

**Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Section 604(b) – Water Quality Management Planning**

**Notice of Funding Opportunity
Summary Information**

	Data Field	
1.	Awarding Agency Name:	Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA)
2.	Agency Contact:	Christine Davis epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov 217-782-3362
3.	Announcement Type:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Initial announcement <input type="checkbox"/> Modification of a previous announcement
4.	Type of Assistance Instrument:	Grant
5.	Funding Opportunity Number:	2021 Section 604(b) WQMP
6.	Funding Opportunity Title:	Section 604(b) –Water Quality Management Planning
7.	CSFA Number:	532-60-0376
8.	CSFA Popular Name:	Section 604(b) Grant Program
9.	CFDA Number(s):	66.454
10.	Anticipated Number of Awards:	Approximately 3 grant awards per year
11.	Estimated Total Program Funding:	Approximately \$375,000 per year
12.	Award Range	Not applicable. No set maximum or minimum amount.
13.	Source of Funding:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Federal or Federal pass-through <input type="checkbox"/> State <input type="checkbox"/> Private / other funding
14.	Cost Sharing or Matching Requirement:	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
15.	Indirect Costs Allowed Restrictions on Indirect Costs	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No If yes, provide the citation governing the restriction:
16.	Posted Date:	September 20, 2021
17.	Closing Date for Applications:	Noon (CST) on October 20, 2021
18.	Technical Assistance Session:	Session Offered: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No Session Mandatory: <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Section 604(b) – Water Quality Management Planning

Notice of Funding Opportunity
Detailed Information

A. Program Description

The Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (Illinois EPA) is seeking proposals for water quality management planning projects (Projects). The Illinois EPA receives federal funds under Section 604(b) of the federal Clean Water Act (CWA) to carry out water quality management planning activities under Sections 205(j) and 303(e) of the CWA. Grant funds are used to determine the nature, extent, and causes of point and nonpoint source water pollution; develop water quality management plans; develop technical and administrative guidance tools for water pollution control; develop preliminary designs for best management practices (BMPs) to address water quality problems; implement administrative water pollution controls; and educate the public about the impact and importance of water pollution control. The requirements of the United States Environmental Protection Agency's (U.S. EPA) Guidance for Management of Section 205(j)(1) and Section 604(b) Funds apply to all recipients of grants made with funds appropriated by Congress under Section 604(b) of the CWA.

Illinois EPA's Section 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning grant program (a.k.a. Section 604(b) Grant Program) is designed to implement the [*Illinois Water Quality Management Plan*](#) and [*Illinois' Nonpoint Source Management Program*](#) (Illinois EPA, 2013). Nonpoint source (NPS) pollution, unlike pollution from industrial and sewage treatment plants, comes from many diffuse sources. NPS pollution is caused by rainfall or snowmelt moving over and through the ground. As the runoff moves, it picks up and carries away natural and human-made pollutants, finally depositing them into lakes, rivers, wetlands and even our underground sources of drinking water.

Examples of projects and activities that have been funded through the Section 604(b) Grant Program are listed below. The list is not all-inclusive, and inclusion of a project or activity does not equate to an automatic eligibility for funding under the NOFO.

- Development of a watershed-based plan;
- Development of a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plan;
- Development of design specifications for nonpoint source (NPS) pollution control BMPs;
- Technical assistance for water pollution control;
- Environmental and social indicator monitoring to help document the need for water pollution control or to validate the accomplishments of ongoing and completed pollution control projects; and
- Education and outreach to promote awareness and implementation of activities that may help to restore degraded waters or protect waters from degradation due to pollution.

Illinois EPA will rank the applications according to the criteria outlined in Section E.2. Grants will be awarded to the applicants that propose the most cost-effective projects with the largest potential for water quality improvement. Applications that meet a minimum cut score (outlined in Section E.2.) will receive additional points for projects identified in an Illinois EPA-approved watershed-based plan (WBP) or Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL), or are located within a priority watershed or Environmental Justice area.

The anticipated start date for approved projects is **February 1, 2022**. Project length is two years (24 months) unless otherwise approved by Illinois EPA. Costs incurred prior to the execution of the grant agreement or after the Project period ends are ineligible for reimbursement.

Project applicants may propose to subcontract portions of the Project to other appropriate entities to assist with implementation of the Project components.

B. Funding Information

This grant award is utilizing federal pass-through funds received from U.S. EPA and distributed by Illinois EPA under Section 604(b) of the Clean Water Act. Illinois EPA expects to award a total of approximately **\$375,000 of federal funds** and anticipates distributing this amount across two (2) to three (3) awards. The actual amount depends upon the final U.S. EPA budget approved by Congress and the allocation awarded to Illinois by U.S. EPA. The Section 604(b) Grant Program does not have a set maximum or minimum total project cost or grant amount. However, in the past, projects have had a federal grant assistance amount that generally ranged from approximately \$50,000 to \$350,000.

