



## VERMONT CLEAN WATER INITIATIVE GRANTS TO PROMOTE STRATEGIES THAT REDUCE AGRICULTURAL NUTRIENT LOSSES INTO WATERS OF THE STATE.

### OVERVIEW

The purpose of this grant is to provide opportunities to undertake projects that will achieve reductions in nutrient runoff from farming operations, with a priority for phosphorus reductions statewide, and to meet the goals of Act 64, the Clean Water Act. Funding for these grants will come from the Clean Water Fund, which was set up as part of the Clean Water Act.

**Available Funds: \$888,000**

### GRANT CATEGORIES

#### ❖ **Education, Outreach and Implementation**

##### PURPOSE

The Education, Outreach and Implementation Grants provide up to \$20,000 each to eligible groups to inform, promote and implement strategies that reduce agricultural nutrient losses into waters of the state. The program's objective is to develop awareness, knowledge, skills and commitment on an agricultural water quality issue so that informed decisions and constructive actions will benefit waters of the state. Projects that address significant sources of agricultural nutrient losses and/or are located in a watershed that is listed as impaired are strongly encouraged.

#### ❖ **Organizational Development**

##### PURPOSE

The Organizational Development Grants provide up to \$20,000 each to support increased organizational capacity and long-term effectiveness of organizations working to help farmers understand and implement innovative farming

practices to improve water quality. The intent of this grant category is to assist organizations in the early stages of their development and/or to assist established organizations in strengthening their capacity to work with farmers to reduce the impact agricultural activities have on water quality. Projects that address significant sources of agricultural nutrient losses and/or are located in a watershed that is listed as impaired are strongly encouraged.

#### ❖ **Innovative Phosphorus Reduction Activities**

##### **PURPOSE**

The Innovative Phosphorus Reduction Activities Grants do not have a preset dollar limit. The Agency is seeking not to inhibit ideas based on budget, but there is limited funding currently available. A phased approach budget will be required because we may only partially fund projects. Where appropriate the Agency may invest in the initial stages of larger proposals. Projects will be judged on their effectiveness for agricultural phosphorus removal and or phosphorus reduction in waters using innovative and or under-utilized activities/technologies that enhance BMP implementation. Projects that address significant sources of agricultural nutrient losses and/or are located in a watershed that is listed as impaired are strongly encouraged.

These categories cover a broad range of activities that result in nutrient reductions from agricultural land due to management changes and/or nutrient inputs. There should be no limit to the creativity of these proposals in that the goal is agricultural nutrient reductions, with a priority for phosphorus reductions to waters of the state. Projects will be judged on their effectiveness towards the overall goal of nutrient removal and/or nutrient reduction. Applicants must include a plan, steps that will be taken and estimates of amounts of nutrients removed or reduced. Funding requests must be within the scope of a grant category. Applicants may submit applications in more than one category. Please identify any other applications or funded projects that you currently have that relate to this grant application and explain how the projects overlap. Match funds are not required, but are encouraged. Please identify whether this grant will be used as a match to another grant application. If so, the supporting match grant application must be awarded within four (4) months of this grant award as obligated funds cannot be held beyond that time frame. Any project that involves an education or outreach event will be required to submit an electronic Education and Outreach Tracking Form (see resources for applicants). Any project that includes an on the ground implementation effort will be required to submit the geospatial data that identifies the location and specific details of the project so that it can be tracked in the statewide partner database.

## APPLICATION INFORMATION

Deadline for Submission: November 3, 2016 at 4:30 pm

Application Notification: Late December, 2016

Estimated Project Start Date: Mid-February, 2017

Grant Agreement Timelines are up to 24 months.

### **Question and Answer Period:**

If you require clarification of any portion of this RFP, please submit specific questions in writing no later than October 11, 2016. Questions may be emailed to [AGR.PhosphorusRFP@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.PhosphorusRFP@vermont.gov). At the close of the question period a copy of all questions or comments and the Agency of Agriculture's responses will be posted on the Agency's web site [www.agriculture.vermont.gov](http://www.agriculture.vermont.gov). Every effort will be made to have these responses available on October 18, 2016, contingent on the number and complexity of the questions.

