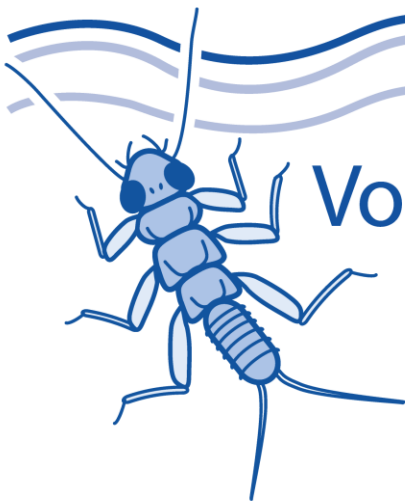


Michigan Clean Water Corps

Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program Maintenance Grants Request for Proposals

Application Deadline: March 6, 2026, at 5:00 p.m.
Contract period: April 1, 2026-December 31, 2026

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



Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program

Michigan Streams – Ours to Protect
www.micorps.net

Funding Source and Authority

The information contained in this Request for Proposals (RFP) is based on Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Michigan State University (MSU) guidance and administrative rules.

This RFP is one of three Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP) Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey grants offered by EGLE's Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) Program. A total of \$75,000 will be available for grants in fiscal year 2026/2027, 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 Startup grants and Implementation grants that have separate RFPs. The maximum award for a single Maintenance grant is \$3,000.

Grants will be announced as soon as possible with the intended contract date of April 1, 2026 so that organizations can rely on the funding to help with spring monitoring. Contracts will end on December 31 and no extensions will be given.

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 buy monitoring equipment, pay staff to implement macroinvertebrate monitoring events and identify macroinvertebrates, process monitoring data, 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 the program and results.
<https://www.micorps.net/streams/grants/docs>
 - Filling out and submitting a final financial report.
 - Grantees will also be required to submit their sampling data that was collected during the grant time period to the MiCorps online database.
- There is a 25% local Match requirement for the Maintenance grants.
- The final report/ close-out materials are due by January 31, 2027.
- 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, applicant must be one of the following:

- Federally recognized Tribe
- Local government
 - e.g. Michigan county, city, township, and village agencies
- Non-profit organization
 - e.g. 501 (c) (3); watershed and environmental action councils; universities; colleges; regional planning agencies; and incorporated not-for-profit organizations.

In addition, applicants must:

- The applicant **must have** an approved macroinvertebrate monitoring QAPP within the last two years (approval dated on or after March 6, 2024). To get QAPP approval or check on the status of your previous QAPP, contact Dr. Steen.
- **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.
- **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 February 27, 2024) is based on the audit period and not the date of the audit or the audit letter.
 - To make sure you are submitting the proper documentation, be aware that these letters typically state something akin to the following accounting language: "In our opinion, the financial statements referred to above present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of *Org Name* as of *Date*, and the changes in its net assets and its cash flows for the year then ended in conformity with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America."
 - Entities that do not meet this requirement must 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))

Ineligible Entities and Activities

- Individuals, for-profit organizations, and federal and state agencies are not eligible to receive funding.

- River cleanups, lake monitoring, and restoration efforts activities will not be funded. There is a separate MiCorps grant opportunity for river cleanups (<https://www.micorps.net/streams/cleanups>) and lake monitoring is done through MiCorps Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (<https://www.micorps.net/lakes>).
- Role of school programs: The MiCorps Program uses adults as the primary volunteers and does not fund projects based completely on school programs. However, you are welcome to work with schools and work with school-aged children, provided adult volunteers remain the project's focus. If you plan to work with a school, please elaborate on how this relationship will be structured. Additional resources for environmental education can be found at [EGLE Classroom \(michigan.gov\)](https://www.michigan.gov/egle/classroom).
- Costs associated with chemical and thermal analysis are not eligible activities under the MiCorps VSMP and may not be included as local match.

Submittal Deadline and Instructions

- All grant applicants will email their application materials as email attachments to Dr. Paul Steen, psteen@hrwc.org, by **5 p.m. Eastern Time on March 6, 2026**.
- Attach one PDF including the narrative and one excel file including the budget. Instructions are below.

Narrative Submission

Submit one compiled PDF containing:

A. *Quick facts (Front page)*

- 1) Project Name: The name of the proposed project being submitted for funding.
- 2) Project Type: Write "Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program Maintenance Grant" (to distinguish this from other offered MiCorps grants).
- 3) Organization Name: Organization, local unit of government, or Federally recognized Tribe applying for funding.
- 4) Contact Person: The person in the organization who can be contacted by MiCorps staff for any needed information.
- 5) Contact information: Email, mailing address, and telephone number.
- 6) County: Primary county or counties in which the project will be conducted.
- 7) Waterbody: Name of the primary stream(s) affected by the project.
- 8) Watershed Impacted by Project: The watershed in which the project will be conducted.
- 9) Grant Total Requested: The amount of money you are requesting in this proposal.
- 10) Local Match Proposed: The amount of proposed local match.
- 11) 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.

