



Maryland

Department of the Environment

Wes Moore, Governor
Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor

Serena McIlwain, Secretary
Suzanne E. Dorsey, Deputy Secretary
Adam Ortiz, Deputy Secretary

Subject: Request for Proposals: Clean Water Act §319(h) Grant Funding FY2026

Dear Watershed Partner:

The time of the year has come for MDE to release our Clean Water Act §319(h) Grant Funding - Request for Proposals (RFP) for the upcoming FY2026. For all those who have ongoing projects under §319(h) funding, we thank you for your continued participation! We also encourage others to submit their own proposals and existing partners to collaborate with other organizations in your area to solicit §319(h) funding for restoration practices.

Attached is the “Solicitation for Project Proposals,” explaining in greater detail actions you must take to apply for consideration for §319(h) funding. This is a reimbursement style grant which requires funding to be produced by the recipient prior to receiving grant money. The deadline for submittal of proposals is September 30, 2025. Awarded funds will be made available after October 1, 2026, pending receipt of the grant award from the federal sponsor of this grant, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).

To maintain transparency, the Maryland §319(h) Grant has not experienced any issues with reimbursement of funds or a pause in programmatic activities to date. Maryland’s FY2026 §319(h) grant is dependent on the Federal Fiscal Year (FFY) 2026 budget, which has not been finalized by Congress as of today, July 1, 2025. At this time we are being instructed by the US EPA to operate business as usual. As such, we are moving forward with releasing this RFP for projects that may be funded with FY2026 funds. We will be sure to notify you of any changes if they occur.

Additional information about eligibility and other prerequisites can be found in the attachment and on [Maryland’s §319\(h\) Grants website](#). Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions or to request a template for your proposal.

Please note that updates have been made to state and federal guidance regarding the §319(h) Grant in Maryland since the last funding cycle, so make sure to familiarize yourself with the information in the attached document if you are interested in submitting a proposal.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to reach out via email at mde.nps319@maryland.gov, and a member of our team will get back to you. Feel free to pass this along to your partners as you see fit. We look forward to working with you!

Thank you,

Jacey Brooks
Maryland CWA §319(h) Grant
Water and Science Administration
Maryland Department of the Environment



Solicitation for Project Proposals for FY2026 §319(h) Grant Funding

Summary Guidance for Projects Fundable by the §319(h) Grant

Solicitation Period for Project Proposals

The request for FY2026 project proposals was released on 07/01/2025. Proposals are due to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on 09/30/2025 by 11:59PM EST. Early submittals are accepted and encouraged.

Entity & Project Eligibility

Local and State entities, including county and municipal agencies, Soil Conservation Districts, State agencies and institutions of higher learning, private firms, and nonprofit organizations are eligible within [watersheds with United States Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)-accepted nine element watershed-based plans](#). Communities located in an area without a watershed-based plan may be eligible for a waiver to the requirement. If your organization is interested in pursuing such a waiver, please contact MDE to determine your eligibility for grant funding.

Project managers must ensure they have capacity in grant management and funding, as §319(h) funding is a reimbursement style grant in Maryland (no up-front funding). Justification of capacity must be included in the project proposal, and MDE may request further documentation or have additional oversight to ensure project completion if a project is selected. Invoices may be submitted for reimbursement on a quarterly basis. Reimbursement occurs only for satisfactory deliverables/invoices.

No §319(h) funding may be used to supplement or cover any staff salary already paid for by §319(h) or any other funding sources. In addition, §319(h) funding cannot be used to fund any activities specifically required by a draft or final National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES), municipal separate storm sewer system (MS4), or concentrated animal feeding operation (CAFO) permit.

Project Type & Location

A description of acceptable nonpoint source (NPS) best management practice (BMP) implementation is included in each watershed-based plan. Proposals for new watershed plans or addendums to existing watershed plans may also be considered for MDE and EPA review.

Grant Amount

Negotiable per proposal - typically ranging from \$30,000 to \$400,000. Overall, this grant opportunity is offering up to approximately a million dollars.

Matching Funds

No matching funds are required, as the State of Maryland covers the required 40% match.

Optional: Leveraging of project funding in addition to the Federal Grant and required match is encouraged and may improve likelihood of grant funding.

Project Duration

Negotiable per proposal - The earliest project start date is 10/01/2026 depending on the timing of MDE's FY26 Grant Application and EPA's award of the grant. Duration typically ranges from less than one year to a maximum of 4 years to complete the project. The project must be completed no later than 03/31/2031.

Required Elements

At a minimum, required elements of a project proposal include a work plan entailing a project description, timeline, deliverables table, direct outputs, indirect outcomes, and budget. Additional documentation may be included such as detailed budget breakdowns, pictures, and maps. Please contact MDE if you need a template - this is highly recommended.

Pollutant Load Reduction

In-the-ground implementation projects must produce "measurable environmental results," (i.e., estimated pollutant load reduction for nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, bacteria, and/or pH impairments). Estimated future load reduction(s) must be included in the project proposal. Revised estimated load reduction(s) is required as one final deliverable.

