

## **Important Information Regarding the Contents of this Document**

Please note that the policies and information presented in this document are current through the date given below. The documents made available within the [Center's Conservation Districts web pages](#) are intended to serve as a guide for the policies set by each Conservation District. While these policies may in fact be current at the time of your viewing, it is strongly recommended to contact the relevant Conservation District for the most current version.

Document Current Date: March 13, 2019



COLUMBIA COUNTY  
CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
**Dirt Gravel, and Low Volume Road Program**  
**Quality Assurance Board Policies**

(Revision Date: March 13, 2019)



### **Purpose**

The purpose of the Columbia County Quality Assurance Board (QAB) is to recommend a grant program for Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code to the Columbia County Conservation District (District) Board. The QAB will assist the CCCD in carrying out the administrative, educational and contractual responsibilities of the Dirt, Gravel and Low Volume Road (DGLVR) Program in accordance with the current DGLVR Maintenance Program Administrative Manual guidelines including:

- Recommend local policies to District Board
- Establish priorities and requirements for funding
- Review applications submitted for funding
- Conduct site visits (as necessary and determined by the QAB)
- Recommend eligible applications to the District Board for funding projects that address non-point source pollution to reduce impacts on water quality and the environment
- Review completed projects

The QAB shall be bound by the policies established by the PA State Conservation Commission for the administration of this program statewide.

### **Membership**

The Columbia County QAB membership shall be comprised of one member appointed from the following organizations:

- Columbia County Conservation District Board
- Natural Resources Conservation Service
- PA Fish and Boat Commission

A non-voting Chairperson of the QAB shall be appointed by the District Board and will only vote in the case of a tie. To broaden citizen involvement, the QAB may enlist any individual or organization to be advisors (non-voting) to the four-member QAB.

### **Meetings**

The QAB meeting schedule will be determined on an annual basis. Additional meetings may occur as needed. Public notice of meetings will be advertised. Meeting minutes will be kept on record and made available to the public pursuant to the open records policy. QAB meetings will be conducted according to the Roberts Rules of Order.



### **Equal Access**

Any state or local entity that owns and maintains public roads is eligible to apply for DGLVR Program funding. Eligible entities who may participate in the program include municipalities, counties, PA Game Commission, PA Fish and Boat Commission, DCNR Bureau of State Parks, and PA Department of Transportation whose representatives have attained a certification by attending the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Maintenance training.

The QAB is committed to managing a program that increases the quality of the environment through sound road maintenance practices. The QAB shall ensure equal access to the benefits of the DGLVR Program and eliminate bias and favoritism as follows:

- Prohibit discrimination on the basis of race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status.
- Applications with specific deadlines shall be sent to all eligible entities.
- Funding allocation decisions shall be made on the basis of approved ranking criteria determined to maximize environmental impact in a cost-effective manner. All eligible entities shall have access to the Grant Application Ranking Form that is used to prioritize work sites.

### **Conflict of Interest**

No District Director, QAB member or District employee shall, as a result of the DGLVR 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. It shall be understood that this shall not preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.

### **Project Ranking**

The QAB shall determine project ranking according to the Grant Application Ranking Form adopted by the District. Funding allocation shall be based on the following criteria:

- Application validation or eligibility for funding
- Severity of road, drainage, bank and ditch problems that need improvements
- Classification of stream or water body impacted
- Effectiveness of the solution
- In-kind contributions and notification of the District before application submittal
- Level of environmental impact
- Applicant's past history of involvement in the Program, Program project status, and past implementation and maintenance if relevant

Each project will be scored based on the same approved ranking criteria to determine funding allocation.



### **Incentive for Training**

The Commission Statement of Policy requires Districts to develop “incentives for training road managers and equipment operators”. For funding consideration, DGLVR Program Applicants are required to:

- Evaluate their DGLVR with District staff and created worksites within their municipality
- At a minimum, one current elected/appointed or employee (Road Manager or equipment operator) has attended and completed the two-day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop within the last five calendar years
- Where applicable, follow the DGLVR Program guidelines for Traffic Count Procedures as discussed in paragraph 7.4 of the DGLVR Maintenance Program Administrative Manual.

When possible and as needed, the QAB will also sponsor an Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop at no charge to any municipality/agency or surrounding county municipalities/agency wishing to attend.

### **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 programs’ “non-pollution” standard. These materials include, but are not limited to: noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may pose a problem if they enter a 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.

### **Application Submittal for Funding**

The QAB will have an open grant application submittal period year round. The QAB will determine the application submittal deadline(s) for the current funding cycle. The funding cycle deadline(s) and state-approved DGLVR Grant Application and instructions will be distributed to all eligible entities annually.

Each application submitted shall be for one worksite. The District will keep all non-funded projects on file for three years for consideration with future funding allocations. Therefore, resubmittal is not necessary. Municipalities/agencies may also choose to revise existing submitted applications. There isn’t a restriction to the number of applications that can be submitted by one entity.

The QAB will review and rank the submitted applications following the announced deadline. Recommendations for funding will be given to the District Board at the next regularly scheduled Board meeting for final approval. Applicants will be notified by letter and proposed contract of their grant application approval.



### Eligible Program Expenses

The following items are considered eligible program expenses for a proposed project based on environmental impact and ranking criteria:

- Equipment use
- Changing or converting paved or tar and chipped roads to a dirt and gravel road

### Funding Allocation

All approved contracts will be signed by the District Chairperson. The funds will be distributed by the District in the following manner:

- The District maintains two separate accounts specifically for the Dirt and Gravel Roads and for the Low Volume Roads projects.
- Upon execution of the project contract, advance payments of up to 50% of the grant amount may be awarded to the project participant upon the recommendation of the QAB. This advanced payment is to be used for eligible expenses incurred by the project. The project participant is responsible for retaining receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. to document proper expenditure of advanced payments prior to receiving additional payments.
- Upon execution of the project contract, partial payments can be made on documented expenses incurred for the project not to exceed 70% of the approved grant amount upon the recommendation of the QAB. The entity project participant is responsible for retaining receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. to document proper expenditure of funds prior to receiving final payment.
- The project participant has **one year** to complete the approved contract. If unable to complete in that time, the project participant may request in writing a project extension.
- Any changes to project scope of work must be mutually agreed to and confirmed in writing between the applicant and the District. District staff will attempt to be present during the construction process for inspections.
- A pre-construction meeting with the District or QAB members before any work begins or material have been purchased is recommended.

In all cases, the District shall withhold payment of at least 30% of the contract amount not to exceed invoices submitted until the satisfactory completion of the project. Final payment for the project expenses shall be made only after a final inspection by the District determines that the work was performed consistent with the project application and the work plan, and to the satisfaction of the District.

All receipts, weigh slips, labor accounting, etc. must be submitted prior to final payment of grant amount. Total payment to municipalities will be based on actual eligible costs not to exceed allowable unit costs approved by the QAB or total grant amount. Grant monies received for material purchased for the project but not installed by the entity at the end of **18 months** from the date of the executed contract must be returned in full to the District.