StRAP-Helene Funding Application FAQs

Is this funding restricted to counties affected by Hurricane Helene?
Yes. Only organizations in the 39 counties listed in the [FEMA Disaster Declaration for Hurricane Helene](#) are eligible to apply for these funds. All funded work must be done within these 39 counties (plus the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians).

What types of projects can be included in applications?
All project types eligible for StRAP funding are eligible, including Streambank Stabilization, Stream Debris Removal, Stream Restoration, Sediment Removal, and PL-566 Small Watershed Structure repair. Other types of projects involving stream repair may be approved on a case-by-case basis (EX: culvert replacement, repair of non-PL-566 dams). Contact the StRAP manager to discuss specific sites.

What organizations are eligible to apply for StRAP funding?
Eligible organizations within the 39 affected counties include:
- Soil & Water Conservation Districts
- Political subdivisions (city/county government, water/sewer district, municipal service District, sanitary district, drainage district)
- Nonprofit Organizations

Individual landowners or private citizens are not eligible to apply for StRAP. However, there is no restriction about StRAP-funded work being done on privately owned land, with the landowner's permission.

How much funding can a grantee receive?
The maximum amount of StRAP funding an organization can receive depends on 2 factors:
- The amount of need. On your application, document the sites you hope to use StRAP funding on, including the cost estimate for each site. An applicant won't receive more than the amount you requested in your application, as shown by the total estimated cost for all the projects you are applying for.
- Amount of need in category. All counties eligible for Hurricane Helene StRAP funding have been classified as high-, medium-, or low-need, based on the total storm impacts in the county. The established county cap is the maximum amount of funding that can be awarded in the county. The county cap will be divided between any organizations in the county that receive funds.
  - High need: $1,496,250 county cap
  - Medium need: $526,154 county cap
  - Low Need: $310,909 county cap

How does StRAP work?
StRAP is a reimbursement program that awards funds to organizations completing eligible stream repair projects. StRAP reimburses grantees for all eligible project costs, but all costs must be documented with submitted receipts.
1. Once a grantee is awarded a contract, they are responsible for hiring and overseeing the contractor who will complete the planned work. StRAP staff can provide technical

assistance and support, but the grantee (or a hired representative) is responsible for the day-to-day oversight of the project.

2. As the project progresses, grantees submit regular reports on the status of the project.
3. Once work is completed on a section of stream, the grantee reviews the work, then schedules a final inspection from a StRAP inspector to ensure work on that stream segment was completed to program standards.
4. If the site passes inspection, the grantee submits a request for payment to be reimbursed for their costs associated with the project, up to the awarded amount. Reimbursement payments are not made to the grantee until work is completed.

How long will the application window be open?
StRAP will accept applications in a series of application batches. Each county will be eligible to apply during one application window, and each window will be open for 8 weeks. Please use the StRAP website to stay updated on the deadline that applies to your county. Any sites submitted after the deadline has passed for your county will not be considered as part of your application.

How should stream reaches be split into segments?
StRAP uses "project" and "stream segment" interchangeably to mean a stretch of stream where work is needed. This could be either a single short section of stream (EX: there is only 1 logjam on a stream) or a longer section of stream with multiple issues to be addressed (EX: a 1-mile section of stream with scattered blockages every few hundred feed). Ultimately, grantees have flexibility in how long each stream segment is.

- If a stream segment has multiple areas needing work, you do NOT need to list each blockage/eroding bank/issue separately. For example: if you had a 2,000' stretch of stream, that crossed 4 different landowner's properties, and had 10 logjams that need to be removed, you can enter the entire 2,000' stretch of the stream as a single project/stream segment.

Generally, we recommend that if there is a gap of more than ¼ mile between 2 areas needing work, you should split the work into 2 stream segments. For example, if you had 2 areas needing bank stabilization on a stream that are ½ mile apart, enter those as 2 separate stream segments/projects.

Can I change my Scope of Work (SOW)?
Yes. Grantees can change their scope of work as needed by submitting a SOW revision to StRAP staff. Work on added projects should not begin until the SOW revision is approved by StRAP staff. Reasons grantees may change their scope of work include:

- Completing work under budget so leftover funds from one project can be used to fund a new project.
- Reducing the length of a stream segment if costs come in higher than estimated.
- Focusing funds on a new project that is identified as higher-priority than the stream segments listed on the current SOW.

The goal of StRAP is to fund projects that are not eligible for Federal funding (such as through FEMA or the EWP Program). If you receive StRAP funding for a stream segment that later becomes eligible for Federal funding, you should prioritize using Federal funds on the stream segment, and change your StRAP SOW to reallocate your StRAP funding to a site that does not qualify for StRAP.

Do I need to have a completed engineering design before I apply for StRAP?

No- all you need for the application is a brief description of the planned work for the stream segment. Once you are awarded funding, you can hire an engineer (or other qualified staff) to complete the design plan for your project. StRAP funds can be used to reimburse the cost of engineering design or permits.

Can StRAP reimburse work that was already completed?
No- StRAP funding cannot reimburse work that was completed before your StRAP contract was signed.

Can StRAP be used to complete additional work on sites that were partially completed with Federal funding?
Yes- StRAP can be used to do additional work on sites where Federal funding only completed part of the needed work. For example: if a stretch of stream needed both stream debris removal and streambank stabilization, but FEMA only funded debris removal, StRAP could be used to fund bank stabilization on the same stretch of stream. In this situation, your request for payment must be very clear on which work was funded by StRAP.

What if I need help determining if I have sites eligible for StRAP?
The StRAP website has guidance documents, including a photo guide showing examples of previous StRAP projects. You can also reach out to the StRAP program manager at matt.safford@ncagr.gov to share photos or questions about specific sites. In general, keep the following guidance in mind:
- Stream segments are eligible for StRAP if the planned work would prevent future flooding, reduce risks to life and property, restore streams, or otherwise improve streamflow.
- StRAP can fund projects in the list of eligible project types. Other stream-related projects not included in this list may be approved on a case-by-case basis.
- StRAP can only fund the repair of the stream itself (from bank to bank)- StRAP funds cannot be used to remove downed trees that are in the floodplain.
- StRAP can fund repairs on any waterway (including both natural rivers/streams as well as human-made canals).
- Unlike FEMA or EWP, StRAP does not require projects to be within a certain distance of human-made infrastructure (houses, bridges, etc.).

For more specific guidance, StRAP staff can perform a site visit to give recommendations on if a site is eligible and provide guidance on best practice for completing repairs. To schedule a site visit, contact:
- Patricia Gabriel, Inspection Coordinator, 919-751-0976 x 5609   patricia.gabriel@usda.gov

Should all downed trees/logs be removed from a stream?
No! Woody debris is a natural part of streams and provides important habitat. Stream debris removal should focus on debris that is contributing to increased flood risk, damage to property/streambanks, or harm to stream health. The StRAP SOP document provides guidance on identifying areas where woody debris removal is appropriate.