



2015–2016 Virginia Watershed Roundtable Support Request for Applications (RFA)

Source of Funding: Federal Clean Water Act Section 319(h) Nonpoint Source Implementation Grant and Section 117 Chesapeake Bay Implementation Grant (CBIG)

Issued By:

Virginia Department of Environmental Quality

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Division of Water Planning, Office of Watershed Programs and Office of Ecology

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<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/NonpointSourceFunding.aspx>

Timeline

<u>November 10, 2015</u>	Issue request for applications
<u>December 15, 2015 at 11:59 pm</u>	Deadline for submitting applications
<u>January 1, 2016</u>	Target date to begin executing project agreements
<u>December 31, 2016</u>	Target completion date for all project awards

A. PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

EPA Strategic Plan Goal: Protecting America’s Waters

EPA Strategic Plan Objective: Protect and Restore Watersheds and Aquatic Ecosystems.

The purpose of this Request for Applications (RFA) is to solicit applications from Watershed Roundtable organizations for projects that promote watershed stewardship and local and Chesapeake Bay TMDL implementation. Watershed Roundtables are designed to bring together local stakeholders who have a vested interest in their communities and concern for local water quality, thus filling an important role in statewide efforts to restore the Chesapeake Bay and/or improve local water quality. Proposed activities should foster partnerships and strengthen communication among community organizations, local entities, and/or state agencies. Additionally, projects should promote watershed protection and restoration initiatives, provide education and outreach opportunities to stakeholders, support pollution reduction activities, and/or strengthen ongoing implementation of TMDL Implementation Plans. For a complete list of eligible activities, please see Section C.

Expected outcomes or results should include:

- Protection and restoration of watersheds and aquatic ecosystems and the improvement of local water quality;
- Communication and interaction with key stakeholders to address nonpoint source (NPS) pollution;
- Increased sign-up and participation in BMP installation;
- Targeted education and outreach initiatives with the goal of increasing BMP implementation to improve water quality in TMDL implementation watersheds.

Applications received in response to this RFA will be considered for funding for a one-year grant beginning January 1, 2016 and ending December 31, 2016, with a possible one-year extension accompanied by additional funding. Funding will be awarded to eligible organizations through a competitive negotiation process that evaluates the potential of each organization and project to effectively achieve the desired outcomes. Applicants with current roundtable grant awards from DEQ are expected to develop applications that do not contain activities that overlap with existing agreements.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

Organizations serving as a local or regional watershed organization and/or watershed roundtable within the Commonwealth of Virginia are eligible to apply.

C. ELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

Through this RFA, DEQ intends to award funding for the support of Watershed Roundtable activities that lead to a positive impact on the water quality of the rivers, lakes, estuaries, and bays of the Commonwealth of Virginia. All activities must address NPS pollution prevention, watershed health, and community engagement in local TMDL implementation and/or Chesapeake Bay TMDL implementation. See section D for funding restrictions.

Administrative Support

- Steering Committee Meetings
 - Business and administrative information should be posted for transparency (e.g. bylaws, strategic plans, and minutes).
- Website Hosting & Maintenance. Groups should update website content on a quarterly basis.
 - The focus of effort should be on creating content and promoting events specific to the watershed that reflect the Commonwealth's priorities for water quality and watershed health and local watershed cleanup goals.
 - The website should be active throughout the extent of the grant agreement. If the site is under development, a specific timeline for development and launch should be included in the application. Groups should strive to maintain and update information related to their watershed on a quarterly basis.
 - Relevant business and administrative information should be posted for transparency. Examples include but are not limited to: bylaws, strategic plans, list of board members, minutes, presentations, newsletters, annual reports, and contact information.
 - Information regarding current projects and initiatives should be included.
 - Connections to general content, other agencies, resources, reports, etc. should be accomplished via URL links rather than duplication of information (e.g. other roundtables, grants and funding opportunities, general homeowner tips, or statewide events).
- Office supplies and equipment use
- Collaborative project development (develop grant proposals or initiatives for NPS restoration and protection activities)
- Increased membership or executive board capacity and future sustainability
- Roundtable/watershed organization coordinator or facilitator
- Roundtable/watershed organization membership sustainability
- Indirect costs are only allowable if the organization has a federally approved Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (which must be provided).

Education, Outreach and Engagement Projects

- Large watershed educational events: forums, workshops, conference, regional networks, or other programs (e.g. "Watershed Awareness Day", "Regional Watershed Conference", etc.)
 - Events and programs should focus on local watershed cleanup, restoration, and protection goals and targets. For roundtables within the Chesapeake Bay watershed, connections should be made to TMDL nutrient and sediment reduction goals that will benefit from local actions.

