



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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NOTICE OF UPCOMING GRANT OPPORTUNITY

**FFY 2022 Section 319 Nonpoint Source Pollution Competitive Grants Program
Request for Responses to be issued on or about October 13, 2021
One Pre-RFR Information Conference Call will take place on September 27, 2021**

TO ALL INTERESTED PARTIES:

Section 319 of the Clean Water Act of 1987 (319) established a national program to control nonpoint sources (NPS) of pollution. Each year the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) issues a Request for Responses (RFR) for competitive projects to be funded through Section 319 grants. This Fall's RFR is anticipated to be issued on or about October 13, 2021. Proposals will be due on or about December 15, 2021. The RFR will be announced via COMMBUYS, the Commonwealth's procurement site, and also on MassDEP's website. The RFR will be posted at the MassDEP website, <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#section-319-nonpoint-source-competitive-grants-program->

MassDEP will hold one pre-RFR informational conference call via zoom to discuss ideas for potential projects before the Fall FFY2022 Section 319 RFR is issued. MassDEP recommends that all potential grant applicants participate in the call to discuss ideas for new projects. The call will be held on **Monday, September 27, 2021 at 10 a.m.** To participate, you must register in advance of the call. To register copy and paste the following address into your web browser: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZYrceyvqzlvHNMovpS9hzWCF2t5vhtM-aFw>

After you register, you will receive a confirmation email containing information about joining the conference call.

The purpose of the call is to review project requirements and eligibilities and to discuss program guidelines, grant requirements, and FFY 2022 program priorities. Any other aspect of the program may also be discussed. Under state procurement regulations, MassDEP and other EEA staff will not be able to discuss projects with proponents once the RFR is issued. Therefore, potential applicants are urged to take advantage of the pre-RFR conference call to engage 319 program staff in a discussion about how to develop eligible, competitive projects, prior to the October RFR issuance. All attendees will be given the opportunity to ask questions and discuss potential projects.

Potential applicants are encouraged, but are not required, to attend and participate. If you cannot attend the pre-RFR conference call but would like to learn more about the program or discuss a potential project, please contact program staff listed below prior to the October 13, 2021 date for issuance of the RFR.

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Michelle Waters-Ekanem, Director of Diversity/Civil Rights at 617-292-5751.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: www.mass.gov/dep

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PROJECT ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Responses to the RFR may be submitted by any Massachusetts public or private organization. Projects from all basins are eligible and encouraged, excluding work covered under NPDES and MS4 stormwater permits. Projects should be of manageable size but should strive to be comprehensive projects addressing all major identified nonpoint sources affecting water quality in the watershed or subwatershed. All 319 projects are required to provide quarterly reporting as well as a Final Report. A 40% non-federal match, of either funds and/or in-kind services, is required as a condition of the 319 grant award.

FFY 2022 Project Types for 319 funding

The bulk of 319 funds are directed to Implementation Projects. A smaller but still substantial pool of funding is also available for projects of other types.

A) Implementation Projects in Impaired Waters

The most competitive applicants will propose a watershed-based strategy to implement a combination of structural and non-structural Best Management Practices (BMPs) addressing all impairments and leading to restoration of impaired waters (Impaired waters are those listed in categories 4a, 4c, and 5 of the Massachusetts 2016 Integrated List of Waters which can be found here:

[https://www.mass.gov/lists/integrated-lists-of-waters-related-reports#2016-integrated-list-of-waters-\).](https://www.mass.gov/lists/integrated-lists-of-waters-related-reports#2016-integrated-list-of-waters-)

BMPs should be selected for optimal pollutant load removal, emphasizing source reduction. Proposed BMPs must be developed at least to the conceptual design stage and submitted with the proposal. Proposals must contain site specific information to demonstrate that the project is feasible and ready to be constructed within the project timeline. A completed Watershed-Based Plan will be required by the start of each implementation project before a Notice to Proceed can be issued. The MassDEP NPS Program will assist in the development of these WBPs.

