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Award Year 2024/2025 Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant

Official Answers to Questions

September 3, 2026

Q1. What are the project types under this Request for Proposals (RFP)? Page A-1 in the Attachment A – Application section asks for project types to be listed, but we can't find where project types are explicitly listed in the RFP.

A1. The Application in Attachment A refers to the types of Eligible Projects identified and described in Section 2.B. of the RFP.

Q2. Are any project types disallowed with other project types under the same application?

A2. A single application may include multiple Eligible Project types. There is no limit on the number of Eligible Project types, or combinations of Eligible Project types, included in an application. As identified in Section 2.C. of the RFP, the following project types are ineligible for funding under the Section 604(b) Grant Program:

- “Projects that would be undertaken to comply with local, State, or Federal governmental enforcement actions, such as Administrative Orders or Consent Orders.
- Comprehensive municipal wastewater planning projects.”

Q3. If we are applying to be an NPS Regional Coordinator, and planning to focus on sub-watersheds within a larger region, for the application do we need to include participation/support letters from all or any of the municipalities that the sub-watersheds cover? Are letters of support/participation needed for a 9e WBP for sub-watersheds that cover multiple municipalities?

A3. As indicated in Section 3.B. of the RFP, letters of support are required from all organizations identified in the project proposal as participating in the project or providing a portion of the matching funds for the project.

Q4. If the scope of an Eligible and Priority Project includes work that falls under a second Eligible and Priority Project category, should the application identify one or both project categories? (e.g., Regional Scale Watershed Planning for Nitrogen Impacted Areas would naturally fall under the scope of work conducted by an NPS Regional Coordinator)

A4. Applications should identify all relevant Eligible and Priority Project categories, as identified in Section 2.B. of the RFP, regardless of how the project is structured.

Q5. If the scope of an Eligible and Priority Project includes work that falls under a second Eligible and Priority Project category, does the application need to list separate tasks for each project category (e.g., the scope of an NPS Coordinator involves work in a coastal zone)?

A5. Applicants are not required to separately identify Eligible and Priority Project categories in the Application's Scope of Services. However, as detailed on A-7 in Attachment A, the Scope of Services should identify all content-specific tasks which result in discrete, deliverable products. It is the Applicant's responsibility to assess how to best delineate the tasks and deliverables of their Eligible and Priority Project(s).

Q6. Is it possible to include a private consulting firm as a subcontracted partner in the 604(b) application? If we do include them as a project partner, would the process of subcontracting them as a partner be subject to uniform procurement? We have been working closely with a private consulting firm for 20 years on a targeted sub-watershed, and we would like to include them as a partner in the application and as a subcontractor for tasks included in the application.

A6. As outlined in Section 2.A. of the RFP, a private consultant cannot be a co-applicant, as Eligible Applicants are limited to regional planning agencies, council of governments, counties, conservation districts, cities and towns, interstate organizations, federally recognized tribes, and organizations with state-wide agricultural capacity building experience.

However, Eligible Applicants may include a subcontractor or team of subcontractors in their application as part of their proposed work. Applicants must follow all state and federal requirements for subcontracting, including 2 CFR Part 200, Subpart D, and subcontractors working for an applicant are subject to the same terms and conditions as the Applicant, including all state and federal requirements, as defined in the RFP. See RFP Section 2.A.

Q7. Are NPS Regional Coordinators (RCs) required to develop Targeted Watershed Management Plans (TWMP) or Comprehensive Watershed Management Plans (CWMP)? Can a 9e-WBP be developed without a CWMP or TWMP?

A7. CWMPs and TWMPs are not requirements of the 604(b) Program and RCs are not required to develop or update a CWMP or TWMP under this RFP. A 9e-WBP can be developed without these plans.

As outlined in Section 2.B. of the RFP, RCs are required to complete the following water quality management tasks:

- Conducting monthly NPS RC check-ins with MassDEP and other RCs throughout the duration of the contract;
- Develop, write, and submit at least three grant proposals for 604(b) projects and/or 319 implementation projects during the contract period; and
- Develop a MassDEP-approved WBPs.

RCs may develop CWMPs or TWMPs to support the development of their 9e-WBP. However, said CWMPs and TWMPs must incorporate the EPA required nine elements of a WBP and be approved by MassDEP during the contract period.

Q8. Are Regional Coordinators required to create both CWMPs and TWMPs for targeted areas, or can they choose to do one instead of the other for identified areas within the larger regional area?

A8. CWMPs and TWMPs are not requirements of the 604(b) Program, and Regional Coordinators are not required to develop these plans under this RFP. Municipalities may have a separate requirement to complete these plans under MassDEP's Title 5 Program. Applicants should consult with the municipalities in their sub-watershed(s) about any such requirements under Title 5.

As discussed above in Answer 7, RCs may develop or update CWMPs or TWMPs to support the development of their 9e-WBP provided that the plans incorporate the EPA required nine elements of a WBP and be approved by MassDEP during the contract period.

It is the Applicant's responsibility to assess whether a CWMP and/or TWMP might be appropriate to include in a proposed project under this RFP.

Q9. If we are targeting a sub-watershed that falls within two or more municipalities for 9e planning, do we need to do CWMPs for all or any of the municipalities within the sub-watershed as a part of a 9e-WBP? Or, in this situation would we need to do, or be recommended to do, a Targeted Watershed Management Plan (TWMP), in place of CWMPs?

A9. See Answer to Question 8.

Q10. Are there any Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE) Fair Share requirements for this project budget? Do we need to write out our plan for DBE engagement in procurement as a part of the application?

A10. The previous 4.2% and 4.5% DBE goals are not required under this RFP. Compliance with the federal six good faith efforts when procuring goods and services remains in effect. Please see Attachment F for additional information.

Q11. When planning a WBP for a larger watershed that has multiple sub-watershed that cover multiple municipalities, can each partner municipality manage a portion of the scope and their own procurement? Would it be appropriate to have a task to incorporate all the sub-watershed work into the larger WBP?

A11. If a larger watershed has multiple sub-watersheds that cover multiple municipalities, each municipality or project partner can manage their portion of the larger project as an individual a task, and the project can include a separate task that incorporates that other work into the larger plan.

Note that the lead grantee and any lower level subrecipients are responsible for compliance with the state and federal terms and conditions of this award, including procurement guidelines. The partner municipalities would be responsible for their own procurements and compliance with said state and federal requirements.