

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Section 319(h) – Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Financial Assistance Program

Request for Proposals

Program Title	Section 319(h) – Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Financial Assistance Program (a.k.a. Section 319(h) Grant Program)
Project Types	Implementation of an approved Watershed-Based Plan; Development of a Watershed-Based Plan or Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Implementation Plan; Best Management Practice (BMP) Implementation; Information and Outreach; Monitoring.
Eligible Entities	Any entity that has legal status to accept funds from the state of Illinois, including; state and local governmental units, nonprofit organizations, citizen and environmental groups, individuals and businesses.
Application Deadline	Illinois EPA must receive completed applications by close of business on August 1 st each year. In years that August 1 st is a Saturday or Sunday, the deadline is close of business on the preceding Friday.
Funding Source	Federal Clean Water Act – Section 319(h)
Cost Share Rate	Maximum Section 319(h) amount is 60%; Minimum local match requirement is 40%
Typical Grant Range	\$50,000 - \$1,200,000 of Section 319(h) Grant funds
Project Length	Two years (24 months)
Administered by	Illinois EPA – Bureau of Water Nonpoint Source Unit – (217) 782-3362
Application Link	http://epa.state.il.us/water/watershed/forms/319-application-2014.pdf

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) is seeking proposals for nonpoint source (NPS) pollution control projects (projects). The Illinois EPA receives federal funds through Section 319(h) of the Clean Water Act to help implement *Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program* (Illinois EPA, 2013). Illinois EPA's Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Pollution Control Financial Assistance Program is designed to provide grant funds for projects that prevent, eliminate, or reduce water quality impairments caused by NPS pollution. Projects that implement components of an approved Watershed-Based Plan will receive priority for funding.

Approximately \$3.5 million may be available in Illinois for Section 319(h) Grant funded projects in an average year. The actual amount depends upon the final U.S. EPA budget approved by Congress and the allocation awarded to Illinois by U.S. EPA.

Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands and even our underground sources of drinking water. It has been determined that over 60% of the (national) documented water pollution problem can be traced to nonpoint sources.

Source: U.S. EPA – Region 5

Project Priority

The Section 319(h) Grant Program prioritizes projects addressing Illinois waters for which NPS pollution is a significant cause of water quality impairment. Assessment information for Illinois' waterbodies can be found at: <http://epa.state.il.us/water/water-quality/index.html>

Use the most recent *Integrated Water Quality Report and Section 303d List*. Appendix B-2 and B-3 have specific assessment information and Appendix A-2 has 303(d) list details.

Nonpoint source pollution control projects with the potential to eliminate such impairments and restore impaired waters will rank higher in the review process and receive more favorable consideration than general NPS pollution control projects that are not linked to a specific waterbody or do not address a waterbody's current impairments. Nonpoint source pollution control projects that are identified within approved Watershed-Based Plans that eliminate impairments and/or restore impaired waters will receive higher consideration than projects submitted without the support of such a plan.

Priority will be given to applications that show that the project is to be designed, implemented and monitored to show measurable environmental results such as quantifying water quality improvements, estimating or modeling pollutant load reductions associated with innovative demonstration projects or programs, or documenting social results, "such as increased awareness and knowledge or changes in behavior resulting from educational efforts that lead to improved water quality". Please note, the Section 319(h) Grant project length may not be long enough to accomplish all phases required to measure environmental results. Illinois EPA does not necessarily expect a project to complete the design, implementation and monitoring under a single Section 319(h) grant.

Three examples of measurable environmental results:

- In-stream monitoring data indicating post-project sediment and nitrogen levels were less than pre-project levels.
- Recovery of aquatic species through the use of biological monitoring to measure the effects of best management practices (BMP) on the ecologic health of a stream community.
- Implementation of BMPs that have prevented a quantifiable amount of pollutants, such as sediment or nutrients, from entering surface waters, with documentation providing measured, modeled, or estimated load reductions (e.g., 200 tons/year of sediment).

The following are the types of priority projects that Illinois EPA is seeking to support with the Section 319(h) Grant Program. Also included are general grant guidelines as they apply to the specific types of projects.

HIGH PRIORITY WATERSHEDS

Illinois EPA has identified NPS pollution control [Priority Watersheds](#) to encourage work with federal, state, and local partners to implement NPS pollution control throughout Illinois. Illinois has 51 basins; all 51 basins will be a priority for watershed-based planning or plan implementation at least once every five years.

Each year, a subset (8 – 11) of the basins will be a priority for planning. Two-years later those same basins will be a priority for plan implementation. Waterbody segments, with the exception of mainstem waters, that are not attaining their designated water quality uses due to NPS pollution impairments are the priority waterbodies within the priority basins. The mainstem waterbodies have greater priority once NPS components of a watershed-based plan for their headwater areas have been developed and implemented.

