NORTH DAKOTA NONPOINT SOURCE POLLUTION MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Guidance for Writing Information and Education Work Plans

July 2026

Table of Contents

Introduction

The North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Management Program distributes grant funds to local projects that facilitate implementation of North Dakota's NPS Pollution Management Program Management Plan. Information and Education projects support the restoration and protection of North Dakota's water resources by increasing awareness of nonpoint source pollution, building local capacity, encouraging voluntary adoption of conservation practices, and providing the education and technical assistance needed to implement effective water quality solutions. These projects may include outreach campaigns, educational workshops, field-scale demonstrations, training, development of educational materials, youth education, and other activities that advance the goals of the North Dakota NPS Pollution Management Program.

To apply for these funds, project sponsors develop Information and Education (I&E) Work Plans that describe the purpose of the project, the audiences to be reached, the activities to be completed, and how project success will be evaluated. This document provides guidance on how to prepare an I&E Work Plan and the information required for review and approval. Unlike Watershed and Support Project Implementation Plans (PIPs) which document implementation of structural best management practices or watershed restoration strategies, an I&E Work Plan describes how the project will contribute to long-term improvements in water quality through informed decision-making and voluntary action. Conversely, Watershed and Support projects frequently include I&E activities, however, those activities are documented as project tasks within the PIP and do not require a separate I&E Plan.

<u>Applicability of this Guidance</u>

This guide replaces "Specific Criteria to Address in Information and Education Project Implementation Plans" (March 26, 2003) and is intended for I&E projects funded under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act. This guide reflects current US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) Section 319 program guidance and North Dakota's expectations for well-planned, outcome-oriented I&E projects. Throughout the process, work plan writers should ask themselves, "Does this work plan demonstrate that Section 319 funding is commensurate with the scope and expected outcomes of the project?"

<u>Previous Phase Work Plans</u>

Project sponsors developing a subsequent phase of an existing I&E project should build upon previous work rather than recreate it. Relevant information from previous work plans, annual reports, educational materials, evaluations, or other project documents may be incorporated by reference where appropriate, updated as necessary, and supplemented to address the expectations outlined in this guide.

Because this guidance represents a substantial revision of the 2003 I&E PIP guidance, projects with previously approved I&E Work Plans must modify or update the original plan in accordance with these new guidelines to ensure all required elements are included and the document is organized for Program and Task Force review. Existing materials should be reviewed, expanded and re-arranged as needed to follow the required outline, clearly demonstrate the project's need, relationship to the North Dakota NPS Pollution Management Program, intended audience, proposed activities, anticipated outcomes, and evaluation methods.

Reminder: Consult NPS Program staff early and often during work plan development.

Work Plan Outline

All work plans should include the following sections, in this order:

I. Cover Page (Template)

II. Project Location

III. Background & Purpose

IV. Water Quality Issue and Contributing Factors

V. Expected Outcomes

VI. Project Tasks

VII. Personnel Needs and Responsibilities

VIII. Schedule

Task and Output Schedule Table (Template)

IX. Evaluation Criteria

X. Budget & Budget Narrative

1. Budget Tables (Template)
2. Budget Narrative
3. Project Collaboration

XI. Measuring Success

Appendices: Additional documents such as letters of support.

I. Cover Page – Project Proposal Summary

The template provided must be used. See Appendix A and www.deq.nd.gov/publications/WQ/3_WM/NPS/Grants/I&EWorkPlan_Template.docx

- ❖ Customize the document header by adding your project title (see 1.) Example: Riparian Management InfoCenter Work Plan

