



South Carolina Nonpoint Source Program

Request for Initial Proposals: Watershed-Based Plan Development

September 2017

Deadline for Initial Proposal – October 4, 2017 at 3 p.m.

The South Carolina Department of Health and Environmental Control (SCDHEC) is seeking project proposals for the development of Watershed Based Plans (WBP). The United States Environmental Protection Agency's (USEPA) Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) for Source Water Protection (SWP) will be funding the development of WBP projects for the protection of source water. Proposals for SWP funding need to address ambient surface water pollutants that can impact source water for drinking water systems. Only project proposals for the development of WBPs within a watershed with a drinking water intake or containing surface source water will be considered for this SWP funding. SWP-funded projects must use EPA's WBP development guidance.

Who Can Apply?

South Carolina public organizations such as state agencies, local governments, public universities, soil and water conservation districts, regional planning commissions, water systems, watershed organizations and nonprofit organizations are eligible to receive this grant.

Please note that for-profit entities should not develop proposals for other organizations in anticipation of receiving a future contract. All sub-contracts awarded under a selected project's grant must be issued in accordance with federal and state procurement guidelines. This cautionary comment does not apply to for-profit entities already retained by organizations through such a procurement process.

What Projects Are Eligible?

This solicitation is solely seeking proposals for the **development** of a watershed-based plan for future implementation for watersheds within South Carolina. The WBPs should include an element for implementation and protection of public drinking water sources. A watershed-based plan can enhance or augment a source water protection plan in that it encompasses the entire watershed that impacts the supply source, as well as the delineated source water protection area in that watershed. Once a watershed-based plan is in place, it becomes the guidance and framework for any water quality improvement activities in that watershed. Having a watershed-based plan in place also opens up additional funding opportunities such as Section 319 grants for watershed-based plan implementation, as well as the potential for reduced interest rates to implement eligible activities using a Clean Water SRF loan.

What is a watershed-based plan?

Watershed-based plans are documents that identify pollutant(s) in a watershed, determine the sources of the pollutant(s) and describe what needs to be done to address each source. A watershed-based plan has to include stakeholder participation, assessment of the specific causes and sources of water quality problems, identification of measurable water quality goals,

and the implementation of specific actions needed to solve those problems. In order to be eligible to receive funding for future 319 funded watershed implementation projects, a WBP must be in place. Current federal 319 grant guidelines outline nine required elements which must be included in a plan.

DHEC has created a *South Carolina Simplified Guide to Developing Watershed-Based Plans* (available here):

<http://www.DHEC.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Water/Watersheds/DevelopWatershedPlans/>).

This document describes the required elements in detail and walks potential grantees through what will be expected in an approvable watershed-based plan. The purpose of this solicitation for plan development is to assist stakeholders in preparing plans which may be eligible to receive 319 funding in the future. Of note, 319 funds are not available for use where an implementation project would assist in satisfying the requirements of an NPDES permit, including MS4 permits.

Ultimately, plans should *demonstrate a clear, in-depth knowledge* of the watershed as well as the relationship to surface water intakes and how activities in the watershed impact surface water, if applying for SWP funding. Local groups are often best-suited to develop and implement these plans as they are most familiar with their watersheds and those in the community.

Which watersheds?

For purposes of this SWP solicitation, South Carolina watersheds which supply source water for public drinking water systems will be considered.

Selected watersheds should be chosen so that elements of the completed plan may then be eligible for use of Section 319 Nonpoint Source funds, although communities are encouraged to explore multiple funding options for plan implementation. Selection for funding under this RFP does not guarantee future 319 implementation funding.

Note that watershed-based plans are not meant to substitute for or replace existing approved TMDLs. The load reductions prescribed in approved TMDLs must remain in place for permit requirements or other non-regulatory reduction goals. Watershed-based plans may build on these reductions and outline a set of best management practices needed in order to effectively reach them.

Plans should address a watershed at the 12-digit-HUC scale or greater and may also address multiple pollutants although, currently in South Carolina, most approved watershed-based plans address only one pollutant.

Is monitoring allowed?

Due to the relatively short project duration (expected 12-15 months), monitoring is not anticipated as a component of the WBP development proposals. Watershed-based plans may utilize any existing data collected prior to plan development (including applicable volunteer monitoring data), but no new data is envisioned as part of a plan development proposal.

How long can projects last?

Projects are expected to last from 12 to 15 months depending on final start date.

When is the Deadline?

This solicitation includes a phased application process. Applicants are required to submit a brief, initial proposal, which will be used to screen projects for eligibility based on consistency with grant guidelines, watershed location, impairment status and/or source water intake/protection areas. Proposals that make it through this eligibility screening will then be invited to submit a full application package approximately 30 days after they receive notification.

