS_mine_waste_ver_6.5.gdb). All populated records must be based on data available in the public domain, though the materials are not required to be peer-reviewed. The submitted database must include appropriate citations and references for all data used. Examples of acceptable public-domain sources include, but are not limited to, journal articles, theses, dissertations, state and federal agency publications, corporate technical reports, and newspaper articles. The type of mine waste feature (e.g., mine dump, tailings – placer, etc.) must already be documented in a publicly available source before submitting to USGS. The polygon outline should be refined by using remote-sensing data (e.g., satellite imagery) and/or digital elevation data (e.g., lidar). USGS will provide training on how to capture features and attribute records. Funding for field work may not be requested under Priority 1.

See Attachment Figures_1 and2. Figure 1 is the entity relation diagram showing the structure of the mine waste database. Figure 2 (not to scale) shows the relationships between a site and mine features and provides information about populating records at the site and feature level.

Priority 1 activities include the following:

- **State compilation of mine waste data.** Compile geospatial data from the applicant's state that includes the location, geology, and resources of mine waste features using existing publicly available data. All data must be entered into the schema provided by the USGS's mineral deposit database project (USMIN). To assist state agencies in populating the database, USMIN will provide training and collaborate closely with participants as outlined below:
 1. USMIN will provide the ArcGIS database schema and documentation (USGS_mine_waste_dd_ver_6.5.xlsx and USGS_mine_waste_ver_6.5.gdb, which are included in Inventory Supporting Documentation), along with training materials. USMIN will meet with state agencies to provide instruction on how to

populate records. Initially, each state will be asked to populate records for five mine waste features and submit them to USMIN for review. The USMIN team will evaluate those records and provide detailed feedback to ensure correct formatting and data capture practices. This early review is intended to resolve questions and issues before significant time and resources are invested.

2. After receiving feedback on the initial five records, states will proceed to populate records for 20 additional mine waste features. These records will also be reviewed by the USMIN team with feedback provided in the same manner as the initial review.
3. States will incorporate USMIN's feedback and continue populating records for additional mine waste features beyond the initial 25 records. Proposals must specify the minimum number of records the state expects to complete. To be eligible for full funding, at least 100 records must be captured: the initial 25 records plus 75 additional records. Partial funding may be considered for states that cannot meet the 100-record minimum. In such cases, states should indicate the number of records they plan to complete and request a corresponding partial funding amount. The count refers to individual mine waste features, not distinct mine sites.

Deliverables for Priority 1 include:

- A minimum of 100 populated records, or the number of records proposed for partial funding, completed in accordance with the USMIN training and according to the quality control steps.
- All records must incorporate the QA/QC feedback provided by USMIN.
- All records are to be submitted as a single ArcGIS file geodatabase to USMIN@usgs.gov.
- Brief (1-2 pages) progress reports every six months for the duration of the project.
- A brief (1-2 pages) report describing the process and summarizing what was submitted is required upon project completion. This information can be incorporated in the Final Technical Report.
- All Earth MRI deliverables, including reports, will be made available to the public.

FY 2026 Priority 2 – Mine Waste Characterization

The USGS mine waste characterization effort will evaluate mine waste sites that potentially contain critical mineral resources. These sites may also be candidates for remediation, which would foster economic development in conjunction with environmental restoration. Whether mine waste is a potential resource, an environmental liability, or both will depend heavily on the geochemical and mineralogic characteristics of the mine waste materials. In addition, data collected on the compositional characterization of mine waste may inform future technologies to more efficiently reprocess mine waste for extraction of critical minerals. This information will be useful for accounting for the total costs and benefits of reuse, recycling, reprocessing, reclamation, and restoration of ecosystem services. Basic datasets produced by this request will contribute to improved models of critical mineral resources in mine waste and will also improve the understanding of the environmental risks posed by mine wastes. This effort will inform the USGS National Mine Waste Inventory and government-wide strategies for supporting critical mineral supply chains as well as remediation of legacy mine lands.

Areas across the United States with the potential to host both subsurface and surface deposits of critical mineral resources are categorized by mineral systems, deposit types, and known and potential critical mineral commodities. The mineral systems classification documents the relationship between large mineral systems that may contain multiple deposit types and the mineral commodities, including critical minerals, associated with each deposit type ([Hofstra and Kreiner, 2022](#)). Earth MRI takes a mineral systems approach for data collection efforts for both above-ground and below-ground critical mineral resources. The mineral systems linkage to a specific mine waste site should be based on the mineral deposit type of the orebody that sourced the mine waste.

The goal of Priority 2 is to characterize mine waste. Ideally, geochemical characterization will augment mine waste inventory sites covered under Priority 1, but having a Priority 1 record is not a prerequisite for selecting a Priority 2 site. Priority 2 projects will focus on field-based characterization of mine waste volume estimates, geochemical composition, bulk mineralogical composition, and contained mineral commodities. Mine water may additionally be included if it represents a water source that may need treatment in perpetuity, or if the state has interests related to overall site remediation at a site being evaluated primarily for mine waste resource potential.

The USGS has developed mine waste site characterization and sampling protocols to guide this effort under Priority 2 ([Campbell and others, 2025](#)). The protocols, in general, follow well-established methods for geospatial mapping and common features to support the inventory effort as well as standardized sampling methods to characterize mine waste composition for a variety of mine waste types. For example, sampling of solid waste material will emphasize collection of individual sub-samples that are composited to achieve representative samples that will help to characterize waste piles. Priority 2 requires as a minimum one composite sample of each waste pile investigated, collected following prescribed protocols. A limited latitude to collect an additional number of grab samples of mine waste to address scientific interests of states will be permitted. Drilling, where possible, is encouraged but not required. Water sampling protocols will follow USGS approved methods outlined in the USGS sampling protocols including details of sample containers, filtration, sample preservation, and holding times, and other sampling requirements ([Campbell and others, 2025](#)).

In FY2026, state geological surveys may request funding up to \$300,000 for mine waste characterization efforts. States are required to indicate the specific mineral system(s), their component mineral deposit types, particular critical mineral commodities of interest, and expected mine waste type(s) in their proposed efforts. If additional non-critical commodities are also present, then please identify those commodities as well. **States are required to acknowledge awareness of the protocols by including descriptions of their planned sample methodologies and equipment requirements as per the protocols.** Please note that teams of two to three people at a minimum are recommended to carry out sampling according to the protocols. **States are also required to indicate specific sites for sampling, provide documentation that they have permission to access and sample these sites, and describe types of mine waste expected.**

Geochemical Analyses

The USGS will support projects under Priority 2 by providing geochemical analyses on samples collected from mine waste materials. Because all data funded through Earth MRI must meet

USGS quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) standards and be made public, the USGS has set aside funds to provide specific geochemical analyses at no additional cost to the state geological surveys. The types of analyses to be supported by USGS are the following:

USGS Solid phase analysis: \$401.00 per sample

Bulk geochemistry:

- 61-element major and trace element fusion-digestion with analysis by inductively coupled plasma (ICP) optical emission spectrometry (ICP-OES) and mass spectrometry (ICP-MS). Elemental analytes are Ag, Al, As, B, Ba, Be, Bi, Ca, Cd, Ce, Co, Cr, Cs, Cu, Dy, Er, Eu, Fe, Ga, Gd, Ge, Hf, Ho, In, K, La, Li, Lu, Mg, Mn, Mo, Nb, Nd, Ni, P, Pb, Pr, Rb, Re, S, Sb, Sc, Se, Si, Sm, Sn, Sr, Ta, Tb, Te, Th, Ti, Tl, Tm, U, V, W, Y, Yb, Zn, and Zr.
- Major elements by wavelength dispersive X-ray fluorescence (WD-XRF). Analytes are Al_2O_3 , BaO, CaO, Cr_2O_3 , Fe_2O_3 , K_2O , MgO, MnO, Na_2O , P_2O_5 , SiO_2 , TiO_2 , SrO, V_2O_5 , and Loss on Ignition (LOI)
- Fluorine by digestion and ion-selective electrode
- Gold, palladium, platinum by fire assay
- Total sulfur, total carbon, organic carbon, and carbonate carbon by combustion and coulometry
- Mercury by cold vapor atomic absorption spectrometry

Mineralogy:

- Quantitative X-ray diffraction (XRD), limited to the composited solid samples.

