

Instructions for Entering Vision Metric Priorities in ATTAINS

Version: 8/14/2024

The Vision Metric Priorities are due in ATTAINS **by Sept. 30, 2024**. The Priorities should cover any Assessment Unit / Parameter combinations that you plan to address with an Action/Plan (i.e., TMDL, 4B, Alternative, or Protection Approach) from Oct 1, 2024 – Sept. 30, 2026. This period covers Federal Fiscal Years 2025-2026.

The Priorities Batch Upload Template is available on the ATTAINS public website under the Batch Upload section. We do not pull forward previous Priorities. You must add any Priorities you want to use through the Priority Batch Upload template.

EPA expects that states, territories, and authorized Tribes will upload their priorities. Users with **Actions Data Entry** or **Actions Administrator** permissions may upload Priorities. However, if you need assistance, an EPA Actions Administrator or EPA Actions Reviewer for your Organization may assist you with uploading your Priorities into ATTAINS. You may also contact the ATTAINS Helpdesk for assistance (attains@epa.gov).

Instructions

1. Fill out the Priorities Batch Upload Template, paying attention to the validation rules. All three columns are required.
2. Save the Priorities data entry tab as a .csv (comma separated value) file on your computer and remember where you saved it. The template has an Export tab that will create the file for you in the folder where you have stored the template. It will overwrite the existing priorities.csv file in that folder, so change the file name of the .csv if you want to keep multiple versions of the priorities.csv files (ex: priorities_1.csv, priorities_2.csv, etc.).
3. Once you are notified that the Priorities module is available for data entry in ATTAINS, login to ATTAINS and go to the Priorities module.
 - a. From the Priority Cycle Selection drop-down list, select the Priority Cycle: **2024**. (This is because they are being entered in 2024.)
 - b. **Upload the file: Go to the Menu button → select the Upload Priorities option** and upload the priorities.csv file (or whatever you have named the .CSV file).
4. Notes:
 - a. The Priorities module may be slow to load the page initially. Please be patient. It needs to pull and join data from multiple locations to calculate the catchment sizes and find corresponding Actions.
 - b. You may either use the Priorities Batch Upload or start from an exported Priorities file. If you start from an exported Priorities file, ATTAINS will read and upload the first three columns (Assessment Unit ID, Parameter Name and Expected Progress), and ignore the other columns in the uploaded file because those additional columns are calculated fields.

- c. There are tooltips available to explain most of the data fields in the Priorities module. The fields at the top of the page have clickable information (“i”) icons. To see the tooltips for the columns of the Priorities List table, mouse over the column names.
 - d. Please focus on loading your Priorities (Assessment Unit ID, Parameter, Expected Progress). Do not worry about the weighted size or commitment size yet because they may change. EPA is updating to a new geospatial fabric for the Vision Metric period, so the underlying catchments associated with an Assessment Unit may change. Please contact the ATTAINS Helpdesk if you have questions regarding changing catchment sizes.
5. **You may make changes to the Priorities as often as you like through Sept. 30, 2024.** After that, the Priority entry period will be closed. The list of Priorities in ATTAINS as of Oct. 1, 2024, will be used for the Vision Metric.

Batch Upload

For the FY25-26 Vision Metric, Priorities will be entered from scratch. Existing Priorities will not be carried forward in ATTAINS. Therefore, if you want to include existing Priorities as part of the FY25-26 Vision Metric, please include them in the Priorities Batch Upload Template.

The Priorities Batch Upload will work as a **Replace** function, similar to other modules in ATTAINS. It is good practice to upload all Priorities for all Assessment Unit IDs at one time when making edits, so that all your data is in one file.

- Replace looks at the Assessment Unit IDs in the uploaded file, deletes any existing Priorities for the same Assessment Unit ID and then replaces it with only the data in the uploaded file. Therefore, if you need to edit Priorities for an Assessment Unit, you must upload all Priority records pertaining to that Assessment Unit ID simultaneously.
- Replace should not touch any Priority Assessment Unit IDs that are excluded from the uploaded file.
- Once a Priority is uploaded into ATTAINS, the User Interface allows deletion of an individual Priority row, if necessary, up until the Priority data entry period closes.

Required Information

The following three pieces of information are required for each Priority:

- **Assessment Unit ID**
- **Parameter Name:** This refers to the Parameter from the **Assessments** module that will be addressed by an Action/Plan.
 - For TMDL Actions: The Priority Parameter must match **either the Pollutant OR the Addressed Parameter** field of the TMDL Action.
 - For non-TMDL Actions (such as Advance Restoration Plans or Protection Plans): The Priority Parameter must match the Addressed Parameter field (because there is no Pollutant field in non-TMDL Actions).