1) Provide a descriptive unique project title.
   a) Contact the NPS Program staff to determine if "Phase II" etc. is appropriate to include in the title.
2) Include the lead project sponsor organization name and address.
   a) Include the project Coordinator name, phone and email. The Coordinator will be the primary point of contact for the project.
3) If this is a statewide project, check the box and put "NA" in sections 4 and 5.
4) List the HUCs that make up the project area.
5) List the Waterbody ID(s) (Assessment Unit(s), or AU(s) which are being targeted with this project.
6) Select the NPS Management Program goal(s) this project will address.
   a) This will match Section III.
7) Provide a concise description of the project.
   a) Maximum 400 characters. Focus on the top line take away: what will be accomplished as a result of successfully completing all tasks.
8) Budget Summary
   a) FY______ 319 Funds = (a) on budget tables
   b) Match Funds = (b) + (c) + (d) on budget tables
   c) Total Project Cost = (e) on budget tables
   d) Other Federal Funds = (f) on budget tables

COVER PAGE

- ❖ The cover page template must be filled in completely.
- ❖ Do not edit the template. Do not use more than one page.
- ❖ Insert a page break before Section II.

II. Project Location

Describe the geographic area served by the project. The level of detail should be appropriate for the project's scope. For statewide projects, simply identify the project location as "Statewide". A map is not required.

For regional or local projects, describe the project area and include a map if it would help reviewers understand where project activities will occur. Maps should clearly identify the project area and include sufficient reference information (e.g., major communities, county boundaries, watershed boundaries, or other recognizable features) to orient the reviewer.

PROJECT LOCATION - ASK YOURSELF:

- Is the geographic area served by the project clearly identified?
- Would a reviewer unfamiliar with the project understand where activities will occur?
- If a map is included, does it add value by helping orient the reviewer?

III. Background & Purpose

Provide background information that helps reviewers understand the purpose of the project and why it is being undertaken. This section should establish the context for the project, explain its relationship to the North Dakota NPS Program, and provide any information necessary for reviewers to understand the project's overall intent. At a minimum, address the following:

- Geographic context (if not already addressed in the Project Location section) and/or programmatic context.
- Purpose of the project and why I&E is an appropriate approach.
- How the project supports the selected goals of the North Dakota Nonpoint Source Pollution Management Program (see box below). Simply checking a goal(s) on the cover page is not sufficient; explain how the project will contribute to achieving those goals.
- Accomplishments of previous phases of the project (where applicable)

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE – ASK YOURSELF:

- Is the purpose of the project clearly explained?
- Does the narrative clearly justify each NPS Management Plan goal selected on the cover page?
- Does this section provide enough context for a reviewer to understand the project before reading the more technical discussion that follows?

Goals of the North Dakota NPS Program

Goal 1: Water Quality Restoration and Protection. North Dakota's surface and groundwater resources are restored and protected so that designated beneficial uses are fully supported and resilient to the impacts of nonpoint source pollution.

Goal 2: Watershed Planning and Management. Nonpoint source pollution in North Dakota is identified, understood, and addressed using assessment, monitoring, modelling, spatial analysis tools and data-driven watershed planning.

Goal 3: Local Capacity and Partnerships. Local partners, watershed organizations, conservation professionals, and communities have the capacity, technical support, and resources needed to successfully plan and implement watershed-based or impact focused nonpoint source pollution management projects.

Goals 4: Public Awareness. Producers, landowners, communities, and the public understand the causes and impacts of nonpoint source pollution and actively participate in protecting and improving water quality.

Goal 5: Nutrient Reduction and Landscape Management. Nutrient management and landscape practices across North Dakota are improved to reduce nutrient losses to surface and groundwater and to support the objectives of the North Dakota Nutrient Reduction Strategy.

IV. Water Quality Issue and Contributing Factors

This section should establish the technical basis for the project and clearly connect the identified water quality issue to the I&E need. At a minimum, address the following:

- The water quality issue or nonpoint source concern.
- The human behaviors, knowledge gaps, or other contributing factors influencing the issue.
- Available information, data, assessments, monitoring results, surveys, or other evidence supporting the identified need.
- How increasing awareness, knowledge, skills, or technical capacity is expected to influence one or more of the identified contributing factors.

