

**Instructions for Applying for
FY 2015 Section 106 Monitoring Initiative Funds for
Water Monitoring Program Enhancements and the
National Wetland Condition Assessment 2016**

February 2015

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ATTACHMENTS

- A. Part A. Implementation of Monitoring Strategies Excel Worksheet
- B. Part B. Participation in National Aquatic Resource Survey Table Excel Worksheet
- C. Example email/letters for request of Associated Program Support

Instructions for Applying for FY 2015 Section 106 Monitoring Initiative Funds for Water Monitoring Program Enhancements and the National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA) 2016

I. Summary of Important Items

1. EPA is requesting an application by April 18, 2015 for work to be completed using FY15 monitoring initiative funds.
2. Grants will be incrementally funded as monitoring initiative funds are available
3. APS: As was done in FY 2014, EPA is providing an approach that allows states/tribes to request field and lab services for the NWCA under EPA's associated program support (APS) authority (see Section IV.B.2).
 - a. Part B of the monitoring initiative workplan is filled out only for activities that states are conducting themselves or for activities that are requested as in-kind services (note: dates identified in I.4 and I.5 below DO NOT apply to APS).
 - b. Requests for APS must be made pre-allotment (estimated date is March 28, 2015).
4. Requests for In-kind Services Field Work: Grants that include in-kind services requests for NWCA 2016 field work must include a period of performance that ends no earlier than December 31, 2016 to ensure that all work is completed and funds drawn down under the national field work contract. Note this is not necessary if the state opts for APS to secure contractor support.
5. Requests for In-kind Services Lab Work: Grants that include in-kind services requests for NWCA 2016 lab work must include a period of performance that ends no earlier than December 31, 2017 to ensure that all contract work is completed and funds drawn down under the national lab contracts. Note this is not necessary if the state opts for APS to secure contractor support. State/tribal grants may only include products (such as state-specific assessments) using the NWCA data if both the Region and the NWCA project lead have agreed that the data will be available from EPA in time for the state to develop the product within the project/budget period of the grant.

II. Introduction

Beginning in FY 2005, Congress specifically dedicated a portion of the Clean Water Act (CWA) Section 106 annual appropriation for water quality monitoring enhancements. The goal of EPA's Monitoring Initiative is to provide resources to enhance existing state and tribal monitoring programs, and to establish a nationwide statistical survey program in an effort to begin answering broader water quality questions. These Monitoring Initiative funds are a supplement to the base Section 106 grant and have two components, funds for states and other eligible entities to enhance their water monitoring and assessment programs consistent with their monitoring strategies, and funds for states, tribes and other eligible entities to participate in statistically-valid surveys of the Nation's waters.

These instructions are intended to assist Regions and Section 106 eligible grant recipients in preparing applications for the FY 15 grant cycle. It is important to note that grant recipients must

submit specific information on the use of Monitoring Initiative funds, apart from base Section 106 funds, to receive these funds.

EPA is asking for an application for **FY 2015 funding** including:

1. Part A Worksheet: a description of the activities that will support enhancement of the state Monitoring Strategy.
2. Part B Worksheet: information as to how each state or tribe will participate in the National Wetland Condition Assessment 2016 (FY 15 Monitoring Initiative funding is used to support the NWCA field/lab work conducted in 2016).

Activities included as APS are not included in Part B. For states/tribes that would like to use APS for contractor assistance with all NWCA field and lab work, no Part B workplan is required. Alternatively, if a grantee requests contractor assistance as traditional in-kind services, then Part B is required. Recipients requesting APS must provide written documentation requesting the specified associated program support activities by March 28, 2015. The statement should include the amount of funding to be withheld, as applicable, and acknowledgment that EPA will be directing the funding for the specified purpose. See Section IV.B.2 for instructions on preparing this statement.

Included in the Part A worksheet is a checkbox for specifying the implementation of statewide statistical surveys. The checkbox at the bottom of the form is in lieu of submitting a separate certification form as specified in the *2008 Amendment to the Guidelines for the Award of Monitoring Initiative Funds under Section 106 Grants to States, Interstate Agencies, and Tribes* (Guidelines) available at <http://www.epa.gov/owm/cwfinance/106-guidelines-monitor.htm>.

