



Mike DeWine, Governor
Jon Husted, Lt. Governor
Laurie A. Stevenson, Director

May 13, 2021

**Request for Proposals - Assistance Grants for Developing 9-Element
Nonpoint Source Implementation Strategies in the Ohio River
Watershed
Project Application Deadline – June 18, 2021**

Dear Nonpoint Source Management Partner:

The Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) is soliciting proposals for small grants to develop 9-element nonpoint source implementation strategies (9-Element NPS-IS) for high priority watersheds within the Ohio River Basin. This is the second request under this initiative. These grants may cover up to 100% of the cost associated with developing the strategies. These strategies will address causes and sources of localized impairment of water resources at the HUC-12 watershed scale and those that contribute to far-field impairment in the Ohio River Basin and the Gulf of Mexico, specifically nutrients, sediment, and other nonpoint sources of pollution. The strategy created and the implementation projects they contain ensure that appropriate actions are conceived to make incremental progress toward reducing nutrient loads. Watersheds that develop these strategies are eligible for receiving 319 and other funding made available under Federal NPS Program Guidelines (April 2013)¹.

Eligible recipients are soil and water conservation districts (SWCDs), local government and/or others (e.g., park districts, regional councils of government, nonprofit watershed groups) who coordinate with local SWCD and stakeholders to develop one or more 9-Element NPS-IS plans for 12-digit HUC watersheds within the Ohio River Basin. Priority areas within the Ohio River Basin include the **Upper Scioto River, Upper Great Miami River, Upper Paint Creek, and Upper Little Miami River (see the map below) and where there is at least 10,000 acres of cultivated cropland (or greater than 50% of the lands within the watershed are cultivated cropland).** Land use and cropland information (acreage and percentage) should be provided in the application.

Applicants may be given priority based on watershed loading (especially on lands with highest percentage of agricultural land use; where there is documented local support in the form of cash and/or in-kind services provided as match from participating organization(s), and/or where there includes effort to utilize BMPs siting tools (e.g., Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework).

These grants are being awarded under an assistance agreement from U.S. EPA to Hypoxia Task Force member states to reduce excess nutrient losses to Ohio streams draining to the Ohio River, Mississippi River and ultimately the Gulf of Mexico. This funding will develop locally led and tailored implementation projects that include solution-oriented nutrient reduction that can be applied in the short and medium term. To increase eligibility for funding under Ohio's nonpoint source programs—specific to the Ohio River Basin watersheds, this request focuses on getting these 9-Element NPS-IS plans developed. We encourage participation from as many entities concerned with protecting and improving watersheds within the Ohio River Basin as possible. Broad stakeholder involvement

¹ Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories: Issued on April 12, 2013. These guidelines apply to all § 319-funded grant activities beginning in fiscal year 2014. <https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2015-09/documents/319-guidelines-fy14.pdf>

increases the value of 9-Element NPS-IS planning in assisting both agricultural stakeholders as well as county, city, village stakeholders in meeting nutrient reduction and watershed delisting targets.

Due to limited funds (\$40,000), applications may request up to \$7,000 per each NPS-IS plan. Proposed project costs must be justified within the application and be reasonable for the extent of work that is proposed. A separate request for proposals (RFP) for potential contractors to provide assistance using the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework toolbox may also be offered in order to assist with this work.

Please include the following information in the project narrative in the application for funding. The application contents will be used to rank proposals.

- 1) Please provide the watershed(s) of focus. Is it listed as a high-priority watershed within the Ohio River Basin? (See attached list/map.)
- 2) Will the project include use of the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) model and maps for developing implementation projects in consultation with local stakeholders? Will it use ACPF developed concurrently and follow up with ground-truthing and landowner/land user outreach using ACPF outputs?
- 3) Although not required, please describe how any matching funds or in-kind services will be provided in the 9-Element NPS-IS plan development effort?
- 4) Please demonstrate the amount and type of public outreach that will be part of the project by describing the planning process and/or with letters of commitment from stakeholders.
- 5) Show Unit Costs (Grant dollars + (In-Kind value or Cash \$) per plan) AND (total grant dollars requested per plan).
- 6) If subcontracting with a consultant, describe the experience and specific expertise that the consultant is expected to provide (e.g., mapping, accumulating/summarizing data, drafting the plan(s), outreach and meeting support, etc.).
- 7) What tasks are included and what are the specific deliverables and timeline for each task?
- 8) If the watershed(s) crosses county or jurisdictional boundaries (e.g., village, municipal, or state lines), is there an expressed commitment to collaborate on this project? Attach any letters of support.
- 9) Please demonstrated commitment by multiple stakeholders (e.g. especially farming organizations, watershed organizations, non-profit conservation organizations)?

Eligible Applicants: The following may apply to receive grant funding awarded under this funding:

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

Forty-thousand (\$40,000) in federal funding is available for subgrants to eligible applicants to prepare HUC-12 scale 9-element nonpoint source implementation strategies (NPS-IS). **These short-term grants are limited to \$25,000 and no more than nine (9) months in duration.** The 9-element plans must be developed using existing data and information that can be distilled from existing reports and data², (e.g., Total Maximum Daily Load studies, Technical Support Documents, historical watershed

²² Both nearfield (local watershed HUC-12 impairment) and far-field (e.g., Ohio River, Mississippi and Gulf of Mexico) impairment related to nitrogen and/or phosphorus loading reduction goals must be addressed in these 9-Element plans. Load reduction baselines are under development and will be provided after contracts are executed.

plans, agricultural conservation planning framework, etc.). Funds may be used ONLY for costs associated with developing HUC-12 watershed 9-Element nonpoint implementation strategies within the Ohio River Watershed, within the priority watersheds shown below and which have a nutrient reduction priority (as listed in the appendix) due to substantial cultivated cropland.

Priority Ohio River Basin Watersheds
Upper Scioto River Watershed
Upper Great Miami River Watershed
Lower Great Miami River Watershed
Little Miami River Watershed (Headwaters (01) to Caesar Creek (04))
Paint Creek River Watershed (Headwaters (01) to Rattlesnake Creek (04))
(See the complete list of eligible HUC-12 watersheds in Appendix A)

Application Deadline & Review Procedures

Applications may be found at: <https://www.epa.ohio.gov/dsw/nps/index>. Complete grant applications must be submitted to the Ohio EPA Division of Surface Water representatives below by **June 18, 2021** to be considered for funding.

Please submit your signed application by email (in both **Microsoft Word** and **PDF** format) to:

- John Mathews, 319 NPS Program Manager, john.mathews@epa.ohio.gov and
- Rick Wilson, 319 Program Specialist, rick.wilson@epa.ohio.gov

Once received, applications will be reviewed for completeness, technical merit and adherence to Federal and State guidance. Final funding decisions will be made by the director of Ohio EPA. Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal grant agreement and adhere to all requirements of the Federal and State guidance.

We appreciate your interest in this subgrant funding opportunity and look forward to working with you to help develop implementation strategies that further Ohio's implementation of conservation practices designed to achieve important water quality goals. If after reviewing this information you require additional assistance or have questions, please do not hesitate to contact John Mathews or Rick Wilson. Please understand current COVID19 situation has made email the best way to initiate contact with NPS program staff.

Sincerely,

Brian W Hall

Brian Hall, Assistant Chief
Ohio EPA, Division of Surface Water

Attachment