Water-rock interaction:

- Acid-base accounting by the Lawrence Method

USGS water chemistry analysis: \$296.00 per sample

Composition:

- Major and trace element chemistry
 - o Major anions (ion chromatography)
 - o Cations and trace elements, including precious metals (ICP-OES/ICP-MS). Analytes include Ag, Al, As, Au, B, Ba, Be, Bi, Ca, Cd, Ce, Co, Cr, Cs, Cu, Dy, Er, Eu, Fe, Ga, Gd, Ge, Hf, Hg, Ho, In, Ir, K, La, Li, Lu, Mg, Mn, Mo, Na, Nb, Nd, Ni, P, Pb, Pd, Pt, Rb, Re, Rh, Ru, S, Sb, Sc, Se, Si, Sn, Sr, Ta, Tb, Te, Th, Tm, Ti, Tl, U, V, Y, Yb, Zn, and Zr.
 - o Alkalinity/acidity

Please note: The analytical packages are non-negotiable. USGS will not exclude any elements from the analyses described above and cannot accommodate individual requests to do so from state geological surveys, landowners, companies, etc.

States are responsible for providing and budgeting for all sampling equipment, sample containers, and shipping to meet the requirements of the protocols. For water samples, multiple sample splits will be required to accommodate preservation and analysis requirements. Details

on sample volumes, number of sample splits, materials, equipment, sample duplicates, and preservation requirements are provided in the USGS protocols, and necessary sampling supplies needed for solid and/or water sampling should be reflected in the budget.

As part of the analytical service, the USGS will provide additional QA/QC on samples and archive the solid phase samples. The data will be published and combined into the periodic USGS mine waste data releases listed on the Earth MRI website. Please note, mine waste sample analysis takes longer than usual due to the large number of methods that are run on the samples. Upon receipt of samples, returned results may take about 12-20 weeks, so please plan work accordingly. If a state geological survey chooses to perform additional analyzes as part of the proposed project beyond what is provided in the standard analytical package, costs for these additional analyzes must be included in their project budget. Although all Earth MRI data will become publicly available on-line, any non-contract geochemical data must be flagged as “unvalidated by the USGS”. Please note, that funds given to the states through Earth MRI are prohibited from being used to fund analytical work at or by any Federal facility.

Each project is limited to a total analytical budget of \$70,000, which is not included in, but is in addition to the \$300,000 project budget cap. The project scope will determine the distribution of solid samples (\$401 per sample) and water samples (\$296 per sample) submitted to the USGS for analysis, as long as the total cost does not exceed the analytical budget maximum. If, however, a state can sufficiently justify needs for additional samples above the analytical budget maximum of \$70,000, Earth MRI will consider this request, and states should provide request and justification in the proposal. The analytical budget does not include sampling equipment, sample containers or shipping to the USGS; these costs must be included and described in the project budget. Proposals should include a projection of the number of samples and sample type (solid or water) to be collected. Please also include in analytical estimates the requirements for field blanks and field duplicates for QA/QC as described by [Campbell and others \(2025\)](#) with the following frequency:

- Solid samples: 1 duplicate per 10 samples, or at least one per sampling event, if less than 10 samples collected per event.
- Water samples: 1 field blank and 1 field duplicate per 20 samples, or one blank and one duplicate per sampling event, if less than 20 samples collected per event.

Project proposals for Priority 2 must discuss the following:

- Expected mineral system(s), deposit type(s), and critical mineral commodities expected in the waste, based on mine history, previous analyses, mineral system and/or deposit type processed. For clarity, please include a table summarizing the names of sites planned for sampling, mineral system and deposit type, types of mine wastes present, and expected associated critical minerals;
- Size of the resource: the features should be large enough to contribute to the national assessment objectives stated above;
- Accessibility to the sites: proposed sites (active, managed, and/or abandoned) must be safely and legally available for sample collection. The state is responsible for securing access to sites in their project at the time of proposal submission. States are responsible for:

- o identifying, understanding and following all rules, laws, regulations and other protocols relevant to the site including but not limited to environmental protection, health, and safety.
- o obtaining and coordinating access to the site with the relevant landowner(s), land management authority(ies), and/or leaseholder(s)/claim holder(s).

The status of specific site access must be described in the proposal, and letters of support from cooperators, land managers, tribal partners, and/or landowners are encouraged;

- Mine Waste material type: Primary emphasis will be on tailings, slag, ore stockpiles, and perpetual water sources as target materials for FY26; material types may be expanded in subsequent years. Perpetual water sources are those that are long-lived, such as adit flows or pit lakes.
- Geochemical analysis of radioactive samples is limited to materials that measure <7,000 microuR/hr. If states anticipate collecting materials that exceed this threshold, those materials may not be submitted to USGS and must be analyzed by a suitable external lab and discussed and budgeted accordingly.

The FY2026 Priority 2 data collection efforts/deliverables shall include:

- Geospatial data including waste feature boundaries that are compatible with the Priority 1 Inventory database and sample locations (latitude/longitude with defined datum) that link to National Geochemical Database ([National Geochemical Database | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/national-geochemical-database)).
- Volume and load estimates. Approaches for estimating volumes and masses of mine waste piles and volumes of pit lakes may vary, particularly with regards to the vertical dimension. Similarly for mine adit discharge waters, seasonal flows of mine effluent may factor into load estimates. An estimate of discharge at the time of sampling should be made so that volume and load estimates can be made for adits; direct measurement does not need to be made if estimates can be obtained with other data (such as discharges measured by site managers). However, please clearly describe the methodology for solid piles and water (if collected) in the final report.
- Geochemical (solid and water) data will be released by USGS in USGS data releases and used in the interpretive report published by the state.
- Resource estimate of contained critical minerals and other potential commodities.
- Brief (1-2 pages) progress reports every six months for the duration of the project.
- Final interpretive report, including methods and data sets used for calculating volume and resource estimates. Report must include site description, interpretation, geospatial data on waste piles and other sample sites, and mine waste inventory data for samples sites. Report must be provided as a peer-reviewed state publication or similar peer-reviewed product. Note: Published final interpretative report is separate and in addition to the Final Technical Report.
- Digital archive of field sheets.
- All Earth MRI deliverables shall be made available to the public.
- Once Priority 2 data are publicly available, they shall be submitted to USGS for inclusion in the National Mine Waste Inventory in a similar manner as described under Priority 1.