The 10 to 12 digit hydrologic units (HUC) that contain these impaired waterbody segments are the priority watershed. A higher priority for assistance will be given to those watersheds that have multiple NPS impaired waterbody segments.

Illinois EPA also recognizes Nutrient Priority Watersheds as a priority for planning and plan implementation every year. [Click here](#) to see a set of maps that depict the 5-year priority watershed rotation and the priority watersheds for nutrient reduction.

HIGH PRIORITY PROJECT TYPES

Implementation of a Watershed-Based Plan to address NPS Pollution. Implementation activities include installation of BMPs that have been identified for specific critical areas by the Watershed-Based Plan; NPS water quality modeling, environmental and social indicator monitoring, and outreach activities that are specifically identified in the Watershed-Based Plan.

Development of a Watershed-Based Plan to address NPS pollution. A Watershed-Based Plan must include, at a minimum, nine specific elements required in U.S. EPA guidance. These elements are listed as items a. through i. in **Appendix C** of the [Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories](#) (April 12, 2013).

The Illinois EPA recognizes the importance of preventing currently unimpaired waters from becoming impaired. Development of Watershed-Based Plans for unimpaired or unassessed waters is also eligible for funding. These plans will also need to follow the U.S. EPA guidance for Watershed-Based Plans, although slight modifications to the requirements are needed. Contact the Illinois EPA NPS Unit at (217) 782-3362 for more details.

For additional information on watershed-based planning, please refer to the [Guidance for Developing Watershed Action Plans in Illinois](#) (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2007).

Development of a TMDL Implementation Plan to address NPS Pollution. A TMDL is the maximum amount of a specific pollutant loading a waterbody can tolerate and still support all of its intended uses. The proposed TMDL Implementation Plan to be developed must be related to a 303d listed waterbody that is being impaired by NPS pollution. [Click here](#) for additional information about TMDL requirements as defined in U.S. EPA guidance. A TMDL Implementation Plan must also meet the requirements of a Watershed-Based Plan.

A TMDL Implementation Plan must be related to an approved TMDL. The TMDL Implementation Plan will spell out the actions necessary to achieve the goals of the approved TMDL. The plan specifies limits for point source and NPS discharges and recommends specific BMPs for nonpoint sources. It also estimates associated costs and lays out a schedule for implementation. Commitment to the implementation plan by the citizens who live and work in the watershed is essential to success in reducing the pollutant loads and improving water quality.

[Click here](#) for additional information about Illinois EPA's TMDL Program and consult with the Planning Unit at (217) 782-3362 before applying for the development of a TMDL.

LOW PRIORITY PROJECT TYPES

Illinois EPA considers projects that address NPS pollution control that are not identified in or supported by a Watershed-Based Plan as low priority projects. These projects can include BMP implementation, BMP demonstrations, environmental monitoring, social indicator monitoring, and outreach efforts that are not yet identified for implementation in a Watershed-Based Plan.

Individual BMPs, treatment systems or outreach efforts are eligible for funding, but will not be prioritized as highly as those projects specifically identified in a Watershed-Based Plan.

See Appendix 1 of this document for additional examples of BMPs and projects that have been funded through the Section 319(h) Grant Program.

Please note – the following are not eligible for Section 319(h) Grant funds:

- Activities that do not control, prevent, or address NPS pollution,
- Activities required by state or federal law, and
- Activities required by state or federal permit.

Eligible Entities

Section 319(h) Grant Program funds are available to any entity that has legal status to accept funds from the State of Illinois. This can include: local watershed groups; land conservancies or trusts; public and private profit and nonprofit organizations and institutions; units of county, municipal, township, and state governments; universities and colleges; park districts and other local land managing agencies; soil and water conservation districts; conservation organizations; and others.

Grant applicants must have the financial ability to initiate the project; pay expenses and then **request reimbursement** from the Illinois EPA, while continuing to finance their normal operating expenses.

Applicants must have the authority and ability to implement the proposed project, or propose to subcontract portions of the project to the appropriate entities for implementation.

Application and Submittal Process

Illinois EPA employs an electronic application that allows the applicant to download the files, enter and save data on their own computer, and return the completed documents to Illinois EPA in an electronic format. However, Illinois EPA still requires the applicant to submit two (2) **unbound** paper copies of the Section 319(h) Grant Program application with original signatures along with submission of the electronic copy.

A complete application includes the following:

Note – Items 1 - 3 require original signatures

1. [Section 319\(h\) Grant Program Application](#)
2. [Organization Certifications and Grant Conditions for Clean Water Act Section 319\(h\) Financial Assistance Agreements](#)
3. [Taxpayer Identification Number Form](#)
4. Supporting documentation (photos, maps, pollutant reduction worksheets, designs, letters of support, etc.)

