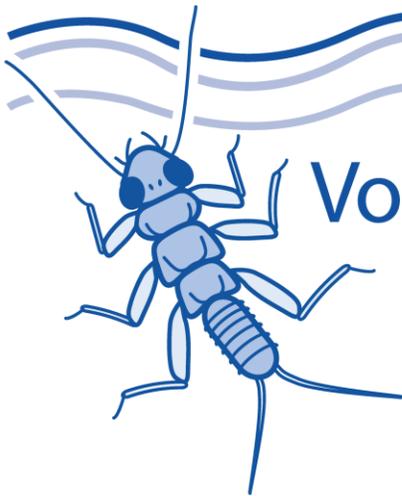


Michigan Clean Water Corps

Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program Maintenance Grants Request for Proposals

Application Deadline: March 8, 2024, at 5:00 p.m.
Contract period: April 2024-December 31 2024

Administered by
Michigan State University and the
Huron River Watershed Council for the
Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy



Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program

Michigan Streams – Ours to Protect
www.micorps.net

Funding Source and Authority

This Request for Proposals (RFP) is for the MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP) Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey grants offered under the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy's (EGLE) Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) Program. A total of \$75,000 will be available for grants in fiscal year 2024/2025, across the spectrum of available VSMP funding opportunities. Maintenance Grants will comprise about \$20,000 of the \$75,000, with the other money spread across Implementation grants and Startup grants ([see those RFPs separately for more detail](#)).

Grants ranging from \$1,000-3,000 each will be given under this specific RFP. Information contained in this RFP is based on EGLE and Michigan State University (MSU) guidance and administrative rules. Grants will be announced in late March with a grant period start upon contract execution and an end date of December 31, 2024.

NEW TO 2024: To facilitate groups who want this grant to help support their spring sampling, contracts will have the option of starting April 1.

MiCorps Contact for VSMP:

Dr. Paul Steen
Huron River Watershed Council
Phone: 734-519-0449
E-mail: psteen@hrwc.org

Description of MiCorps VSMP Maintenance Grants

- Maintenance grants are supporting funds for organizations who already run MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring Programs.
- Maintenance grants can provide money to allow staff to attend the MiCorps stream training and annual conferences, buy monitoring equipment, and pay for staff to hold monitoring events, identify macroinvertebrates, and upload monitoring data to the MiCorps database.
- Grant funds are dispersed on a cost-reimbursement basis after the submission of the final report. This report will consist of:
 - Filling out and submitting a fact sheet template (1 page, 2 sided) that gives highlights of their program and results, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MiCorps-fact-sheet-template.docx>
 - Filling out and submitting a final financial report.
 - Grantees will also be required to upload their sampling data that was collected during the grant time period.
- There is a 25% local Match requirement for the Maintenance grants.
- The final report/ close-out materials are due by January 31, 2024.
- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a project contract with MSU, which is administering the MiCorps Program on behalf of EGLE. A project contract consists of standard "boilerplate" language, the applicant's project description and budget information. Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award. The Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has been contracted by the Michigan State to lead the project management of these

grants. Dr. Paul Steen, HRWC, will serve as the Project Officer for the grants awarded under this program, with oversight and fiduciary responsibility provided by MSU.

- If you have questions about your project, you are welcome to contact Dr. Steen (contact information above) prior to submitting your application.

Eligibility

To be eligible, entities must meet all of the following:

- Any local unit of government or non-profit group that can supply proof of a successful financial audit and meet the other stated eligibility requirements noted below are eligible to receive grant funding. Nonprofit entities are those exempt from taxation under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. Eligible entities generally include county, city, township, and village agencies; watershed and environmental action councils; universities; regional planning agencies; and incorporated not-for-profit organizations. Federally recognized tribes are also eligible for these grants.
- Must not have had a grant revoked or terminated or demonstrated an inability to manage a grant or meet the obligations in a project contract within the 24-month period immediately preceding the application.
- The applicant must have a MiCorps approved macroinvertebrate monitoring QAPP dated no later than two years prior to the application deadline (dated on or after March 8, 2022). To get QAPP approval, contact Dr. Steen. All QAPPs pending approval must be received by March 1, 2024, to allow time for review.
- If the applicant received a Maintenance Grant in 2023, they must have successfully closed out this grant on-time to be eligible in 2024.
- Supply proof of a successful financial audit of the applicant organization conducted in accordance with generally accepted auditing standards for a period ending within the two years immediately preceding the RFP due date, as demonstrated by an Independent Auditor's Report signed by a Certified Public Accountant from a Comprehensive Annual Report. Note: The audit date (on or after March 8, 2022) is based on the audit period and not the date of the audit or the audit letter.
- Entities that do not have an audit can partner with an eligible local unit of government or a nonprofit organization with a current audit that will serve as the primary applicant and fiduciary agent for the grant. [Audit costs may also be eligible for an EGLE Watershed Council grant; more information can be found at [Nonpoint Source Program \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/nonpoint)]

Submittal Deadline and Instructions

- Complete applications – including all required supporting documentation – must be received by **5 p.m. on March 8, 2024**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.
- All grant applicants must complete the Web Application Form and upload attachments to the MiCorps VSMP/VSCP application system at: <https://micorps.net/stream-monitoring/stream-grants/>
- Once the Web Application Form and uploaded file(s) have been submitted, a confirmation e-mail will be sent to the e-mail address that was listed for the project's Contact Person in the completed Form. This will be your only notification that the Web Application Form and uploaded file have been submitted successfully.