This is a reimbursement program. The Grantee must perform the work, pay project costs, and submit invoice(s) with supporting documentation before Illinois EPA will compensate the Grantee for any approved eligible costs. Illinois EPA shall only make reimbursements to the Grantee and shall reimburse the Grantee no more frequently than monthly.

The Illinois EPA may elect to partially fund an application by funding discrete portions or phases of the Project scope of work. This could be due to ineligible (e.g., proposed monitoring without an approved QAPP) or low priority components identified in the application or inadequate funds available to complete the entire project.

C. Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants

Section 604(b) Grant Program funds are available to Regional Public Comprehensive Planning Organizations (RPCPOs), Interstate Organizations (IOs), and entities who have approved charters, recognized by the State of Illinois, that specifically include the type of work proposed in the Section 604(b) Grant Program application as a part of their approved business activities. In Illinois, RPCPOs include the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP - formerly Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission), the Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan and Regional Planning Commission (SIMRPC), and the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission (GERPDC). The applicant must also be a Grant Accountability and Transparency Act (GATA) Pre-Qualified entity that has legal status to accept funds from the State of Illinois.

The Illinois EPA cannot make a Section 604(b) Grant Program award to an applicant who fails to meet the GATA Pre-Qualification criterion defined in Section E.1. Applicants that do not meet this criterion will be deemed ineligible. Proof of eligibility is required at the time the application is submitted.

Section 604(b) Grant Program applicants must have the financial ability to initiate the project, pay expenses, and then request reimbursement from the Illinois EPA, while continuing to finance their normal operating expenses.

Applicants must have the authority and ability to implement the proposed project or propose to subcontract portions of the project to the appropriate entities for implementation.

Applications that include monitoring are required to submit a copy of an Illinois EPA approved Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) for that monitoring at the time of application. Monitoring components for applications without an approved QAPP will not be considered for funding, however, the remainder of the application and budget will be reviewed for funding consideration. U.S. EPA guidance for QAPPs can be found at: <https://www.epa.gov/quality/guidance-quality-assurance-project-plans-epa-qag-5>

2. Project Match

There is no match requirement for the Section 604(b) Grant Program. However, local match is allowed. Local match may include money spent or in-kind services utilized to complete the approved project tasks but cannot be federal funds or funds used to match another federal program. Local match can be provided by the recipient, sub-contractor, or project partners.

3. Indirect Cost Rate

In order to charge indirect costs to a grant, the applicant must have an annually negotiated indirect cost rate agreement (NICRA). There are three types of NICRAs:

1. Federally Negotiated Rate. Organizations that receive direct federal funding may have an indirect cost rate that was negotiated with the Federal Cognizant Agency. The State of Illinois will accept the federally negotiated rate. The applicant must provide a copy of the federally NICRA.
2. State Negotiated Rate. The applicant must negotiate an indirect cost rate with the State of Illinois if they do not have Federally Negotiated Rate or elect to use the De Minimis Rate. The indirect cost rate proposal must be submitted to the State of Illinois within 90 days of the Notice of State Award.
3. De Minimis Rate. An organization that has never received a Federally Negotiated Rate may elect a de minimis rate of 10% of modified total direct cost (MTDC). Once established, the de minimis rate may be used indefinitely. The State of Illinois must verify the calculation of the MTDC annually in order to accept the de minimis rate.

An applicant has the discretion not to claim payment for indirect costs. Applicants that elect not to claim indirect costs cannot be reimbursed for indirect costs.

4. Other Eligibility Criteria

The following are not eligible for Section 604(b) Grant Program funds:

- Activities that do not address water quality or water pollution control.
- Implementation activities such as the construction of best management practices for water pollution control.
- Ineligible activities specified in the current U.S. EPA guidelines for Section 604(b) grants.

An applicant's failure to meet an eligibility criterion will not result in the Illinois EPA returning the application without review but will preclude the Illinois EPA from making a Section 604(b) Grant Program award for that application.

There is no limit on the number of applications an applicant may submit under this announcement. Applications for renewal or supplementation of existing projects are eligible to compete with applications for new grant awards.

D. Application and Submission Information

Applicants **shall not apply** for the Section 604(b) Program until the applicant has pre-qualified through the GATA Grantee Portal, www.grants.illinois.gov.

