# Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program
## Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey
## Grant Application Package
## Fiscal Year 2017

Administered by the
Great Lakes Commission and the
Huron River Watershed Council for the
Michigan Department of Environmental Quality

Online at
https://micorps.net

**Application Deadline:  February 21, 2017, at 5:00 p.m.**

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**INFORMATION FOR THE
2017 VOLUNTEER STREAM MONITORING PROGRAM
AQUATIC MACROINVERTEBRATE SURVEY GRANT APPLICATION PACKAGE**

### *Funding Source and Authority*

This Grant Application Package (GAP) is for the Volunteer Stream Monitoring Program (VSMP) Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey grants offered under the Michigan Clean Water Corps (MiCorps) Program. It is expected that approximately $50,000 will be available for VSMP grants in fiscal year 2017, across the spectrum of available VSMP funding opportunities. Multiple grants are expected with a maximum grant award of $14,000 under this specific GAP. Information contained in this GAP is based on Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) guidance and administrative rules for Clean Michigan Initiative-Clean Water Fund grants. Grants will be awarded in 2017 contingent upon funding approval, which is expected within the next two months.

### *Description of Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey Grants*

- The Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey component of the MiCorps VSMP funds benthic macroinvertebrate and stream habitat monitoring activities in wadeable streams and rivers through competitive grants.

- This is a "train the trainer" program. MiCorps staff will provide training and support to the grantees. Grantees are then expected to use the information provided to them to train their own volunteers who do the majority of the data collection work.

- All grantees and volunteers must use MiCorps standard operating procedures in collecting their data.

- The resultant data will be entered into a publicly available database and used by the DEQ as a monitoring screening tool.

### *Submittal Deadline and Instructions*

Complete applications – including all required supporting documentation – must be received by **5 p.m. on February 21, 2017**. Late or incomplete applications will not be considered for funding.

All grant applicants must complete the Web Application Form and upload an application (as a single PDF or MS Word file) to the VSMP Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey application system at: https://micorps.net/register/gap17.html. You may also submit your supporting documents via the Web Application Form, provided the application and supporting documents can be combined and uploaded as a single PDF or MS Word file that contains your entire proposal package. This combined file cannot be larger than 4 MB in size. Additional instructions for creating a single combined file are provided below.

Once the Web Application Form and uploaded file 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. **However, your application is not considered to be complete until all of your required supporting documents have also been submitted (if not included in your uploaded file).**

All applications <u>and</u> supporting documents must be received by the Contact Person listed below **no later than 5 p.m. on February 21, 2017.** Late applications or applications submitted with incomplete supporting documentation as described within this GAP will not be considered for funding.

If you are unable to access and submit the Web Application Form and uploaded file online, you must notify the Contact Person listed below to determine an acceptable alternative method for submitting your application materials prior to the application deadline.

Creating a Single Combined File of all Application Materials

The preferred method for creating a single file out of multiple documents is to combine the files into a single PDF file using Adobe Acrobat Pro or Adobe Writer; however, this capacity does not exist with Adobe Reader.  Tutorials and additional instructions are available at:

- http://tv.adobe.com/watch/learn-acrobat-9/combining-documents-into-a-single-pdf/, or
- http://wwwimages.adobe.com/www.adobe.com/content/dam/Adobe/en/feature-details/acrobatpro/pdfs/combine-multiple-documents-into-one-pdf-file.pdf.