If funded for Priority 2 activities, USGS will provide in person training on the USGS protocols and sampling strategies, which must be followed for all sampling efforts ([Campbell and others, 2025](#)). USGS will coordinate with the project principal investigator (PI) to determine timing and location of training, which will occur at a mine waste site identified by the state for Priority 2 activities. The state must be prepared to start sampling during the training session. No additional resources will need to be allocated for training as training efforts will contribute to Priority 2 activities. Repeat State awardees with the same project PI may not require additional training. To aid in proposal writing, a copy of the USGS sampling protocols is included in the supporting documents ([Campbell and others, 2025](#); see Attachment H).

FY 2026 Priority 3 – Earth MRI Workshop

An annual Earth MRI workshop is held in collaboration with the state geological surveys and other partners to help define and evaluate focus areas, or areas that have the greatest need for future Earth MRI data collection. The Earth MRI workshops bring together technical experts from across the USGS and state geological surveys and other agencies to assess and discuss data and information relevant to the identification of focus areas across the Nation with potential for hosting critical mineral deposits. The workshops will address both subsurface and above-ground (mine waste) critical mineral resources. The September 2026 workshop is planned to be hybrid, with both in-person and virtual participation for those not able to travel to the meeting.

Mine waste efforts will be a component of future Earth MRI annual workshops, which will require state geological survey input to help define mine waste sites within each state that are important targets for Earth MRI inventory and characterization.

State representatives may participate in the workshop to help Earth MRI understand the national scope of Earth MRI mapping efforts, including mine waste, and help delineate the focus areas for future above- and below-ground data collection. The USGS will support travel for up to two participants per state, up to \$3,000 in total costs (direct) per participant to attend the workshop. All requests for workshop travel funds will be granted up to a total of \$6,000 direct costs (for two travelers), regardless of whether funds for other proposed mine waste activities are requested. Requests for Priority 3 funds are not competitive and will not be subjected to panel review. The next workshop will be held September 21-25, 2026, at the USGS headquarters in Reston, VA.

The total for Priority 3 including potential travel to critical minerals workshop shall not exceed \$6,000.00 in direct costs. To obtain funds to support travel to the Earth MRI Critical Mineral Resources Workshops, states must:

1. Request MRP Earth MRI funds,
2. Provide travel estimates in the budget table (Attachment B),
3. Specify travelers' names, and
4. If funds are awarded for Priority 3, States are required to use them on travel to the Earth MRI workshop only.

Legislative Authority

The USGS Mineral Resources Program (MRP) delivers unbiased science and information to increase understanding of ore formation, mineral resource potential, production, consumption, disposal, and how minerals and mineral extraction interact with the environment. MRP conducts data collection and research on a wide variety of mineral resources that are important to the Nation's economy and national security.

The Earth Mapping Resources Initiative (Earth MRI; <https://www.usgs.gov/special-topics/earth-mri>), a component of MRP, is a national effort to carry out the fundamental resources and mapping mission of the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS). The goal of Earth MRI is to modernize the surface and subsurface geologic mapping of the United States, with a focus on identifying areas that may have the potential to contain critical mineral resources. Earth MRI was established in FY2019 in response to Executive Order 13817 ("A Federal Strategy to Ensure Secure and Reliable Supplies of Critical Minerals") and also supports Executive Order 14017 ("America's Supply Chains"). In FY2022, the [Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act](#) (IIJA) funded Earth MRI efforts related to critical minerals, including specific direction to: "accelerate efforts to carry out the fundamental resources and mapping mission of the United States Geological Survey by— (1) providing integrated topographic, geologic, geochemical, and geophysical mapping; (2) accelerating the integration and consolidation of geospatial and resource data; and (3) providing interpretation of subsurface and above-ground mineral resources data."

The IIJA further provides for this work to be accomplished through cooperative agreements with state geological surveys.

This funding opportunity implements the above-ground portion of the IIJA direction by supporting state geological surveys in coordinated activities to map, inventory, characterize, and assess the potential for critical minerals in mine waste.

Type of Award

Projects will be funded through CA (Cooperative Agreement).

Recipient should expect the Federal agency to have substantial involvement in the project.

The Cooperative Agreements with state geological surveys will involve regular contact and interaction with the staff of the USGS Mineral Resources Program (MRP) Earth MRI over the duration of the project. The recipient will have scheduled meetings with USGS scientists working on the mine waste sampling, characterization, data gathering and acquisition and other activities in support of USGS mine waste research efforts. This interaction will ensure that there is a uniformity to the properties listed and that the final submission will fit the format of the data requirements. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, the recipient will provide USGS with progress reports every six months. There will also be meetings among the entire group of cooperators for this project to unify data collection and sampling protocols between state geologic surveys and USGS. This will include email, conferencing platforms, and scheduled meetings between the project chief and staff at the state agencies and the USGS.

PREPARE YOUR APPLICATION

Application Content and Format

Application Documents

Applicants must submit the following forms with their application as specified below. Instructions for accessing and submitting application forms are provided in the [Submission Instructions](#) section of this document below. For instructions on completing form fields, see the form instructions on the [Grants.gov Forms Repository](#).

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance Note: For applicants requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds, the Authorized Representative's signature (or electronic equivalent) on the Application for Federal Assistance form also represents their certification of the statements in Appendix A to 43 CFR 18-Certification Regarding Lobbying	Required from all applicants
SF-424A, Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs	Required for non-construction projects
SF-424C: Budget Information – Construction Programs	Required for construction projects
SF-429 (Cover Page & Attachment B), Request to Acquire, Improve, or Furnish Real Property Note: The SF-429 forms are only available in the Grants.gov Forms Repository . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required if requesting to acquire, improve, or furnish real property.
SF-LLL, Disclosure of Lobbying Activities	Required if requesting more than \$100,000 in Federal funds <u>and</u> the applicant has used or plans to use funds other than Federal appropriated funds for lobbying related to the proposed project.
Project Abstract Summary (OMB 4040-0019). Must include, in plain language: • Award purpose, • Activities to be performed, • Expected deliverables or outcomes, • Intended beneficiaries, Subrecipient activities (if known or specified at time of award)	Required from all applicants
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Current and Pending (Other) Support Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants	Required for research projects.

Forms/Assurances/Certifications	Submission Requirement
must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	
DOI Research and Development (R&D) – Biographical Sketch Note: This form is available on the DOI website . Applicants must download the form and include the completed form as an application attachment.	Required for research projects.

Project Narrative

Applicants must submit the appropriate Standard Form (SF)-424, Application for Federal Assistance. The required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. The SF-424, Application for Federal Assistance must be complete, signed, and dated. Do not include any proprietary or personally identifiable information. Please note: Enter only the amount requested from this Federal program in the “Federal” funding box on the SF-424 Application form. Include any other Federal sources of funding in the “Other” box and provide details on those Federal source(s) and funding amount(s) in the required Budget Narrative (see the “Budget Narrative” section below).