Initial proposals must be received by 3 PM on Wednesday, October 4, 2017. All proposals must be submitted electronically to NPSGrants@dhec.sc.gov. DHEC staff will review proposals for eligibility within 21 days. Applicants with eligible proposals will be notified and given 30 days to submit a full application package and will be provided the necessary forms at that time. The **estimated** final application package due date is December 6, 2017 (actual deadline will be determined when the review of initial proposals is complete).

Once final applications are received, a review committee will select eligible projects for funding. Applicants will be notified of selection within 45 days of the close of the final application period. From the time that DHEC staff evaluate the proposals until the grant agreement is signed will be approximately 60 days.

For each project selected, the applicant may be asked to submit a revised workplan, taking into account the comments received from the review committee. Following the submittal of the revised workplan, SCDHEC will conduct a final review.

SCDHEC reserves the right to (1) make no awards following this solicitation, (2) reject all proposals, or (3) to reject proposals which, in the judgment of SCDHEC staff, fail to reasonably meet requirements of the RFP.

What Would Be a Final Product of a Funded Project?

At the completion of a selected project, grantees must submit a completed, fully reviewed watershed-based plan. These plans will include all nine required elements outlined in the *SC Simplified Guide to Developing Watershed-Based Plans* (<http://www.DHEC.gov/library/CR-010496.pdf>). This will mean that selected projects must submit a final draft of their watershed-based plan to DHEC *thirty (30) days prior* to the completion of their contract in order to provide enough time for final review.

How Much Money is Available?

Source Water Protection Grants will be funded with monies provided to SCDHEC by USEPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) set-aside for Source Water Protection (SWP). DHEC plans to allocate approximately \$100,000 for projects under this RFP. No per-proposal maximum funding amount is specified in this solicitation, but **proposals must clearly justify all costs included in the final application.**

WBP development projects are funded by quarterly reimbursement. SCDHEC is not liable for any costs incurred by the grantee prior to the date of grant agreement approval, and no payment in advance of the final approval can be made.

Are Matching Funds Required?

Under this solicitation, no matching funds are required. Selected projects will be funded 100% by monies provided to SCDHEC by USEPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Fund set-aside for Source Water Protection. However, additional consideration will be given to proposals which show supplementary funds leveraged for WBP development.

Can DHEC Staff Review Draft Documents?

NPS staff and Watershed Managers are available to review draft initial proposals and draft applications on a first-come, first-served basis. Staff may also meet with applicants, upon request. Applicants are *strongly* encouraged to submit draft materials, and submit those materials well before the deadlines in order to receive timely feedback.

Who Can I Contact for Assistance?

The following staff are available for assistance with this solicitation. Applicants should contact the NPS Program Coordinator or the appropriate Watershed Manager for the watershed of interest.

Nonpoint Source Staff

Shakhlan Garane
NPS Program Coordinator
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Watershed Managers

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Andy Miller
Pee Dee and Santee Watershed Manager
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803-898-4355

Karin Skipper
Salkehatchie and Savannah Watershed Manager
skippek@dhsc.sc.gov
803-898-4187

What Grant Conditions Will Apply to Selected Projects?

The applicant for each project which is selected by the review committee must enter into a written Grant Agreement with SCDHEC to establish mutually agreeable terms for completing the project. The Grant Agreement is in the form of a contract formatted according to standard SCDHEC contract

procedures. A sample grant agreement is available upon request. Some of the key elements included are as follows:

- **Administrative Capacity**

A “Grantee” (grant recipient) must have administrative capacity to comply with the applicable requirements of federal “Uniform Administrative Requirements for Grants and Cooperative Agreements” (40 CFR Part 30 or 31) or “Uniform Administrative Requirements” (2 CFR Part 200 and 1500) and State requirements. Applicable federal requirements will be specified in an executed grant agreement. This includes, but is not limited to, managing allowable project costs, non-federal match, cost accounting and invoicing, audit procedures, records access, record keeping, sub-agreements, and progress reporting.

- **Timely Implementation and Closeout**

A grantee is obliged to take action to implement the project as planned and closeout the project in the time frame outlined in the workplan. The final watershed-based plan document will be due at the close of the grant period. Note that additional final financial paperwork and closeout reporting documents will be due 30 to 45 days AFTER the close of the project. NO costs will be allowed after the close of the project; hence potential grantees should plan to complete these requirements accordingly.

- **Pre-Award Costs**

DHEC is not liable for any cost incurred by the Grantee or any Grantee subcontractor(s) prior to the contract effective date. DHEC cannot authorize any payments prior to final approval and signing of the grant agreement.

