



# Watershed Assistance Grants Pre-proposal Application



RSA/Rule: Voluntary

## PART 1: INFORMATION PACKAGE

### I. Introduction

Each year, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) solicits projects to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution through the implementation of watershed-based plans in priority watersheds. Projects must comprehensively address NPS problems and must have a quantitative way to assess progress and determine success. The watershed-based plan must have a clear water quality goal and include the nine, minimum elements (a) through (i) required by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Funded projects must make reasonable progress toward achieving the water quality goal established in the watershed-based plan.

### A pre-proposal consultation is REQUIRED.

- Coastal watershed: Sally Soule [\(603\) 559-0032](tel:6035590032) or [sally.a.soule@des.nh.gov](mailto:sally.a.soule@des.nh.gov)
- All other watersheds: Jeff Marcoux [\(603\) 271-8862](tel:6032718862) or [jeffrey.d.marcoux@des.nh.gov](mailto:jeffrey.d.marcoux@des.nh.gov)

**Call or email us to discuss your pre-proposal by September 6, 2023.**  
**The pre-proposal submittal deadline is 4:00 PM on September 15, 2023.**

### II. General Watershed Assistance Grant Information

The NHDES Nonpoint Source Management Program is pleased to announce the availability of Watershed Assistance Grants to support local initiatives to restore impaired waters or protect high quality waters.

Funds for NHDES Watershed Assistance Grants are appropriated through the EPA under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. Approximately \$500,000 will be available for Watershed Assistance Grant projects this year, pending EPA and State approvals and federal budget appropriations. NHDES may award grants for projects that will restore impaired waters or protect high quality waters in conformance with EPA's *Nonpoint Source Program Grant Guidelines for States and Territories* (April 12, 2013) and the priorities identified in the *New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan 2020-2024*. Projects must implement existing watershed-based plans that meet the nine EPA Watershed Plan elements (a) through (i) criteria or implement an EPA and NHDES approved alternative plan. Although there is no minimum or maximum limit on project budgets and grant requests, NHDES typically selects five to eight projects each year.

Planning funds (for developing watershed-based plans, designated river corridor management plans, etc.) are available through Water Quality Management Planning 604(b) grants (see [NHDES' Watershed Assistance Grants webpage](#) for more information) or through Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) planning loans available to municipalities with up to \$100,000 in principal forgiveness (see [NHDES' Clean Water State Revolving Fund webpage](#) for more information).

### III. Watershed Assistance Grant Proposal Process

Project information provided in the pre-proposal is reviewed and ranked by the NHDES grant selection team. Selected pre-proposal applicants may be invited to an interview to further discuss the project. Based on the pre-proposal and interview results, selected applicants are invited to work with NHDES staff to develop and submit a full proposal. If approved, applicants will be notified of award amount and a Grant Agreement between NHDES and the applicant will be drafted.

**Potential applicants are required to contact NHDES** Watershed Assistance Section staff to discuss the proposed project prior to beginning the pre-proposal process.

- Coastal watershed contact: Sally Soule at [\(603\) 559-0032](tel:6035590032) or [sally.a.soule@des.nh.gov](mailto:sally.a.soule@des.nh.gov)
- Other watersheds contact: Jeff Marcoux at [\(603\) 271-8862](tel:6032718862) or [jeffrey.d.marcoux@des.nh.gov](mailto:jeffrey.d.marcoux@des.nh.gov)

### IV. Watershed Assistance Grant Recipient Eligibility

Governmental subdivisions and non-profit organizations are eligible to receive Watershed Assistance Grants. Examples include:

- |                                 |  |
|---------------------------------|--|
| ✓ Municipalities                | ✓ Watershed Associations                     |
| ✓ Regional Planning Commissions | ✓ Lake, Pond, or River Associations          |
| ✓ Non-profit Organizations      | ✓ Water Suppliers                            |
| ✓ County Conservation Districts | ✓ Designated River Local Advisory Committees |
| ✓ State Agencies                |  |

Other groups may also apply for grant funding by partnering with governmental subdivisions or non-profit organizations. **Non-profit organizations must be registered with the N.H. Secretary of State** (this can be done on the [N.H. Secretary of State's website](#)).

Note that grant recipients may use these grant funds to sub-contract with private entities, such as environmental consulting or engineering firms selected through an approved procurement procedure.