If you are unable to create a single combined PDF file containing your entire proposal package, you may also submit your materials as scanned images inserted into an MS Word document, provided the file does not exceed the 4 MB size limit.  Please note that this method may reduce the resolution (and readability) of the materials.  Therefore, you may wish to instead upload and submit one document of your proposal package via the online Web Application Form, and then e-mail, fax, mail, or hand deliver the remaining supporting documents to the Contact Person listed below.  **It is the applicant's responsibility to make sure that all applications and supporting documents have been received by the appropriate Contact Person listed below prior to the application deadline.**

*Contacts*

*For Project-Specific Questions:*

Dr. Paul Steen
Huron River Watershed Council
1100 North Main Street
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
Phone:  734-769-5123, ext. 601
Fax:  734-998-0163
E-mail:  psteen@hrwc.org

*For Application Questions and Submittals:*

Ms. Laura Kaminski
Great Lakes Commission
2805 S. Industrial Hwy., Suite 100
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48104
Phone:  734-971-9135, ext. 124
Fax:  734-971-9150
E-mail:  laurak@glc.org

*General Information*

- There is a maximum dollar amount of $14,000 per grant award.  However, the dollar amount requested should be based upon what is needed to carry out the tasks identified in the project proposal.

- Grant funds are dispersed on a cost-reimbursement basis.

- Grants require a minimum 25% local match of funds (can include in-kind services).

- Project contracts are for two years.  Contracts will begin on June 1, 2017, and end on May 31, 2019.  The final report and close-out materials are due by June 30, 2019.

- The grant funds are intended to initiate, or significantly improve, local volunteer monitoring programs, but not to serve as an ongoing funding source.

- Applicants may be contacted for clarification of proposed project activities, timetable, and grant amounts.

- Information provided in the grant application will not be kept confidential.

- Successful applicants will be required to enter into a project contract with the Great Lakes Commission (GLC), which is administering the MiCorps Program on behalf of the DEQ.  The

Huron River Watershed Council (HRWC) has been contracted by the GLC to assist in the administration 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 the GLC.

- If you have questions about your project, you are welcome to contact Dr. Steen at the HRWC prior to submitting your application.

*Grant Application Criteria*

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

- Clarity and reasonableness of project description, goals, and objectives.

- Plan for data use and education of the community.

- Watershed coverage/sampling design.

- Quality/past performance of the organization.

- Anticipated number of volunteers and quality of recruitment and methods to retain volunteers.

- Location/watershed priority and links to other programs and projects.

- Useful partnerships, verified by letters of commitment.

- Plans to continue the project beyond the grant period.

- Quality of the evaluation plan.

- Costs reasonable for project scope, including 25% minimum matching funds, and appropriate allocation of the grant funds.

- Likely to generate useful data for the DEQ.

*Eligibility*

Local units of government and not-for-profit entities 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.

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

- Must 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 24 months immediately preceding the GAP due date (February 21, 2017), as demonstrated by an Independent Auditor's Report signed by a Certified Public Accountant from a Comprehensive Annual Report.  Note:  The audit date is based on the audit period and not the date of the audit or the audit letter.  To be eligible under this GAP the end date of the audited period must be after February 21, 2015.  A sample audit letter can be found at: http://www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/wrd-nps-rfp-audit-letter-example_359089_7.pdf.

- 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.

- Must submit an online application and all supporting materials by **5 p.m. on February 21, 2017**.

Entities that do not meet the requirements above must partner with an eligible local unit of government or a nonprofit organization that will serve as the primary applicant and fiduciary agent for the grant.

### *Ineligible Entities and Activities*

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

- Volunteer activities such as river cleanups, lake monitoring, restoration efforts, and strictly education or school activities will not be funded.

- School or classroom-based programs using students as the primary volunteer source are not eligible for grant funding.

- Costs associated with chemical and thermal analysis will not be covered by MiCorps support and the data will not be included in the MiCorps database. These are not considered to be eligible activities under the MiCorps Program and may not be included as local match.

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE**
**2017 VOLUNTEER STREAM MONITORING PROGRAM**
**AQUATIC MACROINVERTEBRATE SURVEY GAP**

### *List of Information Required for the Application*

The following items are <u>required</u> for all grant applications.  All pages must have a header stating the name of the organization.

1. Completed Web Application Form.

2. Project Description (maximum eight pages).

3. Work Plan / Timeline listing the mandatory tasks and other tasks deemed important by the applicant (maximum three pages).