Applicants must submit the appropriate SF-424 Budget Information form and Budget Narrative. Applicants must complete and submit the SF-424A, “Budget Information for Non-Construction Programs” form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov. Federal award recipients and subrecipients are subject to Federal award cost principles in 2 CFR 200.

All proposals must include the following documents:

1. Standard Form 424. Application for Federal Assistance (mandatory form provided in grants.gov). The person who electronically submits the SF-424 must have the authority to bind the state to the terms of the assistance award.
2. Standard Form 424A. Budget Information – Non-Construction Programs (mandatory form provided in grants.gov).
3. Standard Form 424B. Assurances – Non-Construction Programs (mandatory form provided in grants.gov).
4. Project Abstract Summary.

In accordance with the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Memoranda M-21-20 and M-22-02, Federal agencies are now required to provide complete and accurate financial assistance award descriptions within USAspending.gov. As such, the Department of the Interior is requiring its bureaus and offices to provide a Project Abstract Summary for all financial assistance awards in the following format (**DO NOT WRITE IN PARAGRAPH FORM. SUMMARY MUST INCLUDE BULLET TITLE AND RESPONSE**):

- Include a plain language description Award purpose (avoid acronyms or Federal or agency-specific terminology);
- Activities to be performed;
- Deliverables and Expected Outcomes;

- Intended beneficiary(ies) as well as
- Subrecipient activities, if known or specified at the time of award

Project Abstract Summary character limitation as 1 page or less (no more than ~4000 characters) and use of 12 pt. font and Times New Roman is recommended. *This abstract should be attached as a separate project narrative document in the Grants.gov application.*

NOTE: Upon issuance of the cooperative agreement, this Project Abstract Summary will be publicly available at USAspending.gov.

Any applicant organization that has not completed the financial assistance certifications and representations within their SAM.gov registration must submit the appropriate signed and dated Assurances form. All of the required application forms are available with this announcement on Grants.gov.

1. Project Narrative and Budget, including Attachments A and B (see explanation below).
2. Common Disclosure Forms (see Attachments F and G)

DOI-PGM-POL-0017, issued in accordance with “National Security Presidential Memorandum (NSPS-33) Supported Research and Development National Security Policy”, states “the purpose of this policy is to require the use of the Department of the Interior (DOI) common disclosure forms of potential conflicts of interest and commitment from research and development project applicants and recipients subject to 2 CFR 200.” Accordingly, DOI PGM instructs that all recipients of research financial assistance awards are required to submit the following two forms:

Biographical Sketch Common Form (Attachment F)

Current and Pending (Other) Support Common Form (Attachment G)

Please note that these are not actually forms but rather formats for submission of information. Please submit all required information. If there is no in-kind contributions associated with project, please include a statement to this effect. The certification at the end of each form requires an actual signature not just "signed" and the typed name. These forms will not count against the page limit.

Incomplete proposals will not be forwarded to the Review Panel and will be immediately rejected by the Contracting Officer.

Project Narrative

Proposals must be arranged according to the format provided below and compiled into one PDF for submission. Following this format ensures that every proposal contains all essential information and is evaluated equitably. The proposal and associated forms shall be submitted to www.grants.gov. Provide requested information in the correct locations within the guidelines below. **Please compile all documents into one PDF for submission.** Failure to do so may result in disqualification of the proposal.

Proposals are limited to 11-pages, which include 1) Project Description, provided separately for Priorities 1, 2 and 3, and limited to 5 pages each for Priority 1 and Priority 2, and limited to 1 page for Priority 3. Proposals may be shorter than 11 pages. Other forms and documents,

including: (1) Standard Forms 424s, (2) Project Abstract Summary, (3) project summary sheet (Attachment A), (4) budget sheets and justification (Attachment B), (5) project personnel justification and expertise table or list, (6) Curricula Vitae (CV; max 2 pages each), (7) letters from stakeholders, (8) DMP (see [Data Management Plans | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/manage-quality); example template is provided in Attachment C), (9) negotiated rate and cost agreements, and (10) equipment quotes do not count toward the 11-page limit.

1. FY 2026 MRP Proposal Information Sheet. (Attachment A). Summary sheet shall clearly list project and budget summary for all priorities. Please include e-mail addresses for the Principal Investigator and authorized institution representative. Outcome notifications will be sent via e-mail to the authorized institution representative and the Principal Investigator. The Proposal Information Sheet is NOT included in the 11-page limit.
2. Project Description for Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects only. The project description of the proposal is limited to 5 single-space pages for each Priority (including figures, tables), with no smaller than 11-point font size, and 1-inch margins. The font size in figures and tables is limited to no smaller than 8-point font size. All text, figures, and tables shall be sized to fit on 8½" x 11" paper. The project description section of your proposal should include the following:
 1. *Introduction and societal relevance:* The introduction should provide a brief overview of the project activities, methods, and goals. Clearly state the societal relevance of the work and/or workforce development via student opportunities. Also describe any related previous or ongoing mine waste activities (including previous Earth MRI mine waste projects).
 2. *Project narrative, technical merit, and performance:* Follow the guidelines and requirements listed in section A2 of this program announcement. Describe the procedures and workflows that will be carried out to gather mine waste data. Include descriptions of the separate activities for the designated processes, including the quality assurance and control methods to ensure accuracy and quality of products. Guidance and best practices for managing data quality can be found on the USGS Data Management site: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/manage-quality>. Discuss the deliverables and provide a table or list that includes information about the Principal Investigator, staff, and support positions (such as geologist, information technologist, or database developer) and detail the estimated time by objective by person. Note: a table may be a good way to convey this information. Briefly discuss each person's role on the project so that it links to the budget. For each person, provide a brief statement of their background, define their roles and responsibilities, and provide a CV for primary personnel (no more than two pages) that includes skills and expertise relevant to the proposed activities, and indicate whether the person works for your organization or elsewhere (contractor or volunteer). If the contractor has not yet been hired, describe experience and skills necessary for completing the work. CVs do not count against the page limit. A statement of use/access or a letter of support from a stakeholder may be included (but are not required). Letters of support from stakeholders do not count against the page limit.

Detailed Budget Narrative

The project budget shall utilize budget sheets provided (Attachment B) and include detailed information on all cost categories and must clearly identify all estimated project costs. Unit costs shall be provided for all budget items including the cost of work to be provided by contractors or sub-recipients. **In addition, applicants shall include a narrative description of the items included in the project budget**, including the value of in-kind contributions of goods and services provided to complete the project when cost share is identified to be included (reference section C of this announcement). Cost categories can include, but are not limited to, those costs items included on the SF424A or SF424C.

Proposals must include completed detailed budget sheets using the specified format in Attachment B. If applicable, one budget sheet must include expenses for Priority 1 inventory activities. If applicable, a separate budget sheet must include expenses for Priority 2 characterization activities. Although it should not be included in the budget request, for Priority 2, please include the number of solid and water samples that will be collected to ensure that costs do not exceed \$70,000.00 (see Attachment B, Priority 2) unless otherwise justified. A budget sheet for Priority 3 must be included if requesting travel funds to the 2026 Earth MRI workshop. The detailed proposed budget(s) must be summarized and provided in the “Amount Requested” on Proposal Information Summary Sheet (Attachment A). Attachments A and B provide format guidance. Matching funds are optional and are not required, but please include if appropriate.

