

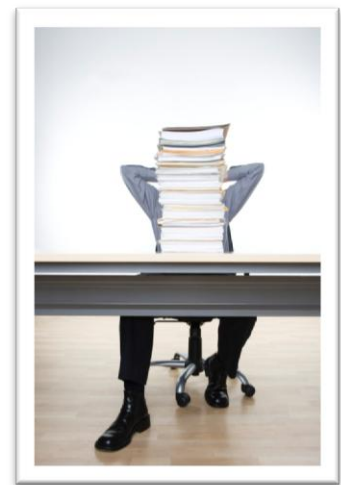


Quality Assurance Documentation and MCBP Implementation Grants

Why document quality assurance?

When applying for and receiving grants, the paper work can seem immense, and at times redundant. So you may be asking why we are now requiring more paperwork. As a National Estuary Program, the Maryland Coastal Bays Program receives funding from the EPA. Therefore, we must be in compliance with any requirements for EPA funds.

The funds for this grant are provided through the EPA, who requires by federal law that any environmental data collected with federal funds be subject to quality assurance requirements. Though this may seem like a bureaucratic exercise, QA documentation protects you and your work from inquiries and federal audits. In fact, most of the things that you document in a Quality Assurance Project Plan are items that are considered in the project planning process regardless.



What does MCBP require for Implementation Grants?

If a project collects environmental data or uses secondary data, a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) must be written for that project. We will provide a template with the grant award letter to assist with formatting. The QAPP must be signed and receive written approval from the MCBP Quality Assurance Officer before the beginning of the project or any grant monies can be distributed. While it is possible for time sensitive projects to receive written permission to begin a project early, it is only under special circumstances. Therefore, you should leave time for the writing of your QAPP in the project planning process.

Considering scope...

Every project is different and will require different types of documentation. In some cases, a project may only be dealing with secondary data, rather than collection. The grantee will still have to provide a QAPP, however, the level of documentation required is far less. Rather than focusing on the prevention of and the response to error, a secondary data QAPP is focused on the source of the data and its known level of quality. When writing your QAPP, the scope of the project should be considered. We do not, for example, expect 30 pages of QAPP for a \$750 grant award. That project could possibly already be covered under a Quality Management Plan that your organization has already written. Where possible, reference current documents to avoid replicating work that you or your organization have already done. If there are Standard Operating Procedures that detail your methods, save yourself some time and cite the document and its location.

Looking for assistance? We can help!

MCBP will work with you every step of the way if that's what it takes. Our Quality Assurance Officer, Bill Mahoney, is always available by phone or email to discuss your project and what kind of quality assurance documentation you may need.

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The following links could also be of some use:

EPA Requirements for QAPPs

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/r5-final.pdf>

Guidance for QAPPs

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5-final.pdf>

Guidance for Geospatial Data QAPPs

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5g-final.pdf>

Guidance for Modeling QAPPs

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5m-final.pdf>

Guidance on Choosing a Sampling Design for Environmental Data

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/g5s-final.pdf>

Guidance on Secondary Research Data QAPPs

<http://epa.gov/quality/qs-docs/found-data-qapp-rqts.pdf>

Visit www.epa.gov/quality for more information on the quality assurance documentation process.