1. Content and Form of Application Submission

A complete Section 604(b) Grant Program application must include the following:

- a) Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance – signed (electronic signature not allowed)
- b) Uniform Grant Budget Template – signed (electronic signature not allowed)
 - Entire 23-page budget with all worksheets included
 - Illinois EPA requires the FFATA Form to be completed
- c) Project Details Document
- d) Quality Assurance Project Plan (if monitoring is proposed)
- e) Support Documentation (as applicable)
 - Location maps (as applicable)

The applicant must describe how the project will be implemented and identify interim milestones for implementing the outputs or accomplishments along with an associated schedule for completion of those milestones. Example outputs and milestones include: the steps to 1) develop an Illinois EPA-approvable WBP, 2) implement an effective outreach and information program, including the types of workshops to be held, or training materials to be developed, and 3) develop and implement a water quality monitoring program, including data collection and tracking program.

The applicant must describe the expected or desired outcomes of the project. The outcomes are the important changes that are to be set in motion or supported by the Project. These changes may be environmental or social and may be expected to appear on different time scales.

- Short-term outcomes can include creation of a well-balanced active watershed planning committee, development of a watershed resource inventory and WBP, and water quality monitoring, data collection and tracking program.
- Intermediate-term outcomes can include things such as increased local interest/investment in clean water and improved water quality in the watershed.
- Long-term outcomes can include removal of a waterbody from the list of impaired waters or the local benefits of clean water.

The Section 604(b) Grant Program application is available at Illinois EPA's website at:

<https://www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/forms/water-forms/Pages/financial-assistance.aspx>

Paper copies of the Section 604(b) Grant Program application are available upon request by contacting the Watershed Management Section (WMS) at (217) 782-3362.

The Illinois EPA requires the Section 604(b) Grant Program applicants to use the current application forms provided in the link above or in the GATA Portal. These forms are designed to allow the Illinois EPA and the Evaluation Panel to obtain enough information to properly evaluate the application.

All Section 604(b) Grant Program forms that require a signature must be signed by persons authorized by the applicant organization to enter into formal contractual agreements. A scan of the original signature is required. Electronic signatures are not acceptable.

The narrative application materials, including application and budget forms, must be formatted to letter-sized paper and type font should be 10-point or greater. Designs and drawings may be submitted formatted on larger paper.

All project descriptions, proposals, charts, tables, designs, and cost estimates on separate sheets should be labeled with the Project title.

If an applicant makes significant changes to the scope of work after the application deadline, the application will be rejected.

Applications must be submitted in an electronic format. Submissions can be made either:

- a) By email using the [Illinois.Gov File Transfer tool](#) to epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov. Include the project title and applicant name in the "Message to Recipient" box. **Do NOT** email files direct, without the file transfer tool, as the Illinois EPA firewall might reject the application. Contact the WMS at (217) 782-3362 regarding the use of the file transfer tool including file size limitations or potential firewall issues.

or

- b) By mailing or delivering the application on a USB directly to:

US Postal Service Mailing Address:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, NPS Unit #15
P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276

Attention: Christine Davis

Delivery Address:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, NPS Unit #15
1021 North Grand Avenue East
Springfield, Illinois 62702

Attention: Christine Davis

2. Dun and Bradstreet Universal Numbering System (DUNS) Number and System for Award Management (SAM)

Each applicant (unless the applicant is an individual or federal or State awarding agency that is exempt from those requirements under 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(b) or (c), or has an exception approved by the federal or State awarding agency under 2 C.F.R. § 25.110(d) is required to:

- a) be registered in SAM **before** submitting its application (Register at: <https://www.sam.gov/>);
- b) provide a valid DUNS number in its application; and
- c) maintain an active SAM registration with current information at all times during which it has an active federal, federal pass-through, or State award or an application or plan under consideration by a federal or State awarding agency.

Verifications are performed including a check of the federal Debarred and Suspended list and status on the Illinois Stop Payment List. An automated email notification from the GATA Portal to the entity alerts them of 'qualified' status or informs how to remediate a negative verification (e.g., inactive DUNS, not in good standing with the Secretary of State). A federal Debarred and Suspended status cannot be remediated.

The Illinois EPA shall not make an award to an applicant unless the applicant has complied with all applicable DUNS and SAM requirements. If an applicant has not fully complied with these requirements by the application deadline, the Illinois EPA shall determine the applicant as not qualified to receive an award. The Illinois EPA shall use that determination as a basis to make an award to another qualified applicant.

3. **Submission Dates and Times**

Section 604(b) Grant Program applications are accepted by Illinois EPA until October 20, 2021. The complete electronic copy of the application, per Section D.1., must be received at Illinois EPA's Springfield office by noon (CST) on October 20, 2021, to be considered for funding under the Section 604(b) Grant Program NOFO.