### V. Project Eligibility

Watershed Assistance Grants must address specific water quality problems or threats and result in quantifiable water quality improvement or protection activities. **Preference will be given to high priority watersheds as identified in the [New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan](#)** (search by town or water body name)

#### Eligible Projects

Implement one or more components of an existing (a) through (i) watershed-based plan or an approved alternative plan.

For reference, completed (a) through (i) watershed-based plans can be found at the [NHDES' Watershed Assistance webpage](#).

Examples of potential alternative plans are noted below.

**Alternatives** - Projects may be eligible for Watershed Assistance Grant funding without the required (a) through (i) watershed-based plan elements in limited circumstances such as projects which implement Total

Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) plans, or where the impairment is not specific to a pollutant, e.g., stream restoration through selective dam removal. Alternative plans must be pre-approved by NHDES and EPA. Please contact NHDES staff as listed in Section III to discuss.

**\*MS4 Projects may be ineligible** - Projects must not use grant funds to implement requirements of a Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit, the Multi-Sector General permit, or the Construction General Permit. EPA guidance clarifies that Section 319 funds may be used to fund any urban stormwater activities that do not directly implement a final MS4 permit. Therefore, we anticipate that some projects in MS4s will still be eligible. *Please contact us if your proposed project area is within a regulated MS4 prior to completing the pre-proposal to discuss eligibility.*

## VI. Watershed Assistance Grant Requirements

1. Watershed Assistance Grant recipients must enter into a Grant Agreement with the State of New Hampshire to receive funds. Grant Agreements will require Governor and Executive Council approval. The State of New Hampshire requires the following documentation for execution of Grant Agreements (this documentation is **not required at the time of pre-proposal submittal**, but will be needed prior to awarding funds):
  - a) **Vendor Code** - Grantees must have a Vendor Code. You can register at [State of New Hampshire Vendor Code](#). (Grant recipients that have received funds from NHDES in the past will already have a Vendor Code on file).
  - b) **"Grant Agreement"** (the "contract") – provided by NHDES and signed by the grant recipient.
  - c) **"Certificate of Authority"** form – provided by NHDES and signed by the Grant recipient (Note: The Certificate of Authority indicates that the person signing the Grant Agreement has authority to do so).
  - d) **A current "Certificate of Existence" or "Certificate of Good Standing"** form from the N.H. Secretary of State (Note: This certificate indicates that an organization has filed its Articles of Agreement with the Secretary of State, and is registered and in good standing).
  - e) **Certificate of Insurance** indicating that the grant recipient has the required insurance coverage (statutory worker's compensation; employee liability; comprehensive public liability of \$2,000,000 for bodily injury or death per incident, and \$500,000 property damage per incident).
2. Grant recipients must **provide matching funds** of at least 40 percent of the total project cost (not 40 percent of the grant amount requested) in non-federal funds and/or in-kind services. One way to calculate the required match amount is to multiply the grant funds requested by 0.667. To be credited as match, an item must be necessary to complete the project, and have a verifiable monetary value. Volunteer labor in New Hampshire is currently valued at \$32.54 per hour; see [Independent Sector's website](#) for methodology and current rate and be sure to use the New Hampshire rate as opposed to the national rate. Donated professional services may be valued at the current professional rate for those services. Please contact us if you have questions about match applicability or values.
3. Organizations are required to **conduct competitive procurement processes** for contractor selection and other purchases, and to make a good faith effort to hire disadvantaged businesses. Your NHDES project manager will provide assistance. Procurement guidance documents are available on the NHDES website. A list of disadvantaged business enterprises (DBE) is available on the [New Hampshire Department of Transportation \(NHDT\) website](#). For assistance contact Andrea Bejtlich at [\(603\) 271-8475](tel:6032718475), or [andrea.l.bejtlich@des.nh.gov](mailto:andrea.l.bejtlich@des.nh.gov).