WATER QUALITY ISSUE AND CONTRIBUTING FACTORS – ASK YOURSELF:

- Is the water quality issue clearly identified?
- Have the contributing factors that I&E can realistically influence been identified?
- Does the work plan explain the connection between increased understanding and improved water quality?
- Is the discussion supported by available information or evidence?

V. Expected Outcomes

Describe the expected outcomes of the project. While activities such as workshops, presentations, educational materials, or outreach events are important components of a project, they are the means, not the end. These are tasks that will be described in Section IV. The primary focus of this section should be the changes expected to occur as a result of those activities and how those changes are expected to contribute to the restoration or protection of water quality.

Expected outcomes should logically build upon the water quality issue and contributing factors discussed in Section IV and should be accomplished through completion of the tasks described in Section VI.

At a minimum, address the following:

- The changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or technical capacity expected as a result of the project.
- How these changes are expected to influence one or more of the contributing factors identified in Section IV.

- ❖ Any assumptions or limitations that may influence the project's ability to achieve the expected outcomes.

One of the most important steps in developing an effective I&E project is identifying the pathway between project activities and improved water quality. Before developing goals, objectives, and tasks, consider the following sequence:

If this project successfully increases __________, then __________ will change, which is expected to contribute to __________. For example, if this project successfully increases *homeowner knowledge of proper septic system maintenance*, then *more homeowners will inspect and maintain their septic systems*, which is expected to contribute to *reduced bacteria and nutrient inputs to nearby waterbodies*.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES – ASK YOURSELF:

- ❖ Do the expected outcomes logically build upon the water quality issue and contributing factors identified in Section IV?
- ❖ Are the expected outcomes realistic and achievable?

VI. Project Tasks

This section describes the specific activities completed by project staff, contractors, and/or partners that will lead to the outcomes described in Section V. Tasks should describe the work to be performed during the project period and should be specific enough that project progress can be tracked and evaluated. You **MUST** also include a grant administration task section.

Example:

Task 1: Develop educational materials describing proper septic system operation, routine maintenance, inspection schedules, warning signs of system failure, and available financial assistance programs.

Task 2: Develop a public outreach campaign using newsletters, social media, community events, local media, and partner organizations to increase homeowner awareness of septic system maintenance.

Task 3: Conduct four educational workshops for homeowners on proper septic system maintenance including opportunities for questions and one-on-one technical assistance.

Task 4: Evaluate changes in homeowner knowledge and maintenance practices through participant surveys and workshop evaluations.

Task 5: Maintain project records, prepare and submit reimbursement requests in a timely manner, and submit annual reports by the required deadlines.

Task 6: Prepare and submit a final project report by the deadline summarizing project accomplishments, expected outcomes achieved, lessons learned, and recommendations for future septic maintenance I&E efforts

PROJECT TASKS – ASK YOURSELF:

- Are the tasks the specific activities that will be completed to achieve the objectives?
- Did you include grant management tasks reflecting the requirements of the Section 319 program?

VII. Personnel Needs & Responsibilities

This section should describe the personnel, administrative support, and/or contractual services needed to successfully complete the Tasks outlined in Section VI. The purpose of this section is not to identify specific individuals, but rather to describe the types of duties, expertise, and services needed to complete project activities. Where multiple organizations are involved, briefly describe partner roles and responsibilities and any significant coordination arrangements (e.g. MOUs) necessary for project implementation.

PERSONNEL NEEDS & RESPONSIBILITIES – ASK YOURSELF:

- Are the personnel, administrative support, and/or contractual services needed to complete the project clearly identified?
- Do the roles and responsibilities align with the tasks described in Section VI?
- Is the level of staffing appropriate for the scope and complexity of the project?
- If multiple organizations are involved, are their respective roles and coordination responsibilities clearly described?

