



CWA Section 319 Nonpoint Source Grant Program FY 2026 Request for Proposals (RFP)

Synopsis

The Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Program is soliciting proposals, through a competitive grant process, to improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment loads in impaired waterbodies of Delaware. The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) NPS Program will administer the grant application process and provide technical and financial guidance during the grant application and project period.

For the FY 2026 Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 319(h) grant RFP process, approximately \$100,000 is available for selected proposals. Funding for proposal(s) selected is available upon the execution of a fully signed grant agreement and establishment of a purchase order. For this RFP, grant funds are available approximately in August / September 2026. Grant funds may be available prior to this timeline; however, it is contingent upon the Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) processing timeline.

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Important Timelines

December 1, 2025 – Issuance of RFP

March 6, 2026 – Proposals due to the DNREC's NPS Program office electronically by no later than 4:30PM. Applications received after this time will not be reviewed. Submissions must be sent to NPS.Grants@delaware.gov.

August / September 2026 – Grant awards announced, and recipients notified.

1. INTRODUCTION AND FUNDING

Purpose

The Delaware Nonpoint Source Program administers a competitive grant made possible through Section 319(h) of the Federal Clean Water Act. The grant provides funding opportunities for projects designed to reduce nonpoint source (NPS) pollution in Delaware. NPS pollution can be defined as any pollution that originates from a diffuse source (such as an open field or a road) and is transported to surface or ground waters through leaching or runoff.

Reduction of NPS pollution may often be achieved through incorporation of specific best management practices (BMPs) into project work plans. Projects may target any source of NPS pollution, and can include agriculture, silviculture, construction, marinas, septic systems, and hydro-modification activities. Proposals are reviewed and evaluated, and those determined to meet specific requirements are eligible for funding. All projects must include a non-Federal match totaling at least 40 percent of the total project cost. For an example match calculation, please refer to Section 2 (Eligibility & Applicant Requirements) below.

Note – Additional Non-Federal Match Funds May be Available. State funded non-federal match may be available for submitted grant proposals on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the grant review and ranking committee. If a limiting factor in your grant proposal is achieving the minimum non-federal match threshold, please reach out to the grant point of contact. Submitted proposals in consideration of state funded match will still be subject to the same reviewing and ranking metrics. Additional information can be found on the CWA Section 319 Grant Application Form.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Best Management Practice (BMP) means a practice, or combination of practices, that is determined to be an effective and practicable means of preventing or reducing the amount of pollution generated by nonpoint sources to a level compatible with water quality goals. BMPs should be selected based on the goals of a Watershed Implementation Plan or Pollution Control Strategy.

Primary sources for standards and specifications for BMPs appropriate to Delaware are listed below:

- Natural Resources Conservation Service, Field Office Technical Guide <https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/technical/fotg/> ;
- DNREC, Delaware Erosion and Sediment Control Handbook <https://dnrec.delaware.gov/watershed-stewardship/sediment-stormwater/handbook/>
- The Chesapeake Bay Program's Quick Reference Guide for Best Management Practices https://www.chesapeakebay.net/documents/BMP-Guide_Full.pdf ; and
- The Delaware Forest Service helps landowners who wish to learn more about Forestry BMPs. For more information, contact the Forestry Program at (302) 698-4500.

Measurable Environmental Results

CWA Section 319 grant projects are required to include appropriate measures to gauge the effectiveness of the project. These measures can be divided into two categories: Outputs and Outcomes. Outputs are the “deliverables” of a project (i.e., the number and type of BMPs installed, the number of brochures distributed, the attendance and interactions at an outreach event, etc.). The outcomes are the ultimate impacts of those outputs on water quality. When possible, it is best to estimate the Measurable Environmental Results, or MERs, in terms of both the outputs and the resulting outcomes.

In many cases, this involves water quality, biological, habitat and/or other environmental monitoring. This can include generating new environmental data through water quality and/or biological monitoring activities, using existing environmental data from other sources (secondary data), using computer and/or other models to characterize environmental conditions, and creating new geo-spatial data and/or using existing geo-spatial data from other sources.

Depending upon the type of project and the goals of the project, environmental monitoring may not be appropriate to determine the effectiveness and success of a project. Additional types of activities include tracking land use changes, before and after pictures of restoration work; conducting surveys of stakeholder knowledge; or other types of monitoring specific to the goals of the project.

