

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 \$9.941 million in grants available in 2004 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 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 and notification 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 2004, EPA expects to award about \$9.941 million in grants to eligible states, tribes, and territories for the beach program. For this fourth 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) beach season length, 2) beach miles, and 3) beach use. EPA used the same formula as was used in 2003, which includes using shoreline miles as a surrogate for beach miles, while EPA evaluates beach length data.

Based on this allocation formula, the size of the Implementation Grant Award ranges from \$150,000 to \$540,220 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 according to the following principles:

- 1) States that meet the 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) States that have not met the requirements for implementation grants may receive grants for continued program development. Any program development grants that the Agency awards will be for the limited purpose of completing work needed to qualify 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 funds for year 2004 will be:

For the state or territory of:	The year 2004 allocation is:	For the state or territory of:	The year 2004 allocation is:
Alabama	\$262,810	Mississippi	\$257,900
Alaska	\$150,000	New Hampshire	\$204,770
American Samoa	\$302,260	New Jersey	\$281,680
California	\$527,850	New York	\$356,240
Connecticut	\$224,560	North Carolina	\$305,280
Delaware	\$211,300	Northern Mariana	\$303,510
Florida	\$540,220	Ohio	\$224,840
Georgia	\$288,130	Oregon	\$230,290
Guam	\$302,740	Pennsylvania	\$223,650
Hawaii	\$324,230	Puerto Rico	\$329,900
Illinois	\$245,060	Rhode Island	\$213,290
Indiana	\$206,090	South Carolina	\$299,140
Louisiana	\$328,520	Texas	\$387,190
Maine	\$257,650	U.S. Virgin Islands	\$303,350
Maryland	\$272,860	Virginia	\$280,910
Massachusetts	\$257,220	Washington	\$273,980
Michigan	\$282,520	Wisconsin	\$226,570
Minnesota	\$204,490		

EPA has set aside \$50,000 for eligible Tribes who may apply to develop a beach program. EPA expects to apportion these funds evenly among all eligible Tribes that apply.

How Long Will the Funding and Project Periods Last?

The expected funding and project period for Implementation Grants awarded in 2004 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.

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 implementation 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 implementing a program that meets the requirements of the statute one year after EPA publishes performance criteria for beach programs. EPA published performance criteria on July 19, 2002. Therefore, July 19, 2003, was the earliest date a local government would have been eligible for a section 406 grant if EPA determined that its state was not meeting the requirements of the statute. EPA has not determined that any State is implementing the program inconsistent with the requirements in section 406(b). Local governments may contact their EPA Regional office for further information about BEACH Act grants.

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 Beth Leamond at 202-566-0444 (leamond.beth@epa.gov).