4. Grant Application Budget Information Form.

5. Letter(s) of commitment from partner organizations and advisors stating their role in the project.

6. Resume or curriculum(a) vitae for project manager and/or scientific consultant and/or advisor, whoever will provide the necessary ecological knowledge for the program.

7. One-page letter from a Certified Public Accountant demonstrating proof of a successful financial audit within the previous two years (see Page 4).

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 Web Application Form is to be filled out by all applicants.  The form is on the grant application Web page at: <u>https://micorps.net/register/gap17.html</u>.

- *Project Name*:  The name of the proposed project being submitted for funding.

- *Project Location*:  Primary county or counties in which the project will be conducted.

- *Watershed Impacted by Project:*  The watershed in which the project will be conducted or the watershed that may be affected by the project.

- O*rganization Name:*  Group, agency, or local unit of government applying for funding.

- *Organization Address, Fax, and Telephone* numbers.

- *Contact Person:*  The person in the organization who can be contacted by MiCorps staff for any needed additional information.

- *Contact Person's Contact Information:*  Include mailing address, fax, telephone number(s), and e-mail address.  A confirmation e-mail will be sent to this address once the Web Application Form and uploaded file have been submitted successfully.

- *Grant Amount Requested:*  The amount of funding being sought.

- *Local Match:*  The amount of local funding committed to the project.  The local match can include in-kind services and must be at least 25% of the total project cost.

- *Project Total:*  Should equal the Grant Amount Requested + the Local Match.

- *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.

## *Project Description*

Answer the following questions, limiting your response to eight pages.

### *A. Project Description and Goals*

Describe the purpose for this project, the stream quality issues you wish to address, and what you hope to achieve. Why it is important to monitor these specific rivers and streams?

### *B. Site Description*

In which river system or watershed(s) do you plan on conducting this monitoring? If possible, include the following details:

1. Location and water body name (county, longitude, and latitude).
2. Anticipated number of sites to be monitored.
3. Past monitoring efforts conducted in this area and results, if any.
4. Describe surrounding environment (wetland, commercial, residential, agricultural, proximity to combined sewer outfalls, holding ponds, storm drains, etc.).
5. A map of the area to be studied that indicates how much of the watershed will be monitored. This map does not need to be produced by your organization.

### *C. Organization Information*

1. State the organization's mission, goals, relevant programs, activities, and accomplishments.
2. Describe the relevant qualifications of project staff/volunteers and consultants/advisors that will carry out and ensure the success of the project. Please attach or fax/mail a resume or curriculum vitae for the project manager or other scientific consultant/advisor, highlighting science background and experience, and any past experience managing a monitoring program, if any.
3. Since MiCorps cannot provide sufficient funds to cover all of the needs of a successful volunteer monitoring project, please explain how your organization will manage to complete all the tasks demanded by your project.

### *D. Training and Volunteer Information*

1. Please describe in detail how you plan to recruit and train volunteers (be specific). If you already have an existing pool of volunteers, briefly describe their previous training and experience.
2. Role of school programs: The MiCorps Program uses adults as the primary volunteer and does not fund projects based completely on school programs. However, you are welcome to partner with a school and work with school-aged children, provided adult volunteers remain the project's main focus. If you plan to work with a school, please elaborate on how this relationship will be structured.

3.  Please describe the method you will use to keep track of your volunteers' training and activities.

## E. Procedures and Data Use

1.  Please describe the work to be performed.  Include a description of the parameters that will be measured and the procedures that will be used.  Indicate how this work will support your project's goals.

2.  Please state decision(s) to be made, actions to be taken, or outcomes expected from the information to be obtained.  Include the role your organization will play in assisting in such actions.

3.  Please describe how citizens and/or local governments will use the data to promote water quality improvement or protection in the river or stream of interest.

