



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

Central Regional Office • 8 New Bond Street, Worcester MA 01606 • 508-792-7650

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DATE November 18, 2019
NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY
Water Quality Monitoring Grant Program
REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS

Summary of Grant Opportunity: The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is seeking grant proposals from eligible entities outside the agency for bacteria monitoring data collection and/or associated capacity-building in order to perform data collection in the future, with the goal of increasing the amount of bacteria data for MassDEP's assessment of primary and secondary contact recreation activities in surface waters of the Commonwealth.

Grant Program Goal: With more than 3,000 lakes and ponds and 12,000 miles of streams and rivers in the state, MassDEP's Watershed Planning Program (WPP) can sample just a small fraction of these surface waters in any given year. MassDEP's goal in presenting this grant opportunity is to supplement its own surface water quality dataset ("internal dataset") with data collected by groups outside of the agency ("external dataset"). To help meet this goal, MassDEP is soliciting grant proposals for the 2020 summer sampling season (i.e., from April 1st to October 15th) for the collection of bacteria data in surface waters. This external dataset will enhance the amount and spatial coverage of data that MassDEP can use in the assessment of primary and secondary contact recreation activities in surface waters of the Commonwealth.

MassDEP's internal data, and some external data collected by others, are used as the basis for assessing surface water quality in accordance with the requirements set forth in §305(b) and §303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA). In addition to the data collected by MassDEP staff, reliable data obtained from other state and federal agencies, local governments, drinking water utilities, volunteer organizations and other sources are also considered in MassDEP's surface water quality assessments. Use-attainment determinations (i.e., is the waterbody able to support swimming and boating?) are made for each waterbody for which adequate data and information are available. However, many waters are not assessed for one or both of these uses in any given 2 year assessment cycle. Therefore, many surface waters that were assessed in the past need updated information to determine the current condition of the waterbody, and many small and/or unnamed streams and ponds have never been monitored or assessed. For more information on MassDEP's water quality assessment process, the CALM, please see: <https://www.mass.gov/media/1838926/>.

The quality of the data used by MassDEP reflects project organization, extensive planning, the application of rigorous data quality objectives (DQO), and training in standardized field and laboratory procedures, metadata collection, and data verification. Collectively, the result of these actions is a scientifically-sound and legally-defensible dataset that can help MassDEP determine if a waterbody is meeting surface water quality standards (for more information on writing a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), see <https://www.mass.gov/guides/water-quality-monitoring-for-volunteers>). **MassDEP is in the process of developing a Bacteria Monitoring QAPP that will document general procedures that apply to all projects awarded under this Grant Program (the QAPP will be made available at the time of project award notification).** All successful grantees will be asked to review the QAPP to make certain they understand and agree to the general procedures. Grantees must also complete their own Sampling and Analysis Plan (SAP), which describes the aspects of the monitoring that are specific to their project (e.g., sample locations, sampling frequency, etc.). Completed SAPs must be submitted to MassDEP for review and approval.

All grantees must submit data before November 15, 2020. External data can be submitted to MassDEP's WPP data portal. Guidelines for submission of data to MassDEP's WPP data portal are located here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/external-data-submittals-to-the->

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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[watershed-planning-program](#). Alternatively, external datasets can be submitted through the national Water Quality Portal (WQP). The WQP is a cooperative service sponsored by the United States Geological Survey (USGS), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the National Water Quality Monitoring Council (NWQMC). It serves data collected by over 400 states, federal, tribal and local agencies. For access to the user's guide see this link: <https://www.waterqualitydata.us>. MassDEP staff can access external water quality data submitted through the National WQP. Eligible Entities must specify in their proposals, which method they plan to use for submittal of data.

Eligible Entities and Projects: Eligible Entities for this Grant Opportunity are limited to non-profit organizations, and can include watershed groups, lake and pond associations, academic institutions and other non-profit organizations with the ability to conduct bacteria monitoring and data collection, or who wish to develop this capacity. Previous grant awardees must be in good standing to be eligible for the current funding cycle. Good standing is defined as fulfilling all requirements and conditions under the SFY2019 water quality monitoring grants program.