The Illinois EPA shall not extend the application deadline date. Incomplete and late applications shall 1) not be considered for funding, 2) not be returned to the applicant, and 3) preclude the Illinois EPA from making an award to the applicant.

The Illinois EPA shall use the date and time of the Illinois.gov File Transfer Tool confirmation of receipt email, or the date-stamp applied by Illinois EPA to mailed or hand-delivered electronic applications when received, to determine whether an application has been submitted on or before the deadline.

The Illinois EPA shall send a letter to the applicant acknowledging receipt of the application. Applicants shall be notified, at this time, if their application was not considered for funding due to an incomplete or late application submittal or if they were not pre-qualified in the GATA Grantee Portal by the application deadline.

4. **Intergovernmental Review**

This funding opportunity is subject to Executive Order 12372, "Intergovernmental Review of Federal Programs."

5. **Funding Restrictions**

Section 604(b) Grant Program funds are awarded under Section 205(j)(2) by U.S. EPA to Illinois EPA to carry out water quality management planning. Pursuant to Section 205(j)(3) of the CWA, as amended, States are required to allocate at least 40 percent of funds awarded under 205(j)(2) to eligible Regional Public Comprehensive Planning Organizations (RPCPOs) and Interstate Organizations (IOs). U.S. EPA may approve a State's request to pass through less than 40 percent if, after consultation with its RPCPOs and IOs, the Governor determines that pass through of at least 40 percent will not: (1) result in significant participation by RPCPOs and IOs in WQM planning; and (2) significantly assist in development and implementation of the state's water quality management plan. In Illinois, RPCPOs include the Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning (CMAP - formerly Northeastern Illinois Planning Commission), the Southwestern Illinois Metropolitan and Regional Planning Commission (SIMRPC), and the Greater Egypt Regional Planning and Development Commission (GERPDC).

The grantee must have Illinois EPA's approval prior to incurring costs for implementation of any part of the Project. In addition, costs incurred prior to the grant agreement's effective term date or after its term ends are ineligible for reimbursement. Costs incurred prior to the grant agreements' effective date or after its term ends are ineligible as match unless otherwise approved as match by Illinois EPA.

Grantees shall not use any subcontractors, outside associates, or consultants in connection with any services covered by the grant agreement unless specifically authorized by the Illinois EPA.

Grantees shall use procurement procedures that reflect applicable local and State of Illinois laws and regulations relating to any sub agreements for the performance of grant projects funded under the Section 604(b) Grant Program.

Partial funding may be offered if sufficient funds are not available to fund an entire application.

E. Application Review Information

1. *Application Eligibility*

If the answer to **any** of the following Administrative Criterion or GATA Pre-Qualification Criterion questions is **No**, the application shall not be considered for funding.

Administrative Criterion	Yes	No
Did the applicant meet all of the following requirements for Merit-Based Review eligibility?		
	Yes	No
Fields are completed with requested information and boxes checked, as applicable		
Application submitted electronically to the epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov address or delivered in an electronic format to Illinois EPA Headquarters (see page 6 for address)		
Application received by the Illinois EPA by noon (CST) on October 20, 2021		
Uniform Application for State Grant Assistance with completed/ <u>scanned</u> signature block		
Uniform Grant Budget Template with completed/ <u>scanned</u> signature block		
Project Details Narrative with support documentation submitted		
GATA Pre-Qualification Criterion	Yes	No
Did the applicant meet all of the following pre-qualification requirements through the GATA Grantee Portal, www.grants.illinois.gov , by noon (CST) on October 20, 2021?		
	Yes	No
Has a valid DUNS number in the GATA Portal		
Has a current SAM.gov account number in the GATA Portal		
Is not listed on the Federal Excluded Parties List		
Is in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State		
Is not listed on the Illinois Stop Payment list		
Is not listed on the Department of Healthcare and Family Services Provider Sanctions List		

2. **Criteria**

All Section 604(b) Grant Program applications shall be reviewed for completeness, technical merit, cost effectiveness, and adherence to the Clean Water Act, U.S. EPA Section 604(b) program guidance, and the competitive grant evaluation criteria described in this NOFO. Applications found to be complete shall undergo a comprehensive, merit-based review performed in compliance with GATA Legislation 30 ILCS 708 and Uniform Administrative Requirements; 2 CFR § 200. The merit-based review is designed to evaluate applications against the following criteria:

Tier 1

General Quality of Application (0.1 – 1.0 points)

- All required components (see Section D.1.) are submitted and complete
 - (including an original or scan of all required signature)
- Project information submitted is sufficient, consistent, and correct

Quality of Proposal (0.1 – 2.0 points)