Deliverables

Quarterly status reports are required. A final report is required to document project status, achievements, and results. Particulars will be negotiated.

Grant Conditions

Federal EPA grant conditions apply, including but not limited to compliance with the [EPA General Terms and Conditions](#).

Procurement Regulations

Project managers must abide by the State of Maryland's procurement regulations, which are, in turn, in compliance with federal procurement rules and regulations.

Projects must be in compliance with the Build America, Buy America (BABA) Act, and documentation justifying compliance may be required (e.g. submission of a detailed budget showing costs of construction materials). MDE highly encourages project managers to include a requirement to comply with BABA in each project's design and construction request for proposals (RFPs).

General information about BABA: <https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba>

Information on BABA waivers:
<https://www.epa.gov/cwsrf/build-america-buy-america-baba-approved-waivers>.

General Information

In Maryland, §319(h) Grant funds are typically offered once each year. Contact MDE to be notified via email for future opportunities

Contact mde.nps319@maryland.gov for additional information if needed.

Proposal Evaluation Criteria

Implementation projects and **planning/outreach projects** will have similar scoring structures but slightly different criteria.

All projects will be evaluated by criteria shown in **BLACK**, **implementation projects will be evaluated by additional criteria shown in BLUE**, and **planning/outreach projects will be evaluated by additional criteria shown in RED**. Definitions are listed below; please reach out if you have questions about which criteria applies to your project.

Implementation projects = projects that design and/or construct BMPs which implement an EPA-accepted watershed-based plan

Planning/outreach projects = projects that provide technical assistance (TA), conduct outreach/education efforts, and/or develop watershed-based plans

	Proposal Evaluation Criteria	Maximum Points	Score Obtained
1	Project Background <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Identifies the watershed where the project will occur and outlines any watershed characteristics that may be relevant to the projectb. Provides locations of each implementation site (i.e. latitude/longitude coordinates, address, etc.)c. Describes the current water quality conditions or impairments of the sited. Describes the current issue to be addressed in that watershed and why it is needede. Provides map and images of location (optional)f. All site specific factors and concerns for the project are clearly identified	10	
2	Project Objectives and Goals <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Explains how the project will implement best management practicesa. Explains how the project will provide TA, outreach, education, and/or planning activitiesb. Outlines all objectives and the activities necessary to meet objectives including:<ul style="list-style-type: none">i. What practices are being proposed?ii. How long will the project last?iii. Who will implement the activities?iv. What monitoring will be needed to determine success, and who will perform the monitoring?v. What maintenance will be needed, and who will be responsible for that?v. Will the project continue into the future, and who would be responsible for that?c. Explains how the proposed activity fits within the current watershed plan and addresses a significant NPS pollutant	30	

3	Project Feasibility and Permanence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project outlines how the scope of the work will be broken down b. A timeline for completing work is provided <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Milestones for completing each task are provided ii. Identifies who will complete each task iii. Timeline is achievable c. The cost-effectiveness of the project is outlined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Costs are reasonable for scope of project ii. Budget breakdown is fully explained d. Maintenance for the future of the project is outlined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The project is expected to continue having impacts into the future ii. Lists who is responsible for maintenance and a brief description of how that will occur iii. Describes cost for maintenance (optional) d. Any future efforts/impacts are outlined <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. The project is expected to continue having impacts into the future ii. Lists who is responsible for continuing the project and a brief description of how that will occur iii. Describes cost for continuation of project (optional) 	20	
4	Measures of Success <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Measurable, expected <u>outputs</u> (direct products/results) are described b. Quantifiable indicators are provided to show success c. Indirect <u>outcomes</u> expected from the project are provided (e.g. project works to create long term reduction of a NPS pollutant) d. Monitoring efforts are performed before and after the activity, which will theoretically show some quantifiable improvement 	10	
5	Monitoring <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Monitoring efforts are performed before and after the activity, which will theoretically show some quantifiable improvement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Activities will observe water quality, biological, and/or ecological/habitat parameters i. TA/outreach provider or watershed-based plan developer will monitor number of participants in trainings, meetings, etc. and, if appropriate, gather results from surveys (or something similar) that monitor participants' understanding/behavior 	10	
6	Partnerships and Support <ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Project has support from community partners and stakeholders c. Project identifies the roles of partners and confirms their agreement to the project d. Project outlines partners leveraging/co-funding capabilities e. Project has sufficient support from community members and property owners where the project is taking place 	10	
7	Public Education and Outreach <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project works to educate and inform the community of the project's objective(s) and implementation b. Outreach strategy is detailed and effective c. Outreach strategy works to recruit community members and property owners 	10	

8	Opportunities for Extra Points <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Project addresses the impacts of changing weather conditions b. Project is located in an economic investment community and benefits community members <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Justification that the community is considered an economic investment community (i.e. metrics, on-the-ground experience, etc.) ii. Specific information on how the project will directly benefit an economic investment community (e.g. community members are actively involved in planning and implementation of project) c. Additional in-kind or monetary match 	15	
	TOTAL	115/115	___/115

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