- If you are unable to access and submit the Web Application Form, you must notify Dr. Paul Steen listed above to determine an acceptable alternative method for submitting your application materials prior to the application deadline.

Grant Application Criteria

The grants will be reviewed and awarded based on the following criteria:

- Past performance of the organization in regards to regular monitoring, submission of data to MiCorps, participation in conferences and trainings, engagement of volunteers, responsiveness with MiCorps administrative communications, and timely submission and quality of reports.
- Proposed costs reasonable for project scope, including 25% minimum matching funds, and appropriate allocation of the grant funds.
- The number of maintenance grants already received by this organization.

List of Information Required for the Application

The following items are required for all grant applications (further detail given on each one below).

1. Web Application Form.
2. Project Narrative. PDF(s) and/or Document(s) containing:
 - A. Project Description (maximum two pages).
 - B. One-page letter from a Certified Public Accountant demonstrating proof of a successful financial audit within the previous two years (see Page 2).
3. Excel Budget Workbook using the given template: <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/VSMP-FinancialStatusReportForm.xlsx>

All other information provided by the applicant – including binders, extraneous reports, and general letters of support – will not be considered, reviewed, or returned.

Web Application Form

The form is on the grant application Web page at: <https://micorps.net/stream-monitoring/stream-grants/>

- *Project Name*: The name of the proposed project being submitted for funding.
- *Grant Type*: From the drop-down menu, select Maintenance VSMP.
- *Project Location*: Primary county or counties in which the project will be conducted.
- *Waterbody*: Name of the primary stream(s) affected by the project.
- *Watershed Impacted by Project*: The watershed in which the project will be conducted or the watershed that may be affected by the project.
- *Grant Total Requested*: The amount of money you are requesting in this proposal.
- *Local Match Proposed*: The amount of money/in-kind services you are offering as local match.
- *Organization Name*: Organization, local unit of government, or federally recognized tribe applying for funding.
- *Organization Address and Telephone numbers*.
- *Contact Person*: The person in the organization who can be contacted by MiCorps staff for any needed information.

- *Contact Person's Contact Email* A confirmation e-mail will be sent to this address once the Web Application Form and uploaded file have been submitted successfully.
- *Person with Grant Acceptance Authority and Their Title.* This is the person who will accept responsibility for the terms and conditions of the contract. This may be the contact person, or it may be someone else in the organization, or a board member.
- *File uploads:* Upload the Project Narrative and the Excel Budget Workbook.

Project Narrative

PDF(s) and/or Document(s) containing:

A. Project Description (Two pages max)

1. Provide a brief history of your MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program and an update on its current status. Include:
 - 1) What MiCorps grants have you received in the past (dates and dollar amounts)
 - 2) What were the dates of your monitoring event(s) during the previous year, and how many volunteers participated?
 - 3) How many sites do you currently monitor?
 - 4) When are your next planned monitoring events in 2024 and what changes are you implementing, if any?
 - 5) If you have had change in staff that will be running the program since your last MiCorps grant, introduce your new staff, describe their relevant experience, and what will be done to fix any deficiencies in their ability to lead a macroinvertebrate volunteer sampling program.
2. Briefly describe the expenditures that you are requesting funding for. Refer to your Excel Budget Spreadsheet and make sure all expenses in the spreadsheet are described and justified if they may seem out of place.

B. Audit letter (see Eligibility section on p.2).

Excel Budget Spreadsheet

Fill out the excel grant budget spreadsheet, using the directions below. The spreadsheet is available at <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/VSMF-FinancialStatusReportForm.xlsx>

Please note the following:

- Local match is a financial commitment made by the grant recipient and partner agencies to help implement the project.
- A 25% match is required of all applications.
- Labor, in-kind services, and materials can count as match.
- Volunteer labor can be included as match. As per EGLE Grant Contract Administration policy 10-001, there are three different rates for volunteer labor:
 - Unskilled laborers: The acceptable rate for these workers is the prevailing minimum wage for the State of Michigan (2024: \$10.33/hour).
 - Professionals not working in a professional capacity: The acceptable rate for these professionals is based on the national value (Independent Section) for volunteer time (2024: \$31.80/hour).
 - Professionals, including skilled labor, working in their normal professional capacity: The acceptable rate for these professionals would be equivalent to their normal hourly rate of pay.

- Any original source (i.e., federal, state, local, or private) of match funds is acceptable. However, grants that were funded by other programs under the Renew Michigan funds or the federal Clean Water Act are ineligible to be claimed as match for this program.
- Whatever you commit to as match will become part of your contractual obligation if your project is selected for funding. Be sure the match commitment is realistic. Match activities will be held to the same standards as grant-funded activities.
- Match cannot be earned until the starting date of the contract.