- Project is consistent with the intent of the NOFO
- Applicant is eligible and has the financial ability to complete the Project
 - Either a RPCPO or has a State recognized Charter that specifically includes the type of work proposed in the Section 604(b) Grant Program
- Steps needed to fully implement the Project are identified
- Project helps improve capacity of local, State, and/or federal partners
- The level of project development is strong
- Timeline is appropriate for the tasks and milestones outlined
- Budget line items are justified in the Project narrative

Anticipated Outputs and Outcomes (0.1 – 2.0 points)

- Clear project goals and measurable objectives are identified
- The application demonstrates a sound plan for measuring progress toward achieving the expected outputs and outcomes
- The project proposes to implement components of an Illinois EPA WBP or TMDL Implementation Plan

Cost Effectiveness (0.1 – 1.0 points)

- Budget is detailed and clearly presented
- Project costs are limited to eligible components and activities
- Project's components and/or activities are cost-effective and/or comparable to other water quality management projects

Addresses Need and Environmental Significance (0.1 – 2.0 points)

- Project will protect or improve water quality in local surface water resources
- Proposed approach/actions/activities are appropriate or technically/scientifically sound for Point and/or NPS pollution control
- The project is a component of a larger water quality improvement project

Financial Integrity (0.1 – 1.0 points)

- Applicant has the financial ability to complete the project

Programmatic Capability, Technical Experience and Qualifications (0.1 – 1.0 points)

- Applicant, or its consultant or partner, can successfully manage and complete the Project
- Applicant, or its consultant or partner, has strong staff expertise/qualifications, staff knowledge, and resources or the ability to obtain them, to successfully achieve the intent of the NOFO

Minimum Cut Score. Application points for the Tier 1 criterion listed above will be summed to arrive at a preliminary composite average score. A minimum cut score of 6.0 will be used to determine if points for the additional Tier 2 criterion listed below will be applied. Applications that score ≤ 5.9 will not be given any additional Tier 2 points for the criterion listed below, regardless if they apply.

Tier 2

Relationship to an approved WBP. (Point Range 0.0, 0.5, or 1) Priority will be given to those projects that develop or update an Illinois EPA approved WBP. A WBP must include, at a minimum, nine specific elements required in U.S. EPA guidance. NPS pollution control projects that are identified as being within an approved WBP that eliminate impairments and/or restore impaired waters will receive higher consideration than projects submitted without the support of such a plan. Implementation of a WBP to address NPS pollution could include design of BMPs that have been identified for specific critical areas; NPS water quality modeling, environmental and social indicator monitoring, and outreach activities that are specifically identified in the WBP. Applications that have no relationship and are not located within an approved WBP earn 0.0 points, while those with eligible projects in areas partially covered by an approved WBP earn 0.5 points. Those that have eligible projects which are entirely located within an approved WBP earn 1.0 points.

For additional information on watershed-based planning, please refer to Appendix C of the [Nonpoint Source Program and Grants Guidelines for States and Territories](#) (April 12, 2013) and the [Guidance for Developing Watershed Action Plans](#) in Illinois (Chicago Metropolitan Agency for Planning, 2007).

Relationship to an approved TMDL Implementation Plan. (Point Range 0.0, 0.5, or 1.0) Priority will be given to those projects that develop or update an Illinois EPA approved TMDL implementation plan. A TMDL is the maximum amount of a specific pollutant loading a waterbody can tolerate and still support all its intended uses. Applications that have no relationship to and are not located within an approved TMDL Implementation Plan earn 0.0 points, while those with eligible projects in areas that are partially covered by an approved TMDL Implementation Plan will earn 0.5 points. Those with eligible projects that are located within an approved TMDL Implementation Plan earn 1.0 points.

The proposed TMDL implementation plan to be developed must be related to a 303d listed waterbody that is being impaired by NPS pollution. [Click here](#) for additional information about TMDL requirements as defined in U.S. EPA guidance. A TMDL implementation plan must also meet the requirements of a WBP. The TMDL implementation plan will spell out the actions necessary to achieve the goals of the approved TMDL. The plan specifies limits for point source and NPS discharges and recommends specific BMPs for nonpoint sources. It also estimates associated costs and lays out a schedule for implementation. [Click here](#) for additional information about Illinois EPA's TMDL Program and consult with the Planning Unit at (217) 782-3362 before applying for the development of a TMDL implementation plan.