Please read each category description below and provide the detailed breakdown for each cost. This information will help avoid delays processing a funded proposal, as an award will not be issued until all required information is provided. **Please be sure to convey the level of effort required to do the proposed work.** Please be scrupulous in calculations as they will be meticulously analyzed for consistency and accuracy.

The detailed budget **shall** include the amount proposed for each of the following:

1. Salaries and wages. List names, positions, number of hours individuals will spend on various activities, their rates of compensation and project roles. Salaries or wages for student assistants (undergraduate and/or graduate students) working on the project are an acceptable cost to the Program. If a position is vacant, indicate the position title. Include only personnel actively involved in the project. If senior management salary/time is covered by the overhead (indirect cost) portion of the budget, senior management salary/time should not be included. If senior management personnel participate in project work, include an explanation of their roles. Non-state survey staff working on the project should also be included if they are being supported by other state funding. **The detailed proposed budget shall include the total time worked on the project** (in units of hours), rate-of-compensation (hourly, monthly, or annually), and job title or role of each person.
2. Fringe benefits. Indicate the rates/amounts in conformance with normal accounting procedures. Explain what costs are covered in this category and the basis of the rate computations. Indicate whether rates are used for proposal purposes only or whether they are also fixed or provisional rates for billing purposes. Include a copy of the Negotiated Rate Agreement or internal memo supporting the proposed rates. The Negotiated Rate Agreement and internal memo **do not** count toward the 11-page limit.

3. Travel expenses. State the purpose of the trip(s) and itemize estimated travel costs (including reason for travel, number of people, number of travel days, per diem rate, mileage rate, airfare, or other travel costs) necessary to perform the activities in the proposal.

In the Priority 3 budget sheet, states may request funding for travel for up to 2 participants, \$3,000.00 in total costs (direct) per participant, not to exceed \$6,000.00 of federal share, to a regional 3-day Earth MRI Annual Workshop (see section A2, Priority 3). Salary costs may be included in this \$3,000.00 per traveler to cover time spent during travel or at the workshop. Earth MRI Critical Mineral Resources Workshop travel expenses are itemized in the Priority 3 proposal budget. The 2026 Earth MRI workshop will be held in Reston, VA on September 21-25, 2026.

4. Other direct costs.

- Supplies. List costs for office and laboratory/facility/field supplies. Itemize by including the number and cost for each item.
- Equipment. MRP funds may be used to purchase nonexpendable property required for the project. Nonexpendable equipment has a useful life of more than one (1) year and an acquisition cost of \$10,000.00 or more per item. If necessary, MRP funds may be used to purchase software site licenses needed to complete mine waste inventory and characterization activities. Show the cost of all proposed equipment/software site licenses necessary and prorated if appropriate for achieving project goals. Each item should be itemized and include a **full justification** and a dealer or manufacturer quote. If full justification for equipment is not provided, equipment costs will not be supported. General-purpose equipment must be purchased from the applicant's operating funds. Routine computer maintenance contracts and charges for computer time are not acceptable direct costs under this program. Explain and justify equipment and supplies included in the proposed project budget.
- Drones. Federal funds may be used to purchase **non-covered** UAS only. Please see Attachment E for additional guidance on drones.
- Contractual services. Identify the activities for which such services would be used. Identify proposed contractors (individual or corporate) and provide criteria by which contractors will be, or have been, selected. For each individual, include their job title, total labor hours, and rate of compensation. Include quotes for all contractual services. MRP funds may not be used to pay for USGS or other Federal services.

5. Total direct costs. Total items (1) through (4).

6. Indirect charges. Show the proposed rate, cost base, and proposed amount for allowable indirect costs based on the cost principles applicable to the applicant's organization. The research rate may only be applied for research. If applicant has separate rates for recovery of labor overhead and general and administrative costs, each charge should be shown. Explain the distinction between items included in the two cost pools. Applicant should propose rates for evaluation purposes, which they are also willing to establish as fixed or ceiling rates in any resulting award. A copy of the indirect negotiated cost agreement with the Federal Government must be included. If one is not established,

applicants may charge 15% indirect costs. A copy of the Indirect Negotiated Cost Agreement does not count against the 11-page limit.

7. **Total charges.** Total items (1) through (6).

Budget Narrative

Applicants must describe and justify items and costs listed in their budget. The budget narrative must identify the following cost items: total estimated costs, non-Federal cost share, third-party contributions, and any pre-award costs. Total project cost is the sum of all allowable costs, including required and voluntary cost share and third-party contributions.

Budget items must be:

- Reasonable, allowable, allocable, and necessary
- Compliant with [2 CFR §200 Subpart E](#) cost principles

Indirect Costs: Applicants must indicate in their budget narrative how they will charge indirect costs, including the rate to be applied:

- De Minimis Rate: If eligible, state if your organization is opting to use the de minimis rate of up to 15% of total modified direct costs. Entities that do not have a current Federal negotiated indirect cost rate (including provisional rate) may propose to use the de minimis rate. For more information, refer to [2 CFR 200.414\(f\)](#).
- Negotiated Rate: State if you will negotiate with your cognizant agency. If your organization has previously negotiated a rate, attach a copy of the most recently negotiated rate agreement (active or expired).

Conflict of Interest and Unresolved Matters Disclosures:

If any actual or potential conflict of interest exists related to this project at the time of application, the applicant must provide sufficient information to support a program determination of significance per [2 CFR 1402.112](#). Refer to [2 CFR 200.112](#) Conflict of Interest and [2 CFR 200.113](#).

Overlap or Duplication of Effort Statement:

Applicants must state in their application if the activities, costs, or time commitment of key personnel proposed in this application overlap with those in any other Federal proposal or award or not. If no overlap exists, include a statement to that effect. If any overlap exists, provide:

- Activities: Description any overlapping activities.
- Costs: Description of any overlapping costs.
- Time: Description of any overlapping key personnel time.
- A copy of any overlapping or duplicative proposal submitted to any other potential funding entity.
- Details on when any overlapping proposal was submitted, to whom, and the expected date of the funding decision.

Other Required Information

Data Management Plan Requirements

Proposals submitted to USGS must include a supplementary document of no more than four pages labeled "Data Management Plan" (DMP). This supplementary document should describe

how the proposal will conform to USGS policy on the dissemination and sharing of research results and associated data. A valid DMP may include only the statement that no detailed plan is needed (e.g. “No data are expected to be produced from this project”), as long as the statement is accompanied by a clear justification. This supplementary document may include:

- the types of data, samples, physical collections, software, curriculum materials, and other materials to be produced in the course of the project;
- the standards to be used for data and metadata format and content (where existing standards are absent or deemed inadequate, this should be documented along with any proposed solutions or remedies);
- policies for access and sharing including provisions for appropriate protection of privacy, confidentiality, security, intellectual property, or other rights or requirements;
- provisions for re-use, re-distribution, and the production of derivatives; and
- plans for archiving data, samples, and other research products, and for preservation of free public access to them.

Additional guidance on data management plans is available from the USGS Data Management web site here: <https://www.usgs.gov/products/data-and-tools/data-management/data-management-plans>. Simultaneously submitted collaborative proposals and proposals that include subawards are a single unified project and should include only one supplemental combined DMP by the lead PI that also addresses all subaward data management needs, regardless of the number of non-lead collaborative proposals or subawards included.