**All applications must be submitted electronically to:**

[AGR.PhosphorusRFP@vermont.gov](mailto:AGR.PhosphorusRFP@vermont.gov)

The application should be no more than six (6) pages total and should follow the format provided here. Please use font size 11.

## APPLICATION TEMPLATE

Cover Page (1 page)

**Project Category:** check appropriate category

- 1. Education Outreach and Implementation
- 2. Organizational Development
- 3. Innovative Phosphorus Reduction Activities

**Project Title:**

**Project Summary:**

**Project Location:**

**Watershed:**

**Applicant Information**

**Organization Name:**

**Organization Address:**

**Point of Contact**

**Name:**

**Title:**

**Phone:**

**Email:**

**Funding Requested:**

**Additional Funds Provided:**

**APPLICATION TEMPLATE (Continued)**

**Proposed Scope of Work: (3 pages)**

Address all scoring categories under the Scope of Work for each grant category.

**Itemized Budget and Narrative: (2 pages)**

A complete application will include an itemized budget table and narrative, along with a milestone based budget table. Provide a detailed explanation for each budget category. Describe other funding, if any, you have secured or are working to secure that is relevant to the subject of this project.

**Itemized Budget Table:**

Project Sources and Uses	Requested Funds	Match and Source of Commitment	Total Project Budget
Personnel			
Fringe Benefits			
Travel			
Equipment			
Supplies			
Contractual			
Other			
Indirect			
TOTAL			

**Milestone Budget Table:**

	Milestone	Deliverable	Cost/Unit	Payment Amount
1.				
2.				
3.				
	Total			\$

## Category One:

### Education, Outreach and Implementation Grant Application

#### Eligibility

- Farmers, farmers' partners, agricultural engineering and or consulting firms, agricultural organizations and trade associations
- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions
- Organizations with nonprofit status, or citizen groups such as watershed or lake associations working in coordination with such an organization, that apply on their behalf and will manage the grant funds
- State and Federal government agencies may collaborate with one of the above groups, but are not eligible to be the primary applicant under this grant program
- Applicants must be in compliance with all state regulations (i.e. water quality, taxes, child support) and in good standing with the State of Vermont at the time of submitting an application and must remain so during the entire grant period

Application scoring is based on points for each section as indicated. A grant review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award decisions.

1. **Educational Impact** (15 points)

Explain the extent to which the project will inform the farming community and the general public about agricultural water quality issues.

2. **Link to Required Agricultural Practices** (15 Points)

Explain the extent to which the project will assist the farming community in implementing water quality requirements and accessing tools for the implementation of the Required Agricultural Practices (RAPs).

3. **Goals, Performance Measures and Outcomes** (15 Points)

Explain the extent to which the project will result in tangible products or benefits that can be measured. Describe measurable outcomes using specific performance measures and milestones, specifically addressing both the quantitative and qualitative efforts and effects of the proposed project (see example matrix below). Describe the ability of the project to gauge or evaluate success of the outreach programming in terms of affecting personal or societal behavioral change to improve agricultural water quality in Vermont.

Example Matrix: Potential performance measures for this category, and how they relate to the quantity and quality of both the effort and effect of the project. Describe how the project metrics will be measured.

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of education/outreach/implementation events</li> <li>• Number of hours spent preparing for education/outreach/implementation events</li> <li>• Number of advertising efforts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Credentials of the trainer</li> <li>• Ratio student/trainer per event</li> <li>• Number of new audience members attending</li> <li>• Appropriateness of the course materials for the audience</li> <li>• Appropriateness of advertisements for the desired audience</li> </ul>
Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of attendees who completed the event</li> <li>• Number of implemented practices (will need to provide GIS Shapefile/Feature class with attributes)</li> <li>• Number of attendees who attended because of the advertisement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent of farmers who changed management (if applicable)</li> <li>• Percent of participants with increased knowledge (example: before/after survey)</li> <li>• Percent of implemented practices being maintained (example: follow-up call/check-in)</li> <li>• Percent of participants that retained knowledge (example: 6-month follow-up call/check-in)</li> </ul>

4. **Proposed Methods and Organizational Capacity** (10 points)

Explain the feasibility of the proposed methods and of the organization's capacity for carrying out the project.