Relationship to Illinois EPA Priority Watersheds. (Point Range 0.0, 1.0, or 2.0) Priority will be given to those projects that are located within Illinois EPA [Priority Watersheds](#) for NPS pollution control implementation or planning, as applicable. Illinois has 51 basins; all 51 basins will be a priority for watershed-based planning or plan implementation at least once every five years. Each year, a subset (8 – 11) of the basins will be a priority for planning. Two-years later those same basins will be a priority for plan implementation. Waterbody segments, except for main-stem waters, that are not attaining their designated water quality uses due to NPS pollution impairments are the priority waterbodies within the priority watersheds. The main-stem waterbodies have greater priority once NPS components of a WBP for their headwater areas have been developed and implemented. The 10 to 12-digit hydrologic units (HUC) that contain these impaired waterbody segments are the priority watershed. A higher priority for assistance will be given to those watersheds that have multiple NPS impaired waterbody segments. Priority will also be given to those projects that are located within a NPS Priority Watershed to Reduce Nutrient Loss. [Click here](#) to see a set of maps that depict the 5-year planning and implementation priority watershed rotation and the priority watersheds for nutrient reduction. Applications that have no

relationship to and are not located within a Priority Watershed will earn 0.0 points, while those with eligible projects in areas partially located in a Priority Watershed will earn 0.5 points. Those that have eligible projects that are entirely located in a Priority Watershed will earn 1.0 points.

Relationship to Illinois EPA [Environmental Justice Areas](#) (Point Range 0.0, 0.5, or 1.0) Priority will be given to those projects that are located within an Illinois EPA Environmental Justice Area. "Environmental Justice" is based on the principle that all people should be protected from environmental pollution and have the right to a clean and healthy environment. Environmental justice is the protection of the health of the people of Illinois and its environment, equity in the administration of the State's environmental programs, and the provision of adequate opportunities for meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies. Applications outside of an Environmental Justice Area will earn 0.0 points, while those with project areas that are partially located within an Environmental Justice Area earn 0.5 points. Those projects that are entirely located within an Environmental Justice Area(s) earn 1.0 points.

3. *Review and Selection Process*

The complete applications shall be reviewed by an Evaluation Panel that is composed of Illinois EPA, Bureau of Water (BOW), Watershed Management Section (WMS), NPS Unit staff and other BOW staff, as available.

Each application shall be reviewed in-depth by the entire Evaluation Panel.

Illinois EPA's WMS shall solicit peer reviews on the applications from:

- within the Illinois EPA regional offices in which the project is located, and
- within Illinois EPA's Fiscal department for a fiscal and administrative review

The peer reviews shall not generate a numerical score but will provide information for the Evaluation Panel to consider while conducting the merit-based review.

The Evaluation Panel shall be convened to discuss the applications, peer review comments, and other relevant information. Using the merit-based review criteria, as provided in Section E.2., each member of the Evaluation Panel shall individually score each application on a scale of 0.7 (worst) to 10 (best) independently of the whole panel. Each Evaluation Panel member shall then give the application a numeric score. These individual scores shall be shared with the whole Evaluation Panel and recorded on a summary score sheet that shows the comparative scores. Any significant or substantial variance between member's scores shall be reviewed and documented, including voluntary revision of individual scores.

The final individual scores shall be converted into a composite average score for each application and ranked accordingly. Section 604(b) Grant Program funds will be awarded per the NOFO, starting with the highest ranked project funded first, followed in order by rank.

Additional review and selection processes are provided below.

- If the amount of available grant funding is not sufficient to fund the application in its entirety, the Evaluation Panel shall review the application to determine if a discrete portion or phase of the project meeting the mission of this NOFO can be funded. If the Evaluation Panel determines that it cannot fund the application in full or part, the next highest-ranked application will be reviewed for a discrete portion or phase to be funded to meet the mission of the NOFO.
- If the Evaluation Panel determines that an applicant incorrectly calculated or indicated the project cost, match, and/or total funding request based on the applicable cost estimate, required match, or eligible costs, the application shall still be accepted and reviewed. If the applicant is awarded the grant, the Illinois EPA shall contact the applicant and request a decision from the applicant as to

whether it will accept the award based on the Illinois EPA's determination of the project cost, applicant match, and/or total funding requested. If the applicant does not accept the Illinois EPA's determination, the application shall not be funded.

Illinois EPA's Watershed Management Section will present a summary of all the applications to the Chief of the Bureau of Water and to the Director of the Illinois EPA. This summary will include the findings and recommendations of the evaluation panel.

Based on eligibility criteria, merit criteria, the evaluation panel's scoring, and input from the Chief of the Bureau of Water and the Director of the Illinois EPA, Illinois' Section 604(b) Grant Program Water Quality Management Planning Work Plan (Work Plan) will be prepared and submitted to U.S. EPA for approval. The Work Plan identifies the selected applications (projects) proposed for funding by Illinois EPA. If the amount of available grant funding is not anticipated to be sufficient to fund a higher-ranked application in its entirety, the Illinois EPA will select for inclusion in the Work Plan the next highest-ranked application that Illinois EPA would anticipate to be able to fund in its entirety based on the grant funding level anticipated from U.S. EPA. The Work Plan includes a budget spreadsheet, a short narrative summary of each selected project, and a copy of the selected project applications.