VIII. Schedule

This section describes the timeline for implementing tasks previously identified in the work plan and the parties responsible for each task. This should be presented in table format using the required Task and Output Schedule template (see Appendix B and www.deq.nd.gov/publications/WQ/3_WM/NPS/Grants/I&EWorkPlan_Template).

SCHEDULE – ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the schedule include all major project tasks and milestones?
- Are activities sequenced in a logical order?
- Does the schedule allow sufficient time to complete project activities and accomplish the expected outcomes described in Section V?

IX. Evaluation Criteria

This section describes the criteria that will be used to measure progress in meeting the milestones toward completion of the project tasks. Specific criteria should be described for each unique task. Tasks to which similar criteria apply may be grouped together.

Example:

Task	**Milestone Evaluation Criteria**
Task 1a – Develop and update educational materials and learning resources.	Educational materials developed or revised and made available for project use; documentation may include curricula, lesson plans, publications, websites, or other educational resources.
Task 1b – Recruit schools and teachers to participate in the program.	Number of schools and teachers recruited compared to project goals; participant registration records, contact lists, or other documentation maintained.
Task 1c – Conduct regional and statewide educational events.	Number of educational events conducted; attendance records, agendas, presentations, photographs, or other documentation demonstrating project implementation.
Task 1d – Provide training opportunities for teachers.	Number of training events completed; participant attendance records, evaluations, certificates of completion (if applicable), or other documentation demonstrating educator participation.

Task	Milestone Evaluation Criteria
Task 1e – Evaluate participant learning and program effectiveness.	Participant evaluations, surveys, pre/post assessments, or other evaluation tools completed and summarized; results documented and used to inform future program improvements.
Task 2a – Submit annual progress reports.	Annual progress reports submitted by required deadlines and accepted by NDDEQ.
Task 2b – Submit reimbursement requests on a timely basis.	Reimbursement requests submitted according to grant requirements with complete supporting documentation and approved for payment.
Task 2c – Maintain project records and match documentation.	Project records maintained throughout the project period; match contributions documented; records organized and available for review or audit.
Task 2d – Submit the final project report.	Final project report submitted by the project closeout deadline and accepted by NDDEQ. Report summarizes project accomplishments, expected outcomes achieved, evaluation results, and lessons learned.

EVALUATION CRITERIA – ASK YOURSELF:

- Does each task have a clearly identified milestone or deliverable?
- Are the milestone evaluation criteria appropriate and specific enough to determine whether the task was successfully completed?
- Can progress toward project completion be readily tracked throughout the project timeline?

X. Budget & Budget Narrative

The budget should clearly break down each source of funding, how numbers were calculated, and describe specifically the use of funds for all funding, cash-match and in-kind sources.

1. Budget Tables

1. You must use the Budget Tables Template (shown in Appendix E and at www.deq.nd.gov/publications/WQ/3_WM/NPS/Grants/Budget_Tables.xlsx)
2. Do not modify the budget tables except where noted.

3. Enter full dollar amounts into the green cells only. The spreadsheet will calculate subtotals and totals in the white cells.

Part I Budget Table

1. Add the Project Title in the header row. Example: Riparian Management InfoCenter Budget Table
2. For each of the expenditure categories, enter the total of both cash and match funding.
    - Personnel – Wages/salary for personnel to complete Tasks
    - Fringe Benefits – Fringe benefits for personnel time
    - Travel/Food/Lodging – Travel to field visits, meetings, trainings. Mileage (Federal rate), food and lodging (State rate)
    - Supplies – Supplies, tools, equipment (under grant guidance defined threshold) needed to complete Tasks.
    - Rent/Utilities – Office space overhead needed for this Project (if charging directly)
    - Communications – Postage, phone service
    - Equipment – Will nearly always be $0 (contact grant manager if this is an anticipated expense).
    - Consultant/Contractual -– If services will be provided to the project sponsor for assistance with completing project deliverables.
    - BMP – Will be $0 for I&E projects unless a demonstration including 3rd parties is involved.
    - Other – Items that don't explicitly fit into one of the other categories
    - Administration – Can be direct expenses for bookkeeping (personnel) or Indirect costs (this line item is capped depending on grant). To charge indirect, the project sponsor is required to have documentation of what expenses are indirect vs. direct. Contact NPS Program Staff to determine eligible percentage and discuss necessary documentation before budgeting this line item.

