



Request for Proposals

2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control - Environmental Stewardship Program

Release Date: Friday, January 21, 2022

Proposals Due: Friday, February 28, 2022

Contact for Proposals: Rachel Green ANR, Department of Environmental Conservation,
Financial Operations, (802) 522-8731 anr.widfinancial@vermont.gov

THE STATE WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO CONTACT VENDORS WITH UPDATED INFORMATION. IT IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF EACH VENDOR TO PERIODICALLY CHECK <http://www.vermontbidsystem.com> FOR ANY AND ALL NOTIFICATIONS, RELEASES AND AMENDMENTS ASSOCIATED WITH THE RFP.

Introduction and Purpose

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation (VTDEC) Lakes and Ponds Management and Protection Program (LPMPP) works to protect, maintain, enhance, and restore Vermont lakes and the public uses that healthy lake ecosystems provide through outreach and education, monitoring and assessment, and regulatory programs.

The Aquatic Invasive Species Program is within the LPMPP and administers the Aquatic Nuisance Control Grant-in-Aid (GIA) Environmental Stewardship Program. This stewardship program provides financial assistance through a Participating Costs Agreement to municipalities and agencies of the State for aquatic nuisance species environmental stewardship projects. Funding for this program comes from a portion of annual revenues from motorboat registration fees and can also be supplemented by federal funds provided by the Army Corps of Engineers. Available funding in 2022 is estimated at **\$450,000**.

An “aquatic nuisance” is an undesirable or excessive substance or population that interferes with the recreational potential or aquatic habitat of a waterbody, and includes plants, animals, and algal populations. Applications will be reviewed to determine whether the proposed project is suitable to control or to minimize the effect that an aquatic nuisance has on water quality and use. For more information about the Aquatic Nuisance Control Program and related Vermont State Statutes please visit <http://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/050/01458>.

Eligibility

The VTDEC will deem an Applicant under this program as a Participant Support Cost Environmental Steward who must be a municipality or an agency of the State. Funds will be distributed directly to the Applicant. Local interest groups including lake associations have the option to apply through the municipality in which the waterbody is located. Regional partners, such as a conservation district or watershed associations, are eligible Applicants if applying for funds on behalf of a consortium of municipalities or lake associations.

The Participant Support Costs (PSC) Programs

On 11/12/2020 the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) issued revised guidance on their Recipient Applicant Information Notice (RAIN) RAIN-2018-G05-R1. This EPA RAIN issued Guidance on Participant Support Costs to incorporate regulatory changes to 2 CFR 1500 related to Participant Support Costs. The revised definition of a Participant Support Costs is meant to encourage participation in rebate, subsidy and similar programs that promote environmental stewardship as PSC's.

Previously, Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles and Audit Requirements for Federal Awards (UGG) defined Participant Support Costs in 2 CFR 1500.1 as direct costs for items such as stipends or subsistence allowances, travel allowances and registration fees paid to or on behalf of participants or trainees (but not employees) in connection with conferences or training projects. EPA has expanded the definition of **Participant Support Costs** in 2 CFR 1500.1 to include rebates and subsidies for purchase and installation of pollution control technology under the Diesel Emission Reduction Act grants and other forms **of rebates, subsidies and payments to program participants provided by recipients to encourage environmental stewardship**. PSC's are allowable with prior EPA approval as provided at 2 CFR 200.456. The PSC guidance also notes that subrecipient monitoring and management do not apply to PSC payments. PSCs are also excluded from Modified Total Direct Costs as defined in 2 CFR 200.1.

How does our Aquatic Nuisance Control Program Promote Environmental Stewardship?

Subsidies or rebates provided to program beneficiaries to encourage participation in statutorily authorized programs to encourage environmental stewardship such as Best Management Practices under Clean Water Act 319 nonpoint source management programs, subsidies to promote adoption of source reduction practices by businesses under section 6605 of the Pollution Prevention Act, rebates or subsidies for wood stove replacement, low emission vehicle purchases, or purchase and installation of pollution control devices under financial assistance programs authorized by the Clean Air Act, or EPA's annual appropriation acts.

Pursuant to 10 V.S.A. Chapter 50 of Vermont Statute – The Aquatic Nuisance Control Environmental Stewardship Program is a statutorily authorized Program to encourage environmental stewardship such as Best Management Practices under the Clean Water Act 319 nonpoint management programs. Statute- <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/section/10/050/01458> it therefore considered an Environmental Stewardship Program.

Scope of Work and Funding Priorities under the Aquatic Nuisance Control Environmental Stewardship Program

Priority is given to projects designed to manage new infestations of aquatic nuisances or to develop novel spread prevention programs. Second priority is given to projects that prevent or control the further spread of aquatic nuisance species. Third priority is given to recurring maintenance projects.

In establishing priorities for individual projects, the following criteria are considered: public accessibility and recreational uses; importance to commercial, agricultural or other interests; the degree of local interest; local efforts to control aquatic nuisances; other considerations affecting feasibility, probability of achieving long-term control, and necessity or advantage of the proposed work; and the extent to which the control project is a developmental program rather than a maintenance program.

Additional criteria considered in approving requests and determining the amount of any stewardship program include: the use of the waters by persons outside the municipality in which the waters are located; the long- range effect of the control project; the recreational use of the waters; and the effectiveness of municipal shore land zoning and other controls in minimizing or preventing existing or new development from having any adverse effects on the waters subject to the control program.

Availability of Decontamination Unit Equipment

In addition to the availability of funding, VTDEC anticipates having high-pressure, hot-water decontamination units available to be **on loan** to municipalities engaging in aquatic nuisance species management projects. Use of the units is intended to help prevent new aquatic nuisance species introductions within the State. Applicants will need to determine via their application if they are interested in utilizing these units for their project. Applicants must submit a fully completed VTDEC **Temporary Equipment Use Request Form** in order to secure a unit.