The Section 319(h) Grant Program application packet (including the above documents is available at Illinois EPA's website at <http://epa.state.il.us/water/financial-assistance/non-point.html>.

Paper copies of the Section 319(h) Grant Program application packet are available upon request by contacting the Nonpoint Source Unit at (217) 782-3362.

Section 319(h) Grant Program applications are accepted by Illinois EPA by August 1st of each year. Both the electronic copy and paper copies of the application must be complete and be received at Illinois EPA's Springfield office by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on August 1st to be considered for funding. **If August 1st falls on a Saturday or Sunday, then applications are due at Illinois EPA by 5:00 p.m. (CST) on the Friday preceding August 1st.**

Faxed applications will not be accepted. Incomplete applications or applications received after the deadline will not be considered for funding.

US Postal Service Mailing Address:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, Nonpoint Source Unit #15
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276

Attention: Scott Ristau

Delivery Service Address:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, Nonpoint Source Unit #15
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Springfield, Illinois 62702

Attention: Scott Ristau

Electronic submissions can be submitted 1) on CD with the hard copies of the application or 2) sent by email to epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov. Use the [Illinois.Gov File Transfer tool](#) to send files that are up to 2 GB. Include the project title and applicant name in the "Message to Recipient" box. Contact the NPS Unit at (217) 782-3362 regarding any file size limitations or other firewall issues.

Project Length

Project length is two years unless otherwise approved. Costs incurred prior to the execution of the financial assistance agreement, or after the project period ends are ineligible as match or for reimbursement unless otherwise approved as match by Illinois EPA.

It may be difficult for applications that include BMP design, engineering and permitting, BMP implementation and monitoring to be accomplished under a single project. Contact the NPS Unit at (217) 782-3362 to discuss application options for long-term projects.

Project Costs, Reimbursement Requirements and Match Requirements

The program does not have a set maximum or minimum total project cost or grant amount. In previous program years, Section 319(h) grant funded projects have had total project costs that ranged from \$80,000 to \$2,000,000 and Section 319(h) grant assistance has ranged from \$48,000 to \$1,200,000.

The Section 319(h) Grant Program is a reimbursement program. Grant recipients must perform the work, pay project costs, and submit an invoice with supporting documentation before Illinois EPA will reimburse recipients for any approved costs. Illinois EPA will only make reimbursements to the grant recipient and will reimburse the grant recipient no more frequently than monthly.

The maximum Section 319(h) funding is 60 percent of the total project cost. The remaining 40 percent is the responsibility of the recipient and constitutes the local match. This local match may include money spent or in-kind services utilized to complete the approved project tasks **but cannot be federal funds or funds used to match another federal program.** Local match can be provided by the recipient, sub-contractor, or project partners (including state programs, private foundations, land owners, etc.) Greater than 40 percent local match is allowed.

Other Important Information

- The Recipient, or its approved designee, is responsible for the development of designs and application for all applicable state and federal permits for all BMPs to be implemented. The Design must be certified by a Registered or Licensed Professional Engineer of Illinois, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) staff, or a NRCS certified Technical Service Provider (TSP) unless the applicant obtains a waiver of this certification requirement from Illinois EPA. The designs must be approved by the Illinois EPA NPS Unit prior to the start of BMP construction or implementation. Costs associated with development of BMP designs are eligible for Section 319(h) grant funds as long as the costs are incurred within the Illinois EPA approved project period.
- The Recipient, or its approved designee, is responsible for the development and implementation of an operation and maintenance plan (O & M Plan) for all the BMPs installed during the project period. This includes BMPs installed with match funds or Section 319(h) funds. O & M Plans must be approved by the NPS Unit and are for a minimum of ten (10) years starting from the completion of the implementation of the BMP, unless otherwise agreed to by Illinois EPA.
- Project sponsors may subcontract portions of their Section 319(h) grant or local matching funds for technical or other services associated with implementation of the proposed project. However, any costs associated with a subcontract must be approved in writing by Illinois EPA prior to the start of the subcontracted work.
- All projects require quarterly reporting and a final project evaluation and report.

Application Review Procedures

Upon receipt, all Section 319(h) Grant Program applications will be reviewed for completeness, technical merit, and adherence to the Clean Water Act, U.S. EPA Section 319(h) program guidance, and Request for Proposals criteria. Applications found to be complete will undergo a comprehensive review designed to evaluate the following:

- Environmental results likely to be achieved,
- Relationship to an approved watershed-based planning effort,
- Applicant's prior performance with Section 319(h) grants,
- Overall effectiveness of the project,
- Feasibility of completing the proposed project in a timely manner,
- Local commitment and matching funds, and
- Applicant's capability to administer federal grant funds.

