

Feedback from interviews with Clean Marina Coordinators during the development of the Alaska Clean Harbors program (2009)

Clean Marina programs are diverse in how they are run and where they are housed. Sea Grant, state environmental agencies, and marine trade associations are the most common entities that are involved in running Clean Marina programs. Each stakeholder has their own strengths and interests in the program. Sea Grant is able to take advantage of wide-ranging education and outreach opportunities with boaters and marina operators, state agencies can work to increase regulatory compliance, and marine industry representatives can show good self-management and in some cases reduce the risk of increased regulations and permitting requirements.

Advisory Committees are invaluable to help run the program. No matter where the Clean Harbors program is housed, a Marine Technical Advisory Committee should be formed that will help to oversee certifications and any changes to the program over time. Committees are often comprised of program partner representatives, marina operators, marina customers/boaters, and experts from relevant fields of work.

Involvement by regulatory agencies is helpful, but should be carefully moderated.

State regulatory agencies are key partners in most Clean Marina programs. They understand the relevant regulations and can help advise program staff on how to proceed with compliance assistance where necessary. A good relationship between the Clean Harbors program and the regulatory authorities will be important. Open communication between entities will allow for an effective Clean Harbors program that can be helpful for harbormasters trying to navigate the regulatory landscape and avoid fines. There is paranoia, however, when regulatory agencies are too closely involved with Clean Marina programs. In Connecticut, for example, new state regulations on treating boat pressure wash water have scared marina operators away from participating in the program for fear of being fined for non-compliance. New Jersey has 2 part-time Sea Grant employees who work as the public face of the New Jersey Clean Marina program. Although this program is housed within the NJ Dept. of Environmental Protection, Sea Grant oversees marina outreach to avoid a conflict between marina owners and regulators.

Although 'ideal' budgets are not often met, Clean Marina programs are affordable and can be continued with strong partnerships despite budget cuts. Most of the programs we spoke with had experienced recent budget cuts, or were entirely lacking dedicated funds. Having a group of partners committed to the program helps to share the burden of limited funding through in-kind support and cost sharing. Overall, Clean Marina programs are low-budget programs that provide extensive resources across the states in which they operate.

BMP Checklists and Guidebooks can, and probably will, change over time. It was stressed by program coordinators that having regular reviews of a program's BMP checklist and guidebook were important to stay current on any changes, especially in regulations.