- **Reporting and Invoice Requirements**

The grantee agrees to submit interim **quarterly** progress reports and a final closeout report that evaluates the project. The evaluation is to include a critique of approaches that were used, and recommendations for other similar projects.

In addition to the quarterly progress reports, grantees must also submit invoices each quarter. The grantee also agrees to support minority and women-owned businesses whenever feasible and will submit MBE/WBE (Minority Business Enterprise/Women Business Enterprise) forms.

- **Fund Reimbursement**

Grantees will be paid by reimbursement **only**. Applicants should have funds available to cover costs each quarter while waiting for reimbursement.

- **Environmental Data Quality Assurance**

As noted below, due to the relatively short project duration (expected 12-15 months) for this solicitation, monitoring is not anticipated as a component of the WBP development proposals. If your project involves environmentally-related measurements such as water quality sampling, monitoring, or sample analysis, then the work must be completed in accordance with a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) that is approved by DHEC prior to data acquisition. NO costs associated with monitoring occurring outside of a QAPP will be allowed and no data collected outside of a QAPP will be considered. All grant agreements will include a term stipulating this requirement. More information on QAPPs, including guidelines, can be found online:

http://www.scdhec.gov/HomeAndEnvironment/Docs/OAPP_Guide%20Sept_2008_Finalflags.pdf

- **Food and Promotional Items**

NO food or promotional items shall be allowed to be purchased with SWP funds.

- **GIS Requirements**

All selected projects that have a Geographic Information System (GIS) component must follow EPA/DHEC GIS guidance. Please contact NPS and Watersheds Section staff prior to submitting GIS data to ensure the most current protocols are used.

- **Travel**

Travel expenses, including room and board, incurred in connection with the project will be limited to reimbursement at the standard State rate in effect during the period of the project agreement and will be included within the maximum amount of the contract. The current mileage rate is 54 cents per mile. Due to travel reimbursement policy changes made by the State of South Carolina, effective on July 1, 2006, the State standard rate for hotels will be at the established Federal Government Services Administration rate or below for the area of travel. These rates can be found at <http://www.gsa.gov>.

- **Management Fees and Similar Charges**

Management fees or similar charges in excess of the direct costs and approved indirect rates are not allowable. The term “management fees or similar charges” refers to expenses added to the direct costs in order to accumulate and reserve funds for ongoing business expenses, unforeseen liabilities, or for other similar costs which are not allowable under this solicitation. This includes any mark up added to eligible costs.

How Do I Apply?

This solicitation involves a phased selection process. To be considered, interested groups should submit an initial proposal form. This form was distributed with the e-mail announcement of this solicitation and can also be requested via e-mail to NPSGrants@dhec.sc.gov.

The initial proposal form will be used to screen for eligibility and asks the applicant to include the following information:

- Information about the lead organization, project location, and water quality concerns to be addressed
- A brief description of what the applicant is planning
- Best Management Practices (BMPs) that may be identified in the watershed-based plan

In addition to the initial proposal form, applicants must provide a location map of the project watershed or area on one page of 8.5”x11” paper clearly showing, at a minimum, the SCDHEC monitoring sites(s), waterbody(s), town(s), drinking water intakes(s), and watershed boundaries. This map is required of all applicants.

Initial Proposals must be received by 3 PM on Wednesday, October 4, 2017.

E-mail your complete proposal to NPSGrants@dhec.sc.gov. Only e-mails sent to this address will be considered. Confirmation e-mails will be sent upon receipt of all proposal-related messages.

Applicants who make it through the initial screening will be invited to submit a full application. This application will include extensive detail about the project and its budget.

The e-mail attachments include samples of the full grant application form. These materials apply only to those proposals that make it through the eligibility screening. All applicants should, however, review

these materials in order to understand what they may be required to submit at a later date. Should a proposal be invited to submit a full application package, detailed instructions and fillable forms will be provided. When it comes time to prepare the budget for the application, keep in mind that:

- While no maximum budget amount is specified in this solicitation, ALL costs must be justified.
- The solicitation is for 100% funding, no non-federal match is required; however, additional consideration will be given to proposals which show supplementary funds leveraged for WBP development.

The following table outlines the significant events of this solicitation process.