5. **Outreach Materials** (5 points)

Explain the extent to which the project will create documents and user-friendly products that can be made available to farmers and farmer partners to address nutrient reduction or removal.

6. **Partnership and Collaboration** (5 points)

Explain the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the commitment to work with other partners and/or leverage other funding sources to achieve project goals.

7. **Past Performance** (5 points)

Describe knowledge or experience with education, outreach and implementation to farmers related to agricultural water quality issues, and the applicant's past performance on similar projects.

8. **New Audiences** (5 points)

Explain the extent to which the project reaches new audiences.

9. **Program Synergy** (5 points)

Explain the extent to which the project enhances other education and outreach efforts or programs related to agricultural water quality issues.

10. **Itemized Budget and Narrative** (20 points) (1 page)

Provide an itemized budget and a budget narrative describing all costs listed in the itemized budget. The proposed budget will be evaluated in terms of appropriateness and clarity relative to the project objectives, conciseness of the proposal, adherence to format, and relevance to the RFP.

## Category Two:

### Organizational Development Grants

#### Eligibility

**Specific Qualifying Information:** All organizations seeking grants in this category must have nonprofit status, AND must have an organizational mission that includes achieving water quality improvements on agricultural operations in Vermont.

#### **Examples of Eligible Expenses:**

- Purchase of software for improved database or financial management (such as GIS or bookkeeping and accounting software)
- Operational expenses such as staffing costs or field equipment.
- Strategic planning or other types of board or programmatic development; and
- Training of staff or volunteers for:
  - a) volunteer recruitment and management;
  - b) grant writing;
  - c) membership recruitment and retention; and
  - d) field techniques/field data collection.

Application scoring is based on points for each section as indicated. A grant review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award decisions.

#### 1. **Project Impact** (40 points)

Explain the extent to which the proposal will strengthen the capacity of eligible organizations. (See above for eligibility guidelines). Please indicate how the project will improve organizational capacity, and how improving capacity will increase the organization's ability to reduce agricultural nutrient losses to water of Vermont.

#### 2. **Goals, Performance Measures and Outcomes** (20 points)

Explain the extent to which the project will result in tangible products or benefits that can be measured. Describe measurable outcomes using specific performance measures and milestones, specifically addressing both the quantitative and qualitative efforts and effects of the proposed project (see example matrix below). Describe the ability of the project to gauge or evaluate success of the increased organizational capacity to reduce agricultural nutrient losses to waters of Vermont.

Example Matrix: Potential performance measures for this category, and how they relate to the quantity and quality of both the effort and effect of the project. Describe how the project metrics will be measured.

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quantify increased capacity (examples: number of training events for staff, number of staff supported, number of equipment purchases)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ratio of staff to clients /farmers</li> <li>Increase in membership/ participation</li> <li>Percent staff fully trained</li> </ul>
Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increased number of events, producer contacts, etc.</li> <li>Increased efficiency (example: hours spent to deliver same amount of work)</li> <li>Number of new opportunities or services provided or expanded</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Percent change in ability to work on agricultural water quality issues</li> </ul>

**3. Proposed Methods and Organization Capacity (10 points)**

Explain the feasibility of the proposed methods and of the organization’s capacity for carrying out the project.

**4. Partnership and Collaboration (10 points)**

Describe the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the commitment to work with other partners and/or leverage other funding sources to achieve project goals.

**5. Itemized Budget and Narrative (20 points) (1 page)**

Provide an itemized budget and a budget narrative describing all costs listed in the itemized budget. The proposed budget will be evaluated in terms of appropriateness and clarity relative to the project objectives, conciseness of the proposal, adherence to format, and relevance to the RFP.

## Category Three:

### Innovative Phosphorus Reduction Activities Grants

#### Eligibility

- Farmers, farmers' partners, agricultural engineering and or consulting firms, agricultural organizations and trade associations
- Local government entities including municipal boards, commissions, or committees
- Public or private schools or other educational institutions
- Organizations with nonprofit status, or citizen groups such as watershed or lake associations working in coordination with such an organization, that apply on their behalf and will manage the grant funds
- State and Federal government agencies may collaborate with one of the above groups, but are not eligible to be the primary applicant under this grant program
- Applicants must be in compliance with all state regulations (i.e. water quality, taxes, child support) and in good standing with the State of Vermont at the time of submitting an application and must remain so during the entire grant period

Application scoring is based on points for each section as indicated. A grant review committee will evaluate and rank applications for funding, and make award decisions.