III. Options for Disbursing Monitoring Initiative Funds

There are several options for disbursing the Monitoring Initiative funds. These funds can be requested as a separate categorical grant, part of a base Section 106 categorical grant, or as part of a Performance Partnership Grant (PPG). The table below has more information and a list of key features of these options. States, tribes and other eligible entities are encouraged to discuss these options with their EPA Regional offices to determine which is most appropriate for their situation. Additionally, special requirements associated with tracking and reporting on the Monitoring Initiative funds remain the same regardless of which grant option is selected.

When NWCA field or lab work is conducted directly by the recipient or through in-kind services, the project and budget periods for the Section 106 Monitoring Initiative grant must be synchronized with the tasks and deliverables for NWCA 2016. For example, project periods may need to extend to the end of calendar year 2017 to ensure final deliverables, particularly those associated with laboratory in-kind services requests, are completed within the timeframe of the grant. If the recipient requests NWCA field or lab work under associated program support (see Section IV), the project and budget periods need only cover the activities included within the grant.

Raw data from the national survey will not be available until QA/QC is completed by the EPA. States/tribes should not include tasks in their grant that would require data back from the national

labs prior to allowing QA/QC to be completed. Please contact the Region and the EPA NWCA project leader to discuss when data are likely to be available.

Options for Disbursing Monitoring Initiative Funds	Key Features
Separate Categorical Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct link between monitoring funds and monitoring activities improves ability to track and report on specific activities accomplished and the outcomes related to Monitoring Initiative funds • State and EPA can track funds easily (special grant code) • Period of performance may be tailored to scope of monitoring activities, e.g., two or three years of Monitoring Initiative funds could be put into one grant.
Part of Base Section 106 Categorical Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Initiative funds become commingled with base funds making it difficult to link expenditure of these funds with specific monitoring activities without imposing additional tracking and reporting requirements on states. • Period of Performance for Section 106 base grant activities may not be consistent with the Monitoring Initiative funds (for example, in-kind lab services generally need to extend two years out).
Added to Performance Partnership Grant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Initiative funds become commingled with base Section 106 funds and other state grant funds. Regions need to ensure that Monitoring Initiative tasks within a PPG are consistent with the amount of funding provided. Special reporting, whether within or separate from the final PPG report, required to demonstrate how funds were used. • Period of performance for the PPG may not be consistent with the Monitoring Initiative funds (for example, in-kind lab services requests generally need to extend two years out).

IV. The Monitoring Initiative Application Process

A separate application must be submitted for Monitoring Initiative funds regardless of the grant mechanism chosen. Attached to these instructions are two Excel Spreadsheet Workplan Forms (Attachments A and B) to assist in documenting and reporting activities (including statewide survey activities). Information requested in Parts A and B worksheets must be provided to and approved by the Regional office to receive funds. Part B does not need to be completed for activities accounted for through associated program support. Applicants are encouraged to read the [2008 Guidelines](#) prior to preparing their application package. **Grant applications are due to EPA by April 18, 2015.** Tribes participating in the national survey should discuss with their Region when grant applications are due.

A. Implementing the Monitoring Strategy (Part A)

- Part A Monitoring Initiative workplan required by all applicants with the exception of tribes

1. General Information

Applicants must provide a detailed description of activities to implement the state Monitoring Strategy. These activities may include state-scale statistical survey or other monitoring efforts designed to address gaps or enhancements in the state’s current Monitoring Strategy.

States will receive \$160,000, and each territory and the District of Columbia will receive \$80,000 for the fiscal year. For this section of the workplan, states must provide a 1-2 page narrative format that describes the monitoring and assessment activities that will be undertaken to enhance their monitoring programs and complete the Part A spreadsheet. Any unused monies left over from the national survey must be used for monitoring enhancements. Interstate organizations will also receive funds to implement monitoring strategies and assist in building state monitoring and assessment capacity. Interstate agencies should discuss how to apply for funds with the appropriate EPA Region. Monitoring Initiative funds for tribes are included within the tribe's Section 106 grant allocation and no separate workplan is required.