4. Appeal Process

An appeal process is available to applicants and other interested parties; however, appeals are limited to the Illinois EPA evaluation process. Evaluation scores may not be protested. An appeal must be submitted in writing to the following address: Illinois EPA, Attn: **Section 604(b) Grant Program, Bureau of Water, 1021 N. Grand Avenue, Mail Code #15, P.O. Box 19276, Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276** and must be received within 14 calendar days after the date that the grant award notice has been published by the Illinois EPA on Grants.Illinois.gov. The written appeal shall include at a minimum the following: the name and address of the appealing party, identification of the grant, and a statement of reasons for the appeal. Illinois EPA shall acknowledge receipt of an appeal within fourteen (14) calendar days from the date the appeal was received.

When an appeal is received, the execution of the grant agreement that Illinois EPA intends to make under this NOFO shall be stayed until the appeal is resolved.

Illinois EPA shall respond to the appeal within 60 days or supply a written explanation to the appealing party as to why additional time is required. The appealing party must supply any additional information requested by Illinois EPA within the time period set in the request. The Director of the Illinois EPA may appoint one or more Appeal Review Officers (ARO) to consider the grant-related appeal and make a recommendation to the Director of the Illinois EPA or designee for resolution. The ARO shall make a recommendation to the Director of the Illinois EPA or designee as expeditiously as possible after receiving all relevant, requested information. In determining the appropriate recommendation, the ARO shall consider the integrity of the competitive grant process and the impact of the recommendation on the Illinois EPA. The Illinois EPA shall resolve the appeal by means of written determination, which shall include, but not be limited to: review of the appeal, appeal determination, and rationale for the determination.

5. Anticipated Announcement and State Award Dates

Illinois EPA's WMS shall present a summary of all the applications received to the Chief of the Bureau of Water and the Director of the Illinois EPA. This summary shall include confirmation that the NOFO was followed and the findings and recommendations of the Evaluation Panel, including application rank and funding recommendation.

By November 17, 2021, Illinois EPA expects to send written notice to each applicant whose application was not selected for inclusion in the Section 604(b) Grant Program Work Plan.

Following a decision of intent to award, the Illinois EPA is required by GATA to conduct a fiscal and

administrative risk assessment and programmatic risk assessment of the applicant. Additional information may be required at that time from the successful applicant. To remain eligible for the award, the applicant must provide the requested information within the time specified by the Illinois EPA. The Fiscal and Administrative Risk Assessment Questionnaire is available on the GATA Portal. The Programmatic Risk Assessment is provided by Illinois EPA. These assessments evaluate the applicant's ability to successfully carry out the terms of the Section 604(b) Grant Program and assess four risk categories: 1) quality of management systems and ability to meet the management standards; 2) history of performance; 3) reports and findings from audits performed on prior awards; and 4) the applicant's ability to effectively implement statutory, regulatory, or other requirements imposed on a grantee.

By December 8, 2021, the Illinois EPA expects to send the "Notice of State Award" to the successful grant applicant for signature. The Notice of State Award (NOSA) will specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the pre-award risk assessments. The NOSA must be signed and returned by an authorized representative of the grantee organization. **The NOSA is not an authorization to begin performance or incur costs.**

By December 31, 2021, Illinois EPA expects to send a grant agreement to the grant recipient for signature.

By February 1, 2022, Illinois EPA expects to provide a fully executed grant agreement to the grant recipient. A fully executed grant agreement is authorization for the grant recipient to begin work on the project.

Action by Illinois EPA	Target Dates
Notify applicants that their application was received.	October 26, 2021
Notify unsuccessful applicants that their application was not selected for inclusion in the Section 604(b) Grant Program Work Plan.	November 17, 2021
Send a Notice of State Award to the selected applicant for signature.	December 8, 2021
Send a Grant Agreement to the selected applicant for signature.	December 31, 2021
Provide a fully executed Grant Agreement to the grantee.	February 1, 2022

The anticipated start date for the approved project is **February 1, 2022**.

F. Award Administration Information

1. Notice of State Award (NOSA)

The Illinois EPA shall issue a Notice of State Award (NOSA) to the successful grant applicants. The NOSA shall specify the funding terms and specific conditions resulting from the Fiscal and Administrative and Programmatic Risk Assessments. The NOSA must be accepted by an authorized representative of the grant applicant before a grant agreement can be sent to the applicant. **A NOSA is not an authorization to begin project activities or incur costs.**

2. Administrative, State, and National Policy Requirements

The terms and conditions of the award shall be specified in the NOSA and the grant agreement.

