Official Answers to AIS Grants Questions

The following is a list of all written questions submitted to the AIS Grants Oversight Committee prior to the submission deadline of 1/15/2021. Official Answers from the Committee follow each question in red.

1. We are always looking for potential speakers for our events and conference. Is there someone specific I could contact in regards to an educational session regarding the above topic?

   Please contact Wendy Flynn of the CT DEEP Boating Division at gwendolynn.flynn@ct.gov to coordinate a presentation.

2. Do you anticipate extending the bid due date?

   No, the bid due date will remain static for this round of funding. We expect to offer future grant funding opportunities on an annual basis.

3. What additional details are you willing to provide, if any, beyond what is stated in bid documents concerning how you will identify the winning bid?

   Section II. Review Criteria on page A-2 of Attachment A lists the review criteria that the AIS Grants Oversight Committee will use to score and rank projects. Priority for project funding will be based on the final composite rankings, with the highest scoring project being the highest priority project for funding.

4. Was this bid posted to the nationwide free bid notification website at www.mygovwatch.com/free?

   No.

5. Other than your own website, where was this bid posted?

   The bid was posted exclusively on the BizNet website.

6. The Town of "X" has three lakes in which it would like to apply for the above referenced grant. Can a municipality submit more than one proposal at a time for this grant? If not, can more than one lake be included in a single application?

   A maximum of two proposals may be submitted per applicant. Depending on the scope of work, multiple lakes may be included in the same project.

7. Do you require the easement language on all conservation and access easements around the lake or is it acceptable to simply identify such easements on a survey map?

   We recommend providing as much supporting information about a given easement as is practical along with your application. Additional information may be requested by the committee.

8. In the description of "Eligible, but lower priority projects" for funding, there is mention of East Twin specifically and its zebra mussels issue. I was curious, since no other lake was highlighted by name in this section, if this is a viable option for us to pursue? In the reasoning explanation in parentheses, however, the need for the study was somewhat minimalized.

   A project of this type may be eligible but it may rank lower than other higher priority projects. The specific lake name was only included to provide context to the example.

9. Second, also in that section, was mention of paying for mechanical harvesting to clear milfoil from crewing lanes in a limited access lake. This seems like it was written specifically for West Twin Lake. It is limited access, the Salisbury School rows there and it has a milfoil problem that is partially mitigated with a mechanical harvester that we lease from the Town of Salisbury each year already. Is this a possible project which could be funded under these grants?

   Again, a project of this type may be eligible but it may rank lower than other higher priority projects. The specific lake name was only included to provide context to the example.

10. We have other challenges which might potentially qualify and one is to study rare plants and the possibility of using herbicides to treat milfoil and lilies in the neck of our lake system (an area we call the Channel) that drains into the "X" Brook. We plan to have AER undertake this study for us in the Spring of 2021.

    If you possibly answer yes to more than one of these, should we decide on our top priority and go "all in" on that one or do you encourage RFPs for more than one issue?

    A maximum of two proposals may be submitted per applicant. As a reminder, only species listed in Attachment E are eligible for control projects. Native species including lilies are ineligible.

11. If the development of management plans or monitoring geared toward AIS management would qualify as an eligible project. Would a diagnostic feasibility study qualify as a management plan? In our experience, taking management action without a solid plan based on good monitoring data is not the most efficient way to spend funds and decreases the success of the project.

    Diagnostic feasibility studies may be designed to include management plans as a product.

12. Is eradication of water chestnuts by herbicide application an eligible cost under the grant program?

    Yes.

13. We have received a permit from CT DEEP last year for excavation and removal of phragmites from two ponds located at "X" Park in Town of "X". We have received some funds from CT DEEP from coastal violation. These funds will allow us to pay for pond restoration, but the excavation and disposal part has not been covered. We have some funds available, but not for the entire project. Both ponds are located inland and they are mostly fed by groundwater and precipitation, but during the high tides they receive 0.5 to 1 inch of salt water from Long Island Sound via an existing pipe system. Please let me know if these two ponds will qualify for this grant. Control/management projects addressing phragmites are not eligible for funding.

    Phragmites are considered a "wetland plant", and not a formal "aquatic plant" for these management projects. Eligible aquatic species are listed in Attachment E.

    Phragmites australis may be eligible for research or education projects as it is listed in Attachment F.

14. Our Limnologist found invasive plant life a couple of years ago. How would I apply for such survey when the application requires a budget? How would you suggest I address this issue on getting budgetary numbers? I can ask the nonprofit side for matching funds possibly?

    We suggest that many lake management/aquatic plant consultants can provide well defined estimates for various activities. We also anticipate that grants will again be available next year so you could start planning now for various activities and submit a proposal next year.

15. The eligibility requirements indicate that if the water body is in more than one municipality then municipalities can apply jointly. Can the N-F-P organization apply/participate jointly with the municipalities under the same water body criteria?

    Yes.

16. If a body of water lies in two towns, can the towns and possibly a non-profit jointly apply for a grant even if they do not have a water authority for the lake?

    Yes.

17. Can a town make separate applications for different bodies of water within the town?

    Yes.

18. I was hoping to gain clarification regarding matching funds for the grant. Specifically, I was wondering if in-kind services can be used to fully match the grant funds or should match funds be at a minimum, some mix of funding and in-kind services?

    Either works, however in-kind match should be identified in the application.

19. Should I just put NA under #11 since this project involves identifying and monitoring Cyanobacteria?

    List cyanobacteria as the species. Future iterations of the application form may be revised for clarity.

20. I expect to be leading this project as I have a background in Natural Resource Conservation (B.S.) and Biology (M.S.) and have done aquatic research. I will have the support of professionals such as those at the "X" Center for Freshwater Biology. Would I list an estimate of my time training and sampling, as well as seeking advice from the "X" folks and our local Public Health Director as "in-kind services" under #17?

    Time expended on efforts toward achieving project goals could be considered "in-kind" services.

21. "X" is a specially chartered and incorporated municipal tax district in Town of "X". It was created by an act of the CT General Assembly in 1975. As such, "X" is a municipality with many of the powers of towns and cities in Connecticut. Does "X" meet DEEP's definition of a municipality that can apply for funds under the AIS on its own without the participation of the Town of "X"?

    For the purposes of this grants program, we have adopted the definition of municipality from CT Gen Stat § 7-148 "*(a) Definitions. Whenever used in this section, "municipality" means any town, city or borough, consolidated town and city or consolidated town and borough.*"

22. I just wanted to confirm the 6 page form you can enter data is the core of the submission. I recognize we have a lot of supporting documents to fully submit. It looks like the grant has a lot of instruction pages and examples.

    The Grants for the Control of Aquatic Invasive Species Application Form (Attachment B of the RFP) is the core of the submission.