## F. Partners

1.  Please describe any other partners and advisors in the project, their roles, and commitments and be sure to attach letters of commitment from them.

2.  Please describe all sources of local match funding, including other grants you will claim as local match.  Grants that were funded by other programs under the Clean Michigan Initiative or the federal Clean Water Act are ineligible to be claimed as match for this program.

## G. Sustainability

1.  Please describe any watershed monitoring activities that will continue after the project is completed.

2.  Indicate the length of time your organization is committed to maintaining the volunteer monitoring activities funded by this grant.

3.  Please describe your plan for funding the monitoring program following the end of this grant.

4.  Describe how this project will fit in with other initiatives in the watershed.  How will the resulting data be used to further watershed management goals or activities?

## H. Evaluation

Please describe how your project will be evaluated, including how you plan to measure progress toward achieving your project goals and objectives.  For example, what are the questions that your evaluation will answer?  What methods will you use for evaluation?  Who will conduct the evaluation? Include an indication of the evaluation timetable in your response.

## Work Plan / Timeline

Maximum three pages.

The plan should be presented by task (with sub-tasks, as necessary), with an estimated percentage of time given to each task, and the approximate dates given for each task.  The estimated percentage of time for all tasks should total 100%.  Identify who will be responsible for carrying out each task.

All work plans must include the following mandatory tasks:

- Attend a full-day Aquatic Macroinvertebrate Survey training session led by MiCorps staff (usually held in June).

- Participate in the annual MiCorps conferences during the tenure of the grant (usually held in late October or early November).  The 2017 conference is tentatively scheduled for November 8-9, 2017, at the Kettunen Center in Tustin, Michigan.

- Give a short (20-30 minute) presentation on the process and results of the project at the 2018 MiCorps conference.

- Develop a Quality Assurance Project Plan that meets MiCorps standards and uses MiCorps procedures.  The Quality Assurance Project Plan must be submitted to Dr. Paul Steen (HRWC Project Officer) no less than 30 days prior to the first monitoring event and approved by the HRWC and GLC prior to any monitoring.

- Arrange and complete a "side-by-side" sampling session with MiCorps staff prior to the first macroinvertebrate collection event.

- Hold monitoring events in the fall of 2017, spring and fall of 2018, and spring of 2019.

- Enter all habitat and macroinvertebrate data into the MiCorps online database.

- Submit quarterly status reports and financial status reports to Dr. Paul Steen (HRWC Project Officer) within 30 days of the closing of each quarter of the grant period.  Reports are due one month after the quarter ends.  Quarters are:  June-September 2017 (4 months), October-December 2017, January-March 2018, April-June 2018, July-September 2018, October-December 2018, and January-March 2019.

- Upon grant closing, submit a final report, release of claims letter, fact sheet, final financial status report, and electronic versions of all deliverable products by June 30, 2019.

### *Budget Information*

Fill out the two-page Grant Application Budget Information Form, using the directions below.  A sample of a completed Budget Information Form is provided in Appendix A.  A blank Grant Application Budget Information Form is provided at https://micorps.net/register/gap17.html.

Please note the following:

- Local match is a financial commitment made by the grant recipient and other local 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; however, this type of match will be given lesser weight in the proposal evaluation when compared to other types of match support.  As per DEQ Grant Contract Administration policy 10-001 (www.michigan.gov/documents/deq/deq-dept-policy-10-001_414724_7.pdf?20140602151149), there are three different rates for volunteer labor:

  o Unskilled laborers:  The acceptable rate for these workers is the prevailing minimum wage for the State of Michigan (currently $8.90/hour).

  o Professionals not working in a professional capacity:  The acceptable rate for these professionals is based on the national value for volunteer time (currently $23.56/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 Clean Michigan Initiative or the federal Clean Water Act are ineligible to be claimed as match for this program. Other MiCorps grants are examples of grants that have come from the Clean Michigan Initiative.

- 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 (June 1, 2017).