Process Step	Date	What Applicants Submit
Initial Proposal	<u>Due 10/4/17 by 3 pm</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial Proposal Form • Map
Eligibility Screening (SCDHEC)	Within 21 days (approximately 10/25/17)	(n/a)
Full Application <i>(Eligible applicants only)</i>	30 days after invitation to submit (approximately 12/6/17)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application Form • Map • Budget • <u>Commitment</u> letters from cooperators
Applicants are notified of selection decision	Within 60 days of application submittal	(n/a)
Selected projects are asked to revise application/workplan	Given 2-3 weeks to make changes	All requested information
Grant agreement drafted and sent to grantee for signature	Three weeks	Signed grant agreement

DHEC’s NPS Program reserves the right to refuse any proposal which does not meet the RFP requirements for:

- 1. Eligibility,**
- 2. Complete budget justification,**
- 3. Submission of required information.**

Additionally, proposals which, in the judgment of DHEC staff, fail to reasonably meet other requirements of the RFP may also be rejected.

List of Attachments:

- Initial Proposal Form
- Sample Application Form



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 Watershed-Based Plan **DEVELOPMENT** Projects

Due October 4, 2017, 3 PM

Organization Information:

Tell us about who plans to be the lead organization on this Watershed-Based Plan (WBP) DEVELOPMENT project.

Lead Organization: _____
 Contact Name: _____ Contact E-mail: _____

Project Location Information

Tell us about the watershed the proposed WBP would address.

Watershed Name(s): _____
 12 Digit HUC(s): _____
 Source Water Intake (s): _____
 County(ies): _____

Water Quality Information

Tell us what water quality concerns you will be addressing in the proposed WBP.

Water Quality Impairments Being Addressed: (Mark all that apply)	_____ Pathogens (Fecal coliform/E. coli)	_____ pH	_____ Turbidity
	_____ Fecal coliform (Shellfish)	_____ Nitrogen	_____ Copper
	_____ Macroinvertebrate Community (BIO/Aquatic Life Use)	_____ Phosphorus	_____ Nickel
		_____ Ammonia	_____ Zinc

SCDHEC Monitoring Site(s): _____

Place an X next to the applicable answers below relating to the watershed to be covered by the proposed WBP.

TMDL: _____ Has an approved TMDL _____ Is impaired (no TMDL)

Source Water Protection-SWP: _____ Contains Source Water _____ Contains Surface Drinking Water Intake

Project Information

This section helps us understand what you are proposing with your project. It should not be lengthy, but should demonstrate that you have a clear course of action for developing the WBP.

1. *Tell us about your project partners. List them in the chart below according to whether or not they have officially agreed to partner on the project at this time.*

Confirmed Project Partners	Potential Project Partners

2. *List the potential pollutant sources you are going to address with this WBP.*

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Due October 4, 2017, 3 PM

3. *Tell us what you are planning to do. Provide a brief (1/2-page maximum) description of what you are proposing. Will there be supplemental leveraged funds?*

4. *List the potential Best Management Practices (BMPs) you anticipate the WBP will identify.*

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Required Map

Provide a location map of the project watershed or area on one page of 8.5"x11" paper clearly showing, at a minimum, the DHEC monitoring sites(s), waterbody(s), town(s), source water intake (s) if applicable and watershed boundaries. This map is required of all applicants.

Submitting this Proposal – ONLY submittals of electronic proposals will be accepted.

E-mail the completed initial proposal form and map to NPSGrants@dhec.sc.gov. E-mails submitted to other addresses will not be considered. Do not exceed 20 MB for attachments on any e-mail; send multiple e-mails if needed for larger attachments. Confirmation e-mails will be sent upon receipt of all proposal-related materials.

Initial proposals must be received by 3 PM on Wednesday, October 4, 2017.

Applicants will be notified within 30 days whether or not they are invited to submit a full application package.

Due 30 days after invitation to apply

Instructions: Complete the application using the instructions provided in each section. All instructions are included in blue text. **Please be sure to delete all blue text prior to submittal.**

Required attachments are listed at the end of this application. Do NOT submit a separate cover letter.

1. PROJECT INFORMATION:

Project Title: _____
Length (months): _____

Watershed Name(s): _____
12 Digit HUC(s): _____
County(ies): _____
Source Water Intake(s) _____
Water Quality Parameter(s): _____
DHEC Monitoring Site(s) _____
Included in Watershed: _____

This watershed: _____ Has an approved TMDL _____ Is impaired (no TMDL)
(Place an x next to the appropriate option)

2. FUNDING REQUEST:

Federal Request: \$ _____
Supplemental Funding, if applicable: \$ _____
Source: _____

3. LEAD ORGANIZATION INFORMATION:

Lead Organization: _____
Federal ID Number: _____
Project Manager: _____
Mailing address: _____
Telephone: _____
Fax: _____
Email: _____
Alternate Contact: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____
Financial Officer: _____
Telephone: _____
Email: _____

Official paperwork (e.g. contract) should be sent to the attention of: _____

Due 30 days after invitation to apply

4. COOPERATING ORGANIZATIONS:

List organizations and briefly describe responsibility with and/or contribution to project. All organizations listed here must also submit a letter of commitment. Supporting organizations may also submit letters, but should not be listed here. Cooperating organizations are those that will actually be working on the project. Supporting organizations support the idea of the project and may be involved in future implementation, but will not directly be involved with the development of this watershed-based plan.