B. *Project Narrative (Two pages maximum)*

- 1) Provide a brief history of your MiCorps Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program and an update on its current status. Include:
 - i. List the MiCorps grants that have you received in the past, including grant types, year received, and monetary amounts.

- ii. What were the dates of your monitoring event(s) during your last active monitoring year, and how many volunteers participated?
 - iii. How many sites do you currently monitor?
 - iv. When are your next planned monitoring events in 2026 and what changes are you implementing, if any?
- 2) 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 describe what will be done to fix any deficiencies in their ability to lead a macroinvertebrate volunteer sampling program.
- 3) Any way you have been able to use your monitoring data to advocate or implement water quality improvements or educate your community on water quality issues.
- 4) 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.

C. Audit Letter

Provide a letter from a Certified Public Accountant demonstrating proof of a successful financial audit within the previous two years (see p. 2).

Excel Budget Spreadsheet

Submit a project budget as an .xlsx file, using the first tab on the template given at <https://www.micorps.net/files/defeb4d0-0b91-4e4a-98d6-241fdf08ce09-rpurp0.xlsx>.

Fill out the first tab only. The remaining tab is for your reimbursement if you receive the grant.

1. Staffing

- List each staff person, their title or role, 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 column 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.

2. Fringe Benefits

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

- List each staff person and their fringe rate. Multiply the rate by their Staffing budget to get the Fringe Benefit cost.
- MiCorps reserves the right to request that applicants supply information indicating how their fringe benefits were calculated.

3. Contractual

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 contracted, include an explanation somewhere in the submission.

4. 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 (i.e., a microscope, or computer) is not allowed using grant funds.
- You can get estimates of equipment and supplies commonly needed in the MiCorps program from the Macroinvertebrate Monitoring Equipment list, <https://www.micorps.net/streams/docs>
- Costs related to food and drinks for volunteers are not funded under this grant (but can be included as match).

5. 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 MiCorps Conference changes year to year 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.
- Mileage reimbursement rate is based on IRS guidance and is currently \$0.725/mile.
- 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 travelling, with rates set by the State of Michigan. Maximum per meal: Breakfast (\$12), Lunch (\$14), Dinner (\$27), with more in select cities: (<https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/-/media/Project/Websites/dtmb/Services/Travel/Travel-Rates-FY2026-and-High-Cost-Cities-effective-1-1-2026.pdf>)

6. Indirect Costs

Most organizations have a set indirect rate between 10-20% that covers rent, utilities, office equipment, etc. The maximum acceptable rate is 20% of the total of the other budget line items.

7. Local 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. Local match from partner organizations must be proven with a letter of commitment that specifically mentions that amount.

Please note the following about local match:

- 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 (2026: \$13.73/hour).
 - Professionals not working in a professional capacity: The acceptable rate for these professionals is based on the national value (Independent Sector) for volunteer time (updated January 2026: \$34.79/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, except for grants by Renew Michigan.
- Whatever you commit to as match will become part of your contractual obligation if your project is selected for funding. Be sure 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.

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.
- Quality of proposal writing.
- Proposed costs reasonable for project scope, including 25% minimum matching funds, and appropriate allocation of the grant funds.
- These grants are in high demand. Organizations who have already received several maintenance grants will be less likely to receive one.

Summary of Links

- Location of MiCorps RFPs, <https://www.micorps.net/streams/grants/rfps>
- Maintenance Grant Excel Budget Spreadsheet, <https://www.micorps.net/files/defeb4d0-0b91-4e4a-98d6-241fdf08ce09-rpurp0.xlsx>
- MiCorps Stream Monitoring Documents and Resources (equipment, procedures, QAPPs, etc), <https://www.micorps.net/streams/docs>

- MiCorps Grants Documents (financial, reporting, fact sheet templates), <https://www.micorps.net/streams/grants/docs>
- Selected cities for increased food reimbursement, <https://www.michigan.gov/dtmb/-/media/Project/Websites/dtmb/Services/Travel/Travel-Rates-FY2026-and-High-Cost-Cities-effective-1-1-2026.pdf>)
- EGLE Watershed Council Grants, <https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/nonpoint-source>