



John R. Kasich, Governor
Mary Taylor, Lt. Governor
Craig W. Butler, Director

Request for Proposals
FY2016 Section 319 Grants
Application Deadline AUGUST 14, 2015

June 16, 2015

Dear Nonpoint Source Management Partner:

We are pleased to announce that Ohio EPA, in concert with other state water quality partners, is soliciting proposals for grants awarded under Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act. Grants in varying amounts will be awarded to local governments, park districts and other organizations for the implementation of projects to restore Ohio streams, reduce loadings of nonpoint source pollutants such as nutrients, sediment and/or projects that undo damage caused by hydromodification or the alteration of stream or riparian habitat. These grants provide up to sixty percent (60%) of total project costs and are awarded for three year terms. Local participants must provide forty percent (40%) of total project costs either through in-kind services and/or cash.

Based on anticipated FY16 federal funding, we anticipate that approximately \$2.2 million will be available for Section 319(h) grant funding during Federal Fiscal Year 2016. The actual amount depends upon the final FY16 U.S. EPA budget approved by Congress and the allocation awarded to Ohio by U.S. EPA. Subgranted funds will be awarded to applicants in spring 2016 and will be in effect for three year terms. **There have been several important revisions made to the FY16 Section 319 Request for Proposals so please review this document carefully.**

Background and Funding Priorities: Improving water quality in Ohio streams and lakes that are impaired by nutrients, sediments and other nonpoint sources of pollution is the focus for this year's Section 319(h) grant funding. Projects that eliminate impairments, reduce nutrients or restore impaired stream segments will score significantly higher in the review process and receive more favorable consideration than general NPS pollution prevention projects. Consistent with recently revised federal guidance, proposed projects must be consistent with recommended actions within an approved Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) report or a state-endorsed watershed action plan.

For 2016, Ohio EPA has removed the funding cap within each project category and developed specific state nonpoint source management priorities. Subgrant applications with projects meeting the following criteria will receive additional points during the review and scoring process:

1. Projects within the Lake Erie watershed
2. Wetland and/or riparian restoration that incorporates the use of Lake Erie tributary dredge sediments
3. Projects with expected nutrient reduction results
4. Projects engaging multiple 501(c) nonprofit, public and private sector participants

5. Projects located within critical areas identified in the TMDL and/or watershed plan and are consistent with those recommendations
6. Projects that enhance (*but do not duplicate*) previously funded nonpoint source projects
7. Projects where the sponsor has clear jurisdiction and management capacity
8. Proposed project will be ready to proceed and demonstrates a viable, executable schedule
9. Local commitment is evident
10. The watershed in which the project site is located exhibits a high likelihood of restorability
11. Project will generate measurable water quality benefits
12. Overhead and administrative costs are minimal
13. Proposed education and outreach activities are creative, project specific and narrative that describes proposed activities clearly and thoroughly, including specific activities.

Eligible Applicants: The following entities are eligible to apply for and receive grant funding awarded under Section 319(h):

- Local municipalities, counties and townships
- County and municipal park districts
- Soil & water conservation districts
- 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation and watershed organizations

School districts and private schools (such as Montessori schools) are **NOT** eligible to apply directly for Section 319(h) grants; however, a local government may apply to complete projects on publicly accessible school grounds with permission and support from the school.

Municipalities or regional sewer districts that are operating under a Consent Decree or other legal orders are **NOT** eligible to apply for any project designed to help them meet regulatory or enforcement requirements.

Grant Amounts and Local Matching Requirements

For the 2016 Section 319(h) grant cycle Ohio EPA has removed the funding cap within project categories. Applicants may apply for varying amounts (depending upon the local project costs) in federal Section 319(h) grant funds for a three-year period. **The required local share of project costs is 40%** – in other words, 40% of the total project costs **MUST** be provided as local match. *For example: if **total** project costs equal \$200,000, then no more than \$120,000 may be federal 319(h) grant funds. Applicants providing cash match will score higher than those providing only in-kind services as match.*

Applicants may apply for more than one type project within a single grant application however; grant sponsors may submit only one (1) application per HUC-8 watershed. Each project within an application will be reviewed and scored independently.

