

Official Answers to AIS Grants Questions

The following is a list of all written questions submitted to the AIS Grants Oversight Committee prior to the submission deadline of 1/10/2024. Official Answers from the Committee follow each question in red.

1. Are there any 2025 invasive species grants available in Connecticut for private marinas? **The grants are available to State agencies, municipalities, and not-for profit organizations. Organizations that don't fall into one of these categories may partner with eligible entities on proposals.**
2. I am reading through the RFP and I just want to confirm that the available grant funds are only available to projects that take place within freshwater systems. My organization does trawling in Norwalk and Saugatuck Harbor and we have been bringing up many different species of shrimp and nudibranchs that are non-native/invasive. I just want to make sure that we are not eligible at this time to study these species distributions. **Per the RFP, the study or project must be conducted on an inland waterbody located in Connecticut. Projects in marine waters would not be eligible.**
3. If we were to receive grant funding, could we fund two years worth of AIS removal from one grant period? **Yes two year projects are eligible. The maximum grant award would remain \$75,000. Requests for larger grants may be considered, but only for exceptional and well-justified proposals.**
4. We are considering partnering with another organization to turn our treatment of aquatic invasives into an educational case study to inform future treatment options. However, our project is primarily focused on the control/treatment of Hydrilla and other invasives. Do you have any feedback on how this would affect our grant application? **Both activities are eligible for grant funding. The merits of a project are evaluated using the standardized categories and weighting shown on page 12 and 13 of the RFP.**
5. Our organization would prefer to hire a Project Manager for the project through contracting, is this possible to fund using the grant award? **The hiring of Subcontractors to perform project activities is eligible for grant funding; these subcontractors may have project managers overseeing their scope of work. Grant funds cannot be used for indirect costs, but indirect costs associated with projects may be used as matching funds.**
6. Our lake association is interested in pursuing the subject grant opportunity. We are a "special tax district" in accordance with a Charter original passed through the Connecticut State Legislation We collect our "taxes" separately from the town and those taxes are for the sole purpose of lake and association owned property maintenance. The lake is considered private for use only by tax payers who live in the district. We are not a 501C-3, we are a "special tax district" separate and distinct from the town. My question is this, based on above, would we qualify to submit the grant application on our own as a special tax district? **The grants are available to State agencies, municipalities, and not-for profit organizations. For the purposes of this RFP lakes associations formed through special tax districts will be considered as an eligible entity.**

The following is a list of questions and answers from previous iterations of the AIS Grants Program.

1. Our organization is a CT-registered non-stock corporation. However, we are not a registered 501(c)3. We are a volunteer-based group formed to preserve our waterbody. We are revising our documents to be able to apply for 501c3 status. Does our organization qualify as a not-for-profit organization for the AIS grant, or do we need to partner with our local municipalities? **Until your organization has 501(c)3 status, you can develop a proposal in collaboration with another eligible organization as defined in the RFP, however they will have to be the applicant.**
2. We have now completed the Fillable Application Form but this Word document is giving me a dialogue box that says: "Viewing - You can only view this document. You do not have permission to edit it." Would it be possible for you to provide us with the password that will enable me to add some critical pages before and after the Application Form? If not, what is the best way for us to present this information to you in one comprehensive Word or PDF document? **For applicants that are unable to compile supporting documentation into a single Word or PDF document due to technical issues, we suggest including supporting documents as attachments along with the email submission.**
3. Are letters of support allowed as attachments to an application package submitted to the Grants for the Control of Aquatic Invasive Species? **Letters of support may be included as attachments with the email submission however they are not required or part of the project scoring criteria.**
4. In going through the new AIS grant RFP, I think I may have found an error. On page 8 under "Ineligible projects" it states "species not listed in Attachment E" I think it is supposed to be Attachment A. **Eligible target species are listed in Attachment A. Thank you for noting the error.**
5. We have a few ongoing projects in our waterbody dealing with invasive weed treatments for fanwort, geese mitigation, and stream testing for nutrient loading into our lake. We've had some algae blooms in the past that led to these projects. Does the grant application allow for us to combine at least two of the projects to reach the minimum grant of \$10,000 allowed? **Applications may include multiple activities in a single proposal provided that they conform to the eligibility requirements of this grant program.**
6. Since the contract term for grants is 18 months, and since our project will require more than one year of manual and herbicide treatment, I assume it is okay, and perhaps preferable, to apply for funding for 2 seasons. Is this correct? **The timing and duration of the contract term is intended to allow applicants to conduct work across two growing seasons. Combining two years of project activities into a single contract is preferred vs. annual projects as it reduces administrative burden.**
7. Since the contract term begins on May 1, can grant awardees expect that 50% of the funds will be available to start work on May 15, which is when our activities must begin? Are expenses incurred before May 1 that pertain to this project reimbursable? If not, can such expenses be counted as matching funds? **Funds will be distributed on a reimbursement basis. All project activities including expenses and match must occur during the effective contract period.**

8. What is meant by the term “indirect costs” that “may be used as part of the applicant’s match”?
Indirect costs include administration and general expenses, such as the salaries and expenses of executive officers, personnel administration, and accounting.
9. Our sub-contractor is applying for an NDDB Review for herbicide application, but we also will continue our hand-pulling operation in other parts of the project area. Is a separate NDDB Review required for grant recipients to hand-pull water chestnut plants in a public waterway, such as the lower Mattabesset and Coginchaug Rivers (Cromwell Meadows) or the Connecticut River? If an organization is not funded by a state grant, and is only hand-pulling, is an NDDB Review still required by that organization to hand-pull plants in public waterways? An NDDB is required for any grant funded control/management activity. Questions about whether non- grant funded activities require an NDDB review should be directed to deep.nddbrequest@ct.gov.
10. If, in the final financial report, grant awardees had expenses in one category were over- budget, but expenses in another category were under-budget, can that adjustment be made in the final reckoning for reimbursement as long as the total amount requested is less than or equal to the amount awarded? Or will the contract stipulated that expenses in each line item cannot exceed budget, even if expense in another line is less than budgeted? Grant recipients should refer to the terms and conditions spelled out in their project contract. We anticipate including a provision to allow for some flexibility in this regard.
11. For matching funds, can volunteer labor or other in-kind services be counted toward the match? If volunteer labor can be counted, is there a standard rate (\$/hour) that should be used in the calculation of its value toward the match? Volunteer labor and in-kind services can be counted as match. We do not have a standard volunteer rate for calculating match.
12. If we apply for 2 years of funding but we are awarded (in this 2024 grant cycle) less than the full 2 years needed, can we apply next year for the additional funding we will need to complete the 2 year project? Yes.
13. On page 15 of the CT DEEP AIS Grant RFP under E: it is stated that “attachments other than the required attachments identified in Attachment C are not permitted and will not be evaluated.” Yet, Attachment C to the AIS Grant RFP is the Listing of Known Non-native ANS and Potential ANS in Connecticut. Where is the appropriate list of required attachments in the RFP? Are they to be found in Attachments D and E? The quoted language in Section IV Part E was included in error. Proposal submission requirements can be found in Section III Part A.
14. A lake has a State public boat launch with boats possibly coming from bodies of water with invasive weeds without having been washed before entering our lake. The threat of invasive weeds being introduced to the lake is always a significant concern. Would yearly aquatic plant surveys that could identify invasive weeds be considered a research project? Aquatic plant surveys are eligible as a component of research projects.