If the project will be implementing BMPs that directly reduce sediment and nutrient runoff, grant recipients may utilize the online Pollutant Load Estimation Tool (PLET). This tool can be found on EPA’s website at: <https://www.epa.gov/nps/plet>. Grant recipients are encouraged to utilize the Chesapeake Assessment Scenario Tool (CAST) for calculating applicable load reductions at the following website: <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/>

For reporting purposes, implemented BMPs must also be georeferenced so that load reductions can be estimated on a watershed scale. The spatial locations can be submitted to the NPS Program utilizing a digital map showing latitude and longitude coordinates. If you have any questions concerning the georeferencing of BMPs associated with your project, please contact the NPS Program via email at NPS.Grants@delaware.gov.

Funding

Projects selected for funding can begin work after the purchase order is executed. Payment of CWA Section 319 grant funds is reimbursable for costs incurred as work is completed and upon receipt of an approved invoice and any other applicable documentation. All invoices must provide an itemized list of expenditures and a report of in-kind/cash match contributions. Other cost-share documentation may also be required upon request of the NPS Program. Payment can be expected approximately 4-6 weeks after DNREC receives appropriate invoices.

Equipment purchased with CWA Section 319 grant funding must follow the conditions present in the EPA Section 319 Grant Guidance Document. Equipment disposition guidelines are found in [2 CFR 200.313](#).

2. ELIGIBILITY & APPLICANT REQUIREMENTS

Applicant Eligibility

A project can be sponsored by both public and private entities, including local governments (county, city, or town), conservation districts, tribal authorities, regional development centers, local school systems, colleges and universities, local nonprofit organizations, State agencies, Federal agencies, watershed groups, for-profit groups, homeowner's associations, and individuals. Grants to individuals are limited to demonstration projects.

Applicants are encouraged to identify projects in historically under-engaged or under-served communities. For this RFP and the evaluation of applications, "underserved communities" means people/communities of color, low income, tribal and indigenous populations, and other vulnerable populations such as the elderly, children, and those who have pre-existing medical conditions.

Award Information

Grant award recipients will be required to sign a memorandum of agreement/grant agreement with the Department. All award recipients are required to comply with State and Federal laws and guidelines pertaining to the use of grant funds. The DNREC NPS Program will administer the grant application process and provide technical and financial guidance. Grant award recipients may be subject to site visits from the DNREC and the EPA Region 3 for routine monitoring and/or auditing of the project selected for grant funding.

The award made under this RFP will support lasting water quality improvements necessary in impaired watersheds to meet water quality limits as identified by EPA approved (a-i), nine element watershed implementation plans.

CWA Section 319 Grant funds awarded must be utilized for implementation of the project. Construction costs, project materials, and labor costs related directly to the construction/implementation would be applicable for funding. Administrative costs shall not exceed 10% of the grant award. Examples of administrative costs include, but are not limited to:

- Preparation and submission of grant applications;
- Fiscal tracking of grant funds;
- Maintaining project files; and
- Collection and submission of deliverables

The DNREC reserves the right to reject all proposals and make no awards under this announcement. The DNREC also reserves the right to make additional awards under this announcement, consistent with Department policy and guidance if additional funding becomes available after the original selections are made. Funding levels are subject to change without notice.

Engineering Requirements

The DNREC requires appropriate licensed professional seal construction plans. This applies to implementation projects that include construction. Grant reimbursement will not occur if sealed plans are not submitted prior to construction. The DNREC reserves the right to waive the requirement on a case-by-case basis after review of the grant proposal.

Projects over 5,000 square feet of land disturbance must comply with the Delaware Sediment and Stormwater Regulations. Projects must also comply with any State or Federal permits.

Geographical Requirements – Eligible Watersheds

Priority will be given to those projects whose goal is to improve the water quality of water bodies identified as having nonpoint source pollution impairments, as documented in EPA accepted nine element (a-i) watershed implementation plans including: the Appoquinimink River, Broadkill River, Chester River and Choptank River, Christina Basin (Brandywine Creek, Christina River, Red Clay Creek and White Clay Creek sub watersheds), Inland Bays, Nanticoke River (includes Marshyhope Creek, Gum Branch, Gravelly Branch, Deep Creek, and Broad Creek sub watersheds), Pocomoke River and Wicomico River, St. Jones River and the Upper Chesapeake (Elk River, C&D Canal, Bohemia River and Sassafras River sub watersheds) Watersheds. Watershed plans acceptable for CWA Section 319 grant funding can be found here: [Watershed Plans and Strategies - DNREC \(delaware.gov\)](http://delaware.gov/watershed-plans-and-strategies-dnrec) under the heading titled *“EPA-Approved Watershed Implementation Plans (For Section 319 Grants)”*.