Upon completion of all reviews, selected applications will be incorporated into the Illinois Section 319(h) grant application submitted to U.S. EPA for approval. Grant awards are generally announced by Illinois EPA between May and July of the following year. Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal financial assistance agreement and adhere to all requirements of the Section 319(h) Grant Program and other state and federal contractual requirements.

Application Support and Questions

We appreciate your interest in the Section 319(h) Grant Program and look forward to working with you to help Illinois meet important water quality goals. The NPS Unit staff is available to discuss project ideas and to answer Section 319(h) application questions. Please contact us by phone at (217) 782-3362 or send an email to epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov.

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Appendix 1

The information below provides additional ideas of the best management practices (BMPs) and activities that have been funded through the Section 319(h) Grant Program. The list is not all-inclusive. See the [*Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program*](#) (Illinois EPA, 2013) for a list of potential BMPs.

Inclusion of a BMP, here or in the *Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program* does not equate to automatic eligibility for the Section 319(h) Grant Program. Appropriate practice location and the practice's ability to provide water quality benefits through NPS pollution control are considered a priority.

Streams (Rural and Urban)

Stream BMPs that re-establish naturalized stream morphology adapted to rural or urban flows are appropriate.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Stream channel and bioengineered bank stabilization
- Meandering a channelized stream
- Levee removal or modification
- In-stream habitat restoration
- Reconnecting stream to floodplain

Wetlands (Rural and Urban)

The restoration of wetlands and development of new wetlands with a hydrologic connection to surface waters is important.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Wetland restoration or enhancement
- Wetland area protection
- New wetland development

Not Eligible for Section 319(h) Funds:

- Any activity or project required by state or federal law or state or federal permit, including activities required or anticipated to be required by National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) regulations, including Phase 1 and Phase II stormwater permit requirements;
- Purchase of equipment;
- Routine maintenance or repair of existing on-site systems, such as culvert replacement, street sweeping, catch-basin cleaning;
- Projects to principally protect wildlife habitat, control flooding, or protect infrastructure;
- Ineligible activities based on current U.S. EPA guidelines for Section 319(h) grants.

Contact the NPS Unit at (217) 782-3362 with questions or for additional information.

Lakes (Rural and Urban)

In-lake and watershed BMPs for lake restoration and protection are appropriate.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Lakeshore stabilization
- Detention practices (sediment and nutrient)
- Aeration\destratification

Agricultural

Best management practices that help agricultural landowners to control soil erosion, sedimentation, and reduce application of excess fertilizers and pesticides are appropriate.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Nutrient management
- Erosion and sediment control
- Livestock waste management
- Livestock exclusion
- Buffers and filter strips

Urban

Best management practices that address urban runoff to prevent, reduce, or eliminate NPS pollution are encouraged along with BMPs that have a primary goal of preserving, restoring, or mimicking natural hydrology.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Rain gardens and rain barrels
- Permeable and porous pavements
- Green roofs
- Bioswales

For more Urban BMP information, go to:

[Urban BMPs – Supplemental Guidance
For Funding Eligibility](#)

Resource Extraction

Projects that are comprehensive and complement or supplement existing programs through coordination of existing resources to address abandoned mine land reclamation are appropriate.

The types of approved practices include:

- Acid mine drainage control on abandoned mine land
- Soil erosion and sediment control on abandoned mine land

Riparian Zone (Rural and Urban)

Riparian (streambank and shoreline) areas play vital roles in preventing pollutants from entering surface waters. Projects that restore previously impacted riparian forests and floodplains are encouraged.

The types of approved BMPs include:

- Warm season grass planting
- Tree and shrub planting
- Riparian wetland restoration

Monitoring for Environmental and/or Social Indicators

Environmental and [social indicator](#) monitoring are approvable projects. They should be designed to help document the need for NPS pollution control or to validate the accomplishments of ongoing and completed NPS pollution control projects. **Please note that environmental or social indicator monitoring is not required in order to qualify for Section 319(h) grant funds.**

All projects that include a monitoring component shall provide information on the current status (e.g., approved, under review, under development, to be developed) of their Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) in the application. U.S. EPA guidance for QAPPs can be found at: <http://www.epa.gov/quality/qapps.html>.

Education and Outreach Activities

Education and Outreach projects should promote awareness and implementation of activities that may help to restore degraded waters but also may help protect waters from degradation due to changing land use activities that increase NPS pollution. Projects could include statewide or community-based efforts such as training, displays, and workshops.

Please note – educational projects must include an element that measures their effectiveness. View U.S. EPA's [Getting In Step: A Guide for Conducting Watershed Outreach Campaigns](#) for information on the development and evaluation of an outreach campaign to reduce NPS pollution.