Eligible Projects: Water quality improvement and nonpoint source management projects eligible for funding under Section 319(h) are limited to:

- Stream restoration using natural channel methodology and lowhead dam removal
- Riparian restoration using bioengineering and/or green methodology
- Wetland restoration
- Highly targeted nutrient and sediment reduction demonstration projects (HUC-12 Only)

- Inland lake management and restoration (public lakes only)
- Regional watershed implementation support
- Acid mine drainage

Project Specific Educational and Outreach Requirements

All applications for Section 319(h) grants must include project-specific educational and public outreach activities describing how the successes of the project will be communicated throughout the community. *Costs associated with project-specific educational and outreach activities are eligible for grant funding, but may not exceed ten percent (10%) of total project costs.*

Environmental Monitoring

Ohio EPA will conduct project-appropriate environmental monitoring for all grant funded sub-grant projects using a dedicated crew from the Division of Surface Water's Ecological Assessment Section or by a contract provider. *No grant (or matching) funds may be used by applicants for water quality monitoring or water quality research activities.*

Sample Projects

A sample listing of the types of projects that we are seeking to support with Section 319(h) grant funding follows. We also have included general grant guidelines and limitations that may apply to specific types of projects:

1. Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Projects

When implemented effectively, creative and highly targeted projects using sediment and nutrient specific management practices may be effective at reducing or preventing these types of NPS pollutants from entering surface waters. *During the FY16 grant cycle, Ohio EPA is particularly interested in funding innovative projects that will measurably reduce sediment and nutrient losses within tributaries to the western Lake Erie basin. **These projects must be focused in a single HUC-12 subwatershed** and employ multiple (at least three) different types of agricultural sediment and/or nutrient reduction practices in critical areas of known impairment. The types of projects being encouraged include:*

- Nutrient management practices (may not include manure storage facilities);
- Sediment control projects;
- Controlled drainage or other projects designed to reduce sediment or nutrient rich runoff;
- Livestock exclusion and manure management projects;
- Conservation crop rotation projects with cover crops; and
- Riparian re-vegetation and/or protection projects
- Innovative practices such as saturated buffers and other controlled drainage practices

General limitations for sediment and nutrient reduction projects include:

- Projects must be implemented in a single 12-digit HUC subwatershed which is addressed by an endorsed watershed action plan and/or completed TMDL.
- Grant-funded agricultural management practices must be selected from the Ohio USDA-NRCS list of conservation practices standards except for innovative practices such as saturated buffers, wetland treatment areas, riparian water retention and reuse systems and others.

- Personnel costs to administer the project may not exceed 15% of grant requested.
- Cost-share amounts may not exceed 60% of actual costs required to install or implement management practices.

Consistent with federal grant guidelines, Section 319(h) grant funds may not be used to replace and/or expand an existing EQIP (or other farm-bill funded) initiative within the same subwatershed for which a grant project is proposed. Neither 319(h) grant nor matching funds may be used to purchase agricultural equipment.

Eligible applicants may apply for federal 319(h) funding to implement sediment and nutrient reduction projects **in only one 12-digit HUC per grant cycle**. All proposed practices must be consistent with recommendations within an approved TMDL or state endorsed watershed action plan and implemented in identified critical areas of NPS impairment.

2. Stream Restoration and/or Dam Removal/Modification Projects

Stream restoration or projects such as dam removals that re-establish ecological function, morphology, channel stability and natural flows continue to be projects that are most effective at generating measurable improvements in aquatic life use attainment and restoration of impaired streams. Hydromodification and habitat alteration are the two highest magnitude causes of NPS impairment in Ohio's streams and two of the most readily restored when projects are focused in critical areas of impairment.

Eligible projects include natural stream channel reconstruction; levee removal or modification; non-armored bio-engineered stream bank stabilization; low-head dam removal and/or modification; in-stream habitat restoration; and/or other projects that restore natural stream ecology, morphology and/or flow.

Projects will receive a higher score when conducted on public property where public access is permitted. If being done on private property (or property not owned by the project sponsor) restored areas **must** be protected with conservation easements and/or another riparian protection measure.

Logjam removal and/or stream "cleaning or dipping" are NOT eligible for funding or for use as local match under this program. Also, any project that is under enforcement order or required as mitigation under regulatory programs such as Section 401 permits is NOT eligible for funding.

3. Wetland Restoration and/or Re-naturalization

The restoration of wetlands that are hydrologically connected to surface waters is important for the effective filtering of nonpoint source pollutants. Section 319(h) subgrant funding is available for local groups to help restore and protect naturally occurring wetland areas. We are particularly interested in funding projects that restore previously existing wetland areas that are being degraded through existing land uses such as farming, mowing or other activities.

Stormwater treatment wetlands are eligible for grant funding only when they are constructed as part of a broader "treatment train" designed to reduce the rate and passively treat stormwater runoff from urban or agricultural areas.