The NPS Program may also prioritize funding according to additional environmental factors, such as land use and existing BMPs if these factors can help determine where projects will be most effective at reducing nonpoint source pollution. Grant recipients that failed to meet program requirements in the past may be ineligible to receive additional project funding.

Ineligible Costs and Projects

The following are ineligible uses of the CWA Section 319 grant funds:

- Purchase of agricultural equipment, or other large pieces of equipment (equipment modifications and leasing are allowable);
- Purchase of land or land easements (these activities can be counted as matching funds in some cases);

- Any project which is directed at water quantity rather than water quality, such as dredging, drainage, or flood control;
- Any project where repairs and/or maintenance activities are the primary scope of work;
- Any practices, equipment, or supplies used to fulfill the requirements of any Federal permit, such as a National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit (ex. Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) permit), or to meet enforcement requirements;
- Any practices required as the result of enforcement action taken by the DNREC (penalty or punitive related requirements);
- Wetland mitigation sites;
- Incentive payments or yield losses;
- Practices not sanctioned by the DNREC or a partner agency of the DNREC; and
- Practices not installed in accordance with standards and specifications developed by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), DNREC, or other recognized standards.

Insurance Requirements

There are insurance requirements for grant recipients. Applicants should review their existing insurance coverages and determine if their current insurance coverage meets the requirements established below. If the applicant's current insurance does not meet the requirements established below, please explain in the submittal how any deficiencies in the required insurance coverages will be handled. Certificate of insurance and/or copies of the insurance policies will be required before a grant agreement is executed.

Grantee shall maintain the following insurance coverage:

- Worker's Compensation and Employer's Liability Insurance in accordance with applicable law, and
- Comprehensive General Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, and
- Medical/Professional Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate; or
- Miscellaneous Errors and Omissions - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, or
- Product Liability - \$1,000,000.00 per occurrence/\$3,000,000 general aggregate, and
- If required to transport State employees, Automotive Liability Insurance covering all automotive units used in the work with limits of not less than \$100,000 each person

and \$300,000 each accident as to bodily injury and \$25,000 as to property damage to others.

Expense Reimbursements

The CWA Section 319 Grant is a reimbursable grant. Project work and submission of expense reimbursements are not allowable until a grant agreement is executed, and a purchase order has been established. Recipients are responsible for submitting detailed invoices for allowable expenditures at a period of no more than once per month for disbursement of funds.

Matching Requirements

The CWA Section 319 grant will typically fund up to 60% of the total project cost. The remaining 40% is the responsibility of the grant recipient and can constitute as the non-federal match. For example, a proposal with a \$100,000 total project cost could receive \$60,000 in CWA Section 319 grant funds and the recipient would be required to provide \$40,000 in matching funds. The minimum required match for the proposal can also be calculated by multiplying the CWA Section 319 grant amount requested by 0.66667 (ex. \$60,000 CWA Section 319 grant funding request x 0.66667 = \$40,000 required non-federal match for a \$100,000 project total). Match may be a combination of cash and/or in-kind services. Preference will be given to applicants with cash match. Match documented must be directly associated with the project and for work done to fulfill the agreement/contract tasks. Federal dollars may not be used to match CWA Section 319 grant funds.

A letter of commitment from any organization pledging matching funds or in-kind services should be attached to the application. Activities not eligible for grant funds are also not eligible for match. Match for volunteer time should be calculated using the national volunteer rate established by the independent sector specific to the State of Delaware¹. Applicants who are unsure of the value of volunteer time should contact the NPS Program for guidance.

Subcontracting

Any project subcontracts need to be approved by the DNREC Project Manager prior to being signed (executed). This review is to ensure that the scope of services, budget, and schedule coincide with the overall contractual agreement between the DNREC and project sponsor, the subcontractor is registered with the Secretary of State, and the subcontractor is not suspended from doing business with the State. The DNREC does not perform a legal review of project subcontracts.

