

US EPA ARCHIVE DOCUMENT



# State Innovation Grant Program

## Wisconsin:

### Improved Environmental Results and Increased Regulatory Flexibility in Air Permitting for the Printing Sector Using Environmental Management Systems and an Environmental Results Program

The EPA State Innovation Grant Program was established in 2002 to help strengthen EPA's innovation partnerships with States and Tribes and is a direct result of the Agency's innovation strategy, *Innovating for Better Environmental Results: A Strategy to Guide the Next Generation of Innovation at EPA* (<http://www.epa.gov/innovation/strategy>). To support the *Innovation Strategy*, the 2002 grant program focused its efforts on projects that related to one of the four priority issues: reducing greenhouse gases, reducing smog, improving water quality, and reducing the cost of drinking water or waste water infrastructure. In addition, EPA sought projects that test incentives that motivate "beyond-compliance" environmental performance, or move whole sectors toward improved environmental performance. This series of fact sheets features the State projects selected for funding under the Grant Program.

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#### Background

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources (WDNR) Air Program undertook an extensive evaluation of its air permitting program. The objective was to improve WDNR's efficiency in environmental regulation and program implementation while meeting the environmental protection needs of our citizens. The principal goals are to streamline the process and find innovative air permitting alternatives. This initiative came about due to concerns over the amount of effort and time involved in air permitting and its value in achieving measurable environmental improvement. Also, like many state and local environmental agencies, WDNR's resources are declining and this trend is likely to continue for the foreseeable future. There is also a strong industry interest WDNR's adopting a more comprehensive approach to environmental regulation. All these circumstances provide a strong incentive for the development of innovative and efficient tools.



## Project Description

WDNR will develop an innovative project that would apply both Environmental Management Systems (EMS) and an Environmental Results Program (ERP) across the entire printing industry sector with a goal of reducing the air permit burden while providing regulatory flexibility and improving the environmental stewardship of participants. Wisconsin also hopes to adapt the methodology learned through the implementation of this program to other sectors throughout the state. The printing industry in Wisconsin is diverse in size and products with small and large-scale outfits, and is vital to the state's economy. It is also a significant source of volatile organic compound and hazardous air pollutant emissions.

WDNR will rely on the work previously performed by Florida, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island as a foundation for ERP development, and Colorado's experience in developing an EMS-Permit approach. WDNR will also incorporate findings from their permit improvement initiative and the experience of the Small Business Assistance Program in the Wisconsin Department of Commerce which is already exploring an ERP.

## Benefits of the Project

EMS and ERP efforts tailored to small printers will be much easier to follow than a traditional permit. The administrative burden, often considered arduous and confusing by small businesses, will be eased. Compliance inspection will be reduced and the amount of time required for annual certification should not be greater than what is currently required under traditional permitting.

## Project Plan

The project will begin in late 2004 and continue for 3 years.