- 4. Indirect costs shall not exceed 10 percent.** Indirect costs include two broad categories: "Facilities" and "Administration." "Facilities" is defined as depreciation and use allowances on buildings, equipment and capital improvement, interest on debt associated with certain buildings, equipment and capital improvements, and operations and maintenance expenses. "Administration" is defined as general administration and general expenses such as the director's office, accounting, personnel, library expenses and all other types of expenditures not listed specifically under one of the subcategories of "Facilities."
- 5.** Organizations are required to follow the **Build America Buy America Act (BABA)** requirements (due to the de minimus waiver, this only impacts projects with over \$250,000 in federal award funds):
- a) All iron and steel used in the project are produced in the United States. This means all manufacturing processes, from the initial melting stage through the application of coatings, occurred in the United States.
  - b) All manufactured products used in the project are produced in the United States. This means the manufactured product was manufactured in the United States, and the cost of the components of the manufactured product that are mined, produced, or manufactured in the United States is greater than 55 percent of the total cost of all components of the manufactured product, unless another standard for determining the minimum amount of domestic content of the manufactured product has been established under applicable law or regulation.
  - c) All construction materials are manufactured in the United States. This means that all manufacturing processes for the construction material occurred in the United States.

\*A Buy America preference only applies to articles, materials, and supplies that are consumed in, incorporated into, or affixed to an infrastructure project. As such, it does not apply to tools, equipment, and supplies, such as temporary scaffolding, brought to the construction site and removed at or before the completion of the infrastructure project. Nor does a Buy America preference apply to equipment and furnishings, such as movable chairs, desks, and portable computer equipment, that are used at or within the finished infrastructure project but are not an integral part of or permanently affixed to the structure.

For more information, see the [Office of Management and Budget \(OMB\) memo](#) issued on April 18, 2022.

**\*\*Please note:** The [Small Project General Applicability Waiver](#) of Section 70914(a) of P.L. 117-58, Build America, Buy America Act allows small projects (federal funds under \$250,000 awarded) to be exempt from BABA requirements.

## VII. Documentation Requirements

Project managers will be responsible for **evaluating and documenting the environmental benefits and behavior changes** resulting from the project. Please note that *all* projects must evaluate environmental benefits. Quantitative measures include:

### 1. Measurement and Modeling

Environmental conditions and improvements may be documented through physical measurement or by using approved modeling techniques. All activities that involve collection or manipulation of data must be completed in compliance with an approved quality assurance document as detailed below. Check with your project manager for more information on models. Examples of measures and models include:

- Load reductions of nutrients and sediments to receiving waters using an EPA approved method such as the Pollutant Load Estimation Tool (PLET), Spreadsheet Tool for Estimating Pollutant Loads (STEPL) or Region 5 Model to calculate estimated reductions for your project. PLET uses the same underlying formulas as STEPL, but in a more user-friendly web interface. See Models and Documentation at [EPA's PLET webpage](#).
- Monitoring results of water quality improvements such as reductions in bacteria concentrations.
- Results of physical restoration such as the number of acres of wetland restored, the linear feet of riparian buffers planted, or the miles of restored fish habitat.

Note that all projects using or generating environmental data **must develop an appropriate quality assurance** document, depending on the project type. Projects involving stream restoration, watershed surveying, estimation of nutrient and sediment load reduction, or are involved in established monitoring programs, such as the Volunteer River Assessment Program (VRAP) or Volunteer Lake Assessment Program (VLAP) may be able to complete a Site Specific Project Plan (SSPP) to satisfy the quality assurance requirements of the grant program in accordance with the New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), August, 2020. Other projects may be required to develop an individual Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP). **Please note that it can take several months to complete the writing and approval process, and that the QAPP or SSPP must be approved before the project work governed by it can begin.** For guidelines on the development and approval of quality assurance documents, please consult your project manager.

## 2. Outreach Documentation

The success of outreach campaigns to influence behavior changes can be verified through pre- and post-project surveys; changes in local ordinances; number of website hits; and actual documented observations. All outreach and education materials will be made Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) compliant (see section VIII-6).

## VIII. Reporting Requirements

The following reporting requirements will apply to all projects selected and approved for funding.

### 1. Semi-annual progress reports

Submit electronic semi-annual reports documenting all work performed during the project periods as follows:

- Work completed April 1 – September 30, report is due by October 31.
- Work completed October 1 – March 30, report is due by April 30.

In addition to reporting successes, progress reports provide an opportunity for project managers to communicate with NHDES staff any difficulties being encountered that may impede meeting performance targets. The [semi-annual progress report form](#) is available on the NHDES website.