¹ Based on the Independent Sector National Value of Volunteer Time.
<https://independentsector.org/resource/value-of-volunteer-time/>

3. GRANT PROPOSAL FORMAT & EVALUATION CRITERIA

Grant Proposal Format

Applicants are required to develop their grant proposal and format the content into the following headings:

- Cover Page
- Project Description
- Objectives / Tasks / Timelines
- Measurable Environmental Results
- Operation and Maintenance
- Budget
- Qualifications
- Insurance
- Signature Page

The proposal must address all criteria detailed in the “Proposal Evaluation Criteria Section” and be organized utilizing the “Grant Proposal Format” shown above. If questions in the proposal evaluation criteria are not applicable to your proposal, please provide an explanation as to why. The proposal evaluation criteria are the metrics that the grant review and ranking committee will utilize for scoring submitted proposals. Applicants may be contacted if the selection committee has any questions regarding their proposal(s).

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Cover Page

The cover page of the proposal needs to include the information below. If an applicant utilizes the [Grant Application Form](#) and completes the first two pages of that document, it will satisfy the cover page requirements. Otherwise, the applicant will need to provide the relevant information as part of their overall submission.

1. Project title;
2. Name of organization submitting the proposal;
3. Project Manager and title;
4. Sam.gov Number;
5. Organization’s physical mailing address;
6. Phone number;
7. E-mail address;
8. County (New Castle, Kent, and/or Sussex);
9. Identify the watershed(s) the project proposal covers;
10. Identify the project timeline;
11. Estimated project start date;

12. Estimated project end date;
13. Total project cost;
14. CWA Section 319 grant funding amount requested;
15. Non-federal match amount required to provide (calculated based on the grant request);
and
16. Identify key project partners

Signature Page

This page should contain the signatures of the grant applicant, landowner(s) on which the project will occur, and the party responsible for match. Letters of support from the landowner(s) or vested stakeholders and letters of commitment for future maintenance can be included in this section.

A. Geographic Location (10 Points):

Background and Justification: Describe the issue or problem to be addressed by the grant proposal and why the work is necessary. Include the following:

- Identify the County and/or Municipality in which the project is located.
- Give site specific information (i.e., street location, parcel identification, waterbody draining to, etc.).
- Identify the watershed and sub-watershed (i.e., Brandywine Creek sub watershed within the Christina Basin watershed).
- Provide a map that shows the project location.
- Include any site reconnaissance information, including but not limited to recharge feasibility mapping, soils mapping and/or soils testing, contours via Lidar data or survey, drainage area/acres treated, % impervious cover.
- Include aerial map(s) of the project area with the limits and important features clearly noted. Additional exhibits are encouraged.
- List the impairments of the watershed and/or site area, including watershed implementation plans that have been developed.
- Provide the Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) reduction requirements established and watershed implementation plan or pollution control strategy recommendations to help restore water quality.
- Provide local factors, issues, and concerns and explain why the BMP(s) to be implemented through this grant are needed (e.g., a highly impervious area with no stormwater controls, a highly eroding stream channel, etc.).

B. Meets Program Goals and Priorities (40 points):

Describe the project proposal in as much detail as possible. Include the following items:

- What type of BMP(s) are proposed for implementation? What is the acreage, square footage of the practice area, the drainage area, and/or cubic footage of

the BMP(s) being proposed?

- What are the estimated nutrient and/or sediment load reductions for the proposed BMP(s)?
 - Grant applicants can use the US EPA online Pollutant Load Estimation Tool (PLET) <https://www.epa.gov/nps/plet>, the Chesapeake Assessment and Scenario Tool (CAST) <https://cast.chesapeakebay.net/>, the Delaware Urban Runoff Management Model version 2 (DURMM v.2), or other regional approved methods. Include applicable documentation of how the estimated load reductions were calculated.
 - Estimate the total pounds of nutrient (nitrogen – TN and phosphorous – TP) and sediment load reductions using one of these modeling tools above.
- What is the expected lifespan of the proposed BMP(s)?
- Will the estimated nutrient and/or sediment load reductions remain constant over the lifespan of the improvement, or will there be a diminishing return?
- Who will design the project?
- Who will construct the project?
- Is there any monitoring associated with the project? If so, what kind? *Note: if water quality monitoring is proposed as part of the project, an EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) will be required.*

C. Technical Merit and Project Feasibility (30 Points):

The proposal will be evaluated on the technical feasibility given the proposed budget and timeline. The proposal should identify the applicant's (and key partners') ability to undertake and successfully complete this project. The Grant Ranking and Review Committee will evaluate the applicant's technical ability to successfully complete and manage the proposed project. Factors considered include the applicant's organizational capacity, experience, facilities, and technical expertise to accomplish the proposed scope of work and its likely success.