Wetland restoration projects that are completed that also propose to protect restored areas with conservation easements or other protective measures will receive additional consideration.

Wetland and restoration projects within the Lake Erie watershed are among our highest priorities for the FY16 grant funding cycle.

4. Regional Watershed Implementation Support Projects

Ohio EPA's experience with nonpoint source management projects have helped us to identify that effective project implementation grows from Ohio's communities, park districts, soil and water conservation districts and other local watershed organizations with a vested stake in clean water. We also found that many of these organizations lack watershed management expertise and need direct assistance with activities such as water quality project development, grants writing and administration, changing land use practices, green stormwater management design, stream restoration NPS source reduction management actions and other items such as GIS mapping and advanced graphics support. Regional watershed implementation support projects funded under this grant will provide communities and other direct project implementers within their region's watersheds with direct access to such watershed and grant management assistance and project selection, design and implementation assistance.

Applicants for regional watershed implementation support projects *MUST demonstrate at the time of application that they represent (and are part of) a regional network of watershed managers, local implementers and other experts in watershed and nonpoint source management projects.*

Examples of deliverables that are anticipated to be included in any regional watershed support projects include (but are not limited to) providing assistance with the following:

- Project development and site assessment assistance
- Networking opportunities for regional watershed stakeholders
- Identifying critical watershed areas where implementation is needed.
- Site specific restoration or other NPS management projects
- Finding funding opportunities and assisting with grant writing
- Project management
- Project specific education and outreach
- Managing grants on behalf of local government sponsors and others
- Updating riparian set-back ordinances
- Mapping, publication development and other high level graphics assistance
- Watershed and project related webpage design, management and maintenance
- Facilitating public involvement meetings and events
- Liaison with state and federal agencies
- Designing and implementing homeowner stormwater demonstration projects

Due to the need to provide technical assistance and project implementation services across multiple jurisdictions and geographical areas, regional watershed implementation support projects are not available to municipalities, villages or townships or other organizations whose authority is limited to one watershed and/or community. Established 501(c)(3) nonprofit conservation organizations with a demonstrated track record of watershed management expertise and effective project development, management and implementation experience are preferred applicants for these types of projects. Such expertise must be demonstrated at the time of application.

5. Acid Mine Drainage Abatement Projects

When conducted consistent with an approved acid mine drainage abatement and treatment plan (AMDAT), acid mine drainage (AMD) abatement projects have shown measurable progress with significantly reducing or eliminating metals such as iron, sediment and other NPS pollutants from mining-impaired water bodies.

Proposals requesting grant funds for *a relatively small site-specific project in which 319 funds provide the majority of support* will receive more favorable consideration than a project in which section 319 grant funds are a rather small portion of a much larger reclamation project.

Construction projects designed to address AMD abatement must demonstrate the following at the time of application: a completed characterization of the problem; general permission from all applicable landowners; preliminary cost estimates; and, a conceptual design for treatment as well as an outreach and public information plan. Examples of projects that have been previously funded:

- Limestone channels and leach beds
- Wetland AMD treatment systems and areas
- Stream capture Projects
- Lime dosing systems (with a commitment of local operation and maintenance beyond grant)
- Small source elimination reclamation projects

6. Riparian Restoration Projects

Riparian areas play vital roles in preventing pollutants from entering surface waters. Tree planting, stabilizing eroding streambanks using bioengineering methods, levee and dike removal or riparian wetland restoration and other projects designed to restore previously impacted riparian forests and floodplains are encouraged. If conducted on private lands, a conservation easement MUST be placed on the project sites.

7. Inland Lake Management Projects

Ohio lakes are primary recreational areas that often show the effects of nonpoint source pollution entering and collecting through tributaries draining areas within the watershed. Inland lakes are also the foundation of Ohio's public drinking water sources. By addressing nutrient enrichment that fuels harmful algal blooms in source waters, public health is protected and fewer local resources will be needed to treat raw drinking water supplies.

Inland Lake Management project grants are available to applicants interested in implementing projects that will measurably improve lake water quality in and around recreation areas. Projects proposed to be completed on Inland lakes used as a public raw drinking water supply will receive additional review points. Grant funding is NOT available for private lakes that are that are not accessible by the public.

