



INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY FOR HABs GRANT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

When will the awards be announced?

The award announcements' timeframe varies from year to year but will be at least several months after the application portal closes.

What is the performance period for the grant?

The performance period varies for each grant and is dependent on a host of factors. The preferred performance period is one and a half to two years after the grant's execution.

How much funding is available?

The Innovative Technologies for HABs Grant Program has received a \$10 million appropriation. The program strives to fund as many high-quality and innovative grant submissions as possible within existing funding availability.

Is there a match funding requirement?

There are no match funding requirements. DEP, however, welcomes applicant fiscal contributions towards funding the proposed projects.

What are the minimum and maximum grant funding awards available?

Grant funding awards will differ for every project depending on a host of factors. Past award amounts have ranged from as low as \$31,741 to as high as \$4 million. Applicants must ensure the amount of funding requested is sufficient to fully fund their project from start to completion. Requests for additional funding from DEP for the project after receipt of the award will not be considered.

Who may be considered for an Innovative Technology grant?

Local governmental and non-state entities are eligible to apply for an Innovative Technology grant. This includes counties, municipalities, public and non-profit private universities or colleges, special districts and non-profit organizations registered to do business in the state of Florida.

Private, for-profit vendors are not eligible to apply directly for or directly receive grant funding. Any grant proposals received from private or for-profit vendors will be rejected. Notwithstanding, vendors may partner with eligible governmental or non-state entities to implement their technologies, subject to state and local procurement requirements.

What types of projects are considered?

DEP follows recommendations made by the Blue Green Algae Task Force regarding the types of projects considered for selection. Projects must be demonstrably cost-efficient, environmentally safe and scalable. These include innovative technologies that reduce the introduction of nutrients into waterways; remove nutrients or render nutrients within waterways biologically unavailable for the promotion of algal growth; prevent algal blooms from forming; treat, remove, and clean up algal blooms after they occur; and detect, monitor and forecast HABs to enable more proactive responses.

What are some key considerations influencing project proposal funding selections?

Key considerations influencing funding selections include the following:

- Is the technology innovative (i.e., is it a new technology or a new application of known technology)?
- Has the technology been previously shown to achieve the proposed benefits without causing environmental harm?
- Has the technology previously been evaluated and utilized within the state of Florida?
- Is the technology scalable?
- Does the technology offer other water quality improvements and environmental benefits beyond preventing HABs?
- At what stage is the project in its developmental timeline (theoretical, lab scale, mesocosm scale, ready for field testing)?
- Will the technology be applied within and provide a benefit to an area with a water quality restoration plan (e.g., basin management action plan [BMAP] or reasonable assurance plan [RAP])?
- What permits will be required for the project to be implemented?
- Does the proposal clearly identify how success will be demonstrated?
- Do the project's potential benefits outweigh its costs?
- Does the project yield or generate a product that can be marketed to offset its implementation costs?
- Can the technology be rapidly deployed to problem spots?

What types of innovative technology projects have been selected?

Projects previously selected for implementation can be categorized into four types:

- Nutrient reduction projects, which reduce the supply of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and can help decrease the intensity and duration of HABs.
- Removal and reduction projects focused on addressing algae in waterways, including chemical, biological and mechanical control methods.
- Projects that help to better predict and monitor the formation of HABs.
- Prevention projects that help prevent the formation of HABs.

Please see the DEP [Innovative Technology Grants Story Map](#) for project proposals that have previously received funding support.

Where can projects be located?

Projects must be located within the State of Florida. If the technology is evaluated in the field environment, the project should occur in areas with a history of HABs, an adopted BMAP or RAP. Additionally, if the evaluation occurs within a waterbody, then the waterbody must be fresh waterbody such as a lake, river, estuary or canal. Applications proposing to perform evaluations in marine environments will not be considered.

Should I apply if still awaiting the previous funding year's award announcements?

DEP encourages submitting proposals from the previous year along with proposals for any new projects that the applicant wishes to pursue this fiscal year. Additionally, applicants can contact the Innovative Technology for HABs Grant Program at InnTech_HAB@FloridaDEP.gov for questions regarding any resource limitations/constraints they may run into if awarded funding for all or a portion of the projects applied for. Unless notified by the applicant to the contrary, the Department assumes applicants can execute every project proposal submitted.

What is the limit on the number of proposals that may be submitted?

There are no limits on the number of project proposals that may be submitted by an eligible applicant.

What document must accompany an Innovative Technology for HABs grant proposal?

The only required document is the Innovative Technology Grant Proposal Funding Breakout form. Instructions on how to download and upload this form are found at the end of the webform on the application portal.

What other documents can accompany an Innovative Technology for HABs grant proposal?

Examples of other documents which may be submitted include process flow diagrams, photographs, and schematics associated with technology, written permission from the proposed field site property owner, and relevant published scientific journal articles about the technology's performance. All documents submitted including the proposal will be considered public record under Florida's Sunshine Laws. If sending documents that are confidential or proprietary in nature, those documents must be labeled as such, and the applicant must notify the Innovative Technology grant team prior to the submission of public record exempt documents to ensure the appropriate safeguards are taken.

What are the minimum tasks found in every Grant Work Plan (GWP) for Innovative Technologies grants?

