



## National Environmental Information Exchange Network Grant Program

### Purpose

The Environmental Information Exchange Network (Exchange Network) Grant Program provides funding to states, territories, federally recognized Indian tribes, and tribal consortia to support their participation in the Exchange Network. The Exchange Network is an Internet- and standards-based, secure information network. It facilitates electronic reporting and the sharing, integration, analysis, and use of environmental and other types of information from many different sources. The Exchange Network will make it easier for EPA and its partners to obtain the timely, accurate information they need when making decisions concerning human health and the natural environment.

### Exchange Network Grant Program Priorities

- Establishment of new 2.0 Nodes
- Upgrade of existing Version 1.1 Nodes and data flows
- Network publishing
- Regulatory and national system data flows
- Network-wide innovative projects

### Background

FY2008 was the seventh year of the Exchange Network Grant Program. To date, EPA has awarded approximately \$130 million in grants to the states, tribes, and territories. All states and the District of Columbia, 4 territories, and 53 tribes have received grants and have been involved in the development of the Exchange Network. As of October 2008, the Exchange Network Grant Program has contributed to the development of all 50 state, 8 tribal and one territory Exchange Network Nodes with additional Nodes currently under development.

In September 2008, EPA posted the solicitation notice for the FY 2009 Exchange Network Grants Program at [www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/grants/](http://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/grants/) and a brief announcement on <http://www.grants.gov>. States, territories, federally recognized Indian tribes, and tribal consortia are eligible to apply. Applicants



### For More Information

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could submit proposals using components from one or more of the four groups of assistance activities:

- **Infrastructure** – supports the development or upgrade of information management and technology capabilities (e.g., development and testing of nodes or node clients) and tools to participate in the Exchange Network;
- **Data Exchange, Analysis and Integration** – supports the development of the capability and the exchange of data through the Exchange Network;
- **Mentoring, Planning and Training** – supports activities such as mentoring other partners on the Exchange Network, planning activities that support the Exchange Network, and developing training materials and conducting training on specific topics related to the Exchange Network; and
- **Collaboration** – supports the planning, development, and implementation of collaborative, multi-partner, innovative projects that demonstrate the value of the Exchange Network.

## Achievements

- **Water Quality Exchange (WQX)** - Access to comprehensive water quality information is indispensable for managing and protecting water resources. However, timely and accurate information can be difficult to come by since water monitoring data are collected by a wide range of organizations with different information systems that are often incompatible. The U.S. EPA Office of Water worked with a group of states to overcome this data access problem by developing the WQX. WQX allows states, tribes, and other partners to store their water quality information in any format or database they choose. The standards and simplicity of WQX are already paying enormous dividends. Current contributors to the STORET warehouse are working with EPA to transition away from using the distributed database in favor of the simpler WQX model. Most importantly, new contributors are joining the WQX fold and filling gaps where data was previously unavailable. For example, the state of Wisconsin has added 18,500 monitoring locations and over 1.6 million results since implementing WQX. Similarly, Texas added 8,500 new monitoring locations and over 3.5 million results. Timelier and more comprehensive information is now at the ready to help water quality managers and the public make better decisions about our environment.
- **Beaches Monitoring Data Project**- This project, led by the New Jersey Department of Environmental Protection in partnership with Earth 911, uses state-of-the-art technology and the infrastructure of the Exchange Network to streamline beach monitoring and notification processes. The system allows local water quality monitors to record sampling results on handheld Personal Digital Assistants and wirelessly upload them to New Jersey's data management system. Laboratories quickly and securely add sample results to data records over the Internet. Using the sampling and monitoring results, the system makes recommendations to agency or department officials on whether to order beach closures.

## For More Information

Visit EPA's Exchange Network Web Site: <http://www.epa.gov/exchangenetwork/>