

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



EPA Makes Grants Available to States to Implement Water Quality Monitoring and Public Notification Programs at the Nation's Beaches

Summary

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is making \$9.935 million in grants available in 2003 to eligible states to protect public health at the Nation's beaches. These grants are available to coastal and Great Lakes states to implement programs to monitor water quality at the beach and to notify the public when water quality problems exist.



Background

Each year state, tribal, and local health and environmental protection agencies monitor the quality of water at the Nation's beaches. When bacteria levels in the water are too high, these agencies notify the public of beach warnings or closings. State and local monitoring and notification programs differ across the country and provide different levels of protection for swimmers.

To improve water quality testing at the beach and to help beach managers better inform the public when there are water quality problems, Congress passed the Beaches Environmental Assessment and Coastal Health Act (BEACH Act) in October 2000. This Act authorizes EPA to award grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories to develop and implement beach water quality monitoring programs at coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters near beaches. These grants also support the development and implementation of programs to inform the public about the risk of exposure to disease-causing microorganisms in the waters at the Nation's beaches.

Funding

In 2003, EPA expects to award about \$9.935 million in grants to eligible states and territories for beach program implementation. Once EPA receives all applications for funding, EPA will award grants to eligible states and territories. For this third year of the BEACH Grants, EPA expects to award grants based on an allocation formula to all eligible states and territories who apply. EPA consulted with various states and the Coastal States Organization in 2002 to develop this formula, which considers three factors: 1) length of beach season, 2) miles of beach and 3) number of people that use the beach. EPA used the same formula as was used in 2002 but

updated it to use the 2000 Census data instead of the 1990 Census data to estimate coastal population because it is the more current information.

Based on this allocation formula, the size of the Implementation Grant Award ranges from \$149,025 to \$544,552 if all 35 eligible states and territories apply. EPA expects all 35 eligible governments to apply. If fewer apply or qualify for the grants, then EPA will redistribute available funds to states and as follows:

- 1) States that meet program performance criteria published by EPA in June 2002 (EPA-823-B-02-004) will receive the full amount of funds for which they qualify under the allocation formula.
- 2) EPA may award grants for continued program development to states that have not met the performance criteria. These grants will help them meet the performance criteria for implementation grants. Therefore, we expect that funding levels for continued program development grants will be lower than the amount described in 1) above.
- 3) EPA may award program implementation grants to local governments in states that have not met the requirements for program implementation.
- 4) EPA may use the grant allocation formula to make additional funds available for implementation grants to states that have met the performance criteria.

If all 35 eligible states and territories apply and meet the performance criteria, the distribution of the \$ 9.935 million in funds for year 2003 will be:

For the state or territory of:	The year 2003 allocation is:	For the state or territory of:	The year 2003 allocation is:
Alabama	\$261,514	Mississippi	\$256,481
Alaska	\$149,025	New Hampshire	\$203,594
American Samoa	\$300,364	New Jersey	\$282,586
California	\$532,164	New York	\$359,215
Connecticut	\$223,921	North Carolina	\$305,007
Delaware	\$210,299	Northern Mariana Is.	\$301,648
Florida	\$544,552	Ohio	\$224,227
Georgia	\$287,442	Oregon	\$229,757
Guam	\$300,860	Pennsylvania	\$223,012
Hawaii	\$322,897	Puerto Rico	\$328,757
Illinois	\$245,043	Rhode Island	\$212,340
Indiana	\$204,963	South Carolina	\$298,726
Louisiana	\$380,052	Texas	\$387,508
Maine	\$257,766	U.S. VI	\$301,483
Maryland	\$273,429	Virginia	\$281,693
Massachusetts	\$257,453	Washington	\$274,585
Michigan	\$283,360	Wisconsin	\$225,970
Minnesota	\$203,309		

How Long Will the Funding and Project Periods Last?

The expected funding and project period for Implementation Grants awarded in 2003 is one year. In future years, EPA may award more grants to eligible states, tribes, territories and local governments to support the development and implementation of monitoring and notification programs.

Who Is Eligible to Apply?

States and territories eligible for the BEACH grants are states that have coastal and Great Lakes recreational waters adjacent to beaches or similar points of access used by the public. Under the BEACH Act, EPA can also award grants to eligible tribes. To receive BEACH Act grants, tribes must have coastal recreation waters. (These are waters designated under Clean Water Act Section 303(c) for use for swimming, bathing, surfing or similar water contact activities). A tribe must also meet the “treatment in the same manner as a state” criteria under CWA section 518(e) to receive BEACH Act grant funds. EPA believes there are currently no tribes that have met these requirements for BEACH Act grant funding.

In July 2002, EPA published the *National Beach Guidance and Required Performance Criteria for Grants* (document number EPA-823-B-02-004) which explains the requirements for states, tribes, and local governments to qualify for these grants. You can find this document on EPA’s website at <http://www.epa.gov/waterscience/beaches>. You can also get the guidance by writing or calling the Office of Water Resources Center, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, Mail Code 4100T, 1200 Pennsylvania Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20460. (202-566-1731) or by sending an e-mail to: center.water-resource@epa.gov.

The BEACH Act authorizes EPA to give a grant to a local government for implementation of a monitoring and notification program only if EPA determines that the state is not meeting the requirements of the statute one year after EPA publishes performance criteria for beach programs. EPA published performance criteria in July 19, 2002. Therefore, July 19, 2003, is the earliest date a local government would be eligible for beach grants, given that its state is not meeting the requirements of the statute. A local government may apply for funding to help them develop and implement a beach monitoring and notification program that is consistent with EPA performance criteria.

How Does a State or Territory Apply?

Eligible states and territories may get an application from their regional EPA beach contact. These contacts are listed in the *Federal Register* Notice of Availability for the BEACH grants, which is available on EPA’s Beach Watch web site at <http://www.epa.gov/ost/beaches>.

For More Information

For more information on the BEACH grants, please contact your EPA Regional beach program representative or Charles Kovatch at 202-566-0399 (kovatch.charles@epa.gov).