1. Staffing Costs.

- List each staff person (project manager, analyst, clerical, etc.), the estimated number of hours each person will work on the project, and their hourly rate. Place the costs for each staff person (number of hours times hourly rate) in columns B.
- Each staff person listed under staffing cost should also be included in the work plan.
- Staffing costs for staff in agencies other than the grant recipient should be budgeted under Contractual.
- Appropriate staffing costs are those that directly relate to the macroinvertebrate/habitat monitoring program.

2. Fringe Benefits.

This can include insurance, FICA, federal, state, and local taxes, vacation and sick time, and workers compensation.

- Most organizations have set fringe benefit rates. Use your agency's fringe benefit rate, up to 40% maximum.
- List each staff person and if their fringe rate is different than the generic organization's fringe rate, include that by the staff person's name. Multiply the rate by their Staffing budget to get the Fringe Benefit cost.
- MiCorps reserves the right to request applicants to supply information indicating how their fringe benefits were calculated.

3. Indirect Costs.

Indirect costs have been referred to as the cost of doing business. Typical indirect costs are associated with, but not limited to, office space, telephones, office equipment rental and usage, and general office supplies.

- Most agencies have a set indirect rate. Use your agency's indirect rate, up to 20% of salary and fringe benefits.
- Multiply the sum of all Staffing and Fringe Benefit costs by the Indirect rate to get the total Indirect costs.
- MiCorps reserves the right to request applicants to supply information indicating how their indirect costs were calculated.

4. Contractual Services.

Contractual costs are services provided by staff or agencies other than the grant recipient. Any services not provided by the grant recipient should be listed here. If any part of the work in the grant is to be subcontracted, your grant application must include a description in the workplan.

5. Project Equipment, Supplies, and Materials.

Appropriate costs are for equipment, supplies and materials that are to be used in the macroinvertebrate/habitat monitoring program.

- Equipment is defined as an article of nonexpendable, tangible personal property having a useful life of more than one year (e.g., microscope, nets, waders). Supplies and materials are consumable goods (e.g., ethanol, insect jars, printing costs, postage).
- The purchase of any single piece of equipment greater than \$1,000 (e.g., an expensive microscope, or computer) is not allowed using grant funds. This equipment can be noted as match funds if an applicable expense.
- You can get estimates of equipment and supplies commonly needed in the MiCorps program from the Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Equipment list, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/VSMP-monitoring-equip.docx>
- Costs related to food and drinks for volunteers are not funded under this grant but can be included as match.

6. Travel Costs.

Travel costs related to attending the annual stream training, the annual MiCorps Conference, and driving to related meetings and to monitoring sites are acceptable costs.

- Mileage, lodging, and meals should all be listed separately.
- Mileage costs should be shown as number of miles times mileage rate. The location of the stream monitoring training and MiCorps Conference changes but historically has been somewhere in the central Lower Peninsula. If you live in the Lower Peninsula, an estimate of 150 miles each way is reasonable for these trips. If you live in the Upper Peninsula, an estimate of 250 miles each way is reasonable; more if you are in the far Western Upper Peninsula.
- For current mileage rate, individuals should refer to the Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate Web page at: <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>.
- Registration and overnight stay for the MiCorps Conference can be estimated at \$200 per person. The annual stream training will not have a required overnight stay but may be needed depending on your travel time.
- Staff can be reimbursed for food while traveling, with rates set by EGLE. Maximum per meal: Breakfast (\$9.75), Lunch (\$9.75), Dinner (\$22.00).

7. Sources of Match.

At the bottom of the grant budget, there is an area to record local match. Indicate the description of the item, the source(s) of local match, and the corresponding dollar value provided by the applicant or other partner organizations.

Summary of Links

- Grant Submission page, <https://micorps.net/stream-monitoring/stream-grants/>
- Excel Budget Spreadsheet, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/VSMP-FinancialStatusReportForm.xlsx>
- Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Equipment List, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/VSMP-monitoring-equip.docx>
- Stream Monitoring Procedures, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/VSMP-MonitoringProcedures.docx>
- Fact Sheet Template, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MiCorps-fact-sheet-template.docx>

- Quarterly Report Template, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/MiCorps-quarterly-report-template.docx>
- MiCorps QAPP Guidance, https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Qapp_guidance_2020.pdf
- Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate, <http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715>.
- MiCorps Stream Monitoring Implementation Grant RFP, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/RFP-Implementation-VSMP-2024.pdf>
- MiCorps Stream Monitoring Startup Grant RFP, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/RFP-Startup-VSMP-2024.pdf>
- MiCorps Stream Monitoring Maintenance RFP, <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/RFP-Maintenance-VSMP-2024.pdf>
- MiCorps Stream Cleanup Grants RFP <https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/RFP-VSCP-2024.pdf>
- EGLE Watershed Council Grants <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/nonpoint-source>
- EGLE Environmental Education Resources <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/public/egle-classroom>