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5. PROJECT STAFF EXPERTISE:

BRIEFLY describe the expertise and experience of the lead organization and key cooperators as it relates to watershed-based plan development. Note that some organizations may not have planning experience, but may possess key watershed knowledge (e.g. agricultural influences).

6. PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

The following sections comprise the body of your proposal and should be the longest part of the document. Fill out each section using complete sentences. The provided format and instructions are intended only as a guide and do not substitute for proper organization, grammar and flow.

A. Watershed Description:

Briefly describe the watershed in which you are planning to work. What makes it special? What interest is there in restoring or protecting it? Who are the drinking water users? How many public drinking water customers are in the watershed? Why should the Committee select this watershed to receive funding?

B. Previous Work in the Watershed:

What work, if any, has already been done in this watershed? Is there a current Source Water Protection Plan (SWPP) for the watershed?

C. Planning Goal:

What is the ultimate goal following this planning effort? Will the plan be utilized? If so, how? Are existing funds available for implementation, or are you planning to apply for other funds? Who would be responsible for plan implementation and how would it occur? How would this planning effort relate to any other required plans (e.g. TMDL implementation plans for MS4s)?

D. Strategies for Plan Development:

How will you execute the development of this watershed-based plan? How will cooperators and other stakeholders be involved in the process. You need to demonstrate to the Committee that you have a strategy up-front and will be able to start work immediately and successfully.

E. Data Usage:

What data will you use to put the plan together? List the planned and potential sources.

F. Monitoring Component: (if applicable)

Due to the relatively short project duration (expected 12-15 months), monitoring is not anticipated as a component of the WBP development proposals. Watershed-based plans may utilize any existing data in plan development (including applicable volunteer monitoring data), but no new data is envisioned as part of a plan development proposal.

7. MEASURABLE MILESTONES:

List milestones associated with completion of your project. Examples would include meetings, completion of plan sections, etc. These will be used to track progress of selected projects. All projects are required to include four milestones, which are already provided below. All other milestones should be listed using the number of month by which they will be complete

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Due 30 days after invitation to apply

(e.g. Month 5, NOT November 2015) or with a range illustrating when the milestone will be worked on and completed (e.g. Months 9-10). Keep in mind that these are months after the project starts, counted from the grant agreement signature date. Delete any rows that are not needed.

#	Month	Milestone
1	Quarterly	Submit progress reports, invoices, and MBE/WBE forms per schedule outlined in grant agreement. (Note: All report and invoice forms will be provided by DHEC)
2	30 days prior to project completion	Submit final draft watershed-based plan to SCDHEC for review.
3	Last day of grant period	Submit final watershed-based plan to SCDHEC.
4	30 days after project completion	Submit final invoice and final technical closeout report to SCDHEC. Submit Final Budget Report within 45 days of project close.
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8. PROPOSED BUDGET

A. Overall Project Budget

Use the chart in Attachment 1 (required) to generate the overall project budget. Use those numbers to fill in the chart below. Please also note that, while equipment and construction categories are included below, your proposal should not include these expenses.

	Federal	Total
Personnel - Salary		\$0.00
Personnel - Fringe		\$0.00
Travel		\$0.00
Equipment		\$0.00
Supplies		\$0.00
Contractual		\$0.00
Construction		\$0.00
Other		\$0.00
Indirect <i>(Requires additional documentation)</i>		\$0.00
TOTAL	\$ 0.00	\$0.00

Due 30 days after invitation to apply

B. Budget Narrative:

Explain and justify all costs included in your budget. Be sure to note the source of all non-federal funding. Reference the budget chart in Attachment 1 as needed. Include any calculations that are not found on Attachment 1.

Personnel - Salary:
Personnel – Fringe:
Travel:
Supplies:
Contractual:
Other:
Indirect :

Required Attachments:

Commitment letters from all cooperating organizations (not support letters)
Attachment 1 - Budget Chart to be provided with full application (Excel document)
Attachment 2 – Map
Attachment 3 – Documentation for Indirect Category Billing (only if requesting indirect expenses)

References

List references cited, if applicable. Otherwise, delete this section.

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SAMPLE