Applicants interested in being considered to receive rights to use the Units during the 2022 field season must describe how the use fits into the scope of the overall project and certify that they have appropriate staffing to implement use of Unit as well as keep Unit in good working condition, which includes refilling the Unit from a supply of clean water.

Funding and Method of Payment

Funding is available from the Motorboat Permit Registration Fees Fund and may also be supplemented by federal funds. Payment is contingent upon available funding.

All payments will be made in one payment after satisfactory completion of all deliverables as outlined in your application. Regional partners will have the option of receiving an advance payment in-full upon issuance of award.

Project Timeline

All work is to be completed between April 1, 2022, and November 30, 2022.

Procurement

Awardees must maintain written procedures for procurement transactions. Any equipment, supplies, and/or services procured outside of an awardee's organization will need to be obtained per the awardee's procurement or purchasing policy.

Pre-Bid Site Visit or Bidder's Conference

A Bidder's Conference, or Grant Application Workshop, will be hosted by VTDEC. Applicants can join this meeting via our conference call number details below. Although attendance is not mandatory it is highly recommended.

Conference Title: 2022 ANC Grant in AID ESP Bidder's Conference

Date and Time: Thursday, February 10, 2022 from 10:00 am-12:00 pm EDST

Moderator Names: Kimberly Jensen, Technical Project Lead and Rachel Green, Grants Management Specialist, State of Vermont, Department of Environmental Conservation.

Conference Access: **Online:** [Microsoft Teams Online Meeting Conference Link](#) -OR-
Phone In Only: Telephone number: (802) 210-4484 No Passcode Required.

Goal and Purpose of Meeting:

The meeting will be used to go through the application process, discuss any questions applicants may have, as well as address any questions previously submitted to the Grants Management Specialist, Rachel Green at anr.widfinancial@vermont.gov. Following the meeting, we will post all questions and answers addressed at the Bidders Conference Meeting to the business registry website. Although a bidder's attendance is not mandatory and is not part of the selection criteria, attendance is highly suggested as we will be reviewing the overall program and all the new application documentation, and we would like to help you understand how to fill in all the paperwork.

Deadlines and Content of Proposals

Questions: All questions are required to be submitted electronically via email to Rachel Green at anr.widfinancial@vermont.gov by **February 8, 2022 5:00 pm EDST** using the subject line **"2022 ANC Environmental Stewardship Program - RFP Questions."**

Submittal: All proposals must be submitted electronically via email to Rachel Green by **February 28, 2022, 5:00 PM EDST** using the subject line **"2022 ANC Environmental Stewardship Program - RFP Proposal."**

Bid opening: Proposals are anticipated to be opened **March 1, 2022, 5:00 PM EDST.**

Notification: Proposal preliminarily accepted by DEC are anticipated to be notified no later than **March 31, 2022.**

All proposals must include the following information and completed documents:

- Proposals must clearly meet the selection criteria identified in the Scope of Work and Funding Priorities under the Aquatic Nuisance Control Environmental Stewardship Program section above

- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA I. Application Cover Page
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA II. Project Sheet (one for each project)
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA III. Project Budget (one for each project)
- If applicable, a VTDEC Temporary Equipment Use Request Form
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA Applicant Assurances-Attestations Form

Eligibility

A current Vermont state employee responding to this RFP as a sole proprietor or owner of other form of business must obtain a waiver from the Vermont Department of Human Resources prior to entering into contract with the State.

Reservation of State's Rights

The State reserves the right:

- to accept or reject any and all bids, in whole or in part, with or without cause in the best interest of the State.
- waive technicalities in submissions; (A technicality is a minor deviation from the requirements of an RFP that does not impact the substantive terms of the bid/RFP and can be considered without a material impact on the RFP process, etc.). If uncertain of whether a condition qualifies as a technicality, consult with the OPC or AGO for clarification. For example, a late bid is NOT considered a technicality;
- to make purchases outside of the awarded contracts where it is deemed in the best interest of the State; and
- to obtain clarification or additional information.

Confidentiality

After conclusion of the application process, Proposals are a matter of public record. If an application includes material considered by the applicant to be proprietary and confidential under 1 V.S.A., Chapter 5, the application shall clearly designate the material as such and explain why such material should be considered confidential. The Vendor must identify each page or section of the Proposal that it believes is proprietary and confidential with sufficient grounds to justify each exemption from release, including the prospective harm to the competitive position of the applicant if the identified material were to be released.

Under no circumstances shall the entire Proposal be designated as proprietary or confidential. If the Vendor marks portions of the Proposal confidential, the Vendor shall provide a redacted version of the Proposal for release to the public. Notwithstanding the above, the Secretary has an independent obligation under Vermont law to determine whether any proposal material is subject to public inspection and copying upon request, which may include material that has otherwise been designated as proprietary and confidential by the Vendor. The Vendor's designation of material as proprietary and confidential, and submission of a redacted Proposal, are provided to the Secretary for informational purposes in the event the Agency receives a public records request and will not result in withholding of materials by the Secretary unless expressly supported by Vermont law.

Attachments

- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control Participant Support Costs - Request for Proposals
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control Award Letter Template and Attachments
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA Application Manual
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA I. Application Cover Page*
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA II.A. Greeter Project Sheet*
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA II.B. Education, Outreach, Survey Project Sheet*
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA II.C. Management Project Sheet*
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA III. Project Budget*
- 2022 Aquatic Nuisance Control GIA Applicant Assurances-Attestations*
- VTDEC Temporary Equipment Use Request Form*

* Required to be submitted with proposal, if applicable to proposed project.