- Event must demonstrate active participation of a large number of individuals from many interest groups.
- Annual stakeholder meetings (workshop, forum, or other event with stakeholder engagement and participation)
 - Allowable expenses include: postage, speakers travel/fee, printing & copying materials, refreshments/breaks if the Food and Refreshment Policy is met as described in Section D).
- Special reports or outreach tools regarding watershed health and restoration (e.g. Healthy Waters study)
- Development of a strategic or long-term organization plan for watershed conservation
- Social media initiatives and electronic media outreach to increase stakeholder awareness
- Signage for watershed protection or education

Citizen Water Quality Monitoring

- Development of a water quality monitoring (WQM) plan
- Development and maintenance of an DEQ approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP ; this is required of any program receiving WQM funding)
- Implementation of a WQM plan that will provide consistent and verifiable data
- Purchase of authorized supplies to implement an approved WQM plan and QAPP
- Training of volunteers to collect data

Nonpoint Source Pollution Prevention or Restoration Projects

Note: Information must be provided regarding BMP installation and pollution reduction calculations for practices implemented using grant or match funds. Watershed restoration activities: stream restoration, rain gardens, rain barrels, riparian buffer plantings, turf to trees plantings, riparian buffer maintenance activities, soil testing

- Pet waste (bag/collection stations, composters/digesters, education programs, etc.)
- Low impact development demonstrations (e.g. pervious pavers)
- Mapping of stormwater infrastructure and BMP prioritization for local governments
- Measurement of practice changes by stakeholders/program attendees to quantify/characterize pollution reductions (i.e. through behavioral changes or before/after awareness questionnaire)

D. INELIGIBLE ACTIVITIES

- Lobbying. Grant funds may not be used for litigation against Virginia or the United States or for participating in various forms of lobbying. If successful, applicants must certify that they are compliant with New Restrictions on Lobbying of [2 CFR Part 220.450](#).
- Outreach specifically delivered as K-12 education. However, participation by children or schools in water quality monitoring or as volunteers in buffer and/or tree planting or other restoration projects is acceptable.
- Promotional Materials. The purchase of promotional materials is not allowed, as per the [2 CFR Part 220.421](#) (Federal Uniform Grant Guidance). If you have specific questions regarding this restriction, please contact a grant manager at DEQ.
- Food and Refreshments. Grant funds shall not be used for food/refreshments at activities/events (e.g. meetings, workshops, training, field days or conferences, etc.) unless the objectives of the event would be compromised if food/refreshments were not provided. Costs for food and refreshments shall be at or below the Commonwealth of Virginia or local per diem rates (as applicable) for the event location. Generally refreshments for routine meetings will not be covered. Food and refreshments (and light meals) will be allowed if an event (training, workshop, extended

meeting, etc.) is determined to be a “qualifying” event. The criteria to be used to determine whether an event qualifies and providing food/refreshments is reasonable and appropriate shall include:

- The length of the Event lasts at least 4 hours; and
- At least one of the following:
 - It is impractical for participants to obtain lunch on their own (due to isolation, distance to restaurants or their office);
 - It can be documented that physical attendance of all participants is essential;
 - It can be documented that participants are working during the normal meal time as stated on an agenda (e.g. working lunch or dinner) and no other opportunity for a meal will be provided.

Proposals that include funding for food or refreshments for a qualifying event must provide the following information for each event.

- An estimated budget and description for the light refreshments, meals, and/or beverages to be served at the event(s);
- A description of the purpose, agenda, location, length and timing for the event; and
- An estimated number of participants in the event and a description of their roles.
- Justification: Federal EPA policy prohibits the use of EPA funds for receptions, banquets, and similar activities that take place after normal business hours unless the recipient has provided a justification that has been expressly approved by DEQ.

Note: U.S. General Services Administration regulations define light refreshments for morning, afternoon or evening breaks to include, but not be limited to, coffee, tea, milk, juice, soft drinks, donuts, bagels, fruit, pretzels, cookies, chips, or muffins. (41 CFR 301-74.11)

E. REPORTING AND QUALITY ASSURANCE REQUIREMENTS

Progress will be reported quarterly to DEQ through a variety of reporting formats. For example, a narrative summary of accomplishments that relate to the scope of service and key milestones (Form A) is required. Quarterly reports will also include a financial narrative (including personnel time tracking, if applicable), a financial reporting form/invoice (Form B), and a milestone table (Form C). If the approved scope of work includes the implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs), data regarding their installation and completion must be submitted on a quarterly basis (Form D). If the approved scope of service includes WQM and the implementation of a QAPP, this document must be submitted within 60 days of the effective date of the grant contract. If the approved scope of service includes the implementation of BMPs, an Operations and Maintenance (O&M) plan for each BMP must be submitted within 60 days of the effective date of the grant contract. Examples of terms and conditions and reporting forms can be found on DEQ’s website:

http://deq.virginia.gov/Portals/0/DEQ/Water/NonpointSource/NPS_Grants_Resources.pdf

F. AVAILABLE FUNDING

Funding is available statewide to support watershed roundtable activities. The maximum award for grantees is \$13,500. Exception: non-profit organizations may apply for additional funds to cover [eVA](#) required registration fees. DEQ intends to fund quality applications across the Commonwealth such that many watersheds in Virginia will benefit from the collective effort of the watershed organizations. To this end, DEQ encourages partnerships among organizations within a given watershed. The Department of Environmental Quality reserves the right to determine the final grant awards in order to maximize the cost-effectiveness of grant funds and support the maximum number of applicants with priority projects. Accordingly, the amount requested by the applicant may not equal the amount of the final grant award.