These Part A funds must be used to enhance the state's current monitoring program, *i.e.*, to address gaps or other deficiencies identified in the Monitoring Strategy. They cannot be used for ongoing or routine monitoring and assessment activities. EPA encourages states to include activities associated with continuation of state-scale surveys or intensifications of the NWCA (*i.e.*, sampling additional sites in the state's NWCA draw using national NWCA protocols). The Agency also encourages states to consider including appropriate requests for travel to national meetings to present findings from state monitoring activities. Additional instructions for Part A of the workplan include:

- Proposed activities must be consistent with 40 CFR 130.4¹ and the 2008 *Guidelines*.
- The information provided in the workplan on monitoring activities and schedules must be sufficient for EPA to understand what work will be completed, at what cost and what deliverable is to be expected by what date. If most of the major activities will only be completed by the end of the overall grant period, additional milestones for tracking progress must be provided (consult with the Region for more information.)
- Proposed activities must address gaps identified in the state's Monitoring Strategy as called for in the 2003 guidance *The Elements of a State Monitoring and Reporting Program*.
- As requested in the Part A worksheet, appropriate information on environmental outcomes, information connecting these activities to the state's Monitoring Strategy, and costs must be provided.

¹ 130.4 - Water quality monitoring.

(a) In accordance with section 106(e)(1), States must establish appropriate monitoring methods and procedures (including biological monitoring) necessary to compile and analyze data on the quality of waters of the United States and, to the extent practicable, ground-waters. This requirement need not be met by tribes. However, any monitoring and/or analysis activities undertaken by a tribe must be performed in accordance with EPA's quality assurance/quality control guidance.

(b) The State's water monitoring program shall include collection and analysis of physical, chemical and biological data and quality assurance and control programs to assure scientifically valid data. The uses of these data include determining abatement and control priorities; developing and reviewing water quality standards, total maximum daily loads, wasteload allocations and load allocations; assessing compliance with National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permits by dischargers; reporting information to the public through the section 305(b) report and reviewing site-specific monitoring efforts.

- If the workplan includes intensification of the NWCA, the state must include and account for the costs associated with laboratory analysis and supplies for sampling additional sites. Contact your regional coordinator and the NWCA lead for more information.

2. Part A: Checkbox

To streamline and reduce the burden of submitting individual certifications, states are to use the checkbox at the bottom of the Part A workplan to fulfill the certification requirement in the 2008 *Guidelines* (this takes the place of submitting a certification letter). The basic criteria for a state-scale survey program are outlined as follows:

- The state-scale survey is designed so that it provides condition estimates for a population of waters of the state based on an unbiased, representative sample of a subset of those waters
 - a) the assessment is based on a core set of indicators for at least one designated use. This set of indicators may be tailored to specific water quality issues within the state (e.g., biological integrity, recreation, fish consumption, nutrient pollution, etc.)
 - b) the statistical survey may span more than one year. States may use a rotating basin approach and survey a different watershed over time, or spread the sampling over several years²
 - c) state or national methods and protocols may be used
 - d) states should strive for 90% confidence levels (+/- 10%). This typically requires at least 50 sites
 - e) at least one water body type is assessed
 - f) a commitment to continuing its statewide statistical survey program
- State agrees to continue to participate in the national survey, unless the state-scale survey is fully consistent with the national survey design and methods.
- State survey results are reported to the Agency as a component of their 305(b)/303(d) Integrated Report through the web tool designed for this purpose (EPA is no longer using the probability module included in the ADB to collect this information).

B. Participating in the National Aquatic Resource Survey (Part B)

- Part B Monitoring Initiative Workplan required by applicants participating directly or via in-kind services in the NWCA.
- Email or letter to Regions by March 28, 2015 (estimated pre-allotment date) required for NWCA activities requested under Associated Program Support.

1. General Information:

Applicants must provide details on how they will participate in the National Wetland Condition Assessment. For FY 15 funds, states and participating tribes will receive \$8,000 for each site to conduct the survey. The breakdown of costs will be \$6,125 per site for field sampling and \$1,875 per site for laboratory analysis. EPA is in the process of gathering more information related to costs of implementing NWCA 2016. Additional breakdown of costs for individual laboratory

² Please note, national lab contracts associated with the NARS will not typically be available in years outside the survey cycle.

analyses will be provided by March 21, 2015. In some cases, funding may be provided incrementally.

There are a number of approaches a state/tribe may use to participate in the national surveys. A delegated Section 106 Agency may:

- use the grant funds to conduct all of the field and lab work;
- conduct some portion of the field and/or lab work, and request EPA provide national contract support for the rest of the work (discuss options with your regional coordinator and the NWCA lead); or
- request EPA contractor support for all of the field and lab work.