### 2. Pollutants Controlled Reports (PCR)

PCR Reports are required for all projects that involve pollutant load reduction, or resource restoration. The report must be submitted to NHDES within two weeks following BMP implementation. The [PCR report form](#) is available on the NHDES website.

### 3. Final Report

A comprehensive final report must be submitted to NHDES on or before the Grant Agreement completion date. There are specific NHDES and EPA requirements regarding the information provided in the final report. The [final report guidelines](#) are available on the NHDES website.

Provide high-quality images of project sites that NHDES can use for press releases and web content. Proper photo credit and permissions from all individuals captured in the images are required.

#### 4. Watershed Plan Tracking updates

NHDES and EPA are working to document progress achieved through watershed-based plan development and implementation. NHDES will periodically send the grantee tracking forms, which are intended to solicit updates on progress toward implementation of recommended actions.

#### 5. Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act (FFATA) Reporting

- a. The applicant must provide their Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number. If an applicant does not have a UEI number, they must obtain one in order to complete the full proposal. UEI registration can be completed at the [System for Award Management \(SAM\)](#) website. Information on finding your UEI number can be found on the [Grants.gov Community Blog](#).

**Note:** If you previously had a DUNS number you should have been assigned a UEI number.

- b. The applicant must provide their Executive Compensation Data, when applicable, including: the names and total compensation of the five most highly compensated officers if the entity in the preceding fiscal year received 80 percent or more of its annual gross revenues in federal awards; and \$25,000,000 or more in annual gross revenues from Federal awards; and the public does not have access to this information about the compensation of the senior executives of the entity through periodic reports filed under section 13(a) or 15(d) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 (15 U.S.C. §§ 78m(a), 78o(d)) or section 6104 of the Internal Revenue Code of 1986. See FFATA § 2(b)(1).

**Note:** Total compensation is the cash and non-cash dollar value earned by an executive during the preceding fiscal year and includes the following: salary and bonus; awards of stock; earnings for services under non-equity incentive plans; change in pension value; and above-market earnings on deferred compensation which is not tax-qualified.

#### 6. All publications must be ADA compliant.

All final work products must meet the applicable Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulations to the extent practicable and shall be guided by best practices outlined in the Revised Section 508 Standards of the Rehabilitation Act and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). See Section 2 of the [NHDES Vendor Publication Guide](#) for Section 508 requirements. At minimum, final work products shall include sans-serif fonts, underlined and descriptive text links, color best practices, captions for audio and video content, headers in tables, images with alt text, gender-neutral text, and consideration of the Plain Writing Act. Examples of final work products and outreach materials include, but are not limited to, project reports, press releases, newsletter articles, websites, videos and signage.

#### 7. Current Section 319 Clean Water Act federal requirements can be found at [EPA's 319 Grant Current Guidance webpage](#).

## IX. Evaluation Criteria

The Watershed Assistance Section grants review team will review and rank the submittals based upon the following criteria:

Category	Criteria	Max Points
Water Quality Improvement (either/or)	<b>Impaired Waters:</b> Project will achieve or lead to removing an impairment from the 305(b) or 303(d) list, resulting in a Section 319 Nonpoint Source Success Story (see <a href="#">EPA's Success Stories webpage</a> ).	35*
	<b>High Quality Waters:</b> Project will achieve or lead to quantifiable progress toward water quality goals in a high quality watershed.	30*
Local Capacity	Commitment of the applicant's support network, and capacity to complete the proposed project. Ranking will be based upon the grantee's description and/or demonstration of their team's ability to successfully complete the proposed project.	25
Relative Value of the Waterbody	The availability (access), benefits to surrounding communities, and extent of use of the waterbody. Uses include but are not limited to: drinking water supply; public recreational opportunities; aquatic and terrestrial habitat benefits.	15
Proposal Quality and Thoroughness	General quality and completeness of the proposal package.	10
Priority Ranking	Project is located in high or medium priority watersheds as identified in the NHDES <a href="#">Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan</a> .	5
Environmental Justice	The waterbody's accessibility to the public, lower income area, etc.	5
Climate Impact	Addresses flooding, water quantity, water quality (cyanobacteria etc.) etc.	5
-	Total possible points for Impaired Waters*	100
-	Total possible points for High Quality Waters*	95

\*Funding priority is given to restoration of impaired waters.

Full project proposals will be selected based upon scores received through ranking, availability of funding, final EPA review, and final NHDES approvals of the proposal.