An example template for data management plans is provided in Attachment C.

The DMP does not count toward the 11-page limit.

SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS AND DEADLINES

Address to Request Application Package

A. Electronic Proposal Submission Requirement Applicants are responsible for electronically submitting the proposal to www.grants.gov by 3:00 pm, Eastern Daylight Time, May 4, 2026. Be sure to **read the instructions carefully**. Contrary to Section D.1, only proposals submitted through grants.gov will be acceptable. Paper copies will NOT be accepted.

Please be aware the electronic submission process requires first-time users to register using eAuthentication process. This registration process can be complex and take up to 3 weeks to complete. Be advised that you may not be successful completing electronic submission for the first time if you begin the process only a few days before the due date. If your organization is affiliated with a university, contact the Office of Sponsored Programs, which may be familiar with the federal grant process and can work with you to submit the proposal.

If you have any questions or problems with the registration process, or the completion of the application package, please contact the grants.gov help desk at 1-800-518-4726 or support@grants.gov.

When you submit a grant application package to Grants.gov, you will receive a confirmation

screen as well as three additional emails over two business days from Grants.gov informing you of your application processing status:

1. Confirmation screen
2. Submission Receipt (with “Track My Application” link)
3. Submission Validation (or Rejection with Errors)
4. Agency Retrieval

1. CONFIRMATION: Submission Confirmation Screen After a grant application package is submitted, a confirmation message will appear on the computer screen. This screen confirms that an application has been submitted to Grants.gov. This page contains a tracking number and a “Track My Application” link for monitoring the progress of the submission.

2. NOTIFICATION 1: Submission Receipt Email Within two business days after the application package has been received by the Grants.gov system, a submission receipt email will be sent that indicates the submission has entered the Grants.gov system and is ready for validation. This email contains the same tracking number and a “Track My Application” link that is shown in submission confirmation screen for monitoring the progress of the submission.

3. NOTIFICATION 2: Submission Validation Receipt Email – This is the important one! This second email will include a message validating or rejecting the submitted application package due to errors. The Grants.gov system is designed to check for technical errors within the submitted application package. Grants.gov does not review application content for award determination.

4. NOTIFICATION 3: Grantor Agency Retrieval Email Once the application package has passed validation, it is delivered to the grantor for award determination and further approval. After the grantor has confirmed receipt of the application, a third and final email will be sent from Grants.gov. The grantor may also assign the application package an agency-specific tracking number for use within their

internal system. IF THIS E-MAIL HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED WITHIN FOUR DAYS OF THE CLOSING DATE, PLEASE CONTACT THE CONTRACTING OFFICER, Margaret Eastman, (703)283-9642, Margaret_eastman@ios.doi.gov.

If you need help entering your proposal, you can reach the **Grants.gov Contact Center at: 1-800518-4726**. Their hours of operation are Monday-Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Eastern Time, and they are closed on [federal holidays](#).

When contacting the Grants.gov Contact Center, please have the following information available to help expedite the inquiry:

- Funding Opportunity Number (FON)
- Name of Agency You Are Applying To
- Specific Area of Concern

The electronic submission will consist of required forms SF-424, SF-424a, and SF-424b, plus the additional items described in Section C of this Announcement.

During the application period an applicant may submit a revised or corrected proposal through grants.gov. Include a cover letter as the first page of the proposal stating that the proposal is revised and the previous submittal is to be withdrawn from consideration. Revised submissions

must be completed by May 4, 2026, at 3:00 pm EDT.

Please allow sufficient time for the proposal to be submitted electronically through Grants.gov and allow time for possible computer delays. Applicants are strongly advised not to wait until the last minute for submission. A proposal received after the closing date and time will NOT be considered for award. If the USGS determines that a proposal will not be considered for award due to lateness, the applicant will be notified immediately.

B. Involvement of Federal Employees

Federal employees, including USGS employees, are prohibited from assisting in any capacity (paid or unpaid) with preparation of any proposal submitted under this Announcement. Proposals that have a real, or apparent, conflict of interest related to federal employees will not be processed for evaluation.

C. Rejection of Proposals after Initial Review

If the proposal does not meet all requirements specified in the Program Announcement, as determined by the Contracting Officer in consultation with the MRP management, the applicant will be promptly notified in writing of the rejection along with the reason for the rejection.

D. Award recipients must comply with the 2026 MRP Terms and Conditions (Attachment D). Submittal of an application constitutes the applicant's acceptance of these terms and conditions for inclusion in any award resulting from their application. Any concerns with the requirements of the 2026 MRP Terms and Conditions shall be presented to the Contracting Officer at least seven (7) days prior to the closing date of the announcement.

Submission Dates and Times

Closing Date for Applications: 05/04/2026

Closing Date Explanation

Proposals received after the deadline will NOT be considered for an award.

The earliest project start dates will be after the USGS receives its FY2026 BIL funding, or July 15, 2026, whichever is later. The latest start date is September 30, 2026. All deliverables are due 90 days following end of agreement performance period.

Maximum award period is 24 months.

Submission Instructions

APPLICATION REVIEW INFORMATION

Eligibility Review

During the eligibility review, the application is checked for timely submission, completed packages (see [Application Documents](#) above) and alignment with the requirements of this announcement. The Federal agency may remove an application if it does not pass the eligibility review.

Only state geological surveys are eligible to apply to this Notice of Funding Opportunity under the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (Public Law: 117-58, Sec. 40201). A university may

submit a proposal on behalf of a state geological survey if the state geological survey is organized under a state university system. If a state geological survey is overdue on deliverables or progress reports on ANY previous or ongoing Earth MRI-funded agreements at the time of proposal submission, the proposal may not be considered for funding.

If an applicant selected for funding hasn't finished their SAM.gov registration (see [2 CFR 25.200](#) and [2 CFR 25.110](#)) when the federal agency is ready to make an award, we may decide that the applicant is ineligible for the award and choose to grant it to someone else. Please refer [2 CFR 25.205](#) for more information.

Prior to making an award, the DOI checks the anticipated recipient and their key project personnel against the current list of prohibited or restricted persons or entities in the System for Award Management (SAM.gov) Exclusions database. We are prohibited from making an award if a recipient or any key personnel are found ineligible, prohibited, restricted, or otherwise excluded from receiving or participating in an award, as their ineligibility condition applies to this program.

If removed from consideration for ineligibility, the Federal agency will notify the applicant in writing.

Merit Review

Technical Merit	Maximum Points: 30
This factor assesses the technical approach of the proposed work on mine waste inventory and/or characterization of critical mineral materials in mine waste and the probability of achieving positive results within the designated period. Assessment includes analysis of methodologies, technology, and workflows. Proposals must address the priorities outlined in the Notice of Funding Opportunity. Proposals must clearly specify mineral system(s), deposit types, critical mineral commodities of interest and mine waste types expected and adhere to the guidelines presented in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.	

Societal Benefits	Maximum Points: 15
This factor assesses the value of the proposed mine waste inventory and/or characterization products to advancing scientific understanding, enhancing environmental health, supporting workforce development, and increasing economic growth and/or public safety. This factor should be explicitly addressed in the proposal.	