Time Schedule and Benchmarks (10 points):

- Break down the Scope of Work into tasks/objectives with target dates for each. It should detail target milestones, estimate timelines of project progression, and describe how and what will be accomplished to achieve each identified task/objective.
- Provide a detailed timetable for project implementation. Include any monitoring time as applicable.
- Provide a detailed budget for project implementation and monitoring (as applicable).

Cost Effectiveness (10 points):

- Describe the cost effectiveness of the proposal through implementation as compared to other alternative approaches. Consider the cost of the planning phase as well as the design, construction, monitoring (as applicable), and long-term maintenance and sustainability of the project.
- Include a description of other alternatives considered and why the selected BMP(s) implementation/approach was chosen.
- Provide the amount of dollars per pound invested to achieve the identified nutrient and/or sediment load reduction because of the BMP(s) implemented.
- Describe how the longevity of the BMP(s) implemented relates to the initial cost of implementation.

Maintenance (10 points):

- Who will be accountable for the maintenance of the practice after the grant has ended?
- What is the yearly cost to maintain the project?
- What funding is available for long-term maintenance of the BMP(s) implemented?
- A letter of agreement for future maintenance of the BMP(s) implemented should be included.

D. Leveraging/Co-funding (10 points):

The proposal should identify cooperative partnerships with stakeholders, creation and implementation of sustainable and effective commitments, and should demonstrate strong support from partners and other relevant agencies and organizations. The applicant may attach letters of support from cooperating organizations and/or agencies identifying how they intend to support the project. Applicants will be evaluated based on the extent they demonstrate how they will coordinate/leverage the funding with other funding resources (i.e., funding entities, project partners, surrounding communities, businesses, etc.).

Demonstration of leveraging/co-funding from the applicant can be provided through the following examples:

- Match funding;
- Cost share;
- Co-funding;
- Letter(s) of support; and
- Volunteer Hours

Note: Applicants may choose to demonstrate leveraging by pledging their own funds above the minimum match requirement or other resources for a voluntary match or cost share. Applicants who choose to cost share voluntarily must meet their obligations if their proposals are selected for award. Please note that only eligible and allowable costs may be used for match.

E. Programmatic Capability (10 points):

This section should include a list of the applicant's qualifications to complete the project.

- Provide the organizational experience of the applicant, partners, and consultants/contractors (if known). If any of the consultants or contractors are not known at the time of grant preparation, then the processes of selecting qualified candidates should be described. An appropriate licensed professional is required to seal construction plans for implementation projects.
- Provide a plan for timely and successful achievement of the project objectives.
- Describe other grant(s) awarded where the applicant has served as the Project Lead to help demonstrate proficient project management. Detail all applicable grant awards similar in project scope including any that were awarded through the DNREC.

4. SELECTION PROCESS

A committee consisting of a diverse group of individuals will evaluate and rank all project proposals. Proposals will be reviewed for threshold eligibility purposes as described in the Proposal Evaluation Criteria section of this RFP. Applicant proposals will be reviewed and ranked according to a 100-point scale.

5. HOW TO APPLY

Submission of Proposals

An electronic copy of the proposal and supporting materials (e.g., project support letters from partners, aerial maps, etc.) must be submitted to the NPS Program. All proposals must be completed following the Grant Proposal Format detailed in this RFP. Proposals will not be accepted by facsimile machine submission. Please submit all applications electronically to NPS.Grants@Delaware.gov by 4:30PM on March 6, 2026.

The full RFP document and Grant Application Form can be found on the NPS Program website at: <https://de.gov/319grants>.

Email the proposal to:

NPS.Grants@delaware.gov

Subject: FY26 Clean Water Act Section 319 Grant

Proposal

Attn: Ben Coverdale

6. CONTACT INFORMATION

For further details or questions regarding the CWA Section 319 Grant Program, applicants are encouraged to contact Ben Coverdale (Michael.Coverdale@delaware.gov) and/or Catie Soriano (Cathryn.Soriano@delaware.gov).

The Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control solicits and encourages Minority Business Enterprises (MBE), Women's Business Enterprises (WBE), and Small Business Enterprises (SBE) in all service contracts and is committed to affirmative action, equal opportunity, and diversity of its workforce.