



# Department of Environmental Protection

One Winter Street Boston, MA 02108 • 617-292-5500

Charles D. Baker  
Governor

Karyn E. Polito  
Lieutenant Governor

Bethany A. Card  
Secretary

Martin Suuberg  
Commissioner

## **NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY**

### **Water Quality Monitoring Grant (WQMG) Program REQUEST FOR GRANT PROPOSALS State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023**

**Summary of Grant Opportunity:** The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) is seeking grant proposals from Eligible Entities for the purpose of supporting ongoing or new monitoring and data collection efforts to increase the amount of external data MassDEP uses for water quality assessments.

**Grant Program Scope:** With more than 3,000 lakes and ponds, 12,000 miles of streams and rivers, and almost 3,000 square miles of coastal waters in the Commonwealth, MassDEP's Watershed Planning Program (WPP) can sample only a fraction of these surface waters in any given year. MassDEP supplements its own surface water quality dataset ("internal dataset") with data collected by entities outside of the agency ("external dataset"). Internal and certain external data meeting MassDEP's acceptance criteria for data quality are used as the basis for assessing surface water quality in accordance with requirements set forth in § 305(b) and § 303(d) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA).

Additionally, MassDEP is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and environmental justice (EJ)<sup>1</sup> through its public investments. The agency seeks to prioritize the direction of these

---

<sup>1</sup> "Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens." See Environmental Justice Policy of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (updated June 24, 2021): <https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download>.

This information is available in alternate format. Contact Glynis Bugg at 617-348-4040.

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370

MassDEP Website: [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

Printed on Recycled Paper

resources to benefit EJ communities and to address environmental inequities. To that end, MassDEP grant and funding programs include criteria and evaluation parameters that emphasize equity, diversity and environmental justice, consistent with each program's statutory authority and source of funding.

Through this grant program, MassDEP seeks to facilitate the efforts of Eligible Entities with continued and new work, including (1) direct monitoring of rivers, streams, lakes, ponds, and estuaries (surface waters) through field and laboratory work; (2) associated capacity-building actions (including, but not limited to, training and outreach) that improve the organization's ability to monitor surface waters through field and laboratory work; and (3) developing regional and long-term monitoring programs and networks.

**Eligible Entities and Projects:** Eligible Entities for this Grant Opportunity are limited to (1) federally recognized Tribal Nations within the Commonwealth of Massachusetts; and (2) non-profit organizations that can include watershed groups, lake and pond associations, and other non-profit organizations with the ability to conduct monitoring activities during the project period using technically-sound, approvable methodologies. While coalitions are not required for this grant application, collaborative projects that effectively leverage partnerships to create synergies will be given priority for funding. Academic institutions and towns and municipalities are not eligible for this SFY2023 grant program.

Eligible Entities must describe in their proposals how the grant funding will support one or more of the following or similar activities aligned with the scope of the grant program.

1. Direct monitoring of surface waters through field and laboratory work that includes:
  - a. Purchase of monitoring equipment and supplies for field or in-house laboratory use (e.g., enzyme-substrate analytical systems, incubators, reagents, sample containers, Secchi disk, temperature or conductivity data loggers, etc.).
  - b. Fees for external laboratory analysis performed during the contract period (i.e., services) of samples also collected during the grant contract period.
  - c. Fees for services to provide (a) direct monitoring; or (b) development of data management tools that lead to submission of data to MassDEP by a consultant performed during the contract period (i.e., services). Eligible Entities must demonstrate that work performed by a consultant cannot be performed by staff and/or volunteers and that the Eligible Entity can perform effective oversight of the consultant's work. Additionally, Eligible Entities must demonstrate that the organization or coalition is the principal contributor to the overall project being proposed when the budget includes fees for services by a consultant. Proposals where the organization or coalition are not the principal contributor to the proposed work are not eligible for funding.
  - d. Salary for staff performing monitoring activities specific to this project during the grant contract period including, but not limited to field work, laboratory work, QAPP development, and project planning and management.
  - e. Salary for a coalition coordinator (only if submitting as a coalition) for activities to coordinate the coalition's work specific to this project during the grant contract period.

2. Actions that increase the organization's or coalition's capacity to perform monitoring of surface waters through field and laboratory work, including:
  - a. Training of volunteers or organization personnel to conduct monitoring activities.
  - b. Training on Quality Assurance (QA) activities such as probe calibration or laboratory best practices.
  - c. Training on data management and review.
  - d. Outreach to the community to increase volunteer participation in organization monitoring activities (including communication of regional monitoring data and analyses).
  - e. Data management activities needed to improve data sharing with MassDEP.
3. Actions to develop regional and long-term monitoring programs or networks, including:
  - a. Purchase of monitoring equipment specifically intended for regional and long-term monitoring.
  - b. Training of organization personnel to perform actions specific to developing regional and long-term monitoring programs.

**Funding Availability:** MassDEP currently anticipates that up to \$500,000 in total grant funding may be available for the WQMG program in SFY2023, which ends on June 30, 2023. MassDEP reserves the right not to award the total funding currently available for this grant program. Grant awards may range from \$25,000 (minimum) to \$125,000 (maximum) per application as an individual organization or coalition, although the MassDEP grant review team reserves the right, in its discretion, to (1) grant smaller awards to proposals of exceptional merit; and (2) grant awards smaller than requested by grant applicant(s) based on the availability of funds. MassDEP currently anticipates that five (5) to fifteen (15) grants will be awarded through this program.

The estimated start date for all grant contracts is February 6, 2023 (the formal start date will be identified on the fully executed grant contract and Notice to Proceed following the award). The funding provided through this grant program is available only for Eligible Expenses incurred between the grant contract start date and June 30, 2023. The SFY2023 grant funding awarded through this Program is on a reimbursement basis, and Eligible Entities must provide all supporting documentation required by MassDEP indicating that all Eligible Expenses were incurred between the contract start date and June 30, 2023.

**Grant Application Process:** The WQMG program section on MassDEP's website contains a WQMG program Request for Grant Proposals (RFGP) document that describes the steps of the application process, all project proposal and qualification requirements, the preferred format for proposals in response to this Grant Opportunity, and an Estimated Grant Procurement Calendar; see <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality>.

**Application Deadline:** All applications must be received by MassDEP by **5:00 p.m. on November 14, 2022**. Applications received after the deadline will be rejected automatically. Application must be submitted electronically, via email, to the **WQMG Program Coordinator**, Robert Smith at [WQMG@Mass.Gov](mailto:WQMG@Mass.Gov)

**Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria components for MassDEP's review and scoring of Grant Proposal Responses are as specified in the WQMG program RFGP.

**Question and Answer Period:** Written questions can be submitted to MassDEP at [WQMG@Mass.Gov](mailto:WQMG@Mass.Gov) through October 17, 2022, at 12:00 p.m. (NOON). 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 October 24, 2022.

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