G. APPLICATION PACKAGE REQUIREMENTS, PREPARATION AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

The application package includes several required components. All required elements must be submitted in order for the application to be considered for review, and no additional information will be considered in the evaluation.

REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

Templates available on the DEQ website:

<http://www.deq.virginia.gov/Programs/Water/CleanWaterFinancingAssistance/NonpointSourceFunding.aspx>

- Proposal Narrative (see 2015–2016 Watershed Roundtable Proposal Narrative Guidelines)
- Completed 2015–2016 Watershed Roundtable Application Form (Word)
- Completed “2015_Roundtable_Attach template.xlsx” (Excel)
 - Tab 1 “Attach 1 – Budget”
 - Tab 2 “Attach 2 – BMP”
 - Tab 3 “Attach 3 – Timeline”
- For applicants who did not receive a 2014–2015 award, please provide the following: a copy of the organizational charter, a list of representative organizations or stakeholders, and a description of the roll played or work performed as a watershed organization. A link to an appropriate website that describes organizational structure and purpose is also acceptable.
- A copy of the organization’s Federal Indirect Cost Rate Agreement if grant funds are requested for Indirect Costs.

In order to be considered for selection for this 2015–2016 Watershed Roundtable Support RFA, applicants are required to submit (via E-mail) **an electronic version** (Microsoft Word or Adobe Acrobat PDF files are preferred) of the completed Project Application to the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality **by 11:59 pm on December 15, 2015**. Incomplete applications and those that are not delivered or mailed as specified above will be disqualified.

Email application packages to: npsgrants@deq.virginia.gov

Please use the email subject line: 2015-2016 Watershed RFA_<insert name of applicant>

H. DEQ CONTACTS

General questions regarding this request for applications, the grant application process, and questions specifically about roundtables in non-Chesapeake Bay watershed areas of the state should be directed to NPS Grant and Data Coordinator, Megan Sommers Bascone, megan.bascone@deq.virginia.gov, (804) 698-4435. Questions regarding Roundtables located within the Chesapeake Bay watershed should be directed to Lara Kling, lara.kling@deq.virginia.gov, (804) 698-4002. Specific questions regarding regional watershed organization activities should be directed to the identified Nonpoint Source Coordinator or regional contact person for each of the DEQ Regional Offices (RO):

- **Piedmont RO:** Margaret Smigo, (804) 527-5124, Margaret.Smigo@deq.virginia.gov
- **Tidewater RO:** Kristie Britt, (757) 518-2153, Kristie.Britt@deq.virginia.gov
- **Northern RO:** May Sligh, (804) 450-3802, May.Sligh@deq.virginia.gov
- **Valley RO:** Nesha McRae, (540) 574-7850, Nesha.Mcrae@deq.virginia.gov
- **Blue Ridge RO:** James Moneymaker, (540) 562-6738, James.Moneymaker@deq.virginia.gov
- **Southwest RO:** Chris Burcher, (276) 676-4803, Chris.Burcher@deq.virginia.gov

I. EVALUATION AND AWARD CRITERIA

Projects will be scored based on the evaluation criteria listed below in order to prioritize projects for the distribution of available funds. A team of DEQ staff will evaluate grant applications and proposed projects. All projects approved for funding through this RFA will be announced on DEQ’s website.

Evaluation Criteria	Maximum points
Project Information, Activity Description, and Timeline: The applicant provides sufficient detail on project activities to evaluate the capacity of project sponsor to complete proposed activities. The proposed timeline and milestones are realistic for the grant period. Acquisition of necessary permits, authorizations, and approvals are accounted for in the timeline.	30
Outcomes (Education and Outreach, Watershed Stewardship, etc): The education and outreach activities and/or watershed stewardship BMPs and activities described in the application support existing or well-described watershed planning efforts. The applicant includes activities and events to promote watershed stewardship and improvement.	20
Outcomes (Partnership building and collaboration): The applicant has adequately identified key partnerships. The manner in which partners will further the achievements and accomplishments listed in the application is sufficiently detailed.	20
Experience with Project Administration: The applicant has the experience and capacity to manage grants and projects and has the capability to complete all grant-related requirements. Past record of grant projects received by 319 or CBIG will be taken into consideration. Applicants who have had previous grants cancelled or who have had awarded grant funds reduced may receive an automatic 10 point deduction.	10
Organizational Structure and Purpose is supportive of local/regional watershed restoration goals: The applicant demonstrates the capability of the sponsor and partners to successfully complete the project (e.g. qualifications, expertise, and role within the community).	10
Budget Effectiveness and Efficiency: The proposed budget is reasonable and proposes the use of grant and match resources effectively and efficiently. The application budget appropriately addresses the applicable funding restrictions listed in the RFA.	10
Evaluation Criteria Maximum Points	100