



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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DATE January 30, 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 groups 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.

Overview of the Problem and Grant Program Goals: The mission of MassDEP's Watershed Planning Program (WPP) is to implement a comprehensive surface water monitoring strategy for the Commonwealth that serves all water quality management needs and addresses all waterbody types. However, with over 3,000 lakes and ponds and 12,000 miles of streams and rivers in the state, MassDEP can only sample a small fraction of these surface waters in any given year. Therefore, MassDEP's goal in presenting this grant opportunity is to supplement its own surface water 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 bacteria monitoring and/or capacity building activities that are being planned for the 2019 sampling season (i.e., April 1, 2019 to October 15, 2019) to support eligible groups or entities in the collection of bacteria data in surface waters. This external dataset will enhance the amount and spatial coverage of data that MassDEP can utilize to determine whether Massachusetts' waters are safe for the public's swimming and boating activities (as well as other forms of primary and secondary contact recreation).

The intent of this grant opportunity is to expand the capabilities of eligible entities to collect bacteria data and increase the availability of this external dataset for MassDEP's use in water quality assessments. MassDEP's data and credible external data collected by others will be 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 are in need of 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 please see <https://www.mass.gov/media/1838926/>.

The quality of the data used by MassDEP reflects project organization, extensive planning, 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 CWA water quality standards (<https://www.mass.gov/regulations/314-CMR-4-the-massachusetts-surface-water-quality-standards>).

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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External data can be submitted to MassDEP's WPP data portal or to the National Water Quality Portal (WQP). Guidelines for submission to MassDEP's web site are located here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/external-data-submittals-to-the-watershed-planning-program>. This site has been designed to guide users on data format protocols in order to ease MassDEP's data usability reviews. 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/>.

Eligible Entities and Projects: Eligible entities for this Grant Opportunity are limited to legally recognized 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. To qualify, groups must include proof of current non-profit status in their grant application package.

Eligible Projects: Eligible Entities must describe through their proposals how the grant funding will support external surface water bacteria monitoring data collection and/or to build capacity for surface water data collection. Examples of grant-eligible activities include, but are not limited to, the following:

- monitoring project design and planning (e.g., Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), and Sampling and Analysis Plans (SAP));
- purchase of monitoring equipment and supplies (e.g., enzyme-substrate analytical systems, incubators, reagents, sample containers);
- salary for a monitoring program coordinator;
- training in monitoring support areas (e.g., use of enzyme-substrate analytical systems, probe calibration, QA, data management and review);
- field program for surface water bacteria monitoring;
- technical assistance in data analysis and reporting; and/or
- technical assistance in formatting data submissions to MassDEP's external water quality data portal (<https://www.mass.gov/guides/external-data-submittals-to-the-watershed-planning-program>) or the National Water Quality Portal (WQP)(<https://www.waterqualitydata.us/>).

Funding Availability:

MassDEP's FY19 operating budget allocates \$200,000 water monitoring grants. MassDEP plans to award grants of \$5,000 to \$15,000 per eligible entity. Additional funding could be made available in FY19 if the quality and quantity of the proposals exceeds the current allocation.

Applicants may submit proposals for projects that will start and end during the 2019 monitoring season. The \$200,000 allocated to the grants expires June 30, 2019 and is therefore available to reimburse awardees for costs incurred on or before June 30, 2019. Applicants are encouraged to develop project proposals that maximize incurred costs prior to June 30, 2019. While MassDEP anticipates continued funding for the water monitoring grant program in the next fiscal year, reimbursement for costs incurred after June 30, 2019 are contingent upon appropriation of funds.

Grant Application Process and Evaluation Criteria: The Watershed Group Monitoring Grant Program document on MassDEP's website contains a grant application form, 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>. An information meeting, with a question and answer session, was held on Thursday, December 6, 2018 at 10 a.m. at MassDEP's Worcester Office, located at 8 New Bond Street, Worcester, MA 01606. All questions and answers from that information meeting, as well as those questions and subsequent answers received through December 28, 2019 have also been posted on MassDEP's website, along with a list of meeting attendees.

Proposal submission: The grant application deadline is February 27, 2019 at 5 PM. Proposals must be submitted electronically to Therese Beaudoin (therese.beaudoin@mass.gov) by that date and time.

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

Additional Information: For additional information regarding the Watershed Group Monitoring Grant Program, please refer to the MassDEP website link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>. For process questions, contact the grant manager, Therese Beaudoin, at therese.beaudoin@mass.gov.