



SECTION 604(b) WATER QUALITY PLANNING GRANTS Information Package



RSA/Rule: Voluntary

I. Introduction

Each year, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) solicits Letters of Intent (LOIs) for projects conducting water quality planning.

LOI consultation is **REQUIRED**.

Call or e-mail us to discuss your LOI by **September 6, 2024**.
The LOI submittal deadline is 4:00 PM on **September 13, 2024**.

Table 1. Project Manager contact information for LOI consultation.

Watershed or Plan Type	Project Manager	Contact information
Coastal watershed	Sally Soule	Email: sally.a.soule@des.nh.gov Phone: (603) 559-0032
All other watersheds	Jeff Marcoux	Email: jeffrey.d.marcoux@des.nh.gov Phone: (603) 271-8862
	Nisa Marks	Email: nisa.m.marks@des.nh.gov Phone: (603) 271-8811
River Corridor Plans	Tracie Sales	Email: tracie.j.sales@des.nh.gov Phone: (603) 271-2959

II. General Water Quality Planning Grant

The NHDES Nonpoint Source Management Program is pleased to announce the availability of Section 604(b) Water Quality Planning Grant funds to support local initiatives for water quality management planning.

Funds for NHDES Water Quality Planning Grants are appropriated through the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) under Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act. Approximately \$180,000 will be available for Water Quality Planning Grant projects this year, pending EPA and State approvals and federal budget appropriations. Preference is given to projects that address water quality concerns in high-priority impaired or high-quality waters in conformance with EPA's [Nonpoint Source Program Grant Guidelines for States and Territories](#) (May 4, 2024) and the priorities identified in the [New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan 2020-2024](#).

III. Water Quality Planning Grant Proposal Process

Project information provided in the Letter of Intent (LOI) is reviewed and ranked by the NHDES Watershed Assistance Section grant selection team. Selected LOI applicants may be invited to an interview to further discuss the project. Based on the LOI 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. The proposed Grant Agreements will be reviewed

and executed by the Grantee, and then routed for State approval via the Governor and Executive Council (G&C). Funding is pending approval of the Grant Agreement, the federal budget and continuing appropriation by EPA to New Hampshire.

Potential applicants are required to contact NHDES Watershed Assistance Section staff by September 6, 2024 to discuss the proposed project prior to beginning development of the LOI. Please see Table 1 for Project Manager contact information.

IV. Water Quality Planning Grant Recipient Eligibility

Governmental subdivisions and non-profit organizations are eligible to receive Water Quality Planning Grants. Examples include:

- ✓ Municipalities
- ✓ Regional Planning Commissions
- ✓ Non-profit Organizations
- ✓ County Conservation Districts
- ✓ State Agencies
- ✓ Watershed Associations
- ✓ Lake, Pond, River or Estuary Associations
- ✓ Public Water Suppliers
- ✓ Local River Management Advisory Committees ([RSA 483:8-a](#))

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 New Hampshire Secretary of State** (this can be done on the [New Hampshire Secretary of State's website](#)).

Note: 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

Preference will be given to projects that address water quality concerns in watersheds with high recovery potential as outlined in Appendices B and C or protection potential as outlined in Appendix H, as identified in the [2020-2024 New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan](#) (search by waterbody name or HUC-12).

Eligible Projects

Section 604(b) of the EPA Clean Water Act requires funds to be allocated to entities for conducting water quality planning, including:

- i. Identifying the most cost effective and locally acceptable facility and nonpoint source (NPS) measures to meet and maintain water quality standards.
- ii. Developing an implementation plan to obtain State and local financial and regulatory commitments to implement water quality plans.
- iii. Determining the nature, extent and causes of water quality problems in the State.
- iv. Determining those publicly owned treatment works which should be constructed, taking into account the relative degree of effluent reduction attained and the consideration of alternatives to such construction.

Other eligible projects that address the above water quality concerns may include but are not limited to: developing corridor management plans for designated rivers, conducting monitoring to address specific water quality concerns; planning stormwater retrofits to address water quality impairments; green infrastructure projects that manage wet weather to maintain or restore natural hydrology; working with municipalities

committed to adopting specific model ordinances and/or meeting regulations (NH MS4 Permits) to address priority water quality planning concerns; and/or developing watershed-based plans in accordance with EPA criteria requiring nine mandatory elements (a) through (i) for watershed-based plans. Consider utilizing procured subcontractors for services such as modeling pollutant loads, running watershed and in-lake models to generate water quality goals, creating best management practice (BMP) and/or stormwater control measure (SCM) prioritization and cost effectiveness tables, etc., if in-house capacity does not exist.