Applicants may apply for Section 319 grant funding to implement eligible projects and practices such as the following:

- Green lakeshore stabilization projects (no rip-rap) to reduce sediment loadings.
- Channel aeration equipment to address anoxic conditions and eliminate fish kills.
- Alum treatment demonstration projects designed to inactivate nutrients.
- Alum dosing units designed to reduce tributary nutrient loadings.
- Site limited water quality dredging and beneficial reuse of dredge spoil activities
- Lake water circulators and/or other devices to reduce blue-green algae blooms.
- Upstream fore bays or constructed wetlands to capture incoming NPS pollutants

General Section 319(h) Implementation Grants Guidelines

When preparing your application for Section 319(h) implementation grant funding, the following general guidelines apply:

1. Private individuals and/or for-profit businesses are NOT eligible to apply directly for Section 319(h) funding under Ohio's program. *However private businesses are encouraged to participate in public-private project specific partnerships.*

2. Nutrient and/or manure management or agricultural run-off control from regulated livestock feeding operations are NOT eligible for grant funding. Incentive payments for Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) or Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP), and/or bonus payments for the adoption of certain long-term conservation practices under CRP or CREP are also **not** eligible for Section 319(h) implementation grant funding.
3. Section 319(h) implementation grant funds may **not** be used to pay for best management practices (BMPs) or “end-of-pipe treatments” which either are required or anticipated to be required under an NPDES permit. Neither FY16 Section 319(h) implementation funds nor local matching funds may be spent on Phase 1 or Phase 2 NPDES storm water compliance efforts.
4. Land purchases are ineligible under Section 319(h) implementation program funding. However, this limitation does not apply to the acquisition of conservation easements when the original landowner retains title to the property. Cost-share (and/or matching credit) may **not** exceed the appraised fair market value of the conservation easement or \$25,000 per acre, whichever is the lesser amount. Easements must be acquired consistent with provisions of Ohio Revised Code Section 5301.67(A).
5. **Local matching funds are “federalized” upon approval of grant funding.** Matching funds may **not** be used for activities or expenditures that would otherwise not be allowable, allocable, or reasonable for federal grant funds under federal grant regulations or guidelines. *For example, land acquisition is not allowable under Section 319(h) grant guidelines; therefore, local matching funds may not be used for land acquisition either.*
6. Research and monitoring activities are NOT allowable. However, activities such as sediment studies, hydraulic modeling and other analyses that are required as part of permitting for projects such as dam removal and stream restoration MAY be completed using Section 319(h) grant funds.
7. Costs associated with complying with storm water permit requirements are not eligible for funding under Section 319(h).
8. Grant applicants and implementing agencies must have the proper jurisdiction within a watershed to implement the proposed activities.

Application Deadline & Review Procedures

Section 319(h) implementation grant applications must be submitted to Ohio EPA by the **close of business August 14th, 2015**. **Applications must be complete and received and/or postmarked** by the above date to be considered for funding. Applications postmarked (or hand-delivered) after this date will be returned to the applicant without further consideration.

Please submit **three (3)** copies of the complete application with **original** (blue ink) signatures and **one (1)** copy of the application in **Microsoft Word** format on either flash drive or CD. Completed applications may be mailed or delivered to:

Russ Gibson, NPS Program Manager
Ohio EPA / Division of Surface Water
50 West Town Street, Suite 700
P.O. Box 1049
Columbus, Ohio 43216-1049

Upon receipt, all Section 319(h) implementation grant applications will be reviewed for completeness, technical merit and adherence to the 1987 Amendments to the Clean Water Act, 2015 U.S. EPA

Section 319(h) Program Guidance, and FY16 Request for Proposals criteria. Applications found to be administratively complete will undergo a comprehensive review using criteria designed to evaluate and score the environmental benefits likely to be achieved. In addition, projects also will be evaluated using specific technical criteria developed for the specific type of proposed project and an environmental review to insure that the project is addressing a nonpoint source problem effectively. Upon completion of all reviews, applications will be ranked according to their review scores and recommendations for funding will be developed based upon this ranking. Funding decisions will be made by the director of Ohio EPA and recommended to U.S. EPA Region 5. Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal grant agreement and adhere to all requirements of the Section 319(h) implementation grants program.

Application Materials and Technical Assistance

Applications are available at the Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water homepage located at <http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/nps/index.aspx>. Applications are available and questions may be answered by contacting either Russ Gibson at (614) 644-2020 or Martha Spurbeck at (614) 644-2869.

We appreciate your interest in Section 319(h) grants and look forward to working with you to help Ohio meet important water quality goals. If after reviewing this information you require additional assistance or have questions, please contact us at the numbers listed above.

Sincerely,



Karl Gebhardt, Deputy Director of Water Resources
Chief of Division of Surface Water

Attachment