

Clarion Conservation District
Dirt & Gravel Road Policy and Procedures
Revised 2015
Revised 12.2021

Municipalities, PennDOT, PA Fish & Boat Commission, PA Game Commission and DCNR are eligible for funding under the DGR program.

Quality Assurance Board (QAB):

The QAB's role in the DGR program in Clarion County is to oversee the administrative, educational and contractual responsibilities of the both the Dirt & Gravel and Low Volume Road Program. The QAB will establish priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program. The QAB responsibilities will include review of applications submitted for funding, conducting site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB) and recommend eligible applications to the Clarion Conservation District Board of Directors for funding that will address non-point source pollution in affected areas.

Membership:

The QAB in Clarion County will be comprised of two members appointed from the Clarion Conservation District (Chairman is non-voting except to break a tie), one member from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and one member from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission (PAFBC). Agencies may appoint a representative outside of their organization to serve on the QAB.

Meetings:

The established meeting schedule will be on an annual basis and also on an as-needed basis as determined by the Chairman. Minutes of the QAB meeting will be taken by the Chairperson and will be kept on record and available to the public pursuant to the open records policy. Notices of QAB meetings will be published in the local newspaper and are subject to PA's Sunshine Act (Open Records Law).

Finances:

The Conservation District maintains a separate interest-bearing checking account specifically for each the Dirt, Gravel and the Low Volume Road Program. Any interest accrued from the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road checking accounts must be added to the construction allocation.

Administration and/or Educational and Training monies received and not utilized in the timeframe allotted by the State Conservation Commission must be added to the construction allocation according to the Program guidelines.

All monies received from the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program shall be utilized in the timeframe allotted by the State Conservation Commission according to the Program guidelines.

Grant Process and Project Evaluation:

The QAB will have an open sign-up period year-round. All eligible applicants will be notified at least two months prior to the given deadline for application submittal.

A site evaluation must be made by at least one QAB member and/or District staff person with project applicant prior to ranking by the QAB.

All applications submitted must contain a signature of an ESM certified eligible applicant. The applications will be evaluated, scored, and ranked according to the QAB's Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Grant Application Ranking (Attachment 1).

The one-page Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road Program Grant Application, developed for statewide use, will be distributed to all eligible applicants and is available on the District's website. Each application will be for one verified work site, or continuous project area. Applications for non-funded projects must be resubmitted the following year to be considered for funding to assure current prices are reflected. Eligible applicants may also choose to revise existing submitted applications. There is no restriction to the number of applications that can be submitted by one municipality.

The annual QAB meeting will be held shortly after the given deadline. At that time, all submitted applications will be reviewed, ranked and recommended for funding. Eligible applicants that have open contracts at the time of the QAB annual meeting will not be considered for further funding until the existing contract is completed unless extenuating circumstances have been approved by the QAB. These recommendations will be given to the District Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting for final approval. All eligible applicants who submitted applications will be notified by letter of the District Board decisions.

Eligible Maintenance Practices:

It will also be the policy of the QAB to allow the inclusion of work outside of the eligible applicant's road right-of-way provided the work is necessary for the successful completion and continued maintenance of non-point source pollution problem corrected on the site. All work proposed outside of the eligible applicant's road right-of-way must follow the policy outlined in the DG&LVR Program Administrative Manual. Landowner approval and maintenance access agreement must be in writing and submitted with the application.

A paver must be used for placement of DSA on all projects of 1,000 linear ft. or greater. A vibratory roller must be used when placing DSA. DSA must be tested prior to application and placed during proper temperature conditions. Townships must notify the Center for Dirt & Gravel Roads at least 30 days before placement to allow ample time for testing.

Dirt roads with less than 300' of tar and chip in residential areas to control dust are considered DRG roads and can apply for funding under that program. Tar and chipped roads that are 'turned back' will be ranked under the DGR program. However, if the road is replaced by tar it is no longer eligible for funding under DGR and must be ranked under LVR.

On LVR applications, a traffic count must be included on the application. LVR funding will be limited to repairs unless it is part of a larger ESM design.

Stream crossing replacements for both Low Volume and Dirt and Gravel must be at least equal to the channel's bank-full width or as per current Program Policy. A pre-application site visit to any potential stream crossing site is required prior to applying for Program funds. Funded stream crossing replacements require a longitudinal profile survey to be completed prior to pre-design meeting with Engineer.

Funding Distribution Procedure:

All approved contracts with eligible applicants will be signed by the District Manager or Technician of the Clarion Conservation District. The funds will be distributed by the Conservation District in the following manner:

- Upon execution of the project contract, the District may forward 50% of the grant amount requested to the grantee as funds become available.
- The grantee has one year to complete the approved contract. If unable to complete in one year's time, an extension must be approved by the QAB.
- The Conservation District will withhold the remaining 50% (or greater) of the approved grant amount requested until the project is complete and has been final inspected by the QAB and/or District personnel. For the project to be considered complete, all site work must be accomplished and stabilized as indicated in the contract in a manner to be considered satisfactory to achieve the purpose it was designed to, as determined by the QAB and/or the Conservation District.

The grantee is responsible for retaining all necessary receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. to document expenditure of entire grant amount (100%). All receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. must also meet or exceed the total grant amount requested prior to the final 50% of funds being released. If totals equal less than the remaining 50%, only the lesser amount will be forwarded to the grantee. Grant monies that are unspent by the grantee at the end of two (2) years from the date of the executed contract must be returned in full to the Conservation District.

All permits and easements are the responsibility of the grantee and must be in place before work begins.

Project inspections can be made anytime during construction by Conservation District Staff. All inspections will be documented. Every effort will be made to have one grantee representative present at the time of the inspections. A final inspection will be made prior to final payment and documented on the Project Performance Report.

Non-Pollution Standards:

Section 9106 (f)(7) of the PA Motor Vehicle Code requires Quality Assurance Boards to adopt standards that prohibit use of materials or practices that are environmentally harmful. The Statement of Policy 83.613(1)(b) formalizes that requirement. In response, the QAB has adopted standards prohibiting the use of materials or practices which are environmentally harmful or do not meet the program's "nonpollution" standards. These materials include, but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter the waterway. Compliance with all existing environmental laws is a condition of purchase under the contracting agreement between the Conservation District and the municipality. An environmentally suitable substitute for dust control, as determined by the State Conservation Commission, may qualify for payment.

Conflict of Interest:

No District Director, QAB member or District employee shall, as a result of this program, be permitted to obtain financial benefits for him/herself, a member of his/her immediate family or a business with which he/she is associated. Understanding that this shall not preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.

Equal Access Policy Statement:

The Dirt and Gravel Roads Quality Assurance Board has adopted the following policy procedures to insure equal access to the benefits of the Dirt and Gravel Roads program, and to eliminate bias and favoritism. The QAB is committed to managing a program that increases the quality of the environment through sound road maintenance practices.

1. All eligible applicants will be given a list of the dates and locations of offered ESM training sessions.
2. All eligible applicants will be notified when grant applications are being accepted and when the applications are due.
3. All eligible applicants have access to the evaluation form that is used to prioritize work-sites.
4. Projects will be ranked on environmental impact to the surrounding area.

Discrimination Clause:

The Quality Assurance Board shall prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, gender, national origin, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.