No grantee shall receive a grant or any other State or federal assistance that would provide more than 100 percent of the eligible project costs.

Each grantee must agree to comply with all applicable federal and State requirements. **This includes Uniform Administrative Requirements, 2 C.F.R. § 200, Executive Order 12372 "Intergovernmental**

Review of Federal Programs”, and GATA. These can have a significant impact on the costs and complexity of a project. Section 604(b) Grant Program grantees will be expected to submit signed assurances that they will comply with all federal mandates, including:

- a) Business Enterprise Program for Minorities, Females, and Person with Disabilities Act; 30 ILCS 575/: For grant awards of \$250,000 or more, the grantee will be required to comply with the Business Enterprise Program for Minorities, Females, and Persons with Disabilities Act, which establishes a goal for contracting with businesses that have been certified as owned and controlled by persons who are minority, female, or who have disabilities. The grantee must document a plan for compliance prior to the establishment of the grant agreement and ensure compliance through the life of the grant.

Successful applicants will be required to execute a formal grant agreement and adhere to all requirements of the Section 604(b) Grant Program and other State and federal contractual requirements.

In the grant agreement, the grantee shall be required to:

- Certify that it does and shall comply with all provisions of the federal Internal Revenue Code (26 USC 1), the Illinois Income Tax Act; (35 ILCS 5/), and all rules promulgated thereunder, including withholding provisions and timely deposits of employee taxes and unemployment insurance taxes.
- Certify that it does and shall comply with the reporting requirements of the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act of 2006; PL 109–282, September 26, 2006, 120 Stat 1186 with respect to federal Awards greater than or equal to \$25,000.
- Certify that it shall adhere to the applicable Uniform Administrative Requirements, Cost Principles, and Audit Requirements, which are published in Title 2, Part 200 of the Code of Federal Regulations, and are incorporated herein by reference. See 44 Ill. Adm. Code 7000.30(b)(1)(A).
- Certify that it and its sub-grantees shall: (i) be registered with the federal SAM if seeking an Award that is partially or fully paid by federal funds and registered with the State equivalent of SAM; (ii) be in good standing with the Illinois Secretary of State; and (iii) have a valid DUNS number. It is Grantee’s responsibility to remain current with these registrations and requirements. If Grantee’s status with regard to any of these requirements change, or the certifications made in and information provided in the Uniform Grant Application changes, Grantee’s must notify the Grantor in accordance with ARTICLE XVIII.
- Submit personnel activity reports accounting on an after-the-fact basis for 100% of the employee’s actual time, separately indicating the time spent on the Section 604(b) grant, other grants or projects, vacation or sick leave, and administrative time, if applicable.

3. Reporting

All projects require quarterly reporting of progress and a final project evaluation and report. Quarterly progress reports shall include both a Periodic Financial Report and a Periodic Performance Report.

All projects require a final project report. The grantee shall submit to the Illinois EPA, by the date specified in the grant agreement, a report explaining the execution of the project and evaluating the project’s success. The report shall document the project tasks and summarize the findings, costs, and benefits of the project.

G. State Awarding Agency Contact(s)

If you have any programmatic questions regarding the Section 604(b) Grant Program, this NOFO, or the Section 604(b) Grant Program Application, contact the Illinois EPA's Nonpoint Source Unit staff at:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Bureau of Water, WMS, NPS Unit #15
1021 North Grand Avenue East; P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
Email: epa.bowgrants@illinois.gov
Phone: (217) 782-3362

If you have any fiscal and administrative questions regarding the Uniform Grant Application, the Uniform Grant Budget Template, Indirect cost rates, Internal Controls Questionnaire (ICQ), or pre-qualifying through the GATA Grantee Portal, contact the Illinois EPA's Fiscal staff at:

Illinois Environmental Protection Agency
Fiscal
1021 North Grand Avenue East; P.O. Box 19276
Springfield, Illinois 62794-9276
Email: Max.Paller@illinois.gov
Phone: (217) 558-3386

H. Other Information

Additional information about [Illinois' Water Quality Management Planning Program](#) can be found on Illinois EPA's website, including the [Section 604\(b\) Biannual Report](#), which describes the projects that have been funded in the past under the Section 604(b) Grant Program.

The Illinois EPA has the right to use (including, but not limited to, citing to, circulating, displaying, and reproducing) all products that result from the Grantee receiving financial assistance under the grant agreement whether the product is developed by the Grantee or a sub-recipient.

Illinois EPA is not obligated to make any grant award as a result of this NOFO.