The tasks specified within a GWP will vary between grants. A permitting task will be required for all projects starting any construction, alteration, or development that impacts wetlands, surface waters, mangroves, alters stormwater runoff, involves dredging, filling, or building structures. Additionally, all GWPs will require (1) Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP); (2) Monitoring/Performance Verification; (3) Public Education/Community Outreach; and (4) Final Report/Presentation tasks. All tasks included in the GWP must be accounted for within the Funding Breakout Form submitted with the project proposal.

How long does it take between the award announcement and execution of the grant agreement?

The timeline can vary but the standard is to execute an agreement no later than six months from the time of the award announcement to the signing of the final grant agreement. A host of factors can affect this timeline. A well-written proposal will lead to a shorter time span between funding award announcement and grant agreement execution.

Can the Innovative Technologies grant team assist with the application process?

The HAB Innovative Technology Grant team cannot fill out the proposal for the applicant; however, the team is available to answer questions and provide information about the webform's content. The team encourages applicants to contact them well in advance of the application portal's "go live" date for assistance. Applicants may contact the team by email at InnTech_HAB@FloridaDEP.gov. Discussions with the team does not guarantee the selection of a project proposal(s) for funding.

Can I make changes to my proposal after portal submission?

The HAB Innovative Technology Grant team reviews proposals shortly after their submission into the portal. The team may contact applicants to seek clarification and a better understanding of project descriptions, discuss cost reduction options, and provide suggestions on removing potential friction points (e.g., permitting obstacles) for the submitted proposals. The team will not require applicants to re-submit proposals due to this communication. To allow time for dialogue, the team recommends early proposal submissions. Once the portal closes, no applicant-initiated changes to the project proposals will be accepted.

When will the portal period open?

The portal is anticipated to open on 1 July and remain open until 1 September. The exact date the portal will close will be posted on ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov/Grants. To receive updates, sign up for notifications through the

What laboratory certification is required for submission of water quality monitoring data?

The Office of Water Policy and Ecosystems Restoration, which oversees the Innovative Technology Grant Program, requires grantees to utilize [National Environmental Laboratories Accreditation Conference \(NELAC\)](#) certified laboratories to perform the analysis of sampling presented within their final reports and grant work plan deliverables. This ensures that project data meets acceptable standards of quality. Applicants must account for the cost of using NELAC-certified labs within their Funding Breakout forms when applying for Innovative Technology grants. The Department's lab is unable to provide laboratory services for these projects.

When does an applicant selected for a funding award receive their funds?

HAB Innovative Technology grants are cost reimbursement grants only. The grantee (applicant) is reimbursed for the actual, allowable and necessary expenses incurred up to a specific ceiling amount by the grantor (DEP) after the grant agreement is executed. Prior to any reimbursements, the grantee must provide a deliverable that is accepted by the DEP grant manager and furnish the necessary support documentation (vouchers, receipts, payroll sheets, etc.) to validate the reimbursement. Payments made by the Grantee prior to the execution of the grant agreement may not be reimbursable.

What factors should be considered in identifying the funding request amounts?

Factors to consider when calculating the funding request amounts include:

- (1) The maximum amount that can be allocated for the public education/outreach task cannot exceed \$5,000.
- (2) The total salary expenses cannot exceed 30% of the requested state funding amount.
- (3) The maximum reimbursement amount that can be requested for final report presentation travel expenses associated with presenting in person in Tallahassee at DEP's Marjorie Stoneman Douglas building in Tallahassee is \$1,000.
- (4) The maximum indirect rate applied to the grant cannot exceed 15% of the requested state funding amount.
- (5) Fringe benefits may not be included in the calculation for indirect costs.
- (6) Equipment, software and software license purchases exceeding \$5,000 per item/unit in cost are not allowed under this program. Rental and lease of equipment is allowed.
- (7) Grantees must utilize [National Environmental Laboratories Accreditation Conference \(NELAC\)](#) certified laboratories to perform the analysis of sampling presented within their final reports and grant work plan deliverables.

How many grant applications are awarded funding for a given year?

The number of funded proposals depends on the number of high-quality proposals submitted, the amount of funding requested and the amount of funds the program has available to award. The record number of grants awarded in a fiscal year is 16. The lowest number awarded is 9.

Can I apply for grant funding after the portal closes?

No. We cannot accept project proposals after the portal closes. Entities that missed the submission window, including incomplete applications, must wait until the portal opens the next fiscal year to apply.

How do I best ensure that my project proposal meets the requirement of being “innovative”?

We encourage applicants to read over all the information found on the [Innovative Technology for Harmful Algal Blooms Grant Program Story Map](#) to prevent duplication of previously funded efforts and to align their submissions with the approved categories. Applicants should focus on descriptions of previously awarded projects and how they are categorized. Applicants concerned about the eligibility of their project and “innovativeness” are encouraged to contact the program area by email (InnTech_HAB@FloridaDEP.gov) to discuss these topics before submitting a

project proposal.

What are the steps in the funding award selection process?

The selection process consists of the following steps:

- (1) The innovative technology team receives the grant proposals.
- (2) The innovative technology team determines proposal eligibility for the program.
- (3) All eligible proposals are reviewed for consistency with the goals of the Blue Green Algae Task Force and safety.
- (4) The innovative technology team presents eligible projects to DEP leadership and the State of Florida Chief Science Officer for consideration.
- (5) Notification emails are sent to all applicants about their selection status.