1. **Phosphorus Removal** (30 points)

Describe the extent to which the project will remove or reduce phosphorus through innovative activities in agriculturally impaired or stressed waters of Vermont, including an estimated cost/benefit analysis.

2. **Goals, Performance Measures and Outcomes** (30 points)

Describe the extent to which the project will result in measurable amounts of phosphorus removed or reduced and/or other benefits that can be measured. Describe practical methods to measure both the levels of phosphorus before the project starts and to quantify the amount of phosphorus reduced or removed. Describe measurable outcomes using specific performance measures and milestones, specifically addressing both the quantitative and qualitative efforts and effects of the proposed project (see example matrix below).

Example Matrix: Potential performance measures for this category, and how they relate to the quantity and quality of both the effort and effect of the project. Describe how the project metrics will be measured.

	Quantity	Quality
Effort	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of potential units addressed by practice/technology (example: cows or acres)</li> <li>• Number of farms impacted</li> <li>• Total costs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost/lb. of phosphorus reduced</li> <li>• Cost/farm of phosphorus reduced</li> </ul>
Effect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of management practices adopted</li> <li>• Number of projects successfully implemented</li> <li>• Number of units affected</li> <li>• Number lbs. of phosphorus reduced</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Percent phosphorus reduction</li> <li>• Cost/Benefit analysis -including the potential for adoption</li> </ul>

- 3. Proposed Methods and Organization Capacity (10 points)**  
 Explain the feasibility of the proposed methods and of the organization's capacity for carrying out the project.
- 4. Partnership and Collaboration (5 points)**  
 Explain the extent to which the applicant demonstrates the commitment to work with other partners and/or leverage other funding sources to achieve project goals.
- 5. Past Performance (5 points)**  
 Explain the applicant's knowledge or experience with phosphorus reduction activities related to waters of the state where phosphorus is a concern, and the applicant's past performance on similar projects, if applicable.
- 6. Itemized Budget and Narrative (20 points) (1 page)**  
 Provide an itemized budget and a budget narrative describing all costs listed in the itemized budget. The proposed budget will be evaluated in terms of appropriateness and clarity relative to the project objectives, conciseness of the proposal, adherence to format, and relevance to the RFP.

### **Notification of Award:**

- Award notification will be on or before January 1, 2017.
- Following initial notification of the award, a workplan must be approved by the Agency of Agriculture before a grant agreement can be executed and the work begun. The workplan will detail the logistical elements of the project, including deliverables and project timeline.
- Project work cannot begin until a grant agreement period has officially started. The Agency will not pay for expenses incurred prior to the grant start date.
- Payment for costs incurred will be on a reimbursement basis per the grant payment schedule and contingent upon the completion and acceptance of quarterly progress reports and project deliverables. As well as a final performance report.
- When approved, the final report may be edited for content and style in consultation with the successful applicant and may be used by the Agency in outreach materials.
- All materials and information, regardless of physical form, produced as a result of this project, shall be made available to the Agency in a suitable file format. The Agency shall have unrestricted use of any materials, software, maps, studies, reports and other products or data generated using proposal funds or specified as deliverables in the grant application.
- The Agency requires its grantees to maintain workers' compensation and liability insurance. Please review the links provided in this request for proposals for details about state provisions for grants and contracts.

## Resources for Applicants:

1. The State of Vermont Attachment C: Standard State Provisions for Contracts and Grants Revised July 1, 2016.  
[http://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/pdfs/purchasing/ATTACHMENT\\_C\\_July.1.16.pdf](http://bgs.vermont.gov/sites/bgs/files/pdfs/purchasing/ATTACHMENT_C_July.1.16.pdf)
2. Education and Outreach Tracking form  
<http://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/wsm/erp/docs/Clean%20Water%20Outreach%20Tracking%20-%20Grantees%20&%20Contractors.pdf>