VI. Water Quality Planning Grant Requirements

1. Water Quality Planning 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 LOI submittal** but will be needed prior to awarding funds. For more information, see the [Resources for Watershed Assistance Grants](#) webpage.
 - 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). Please ensure the mailing address associated with your vendor code is up to date as this is where checks will be sent. To update your information, please send all pertinent updates to prch.web@des.nh.gov and include your existing Vendor Code for reference.
 - b) **Grant Agreement** - The “contract” is provided by NHDES using the objectives, deliverables and tasks provided in the full proposal and is signed by the grant recipient.
 - c) **Certificate of Authority** - A 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”** - A document provided by the [New Hampshire 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** – A document provided by the grant recipient’s insurance indicating that the grant recipient has the required insurance coverage, including statutory worker’s compensation; employee liability; comprehensive public liability of bodily injuries, death or property damage, in amounts not less than \$1,000,000 per occurrence and \$2,000,000 aggregate for bodily injury or death any one incident and \$500,000 for property damage in any one incident).
2. Water Quality Planning Grant recipients are **not** required to provide matching funds. However, if you have commitments of matching funds, or want to include matching funds in your full proposal, please contact us about match applicability and 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 \(NH DOT\) website](#). For assistance contact Andrea Bejtlich at [\(603\) 271-8475](tel:6032718475), or 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 management or operations office, accounting, personnel, library expenses and all other types of expenditures not listed specifically under one of the subcategories of "Facilities."

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), Best Management Practice Accounting and Tracking Tool (BMP-BATT) 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.

Note: 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-5).

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. 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.

3. 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.

5. 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.

IX. Evaluation Criteria

Table 2. LOI Ranking. The Watershed Assistance Section grants review team will review and rank the LOI submittals based upon the following criteria:

Category	Criteria	Max Points
Water Quality Improvement (either/or)	Impaired Waters: Project will achieve or lead to removing an impairment from the 303(d) list, resulting in a Section 319 Nonpoint Source Success Story .	35*
	High-Quality Waters: Project will achieve or lead to quantifiable progress toward water quality goals in a high-quality watershed.	30*
604(b) Criteria	The project meets the 604(b) Criteria. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Identifying NPS measures to meet water quality standards. ii. Obtaining local commitments to implement water quality plans. iii. Determining the nature, extent and causes of water quality problems. iv. Determining those publicly owned treatment works which should be constructed, taking into account the relative degree of effluent reduction attained and the consideration of alternatives to such construction. 	25
Outcomes	The LOI includes specific deliverables and associated environmental outcomes.	20
Project Communication	General quality and completeness of the LOI.	5
Priority Watershed	The project addressed water quality concerns in high or medium priority watersheds as identified in the NHDES Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan .	5
Environmental Justice	The waterbody's impact on communities with Environmental Justice concerns (i.e. accessibility to the public, lower income area, etc.). Note: NHDES staff will utilize EPA's Environmental Justice Screening Tool to facilitate project ranking.	5
Climate Impact	The project will address local impacts of climate change such as flooding, water quantity or water quality (e.g. cyanobacteria).	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 Request for LOIs for complete details. We accept electronic files that are compatible with Microsoft Office or Adobe PDF. Email files to 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 Water Quality Planning Grant Processing

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

Total time to execute the Grant Agreement from submittal of the LOI, to the beginning of the project, is approximately **one year**, as shown in the following table. Please take this timeline into consideration when developing your project schedule and timeline.

PROCESS	ESTIMATED SCHEDULE
1a. The LOI consultation must occur with the project manager.	By September 6, 2024
1b. Deadline for submittal of LOI.	September 13, 2024 at 4:00 PM
2. NHDES will evaluate LOIs.	Early October 2024
3. NHDES will contact organizations that submitted LOIs with a status update and schedule interviews if necessary.	October 2024
4. Deadline for submittal of full proposals	December 13, 2024 at 4:00 PM
5. NHDES will make final selection of full proposals to receive funding and submit to EPA for review.	January 2025
6. NHDES will draft Grant Agreements and send to organizations for signatures.	June 2025
7. NHDES Commissioner and N.H. Attorney General's office review Grant Agreements.	June-July 2025
8. Submit Grant Agreements to Governor and Executive Council for approval.	July-September 2025
9. Governor and Executive Council approved project may begin.	Summer 2025

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

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE for LOI
(Contact NHDES staff by September 6, 2024)

4:00 PM

September 13, 2024

SUBMITTAL DEADLINE for Full Proposal (by invitation only)

4:00 PM

December 13, 2024