Academic institutions will only be eligible for grants provided they primarily provide bacteria analysis services, on a no-cost basis, in partnership with other local non-profit organizations that are not academic institutions. Academic institutions must identify the local non-profit organization(s) that they will provide free sample analysis for in the grant application. Grants awarded to academic institutions would be primarily to reimburse the institutions for the direct and indirect costs associated with performing bacteria analyses on a no-cost basis on samples provided by other local partners (watershed groups, lake and pond associations, and other non-profit organizations with the ability to conduct bacteria monitoring).

Eligible Entities must describe in their proposals how the grant funding will support one or more of the following or similar activities for surface water bacteria monitoring data collection and/or to build capacity for surface water data collection.

- monitoring project design and planning (e.g., QAPP review and Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAP));
- purchase of monitoring equipment and supplies (e.g., enzyme-substrate analytical systems, incubators, reagents, sample containers);
- training in monitoring support areas (e.g., use of enzyme-substrate analytical systems, probe calibration, QA, data management and review);
- field staff for surface water bacteria monitoring specific to this project;
- technical assistance in data analysis and reporting; and/or
- technical assistance in formatting data submissions to MassDEP's external water quality data portal or the National Water Quality Portal (WQP).

Funding Availability:

MassDEP currently estimates that up to \$200,000 in total grant funding may be available for the water quality monitoring grants in SFY20. However, at a minimum, grant funding in the amount of \$160,000 will be available for this Grant program in SFY20. Applicants should note that MassDEP reserves the right not to award any grants for this program, and also reserves the right to award lesser grant award amounts, based on the quality and/or quantity of the proposals received. Individual grant awards shall not exceed \$15,000.

The estimated start date for all grant projects is March 1, 2020 (the formal start date will be identified on the fully executed grant contract following award). The funding available for this grant program is available only for expenses incurred between the project start date and June 30, 2020. Eligible Entities are encouraged, but not required, to plan and complete as many activities (i.e., monitoring project design and planning, purchase of monitoring equipment and supplies, training in monitoring support areas, and/or field time associated with surface water bacteria monitoring activities) by the June 30, 2020 deadline in order to maximize the use of grant funding to support the total cost of the project. In addition, Eligible Entities are encouraged to provide matching funds for any activities (i.e., field time associated with surface water bacteria monitoring activities, data analysis, and/or formatting and submitting data) which occur after June 30, 2020.

Eligible Entities should also note that the SFY20 grant funding awarded through this Program is on a reimbursement basis, and Eligible Entities must provide documentation indicating that all costs for activities/equipment were completed by or before SFY end date of June 30, 2020.

Grant Application Process and Evaluation Criteria: The Water Quality Monitoring Grant Program section on MassDEP's website contains a Water Quality Monitoring Grant Program Request for Grant Proposals document that contains a procurement schedule describing the steps of the application process, all project proposal and qualification requirements, and a specific format for responding to this Grant Opportunity; see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>.

Proposal submission: All applications must be received by MassDEP by **12:00 p.m. on December 20, 2019**. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected automatically.

Application must be submitted electronically, via email, to:

Grants Program Manager:

Meghan Selby
Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection
Watershed Planning Program
8 New Bond Street
Worcester, MA 01606
meghan.selby@mass.gov
(508) 767-2893

Evaluation Criteria: The evaluation criteria components for MassDEP's review and scoring of Grant Proposal Responses are as specified in the Water Quality Monitoring Grant Program Request for Grant Proposals.

Question and Answer Period: Written questions can be submitted to the Grant Program Manager at meghan.selby@mass.gov until ***December 4, 2019 at 12:00 p.m.*** A complete question and answer document will be posted on the MassDEP Website (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>) by December 13, 2019.

Additional Information: For additional information regarding the Water Quality Monitoring Grant Program, please refer to the MassDEP website link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>.