

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



# State Innovation Grant Program: New Hampshire

## Superior Environmental Results Through Innovative Land Development Technical Assistance and Permitting (2008 Competition)

### The State Innovation Grant Program

In 2002 EPA introduced the State Innovation Grant Program to support efforts led by state environmental agencies to test innovative approaches for achieving better environmental results and improved efficiency in permitting programs. Between 2002 and 2007, the State Innovation Grant program competition awarded over six million dollars to support 35 state projects that test permitting innovation for a variety of regulated entities including several small business sectors. A summary of the awards by year appears in the table below.

State Innovation Grant Program Statistics, 2002-2007			
Competition Year	Proposals Submitted	Proposals Selected	Total Program Funding (\$)
2002/2003	29	6	\$618,000
2004	33	9	\$1.425 Million
2005	26	7	\$1.479 Million
2006	25	6	\$1.243 Million
2007	17	7	\$1.611 Million
2008	12	3	\$0.825 Million
<b>Cumulative Total</b>	142	38	\$7.201 Million

"Innovation in Permitting" has been the theme of the State Innovation Grant competition since its inception. In the last three competition cycles states received awards for projects in the following three categories:

- **The Environmental Results Program (ERP)** is an innovative approach to improving environmental performance based on a system of the interlocking tools of compliance assistance, self-certification (sometimes, where permissible, in lieu of permitting), and statistically-based measurement to gauge the performance of an entire business sector. The program utilizes a multimedia approach to encourage small sources to achieve environmental compliance and pollution prevention. (See: <http://www.epa.gov/permits/erp/>)
- **Environmental Management System (EMS)** is a system involving a continual cycle of planning, implementing, reviewing and improving the processes and actions that an organization undertakes to meet its business and environmental goals. EMSs provide organizations of all types with a structured system and approach for managing environmental and regulatory responsibilities to improve overall environmental performance and stewardship. (See: [www.epa.gov/ems/info/index.htm](http://www.epa.gov/ems/info/index.htm))
- **Performance Track** is a partnership that recognizes top environmental performance among participating US facilities of all types, sizes, and complexity, both public and private. (See: <http://www.epa.gov/performance-track/>)

NCEI has provided awards also for projects testing watershed-based permitting, and for permit process streamlining in past competitions. For more information on the history of the programs, including information on solicitations, state proposals, and project awards, please see the EPA State Innovation Grants website at <http://www.epa.gov/innovation/stategrants>

### Project Background:

Population growth and land development pose a significant threat to the long-term health of New Hampshire's natural resources including water and air quality, and exacerbate regional and global environmental issues. In response to this issue, the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services (NHDES) is testing a new approach to permitting involving early technical assistance and integrated/coordinated permitting for land development projects to encourage increased adoption of better land use and development practices. The goal is to reduce the environmental impact of continuing growth and development within New Hampshire by reducing air and water pollution generated by development and limiting impacts on natural resource functions, such as flood storage, wildlife habitat, and water supply, through better site location, site and building design, and construction practices.

### Project Description

NHDES received a State Innovation Grant to support this pilot project in the 2008 competition. With the grant, NHDES will develop clear standards and information on best practices and pilot new procedures, including expanded up-front review of proposed development projects, technical assistance for applicants, and integrated/coordinated permitting for those who agree to implement practices, to overcome barriers that limit the adoption of innovative/best practices (e.g., Smart Growth, Low Impact Development (LID) site design and storm water management, Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Green Building Rating System (LEED), Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Neighborhood Development Rating System (LEED-ND), Land and Natural Development (LAND) Code).

Collaboration will play a key role in developing and testing these innovative approaches. In addition to improved coordination between NHDES permit programs, NHDES hopes that better coordination of project review with local municipalities, sister state agencies, and Federal regulatory entities will streamline the permitting process for developers.



NHDES will involve the public and regulated entities in developing the new permit review processes to determine what incentives can be provided to encourage participation in the program. NHDES hopes that the information gained through increased technical assistance together with the time and resources saved by an improved permitting process will provide a sufficient incentive to land developers to participate and help shift the paradigm from meeting regulatory minimums to striving to achieve the best possible environmental results.

NHDES will provide full documentation of the project's results to ensure the dissemination of information to other states and municipalities in an effort to promote the use of successful processes and tools. The upfront review and technical assistance processes as well as the approach for coordinated permitting to be developed by NHDES will be informative for other regulatory agencies.

## Connection to EPA's Goals

This project seeks to improve overall environmental performance by further reducing impacts on air quality and climate change, water quality and quantity, and wildlife and habitat associated with land development activities and thus supports many of EPA's Strategic Plan Goals and Objectives: Goal 1 (protecting air quality and reducing effects of climate change and energy efficiency); Goal 2 (providing for safe and clean water); Goal 4 (providing for healthy communities and ecosystems; and Goal 5 (increasing compliance and promoting environmental stewardship, particularly Objective 5.2.4).

## Project Contacts:

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