Knowledge, Performance, and Experience	Maximum Points: 25
This factor considers knowledge, performance, and experience of the principal investigator and coworkers, including demonstrating the ability to successfully complete mine waste activities, and satisfying MRP reporting requirements. This factor includes the capability to provide necessary facilities and support to ensure satisfactory completion of the proposed work and	

proof of access to proposed mine waste sites for Priority 2.

Appropriateness and Reasonableness of the Budget	Maximum Points: 30
This factor considers whether the proposed budget is commensurate with the level of effort needed to accomplish the project and reasonable relative to the value of the anticipated results. Proposals include clear, itemized budgets and all costs are allowable and adhere to the requirements presented in the Notice of Funding Opportunity.	

Review and Selection Process

This program reviews proposed budgets to ensure:

- figures are correct
- estimated costs are necessary and reasonable and clearly linked to project narratives
- avoid obviously unallowable costs
- identify costs requiring prior approval
- ensure indirect cost rates are applied correctly
- confirm cost sharing requirements are reflected in the budget.

This program reviews applications for potential overlap or duplication between the proposed project and any other funded or proposed project. Depending on the circumstances, DOI may choose to not make an award.

MRP proposals for Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects will be reviewed separately by a seven-member peer panel consisting of four USGS representatives, one state geological survey representative, and two non-USGS representatives. Each Priority will be scored according to the maximum points available for each criterion. If projects for both priorities are proposed, but only one priority is recommended for funding, then funding for that specific priority will be recommended for award. The maximum score for each priority is 100 according to the maximum cumulative number of points for each evaluation criterion. Proposal priorities must meet a minimum cumulative score of 50 to be considered for funding; as long as proposals meet the minimum, the proposals will be ranked for funding based on scores and forwarded to the Program for final award determination.

Evaluation Criteria. All proposals for Priority 1 and Priority 2 projects will be evaluated in accordance with the criteria listed above. NOTE: To avoid conflict of interest, no panelist may vote on a proposal from their state geological survey or state agency, nor may any panelist discuss with other panel members their state's proposal. This does not prohibit collaboration between USGS and state scientists once an agreement is in place.

Risk Review

Prior to making an award, the applicant will be assessed for their level of risk per [2 CFR 200.206](#). This assessment includes the applicant's financial management capabilities, project delivery experience, staffing resources, past award performance, administration and reporting compliance records, and overall project complexity and potential for challenges. If an award will be made, special conditions may be applied to the award corresponding to the assessed risk. For

awards over the simplified acquisition threshold (currently \$350,000), a review of the applicant's eligibility and financial integrity information in the applicant's SAM.gov records will also be performed per [2 CFR 200.206](#).

AWARD NOTICES

Notices of Federal Award are sent electronically via GrantSolutions or e-mail. These notices outline the terms, conditions, and payment instructions per [2 CFR 200.211](#). The Notice of Federal Award signed by an authorized Grants Officer is the legal instrument obligating financial assistance to a recipient. Any other prior notice is not an authorization to begin work. If the program allows pre-award costs per [2 CFR 200.458](#), beginning performance before receiving a Notice of Federal Award is at the applicant's own risk.

Anticipated Project Start Date: 07/15/2026

Anticipated Project End Date: 09/29/2028

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards. USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

POST AWARD REQUIREMENTS AND ADMINISTRATION

Administration and National Policy Requirements

For award administration and national policy requirements, see the [DOI General Terms and Conditions](#). Infrastructure projects require the use of American iron, steel, manufacture products, and construction materials per [2 CFR 184](#).

Refer to the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) Award Terms and Conditions for the general administrative and national policy requirements applicable to USGS awards (Attachment D). The USGS will communicate any other program- or project-specific special terms and conditions to recipients in their Notice of Award.

Data Availability

Per the Financial Assistance Interior Regulation (FAIR), [2 CFR §1402.315](#):

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyzes, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyzes, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyzes, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

MRP Information Products

All Earth MRI information products received as deliverables may be made available to the public. The following information products will be required, if applicable, as a condition of receiving federal funds:

- ArcGIS database of inventory records
- Geospatial data including waste feature boundaries that are compatible with the Priority #1 Inventory database and sample locations (latitude/longitude with defined datum) that link to National Geochemical Database ([National Geochemical Database | U.S. Geological Survey \(usgs.gov\)](https://www.usgs.gov/national-geochemical-database)).
- Volume and load estimates. Approaches for estimating volumes and masses of mine waste piles may vary, particularly with regards to the third dimension. Similarly for mine adit discharge waters, seasonal flows of mine effluent may factor into load estimates. An estimate of discharge at the time of sampling should be made so that volume and load estimates can be made for adits; direct measurement does not need to be made if estimates can be obtained with other data (such as discharges measured by site managers). However, please clearly describe the methodology for solid piles and water (if collected) in the final report.
- Geochemical (solid and water) data, which will be released by USGS in USGS data releases and used in the interpretive report published by the state.
- Resource estimate of contained critical minerals and other potentially valuable commodities.
- Brief (1-2 pages) progress reports every six months for the duration of the project for awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months.
- Digital archive of field sheets.
- Samples of mine waste collected in accordance with USGS protocols (training and resources to be provided to successful applications by USGS)

Final Technical Report(s)

Following project completion of Priority 1, Priority 2, and/or Priority 3 efforts, all awards made under the MRP will require submittal of a final technical report(s) that must document and summarize the results of the work. If funding is received for more than one priority, final reports for each priority are required. All reports will be made available to the public. Please include Award number on all reports.

Priority 1 (Inventory):

- A brief (1-2 pages) report describing the process and summarizing what was submitted to the inventory for Priority 1 efforts. This information can be incorporated in the Final Technical Report.

Priority 2 (Characterization):

- Final interpretive report, including methods and data sets used for calculating volume and resource estimates. Report must include site description, interpretation, geospatial data on waste piles and other sample sites, and mine waste inventory data for samples sites. **Report must be provided as a peer-reviewed state publication.** Note: Published final interpretive report is separate from and in addition to the Final Technical Report.

Priority 3 (Earth MRI Workshop Travel):

- A 1 page report including names of participants who traveled, a list of any presentations given, and any goals (optional) that were met by attending the workshop. This information can be incorporated in the Final Technical Report.

Final technical reports should be accompanied by a cover page that contains:

- Award Number
- Title
- Author and affiliation with address and zip code
- Author's telephone number and e-mail address
- Term covered by the award (start and end dates)
- Submittal date of final technical report
- Abstract

Final technical report(s) must be submitted within 90 days after the end of the grant performance period. Failure to submit a final technical report may hinder receipt of future MRP funds. Final technical reports shall be submitted electronically to the general Earth MRI email box, earthmri@usgs.gov. A courtesy copy shall be submitted to Margaret Eastman, USGS Contract Specialist, Margaret_eastman@ios.doi.gov.

Geospatial Data

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), recipient must follow these rules for geospatial data:

Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at [43 U.S.C. §§ 2801–2811](#)).

Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality.

Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data.