Part II Funding Sources

1. Add the Project Title in the header row. Example: Riparian Management InfoCenter Funding Sources
2. Replace the words "Year" with the actual years of the project. If the project is less than five years, delete the word "Year" as needed and do not enter anything in the columns below.
3. Add the appropriate year to FY___ under "Section 319 Funds". Contact NPS Program Staff for assistance.
4. Under "Project Sponsor", "Other Non-Federal" and "Other Federal" customize Column B as needed to reflect Technical Assistance (TA) and Financial Assistance (FA) that is

included in the budget in Part I. Landowner participation is rare with I&E projects – leave this section blank unless it is needed. Contact NPS Program Staff for assistance.

2. Budget Narrative

The budget narrative describes how the values in the budget tables were calculated or otherwise derived. This should also cite the sources of information that are used to inform cost estimates (e.g. a direct quote from supplier, state rate policy for travel, etc.)

Example:

Personnel - Project Coordinator: $99,840. Based on 4,160 hours over two years at $24.00/hour.

Fringe Benefits - 35% of salary and include FICA, retirement, health insurance, and leave costs. Based on the organization's approved fringe benefit rate.

Travel/Food/Lodging - Travel costs are estimated at 10,000 miles at the current state mileage reimbursement rate for school visits, project meetings, trainings, and events. Lodging and per diem costs are based on estimated attendance at two water quality education conferences per year using current state travel reimbursement rates.

Supplies - Supplies are estimated from costs incurred during similar events and include printing, handouts, and educational materials.

Rent/Utilities, Communications - Office space costs are based on a 50% cost allocation plan and represent the portion of office rent and utilities attributable to project personnel. Telephone and internet costs are also based on a 50% allocation methodology.

Consultant/Contractual – An advertising company will be contracted to create two billboards at $2000 each.

3. Project Collaboration

This section should describe the technical assistance (TA), financial assistance (FA), and/or in-kind support provided by the organizations listed in Table II. Clearly describe each partner's role in implementing the project and explain how their contributions support successful completion of the work plan. Descriptions may include, but are not limited to:

- Technical assistance such as curriculum development, instructor expertise, program planning, technical review of educational materials, training delivery, project evaluation, or coordination with project partners.
- Financial assistance provided through grants, cash match, sponsorships, or other funding sources that support the project.
- In-kind contributions such as staff time, volunteer time, meeting facilities, educational equipment, printing services, outreach assistance, website support, communications, event coordination, or other non-cash contributions.

REQUIRED: If Technical Assistance, Financial Assistance, or in-kind contributions from project partners are included in the work plan or budget, the project sponsor should provide documentation demonstrating those commitments. Acceptable documentation may include letters of support, memoranda of understanding (MOUs), interagency agreements, commitment

---

BUDGET & BUDGET NARRATIVE – ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the budget include all costs necessary to successfully complete the project?
- Are all budget estimates clearly explained and supported in the budget narrative?
- Is there a logical connection between the proposed tasks (Section VI) and the requested expenditures?
- Are cash match, in-kind contributions, and other funding sources clearly identified and adequately documented?
- Are the roles and contributions of project partners clearly described and consistent with the budget and funding tables?
- Would a reviewer understand how the requested funds will be used and why the proposed costs are reasonable?
- If project partner contributions are identified in the work plan or budget, is there written documentation to support those commitments?

letters, or other written documentation that clearly identifies the partner's anticipated role and contribution to the project.

XI. Measuring Success

Every I&E project should include a plan for measuring success. Measuring success helps the project sponsor and NDDEQ determine whether the project achieved its intended outcomes and provides valuable information for improving future efforts.