B) Healthy Watersheds and Protection of High-Quality Waters

Implementation projects for climate-change adaptation and resiliency and projects that protect non-impaired and high-quality waters from the effects of nonpoint source pollution are eligible for 319 program funds. This may include funding and support for a project with a substantial land conservation component as part of NPS prevention and remediation work. It might also include geomorphology and habitat improvement, and/or nutrient, sediment, and pathogen reduction in streams. These proposals must be supported with documentation of the problem, conceptual or better plans to explain the strategy and approach, and all other information necessary to demonstrate the feasibility and effectiveness of the proposed project. While MassDEP welcomes high quality proposals throughout the state, a list of waterbodies that may be more competitive can be found on the MassDEP website [Tools for Developing 319 Proposals](#).

C) Development of Municipal and Regional Stormwater Collaboratives and Funding Mechanisms

A stormwater utility is a property assessment tool that provides a sustainable source of funding to construct, maintain, and repair stormwater infrastructure. Proposals may include initial research to evaluate whether a stormwater utility is appropriate for a town, quantifying the current and future cost of stormwater management programs, development and distribution of educational materials, and development of regional agreements and funding structures.

D) **Regional Implementation Project Development**

An initiative for 2022 will solicit multiple contractors in Worcester and Plymouth Counties to serve as regional nonpoint source coordinators. These regional coordinators will develop watershed-based plans and high-quality projects to be funded through 319 and will conduct outreach and education to enhance the NPS Program message.

E) **Outreach and Education**

Outreach and education is often recommended as an effective nonstructural BMP. Successful projects in this category will propose specific outreach and education activities and products and will develop and implement an evaluation method to gauge the effectiveness of these activities. Projects should have regional or statewide relevance and should include a deliverable that can be made available in both print and electronic form, ensuring accessibility for disabled and non-English-speaking audiences if appropriate.

Requirements for Proposed Projects in NPDES Stormwater Regulated/MS4 areas:

- **Implementation projects remain eligible for funding in NPDES regulated areas** (Town by town maps of regulated areas are found here: <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/regulated-ms4-massachusetts-communities>). The work must be completed by the end of the 319 contract (estimated date: December 31, 2024) and **before it is required by the NPDES Stormwater Management Plan**. 319 funds cannot be used for work that addresses current NPDES permit requirements.
- All other types of projects are eligible in regulated or mixed regulated/unregulated areas, provided the work proposed is not required under the current or pending NPDES stormwater permit.

APPLICATION PROCESS AND FUNDING AVAILABILITY

The RFR contains a schedule for each step of the application process. Applications must meet the eligibility requirements and follow the specific format outlined in the RFR. Applications are reviewed and recommended by a screening committee comprised of MassDEP, EEA, and EPA staff. Once approved by the Commonwealth, the list of recommended projects is submitted to EPA. Following EPA approval, MassDEP begins contract negotiations with the proponents of the funded projects. As a general rule, 319 grantees can expect funds will become available six to ten months after submitting the initial grant application. Funds are paid on a reimbursement basis, and the Department retains 10% of the award amount until the project is finalized. From fiscal year 1990 through 2021, individual 319 grant awards have ranged from \$10,000 up to \$500,000. For this RFR, MassDEP anticipates that approximately \$1,600,000 will be available in total 319 grant funding for disbursement to competitive projects.

Program guidelines emphasize the importance of speedy, efficient expenditure of grant funds. Successful applicants must be diligent about adhering to project milestones and timely completion of tasks and deliverables. Funds may be withdrawn from projects that are not expeditiously implemented and will be redirected to other projects that are ready to move forward.

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Evaluation criteria will be specified in the RFR. Implementation work that addresses water quality impairments listed in Categories 4a, 4c, and 5 of the Massachusetts 2016 Integrated List of Waters continues to be the highest NPS program priority (i.e., in removal of the waterbody from Categories 4a, 4c, and 5 of the Massachusetts 2016 Integrated List of Waters, <https://www.mass.gov/doc/final-massachusetts-year-2016-integrated-list-of-waters/download>).

To obtain additional program information, summaries of past 319 projects, or a copy of the 319 RFR, see

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#section-319-nonpoint-source-competitive-grants-program> or contact **Malcolm Harper**, 319 Nonpoint Source Program Coordinator, at Malcolm.Harper@mass.gov.