These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

Reporting

The recipient's Notice of Award will detail all reporting requirements, including frequency, due dates, and instructions for requesting extensions. In general, but not limited to, recipients must:

- Submit Federal Financial reports and Program Performance reports.
- Use the [Federal Financial Report \(SF-425\) form](#) for financial reporting,

- Monitor award activities and report on program performance per [2 CFR 200.329](#),
- Promptly notify the awarding program in writing of any issues, delays, or conditions impairing award objectives per [2 CFR 200.329\(e\)](#),
- Disclose any conflicts of interest related to their award that arise during the award period per [2 CFR 1402.112](#),
- Report on the status of real property acquired under the award in which the Federal government retains an interest per [2 CFR 200.330](#), and
- Report all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award per [2 CFR 200.113](#).
- Report any matters related to recipient integrity and performance to SAM.gov per [Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200](#).
- If the Federal share of the award is more than \$100,000 and the recipient makes or agrees to make any payment using non-appropriated funds for lobbying in connection to the award, disclose those activities using the Disclosure of Lobbying (SF-LLL) form per [43 CFR 18.100](#).
- Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006 (FFATA) and 2 CFR 170 requires certain recipients to report information on executive compensation, and information on all sub-awards, subcontracts and consortiums equal to or over \$30,000 to SAM.gov.

Financial Reports

All recipients must use the [SF-425, Federal Financial Report](#) form for financial reporting. At a minimum, all recipients must submit a **final** financial report. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** financial reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award. The Notice of Award will describe all financial reporting requirements.

Performance Reports

Performance reports must contain a comparison of actual accomplishments with the established goals and objectives of the award; a description of reasons why established goals were not met, if appropriate; and any other pertinent information relevant to the project results. Final reports are due no later than 90 calendar days after the award period of performance end date or termination date. For awards with periods of performance longer than 12 months, recipients are required to submit **interim** performance reports on the frequency established in the Notice of Award.

Significant Development Reports

Events may occur between the scheduled performance reporting dates which have significant impact upon the supported activity. In such cases, recipients are required to notify the Bureau in writing as soon as the recipient becomes aware of any problems, delays, or adverse conditions that will materially impair the ability to meet the objective of the Federal award. This disclosure must include a statement of any corrective action(s) taken or contemplated, and any assistance needed to resolve the situation. The recipient should also notify USGS in writing of any favorable developments that enable meeting time schedules and objectives sooner or at less cost than anticipated or producing more or different beneficial results than originally planned.

Conflict of Interest Disclosures

Recipients must notify the program immediately in writing of any conflict of interest that arise during the life of their Federal award, including those reported to them by any subrecipient under the award. Recipients must notify the program in writing if any employees, including subrecipient and contractor personnel, are related to, married to, or have a close personal relationship with any Federal employee in the Federal funding program or who otherwise may have been involved in the review and selection of the award. The term employee means any individual engaged in the performance of work pursuant to the Federal award. Recipients may not have a former Federal employee as a key project official, or in any other substantial role related to their award, whose participation put them out of compliance with the legal authorities addressing post-Government employment restrictions. See the [U.S. Office of Government Ethics website](#) for more information on these restrictions. USGS will examine each conflict of interest disclosure based on its particular facts and the nature of the project and will determine if a significant potential conflict exists. If it does, USGS will work with the recipient to determine an appropriate resolution. Failure to disclose and resolve conflicts of interest in a manner that satisfies USGS may result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including termination of the award.

Other Mandatory Disclosures

The Non-Federal entity or applicant for a Federal award must disclose, in a timely manner, in writing to the Federal awarding agency or pass-through entity all violations of Federal criminal law involving fraud, bribery, or gratuity violations potentially affecting the Federal award. Non-Federal entities that receive a Federal award including the terms and conditions outlined in 2 CFR 200, Appendix XII—Award Term and Condition for Recipient Integrity and Performance Matters are required to report certain civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings to SAM. Failure to make required disclosures can result in any of the remedies described in 2 CFR 200.338 Remedies for Noncompliance, including suspension or debarment.

Reporting Matters Related to Recipient Integrity and Performance

If the total value of your currently active grants, cooperative agreements, and procurement contracts from all Federal awarding agencies exceeds \$10,000,000 for any period of time during the period of performance of this Federal award, then you as the recipient during that period of time must maintain the currency of information reported to the System for Award Management (SAM) that is made available in the designated integrity and performance system (currently the Federal Awardee Performance and Integrity Information System (FAPIIS)) about civil, criminal, or administrative proceedings in accordance with Appendix XII to 2 CFR 200.

Other Information

Geospatial Data Notification/Requirement: The following notification/requirement is provided in the event that your project requires the use of geospatial data.

If you receive financial assistance from the Department of the Interior (DOI), you must follow these rules for geospatial data: Follow Federal Standards: All geospatial data you collect or create must meet the standards set by the Federal Geospatial Data Committee (FGDC) or the Department of the Interior. This is required by the Geospatial Data Act of 2018, which is part of Public Law 115-254, specifically in Subtitle F (Geospatial Data), sections 751-759C (codified at 43 U.S.C. §§ 2801– 2811). Include Metadata: Your Geographic Information Systems (GIS) files must include complete metadata. Metadata is information that describes the data, such as where

it came from, how accurate it is, and how it should be used. This is to ensure that anyone using the data understands its context and quality. Check for Existing Data: Before you start collecting new geospatial data, you need to check GeoPlatform.gov. This is to see if there is already existing geospatial data from federal, state, local, or private sources that can meet your needs and is available for free. If such data is available, you should use it instead of gathering new data. These rules help ensure that geospatial data is reliable, high-quality, and that resources are used efficiently.

2 CFR § 1402.315

(a) All data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, valuation products or other scientific assessments in any medium or form, including textual, numerical, graphic, cartographic, narrative, or audiovisual, resulting from a financial assistance agreement is available for use by the Department of the Interior, including being available in a manner that is sufficient for independent verification.

(b) The Federal Government has the right to:

(1) Obtain, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use the data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, produced under a Federal award; and

(2) Authorize others to receive, reproduce, publish, or otherwise use such data, methodology, factual inputs, models, analyses, technical information, reports, conclusions, or other scientific assessments, for Federal purposes, including to allow for meaningful third-party evaluation.

Payments

Domestic recipients are required to register in and receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's Automated Standard Application for Payments (ASAP), unless approved for a waiver by the USGS program. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank outside the U.S. are required to receive payment through the U.S. Treasury's International Treasury Services (ITS) System. Foreign recipients receiving funds to a final destination bank in the U.S. are required to enter and maintain current banking details in their SAM.gov entity profile and receive payment through the Automated Clearing House network by electronic funds transfer (EFT). The Bureau will include recipient-specific instructions on how to request payment, including identification of any additional information required and where to submit payment requests, as applicable, in all Notices of Award.

PAPERWORK REDUCTION ACT STATEMENT:

OMB Control Number: 1028-0133, Expiration Date: 08/31/2026

We are collecting this information in accordance with the program identified above. Your response is required to obtain or retain a benefit. We will use the information you provide to conduct a competitive review and select projects for funding and, if awarded, to evaluate performance. We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid Office of Management and Budget (OMB) control number. Public report burden for this collection is estimated to average 45 hours per grant application and 12 hours to prepare a final technical report. Actual time for these activities will vary depending on program-specific requirements. You may send comments on the burden

estimate or any other aspect of this information collection to the Bureau Clearance Officer, U.S. Geological Survey, 12201 Sunrise Valley Drive, MS807, Reston VA 20192.