One of the most common challenges in I&E projects is distinguishing between project implementation and project success. It is relatively easy to document that workshops were held, educational materials were developed, or outreach events were conducted. While these activities demonstrate that the project was implemented as planned, they do not by themselves demonstrate whether the project achieved its intended purpose. Measuring success focuses on determining whether project activities resulted in the expected changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, technical capacity, decision-making, or behaviors identified in Section V.

The level of evaluation should be appropriate for the scope and complexity of the project. At a minimum, address the following:

- The evaluation methods that will be used to measure project success.
- How the evaluation methods relate to the expected outcomes identified in Section V.
- When evaluation activities will occur.
- How evaluation results will be summarized and used to improve future project implementation.

Evaluation methods may include, but are not limited to:

- Knowledge assessments or quizzes
- Participant evaluations
- Follow-up surveys
- Interviews or focus groups
- Website or social media analytics
- Participation trends

MEASURING SUCCESS – ASK YOURSELF:

- Does the evaluation measure the expected outcomes identified in Section V rather than simply documenting completed activities?
- Are the proposed evaluation methods appropriate for the scope and complexity of the project?
- Will the evaluation provide meaningful information about changes in awareness, knowledge, skills, attitudes, technical capacity, decision-making, or behaviors?
- Will the evaluation results help improve future I&E efforts?

- Observation of voluntary behavior changes
- Other evaluation methods appropriate for the project

Appendix A: Cover Page Template

Information & Education Work Plan

I. Project Proposal Summary

1. Project Title		Project Type: Information/Education
2. Lead Project Sponsor	Name	
	Address	
	City, State, Zip	
	Coordinator Name	
	Phone(s)	
	Email	
State: North Dakota	3. ☐Statewide Project	
4. HUCs		
5. Waterbody ID(s)		
6. NPS Management Program Goals Addressed	☐ Water Quality Restoration and Protection ☐ Watershed Planning and Management ☐ Local Capacity and Partnerships ☐ Public Awareness ☐ Nutrient Reduction and Landscape Management	
7. Project Description		

8. Budget Summary	
FY____ 319 Funds	$
State/Local Match Funds	$
Total Project Cost	$
Other Federal Funds	$

Appendix B: Task and Output Schedule

{Project Title} Task and Output Schedule

Tasks	Responsible Party	Total	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
			Enter date(s)				
List each task described in Section VI. Combine tasks if appropriate.	*Note (from list below)*	*Output (Total)*	*Output (per year)*				
Add rows as necessary							
Responsible Parties *List the parties responsible for completing tasks.*							

Appendix C: Budget Tables

I. [Project Title] Budget Table

Expenditure Category	Section 319 Funds	Project Sponsor*	Other Non-Federal*	Landowners*	Total	Other Federal**
Personnel	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Fringe Benefits	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Travel/Food/Lodging	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Supplies	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Rent/Utilities	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Communications	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Equipment	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Consultant/Contractual	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
BMP	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Other	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Administration	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -
Total	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	**$ -**	$ -
	(a)	(b)	(c)	(d)	(e)	(f)

319 funds % of total	#DIV/0!	Cannot exceed 60%

II. [Project Title] Funding Sources

	Year	Year	Year	Year	Year	Total	
Section 319 Funds							
FY__ Funds	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Subtotal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	(a)
Local Sponsor*							
TA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Subtotal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	(b)
Other Non-Federal*							
[Name 1] TA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 1] FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 2] TA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 2] FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Subtotal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	(c)
Landowners*							
FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Subtotal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	(d)
	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -		
				Total Project Cost		**$ -**	(e)
Other Federal**							
[Name 1] TA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 1] FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 2] TA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
[Name 2] FA:	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	
Subtotal	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	$ -	(f)

*Non-federal — TA: Technical Assistance

**Federal — FA: Financial Assistance