States and tribes conducting field and/or lab work themselves must complete Part B of the Monitoring Initiative Workplan:

2. Contractor assistance via in-kind services or associated program support

EPA is providing two options for provision of contractor support in completing field and lab work: *in-kind services* and *associated program support*. As noted previously, Part B of the workplan does not need to be completed for activities accounted for through associated program support. Although EPA expanded the options for obtaining support for implementing field and lab work, EPA encourages states and tribes with the capacity to conduct field and/or lab work themselves.

In-kind services: As part of the National Aquatic Resource Surveys, EPA has made field and laboratory services available to states and tribes via national or regional contracts and interagency agreements. For in-kind services requests, the Section 106 agency must include the request for in-kind services in their grant application for the National Aquatic Resource Surveys. The grant must include both the services requested and the funding amounts. The state, tribe or other organization must take into consideration when in-kind services will be completed by the contractor (December 2016 for field work and December 2017 for lab work) when identifying the project period for the grant.

Associated Program Support: (Not included in grant application or the Part B workplan): As in FY 14, EPA is offering national contract support as associated program support (APS). Funding that would otherwise be provided as in-kind services through the grant process can be identified in advance for associated program support. This reduces the direct award level to that agency and **the eligible Section 106 agency would not include the APS tasks or funds in their grant.** EPA will retain the applicable funding to provide the requested service (lab analysis or field sampling). EPA will continue to work with states and tribes on planning and implementation of the surveys. As required by the APS provisions, EPA will work with states and tribes in

Associated Program Support:

Since FY 1999, Congress has included language in the State and Tribal Assistance Grant (STAG) account for “multi-media and single media pollution prevention, control and abatement, and related activities”, authorizing EPA to use a portion of the funds available for those programs to fund activities that benefit all or a portion of the state and tribal grant recipients – the associated program support costs authority.

Please see

http://water.epa.gov/grants_funding/cwf/upload/Section-106-APSC-Guidance-Final.pdf for more information.

advance to identify APS needs on a national basis and target funds for the APS *before* determining the final region-by-region allocation of grant funds (i.e. pre-allotment). The APS option is provided to promote administrative efficiency and cost savings to the recipients.

Process for Obtaining Prior Approval for Associated Program Support Activities: To request APS, each Section 106 agency receiving a share of the National Survey funds needs to provide written documentation to the Regional office requesting the specified associated program support activities. The statement should include the amount of funding to be withheld, as applicable, and acknowledgment that EPA will be directing the funding for the specified purpose. Two examples are provided in Attachment C that could be used in an email or letter.

State requests for Associated Program Support must be received by the Region no later than March 28, 2015. Once Regions have obtained written confirmation from the state, the Region will forward this information to Sarah Lehmann, NARS team leader (Lehmann.sarah@epa.gov) no later than April 1, 2015. Based on this, a final funding table for each state will be compiled and funds appropriately distributed. All decisions related to APS must be made pre-allotment (estimated date is March 28, 2015). States/tribes who decide they would like contractor support after final allotment must request these services through in-kind services.

3. Other Information

Frequently asked questions related to funding:

- Supplies - EPA will provide some supplies required for field sampling including field kits and shipping forms. A list of EPA-provided supplies for NWCA 2016 will be supplied. Recipients will provide all other supplies, equipment and/or materials needed.
- Training - EPA will provide field training during the spring of 2016 prior to the sampling season. **Training is mandatory for the field crew.** EPA does not cover the cost of travel to training. Monitoring Initiative funds may be used toward travel. If Monitoring Initiative funds will be used, these costs should be reflected in the state's workplan as part of Part A or Part B.
- Repeat sampling – Each recipient will receive an additional \$8,000 per site to conduct the field sampling and laboratory work for sites designated as revisits.

In cases where the delegated Section 106 Agency does not have the appropriate waterbody monitoring expertise, or otherwise prefers that another agency or organization conduct the national survey work, the delegated Section 106 agency may invoke state procedures, *e.g.*, an MOU, to redirect the Section 106 funds to another state agency. While the above approach is preferred, a state can request EPA redirect the survey funds to another state agency. For this approach, the delegated Section 106 agency must obtain a letter signed by the Governor requesting EPA to set up a separate grant directly with another state agency (*e.g.* Department of Natural Resources, Fish and Game Agency, Natural Heritage Program, Coastal Zone Management Program).