- Match beyond the 25% will strengthen your application.

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**How to Calculate Minimum Match Required**

Note: A minimum of 25% local match is required of all applicants. Minimum match required is calculated by first determining the total cost of implementing a project. Next, calculate the minimum local match required by multiplying the total cost of implementing the project by 25%. The total project cost minus the local match equals the requested grant amount. For example, if the total cost of a project is $15,000, the local match would need to be $3,750, and the remaining cost of the project ($11,250) would be the amount requested in grant funds.

Total Cost   x   0.25   = Local Match

Total Cost   -   Local match  =  Grant Funds Requested

Example:      $15,000   x   0.25    =  $3,750 Local Match
              $15,000   -   $3,750 =  $11,250 Grant Funds Requested

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1. <u>Staffing Costs.</u>

   - In column 1, 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 2 and 3.

   - 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. <u>Fringe Benefits.</u>

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

   - Most agencies have set fringe benefit rates. Use your agency's fringe benefit rate, up to 40% maximum.

   - In column 1, list each staff person and their fringe rate. Put the dollar amount corresponding with each staff person in columns 2 and 3.

- 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.
- In column 1, indicate the rate at which indirect costs are being calculated and the resulting indirect costs.
- Enter indirect costs in columns 2 and 3.
- 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 of all work to be subcontracted.  MiCorps reserves the right to approve all subcontractors and to require grant recipients to replace subcontractors found to be unacceptable.  Volunteer labor is typically listed as local match under contractual services.

- In column 1, list all contractual services.  List amounts in columns 2 and 3.
- All contractual services included here should also be described in the work plan.

5. Project Equipment, Supplies, and Materials.

- 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) is not allowed using grant funds.  This equipment can be purchased using match funds.
- In column 1, itemize equipment and supplies and explain any cost that may appear out of the ordinary.  List amounts in columns 2 and 3.
- Costs related to food and drinks are not acceptable.

6. Travel Costs.

- Show mileage separate from lodging and meals in column 1.  Mileage costs should be shown in columns 2 and 3 as number of miles times mileage rate.  For current mileage rate, individuals should refer to the Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate Web page at: http://www.gsa.gov/portal/content/100715.  Regardless of the rate that is in effect at the

time of budget preparation and approval, grant recipients will not be allowed to use a mileage rate higher than the current Federal Mileage Reimbursement Rate in effect at the time of travel.  For two-year projects, this may mean that the mileage rate may change in the second year of the project.

- Also, include travel costs other than mileage directly related to carrying out the project. Conferences and other training fees, except those related directly to the official MiCorps training and conference, will not be accepted.  Food costs while on travel cannot be covered by the grant.

- Subtotal travel costs.

7. <u>Totals.</u>

Note that the Totals at the bottom of the budget sheet should be the same as listed in the Web Application Form.

8. <u>Sources of Match.</u>

At the bottom of the second page of the budget sheet, indicate the source(s) of local match and the corresponding dollar value provided by the applicant or other local sources.

***Acceptance of Contract Content***

Successful applicants will be required to enter into a project contract with the GLC.  A project contract consists of standard "boilerplate" language (Appendix B), the applicant's project description, work plan, time line, and budget information.  Failure of a successful applicant to accept these obligations will result in cancellation of the grant award.

***Appendices and Additional Resources***

- Appendix A:  Example Grant Application Budget Information Form
  (available at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/VSMP-Macro-Full-AppendixA-FY17.pdf)

- Appendix B:  Terms and Conditions for Grant Contract
  (available at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/VSMP-Macro-Full-AppendixB-FY17.pdf)

- Blank Grant Application Budget Information Form
  (available at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/VSMP-Budget-FY17.doc)

- Sample Grant Application
  (available at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/VSMP-Macro-Full-SampleApp-FY17.pdf)

- Grant Reporting Guidelines and Templates
  (available at: https://www.micorps.net/stream-monitoring/stream-documents)