## X. Submittal Methods

Please see the pre-proposal and full proposal for complete details. We accept electronic files that are compatible with Microsoft Office or Adobe PDF. Please email files to [andrea.l.bejtlich@des.nh.gov](mailto:andrea.l.bejtlich@des.nh.gov). Particularly large files may not be transmitted successfully via email; please contact us if you require alternative arrangements.

**XI. Timetable for Watershed Assistance Grant Processing**

Please note that project funding is pending NHDES and EPA approval of your full proposal and federal budget appropriations.

Total time to complete the Grant Agreement from the submittal of the pre-proposal, to the beginning of the project, is approximately **one year**, as shown in the following table:

PROCESS	ESTIMATED SCHEDULE
1a. Contact NHDES about your pre-proposal.	By September 6, 2023
1b. Deadline for submittal of pre-proposals.	September 15, 2023 at 4:00 PM
2. NHDES will evaluate pre-proposals.	Early October 2023
3. NHDES will contact organizations that submitted pre-proposals with status update and schedule interviews if necessary.	October 2023
4. Deadline for submittal of full proposals	Jan 12, 2024 at 4:00 PM
5. NHDES will make final selection of full proposals to receive funding and submit to EPA for review.	February-March 2024
6. NHDES will draft Grant Agreements and send to organizations for signatures.	April-May 2024
7. NHDES Commissioner and N.H. Attorney General’s office review Grant Agreements.	May - June 2024
8. Submit Grant Agreements to Governor and Executive Council for approval.	June-August 2024
9. Governor and Executive Council approved project may begin.	Fall 2024

\* The dates in this table are subject to federal funds, dates are subject to change.

**SUBMITTAL DEADLINE for Pre-proposal**  
**(Contact NHDES staff by September 6, 2023)**  
**4:00 PM**  
**September 15, 2023**

**SUBMITTAL DEADLINE for Full Proposal**  
**4:00 PM**  
**Jan 12, 2024**



**Attachment A: EPA Watershed Plan Elements (a) through (i)**

- a) *Identify pollution causes and sources: An identification of the causes and sources or groups of similar sources that will need to be controlled to achieve the load reductions estimated in this watershed-based plan (and to achieve any other watershed goals identified in the watershed-based plan), as discussed in item (b) immediately below. Sources that need to be controlled should be identified at the significant subcategory level with estimates of the extent to which they are present in the watershed (e.g., X number of storm drains that need retrofits; Y miles of gravel roads that need drainage BMPs; or Z linear miles of eroded streambank needing remediation).*
- b) *Estimate pollution reductions needed: An estimate of the load reductions expected for the management measures described under (c). Estimates should be provided at the same level as in item (a) above (e.g., the total load reduction expected for storm drain retrofits, gravel road BMPs or eroded streambanks). First quantify the pollutant loads for the watershed. Based on these pollutant loads, determine the reductions needed to meet water quality standards (or other goals).*
- c) *Actions needed to reduce pollution: A description of the NPS management measures that will need to be implemented to achieve the load reduction or habitat restoration scope estimated under paragraph (b) above (as well as to achieve other watershed goals identified in this watershed-based plan), and identification (using a map or a description) of the critical areas in which those measures will be needed to implement this plan.*
- d) *Costs and authority: An estimate of the amounts of technical and financial assistance needed, associated costs, and/or the sources and authorities that will be relied upon, to implement this plan. Describe the types and sources of match that will be used to implement the project, keeping in mind that at least 40% of the project cost must be provided in non-federal match.*
- e) *Outreach and education: An information/education component that will be used to enhance public understanding of the project and encourage their early and continued participation in selecting, designing, and implementing NPS management measures.*
- f) *Schedule: A schedule for implementing the NPS management measures identified in this plan that is reasonably expeditious.*
- g) *Milestones: A description of interim, measurable milestones for determining whether NPS management measures or other control actions are being implemented.*
- h) *Success indicators and evaluation: A set of criteria that can be used to determine whether loading reductions or habitat restoration is being achieved over time and substantial progress is being made towards attaining water quality standards and, if not, the criteria for determining whether this watershed-based plan needs to be revised.*
- i) *Monitoring plan: A monitoring component to evaluate the effectiveness of the implementation efforts over time, measured against the criteria established under item (h) immediately above.*