4. Grant Terms & Conditions

In addition to other terms and conditions from the Region, the following quality assurance term and condition should be included for states/tribes conducting NWCA field/lab work.

Quality assurance - EPA will develop and provide to all partners the Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP), Field and Laboratory Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and other necessary documents for participation in the National Aquatic Resource Surveys. All active participants must verify that they will abide by the EPA protocols. If the state or tribe is planning to conduct some or all of the laboratory work, Part B of the workplan should indicate that the state or tribe will work with the Agency to document, establish, and implement appropriate quality assurance and data management consistent with the national QAPP/SOPs. A certification form to confirm adherence to nationwide protocols will be available no later than February 2016. For states and tribes that request support through associated program support or in-kind services for all aspects of the survey, no certification is required. (Applicable to Part B)

Checklist for Monitoring Initiative Funds Grant Application

Check	Required Items
<input type="checkbox"/>	Grant Application Package (separate grant application, part of the Section 106 grant, or as a PPG)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Workplan – Part A Implementing Monitoring Strategy including a 1-2 page narrative format describing monitoring and assessment activities
<input type="checkbox"/>	Workplan – Part B Participation in National Aquatic Resource Survey (NWCA) (not required for activities supported through associated program support)

Attachments A and B

The attached workplan consists of two parts. In Part A of the workplan, states must identify in table and narrative format activities for which the Section 106 Monitoring Initiative enhancement funds will support. At the bottom of the form, states must also indicate their commitment to conducting state-scale statistical surveys. This must include the upcoming work on implementing a state-scale statistical survey. In Part B of the workplan, states must identify the extent to which they will be participating in the National Wetland Condition Assessment 2016, that is: a) conduct all of the field and lab work; b) conduct some portion of the field and/or lab work, and request in-kind EPA-contractor services for the rest of the work, or c) request in-kind EPA-contractor services for all of the field and lab work. If option b is selected, the state must identify the work it will perform, that is, the number of sites it will sample or the particular indicator tests it will conduct. States that request associated program support are not required to include their APS request as part of their Part B submission.

See excel worksheets.

Attachment C

Example email/letters for request of APS

Example 1

To: Regional contact

Subject: Reserving FY 15 Monitoring Initiative Funding for National Wetland Condition Assessment work under the Associated Program Support Authority

_____ (State name) requests the following Section 106 Monitoring Initiative National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA) work be implemented under the Associated Program Support Authority. The total funding amount _____ (state name/agency) requests EPA reserve under the Associated Program Support Authority for NWCA work is _____ for the (collection/analysis) of all laboratory samples. The state will not include a request for these funds in the state Monitoring Initiative grant. For NWCA activities for which Associated Program Support is not requested/agreed to, the state intends to include the activities and funds in the Monitoring Initiative grant application.

(Example numbers only....)

Activity	Requested Associated Program Support (yes/no)	# of sites	Per site cost (EPA estimates)	Total Amount of Requested Associated Program Support (# of sites * per site cost)
Field Work	No			
Lab work (all)	Yes	10	\$1875	\$18750
Total Associated Program Support Request				

cc:

Sarah Lehmann

Gregg Serenbetz

Example 2

To: Regional contact

Subject: Reserving FY 15 Monitoring Initiative Funding for National Wetland Condition Assessment work under the Associated Program Support Authority

_____ (State name) requests the following Section 106 Monitoring Initiative National Wetland Condition Assessment (NWCA) work be implemented under the Associated Program Support Authority. The total funding amount _____ (state name/agency) requests EPA reserve under the Associated Program Support Authority for NWCA work is _____ for the (collection/analysis) of water and soil chemistry samples. The state will not include a request for these funds in the state Monitoring Initiative grant. For NWCA activities for which Associated Program Support is not requested/agreed to, the state intends to include the activities and funds in the Monitoring Initiative grant application.

Activity	Consent to Associated Program Support (yes/no)	# of sites	Per site cost (EPA estimates)	Total amount of Requested Associated Program Support (# of sites * per site cost)
Field Work	No			
Lab work - selected analyses				
- Plant identifications	No			
- Water chemistry	Yes	10		
- Soil chemistry	Yes	10		
- Microcystin.	No			
Total Associated Program Support Funding Request				

cc:

Sarah Lehmann

Gregg Serenbetz