

Allegheny County Conservation District

Quality Assurance Board

Policies and Procedures

Revision 4 – August 2019

Signed into law in April 1997 and amended in November 2013, the Dirt and Gravel Road Maintenance Program, Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code (§9106), is based on the principle that informed and empowered local control is the most effective way to stop pollution from dirt and gravel roads. The law created a dedicated fund to provide money and training to local communities for local road maintenance. The funds are distributed by the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to participating county conservation districts.

The fund is administered as a non-lapsing, nontransferable account restricted to maintenance and improvement of dirt and gravel roads.

Purpose

The purpose of the Quality Assurance Board (QAB) in Allegheny County is to recommend to the Allegheny County Conservation District (ACCD) Board of Directors a set of projects that would receive grants in keeping with Section 9106 of the PA Motor Vehicle Code. The QAB responsibilities include:

- Establishing priorities and requirements for funding through the Dirt and Gravel Road/Low Volume Road program,
- Reviewing applications submitted for funding,
- Conducting site visits as necessary, and;
- Recommending eligible applications to the Allegheny County Conservation District Board of Directors for funding that will address road related nonpoint source pollution in affected areas.

Board Composition

The Quality Assurance Board comprises one member appointed from the ACCD Board, one member from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), and one member from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boar Commission (PAFBC). Other non-voting members may be appointed by the ACCD Board of Directors as it sees fit to do so. The non-voting Chairman of the QAB is the District Manager.

Meeting Schedule

The QAB shall meet annually and on an as-needed basis as determined by the Chairman. Public notice of the meetings will be posted on the ACCD website and a legal notice placed in the local newspaper.



Minutes

Minutes of the QAB meetings will be kept on record at the District and made available to the public, pursuant to the open records policy.

Rules of Conduct

The Chairperson will be responsible for establishing the meeting agenda and running the proceedings. Voting members will establish policy for the program's operation and distribution of allocated funds consistent with Section 9106. The QAB will make recommendations to the Allegheny County Conservation District Board of Directors. All actions of the QAB require that a quorum of the voting members be present. The Chairman will vote only in the event of a tie. The QAB meetings will be conducted in accordance with Robert's Rules of Order.

Conflict of Interest

No District Director, Quality Assurance Board member, or District employee shall as a result of this program, obtain financial benefits for him/herself, a member of his/her immediate family, or a business with which he/she is associated. This shall preclude the payment of normal salary and benefits to employees provided in their normal course of employment.

Equal Access to Funding

Equal access to funding shall be facilitated by the following means:

- Correspondence on program updates, including applications, shall be sent to all eligible municipalities and agencies
- Special effort shall be made when needed to enlist the cooperation of potential participants through a telephone call or site visit
- Information, including any application deadlines, shall be publicized through multiple means (website, emails, etc.)
- Quality Assurance Board meetings having formal actions shall be open to the public and follow the requirements of the Sunshine Law.

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

All municipalities within Allegheny County are eligible for Dirt and Gravel Road funding provided that the municipality has:

- Identified their dirt and gravel roads and provided that inventory to the District
- Developed a list of priority project sites on their dirt and gravel road and provided that list to the District
- Had at least one current employee or elected/appointed representative attend and complete the two day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop within the last five calendar years.



All municipalities within Allegheny County are eligible for Low Volume Road funding provided that the municipality has:

- Had at least one current employee or elected/appointed representative attend and complete the two day Environmentally Sensitive Road Maintenance Workshop within the last five calendar years.

A minimum 20% match is required of each organization receiving a grant from the DGLVR Program. For example, if an organization requests and is awarded \$50,000, the entire project will have an investment of \$60,000 or more with the inclusion of matching funds. The matching funds can come from in-kind services, salaries, funding from other grants, etc.

Environmental Standards for Products and Procedures

No road maintenance practices and road materials utilized on projects will be permitted if their use is perceived as harmful to the environment or ecosystem. The non-pollution standards established in the Dirt and Gravel Road Administrative Manual will be referenced with regard to materials used. Quality Assurance Board members will determine if a maintenance practice is detrimental to the environment or an ecosystem.

Examples of prohibited materials include but are not limited to noxious weeds, fugitive emissions, and dust control products which may be harmful if they enter a waterway.

Funding Criteria

The Quality Assurance Board recommends the criteria to be used to identify priority projects for funding under the Dirt and Gravel/Low Volume Road program. These criteria are reviewed and approved each year. Examples of criteria might include:

- Municipal contributions (in-kind or cash)
- Relative score
- History of successful, quality projects on the part of the municipality.

Filing Applications for Funding

ACCD uses the one-page application developed for statewide use. The form required municipal information, worksite identification, the problem that is being addressed, estimate contributions, a simple drawing of the project, and a short explanation of the project.

Each application will address one worksite or continuous project area. ACCD will keep all non-funded projects on file for three years for consideration for future funding rounds. Therefore, resubmittal is not necessary. Municipalities may also choose to revise or withdraw submitted applications. There is no restriction to the number of applications that can be submitted by any one municipality.

Work outside a municipal right of way may be included in an application provided the work is necessary for the successful completion and continued maintenance of the pollution problem that was corrected. Sites will be evaluated on a case by case basis.



Grant applications will be accepted in the fourth quarter of each calendar year.

Funding Procedures

All contracts with municipalities will be signed by the Chairman of the Allegheny County Conservation District. ACCD will disburse funds under this project in the following manner:

- The District maintains a separate account specifically for the Dirt and Gravel Road/Low Volume Road program.
- Upon the full execution of the project agreement with a municipality, ACCD will provide an advanced payment to the project participant in an amount up to 50% of the grant, to be applied toward payment of eligible expenses incurred by the project.
- ACCD will process subsequent payments to the project participants on an actual cash expended basis.
- ACCD will withhold at least 30 percent of approved project expenses until satisfactory completion of the project as determined by the QAB or ACCD. Final payment for the project expenses shall be made only after a final inspection by the QAB/ACCD determines that the work was performed in a manner consistent with the project application and the work plan and to the satisfaction of ACCD.
- All claims submitted by the program participant pursuant to the agreement shall be submitted to ACCD in accordance with the schedule and terms and contained in the approved project agreement. The payments will be itemized and show that the use of funds is in accordance with the project cost summary contained in the application and work plan. Claims shall include receipts, weigh slips, and/or other supporting information to document actual expenditures.
- Grant funds received for materials purchased for the project but not installed by the municipality at the end of 18 months from the date of the executed contract must be returned in full to ACCD.

Funding Categories

The following funding categories have been established by the ACCD:

- Publically owned roads (open to public vehicle travel a minimum of two consecutive weeks out of the year)
- Demonstration projects
- Training, up to 10 percent of the total ACCD funding
- Administration, up to 10 percent of the total ACCD funding.

Project Performance

The QAB and/or ACCD staff will perform site inspections. The requirements include:

- Any changes to work in contracts should be mutually agreeable to and confirmed prior to initiation in writing in a letter between the municipality and ACCD.



- ACCD will perform a final site inspection to verify completion of work prior to issuing final funding reimbursement.
- For the contract to be considered complete, all site work must have been accomplished as indicated in the contract in a manner considered satisfactory to achieve the purpose for which it was designed, as determined by the QAB and ACCD. The work site shall be stabilized to the satisfaction of the QAB or ACCD.