- Example 1: Let's say the Priority was "NUTRIENTS" for Assessment Unit "AU_1". If the water had a Cause Parameter of "NUTRIENTS" at the time of the Assessment, but the TMDL was written for the Pollutant of "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL", then the Pollutant in the Action would be "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL". To get credit for the metric, "NUTRIENTS" needs to be listed as either the Pollutant or one of the Addressed Parameters in the Action.
 - Priority: "AU_1" for "NUTRIENTS", with an Action to be "Complete" by the end of the two-year period.
 - Assessment module: Parameter = "NUTRIENTS", for AU_1
 - Actions module:
 - Pollutant = "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL" for AU_1
 - Addressed Parameters:
 - "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL" for AU_1 and
 - "NUTRIENTS" for AU_1
- Example 2: Let's say the Assessments module listed both "NUTRIENTS" and "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL" as causes of impairment for AU_2. Then, either parameter can be used as a Priority. So, the Priority could be "AU_2" for "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL", with an Action to be "In Progress" by the end of the two-year period.
 - Priority: "AU_2" for "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL", with an Action to be "In Progress" by the end of the two-year period.
 - Assessment module: Parameter = "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL", for AU_2
 - Actions module:
 - Pollutant = "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL" for AU_2
 - Addressed Parameters:
 - "PHOSPHORUS, TOTAL" for AU_2 and
 - "NUTRIENTS" for AU_2
- Example 3: Let's say the Assessments module listed "ALUM IN SEDIMENT" as a cause of impairment for AU_3.
 - Priority: "AU_3" for "ALUM IN SEDIMENT", with an Action to be "In Progress" by the end of the two-year period.
 - Assessment module: Parameter = "ALUM IN SEDIMENT", for AU_3
 - Actions module:
 - Pollutant = "ALUMINUM" for AU_3
 - Addressed Parameter:
 - "ALUMINUM"
 - Note: "ALUMINUM" is not an exact match for "ALUM IN SEDIMENT" so the Priorities module would not match this Action with the Priority. Therefore, this example would not get credit in the Priorities module. Either the Pollutant or the Addressed Parameter in the Action must exactly match the Priority Parameter for the Assessment Unit. In this situation, adding an additional Addressed Parameter of "ALUM IN

SEDIMENT” to the Action would resolve the problem and allow the Priority to receive credit.

- **Expected Progress:** This is asking whether you anticipate having an Action/Plan (i.e., TMDL, 4B, Alternative, or Protection Approach) “In Progress” or “Complete” by Sept. 30, 2026.
 - Note: For purposes of the measure:
 - The Action/Plan must be entered in ATTAINS to get credit.
 - Creating a Draft plan in ATTAINS or Submitting it to EPA in ATTAINS counts as “In Progress” and earns half credit.
 - Once EPA Approves/Accepts the Action/Plan in ATTAINS, then it counts as “Complete” and earns full credit.
 - Please refer to the Computational Guidance for more information regarding how the measure is calculated.

Validation Rules

The Priorities should be based on your state’s most recent Assessment Cycle in ATTAINS that has reached at least “Organization Final Action – Submittal” status. If that cycle has reached “EPA Interim Final” or “EPA Final Action” status, please use that version instead of the “Organization Final Action – Submittal” status for that Assessment Cycle. If your most recent cycle has not reached Organization Final Action – Submittal status, then use the previous Assessment Cycle.

1. **The Assessment Unit ID must exist and have an Assessment Unit Status of “Active” in that Assessment Cycle snapshot, or it cannot be used as a Priority.** If the Assessment Unit ID does not exist in that cycle, or is not Active in that cycle, ATTAINS will give an Error message.
 - a. **Example Error message:** "Assessment Unit ID (AU_1) either does not exist in the most recent Assessment Cycle or was not Active for that cycle. Priority Assessment Unit IDs must exist with an Active status in the most recent Assessment Cycle."
 - b. Note: Errors must be resolved before you can continue with the upload. Remove the row containing the affected Assessment Unit ID from the Priority Batch Upload file and then try uploading the file again.
2. **The Priority Parameter should be associated with the Assessment Unit ID in the Assessments module for that Assessment Cycle snapshot.** However, ATTAINS allows for the possibility that the state wants to use a priority Parameter that they did not include in their most recent Integrated Reporting Cycle, such as when they want to write a Protection plan on a water.

ATTAINS will provide a **Warning message** (instead of an Error message) if the uploaded priority Parameter does not exist in the most recent Assessment Cycle. A Warning message allows you to proceed without changes, but it calls attention to potentially incorrect Parameter names in the Priorities. The Warning message is designed to help you double-check whether you selected the correct Parameter name, because the entered priority Parameter doesn’t exist on that Assessment Unit ID in the Assessments module.

Therefore, if your state plans to write a TMDL, Advance Restoration Plan, or Protection Plan for

a Parameter that was not listed in your most recent Assessment Cycle, you may enter that in the Priorities module. (You do not need to modify your Assessment Cycle to add the Parameter first, regardless of the type of Plan that will be written.)

- a. **Example Warning message:** "Parameter (ALUMINUM) does not exist on Assessment Unit ID (AU_1). The Parameter should exist on the Assessment Unit ID in the most recent cycle for most Plan Types, though that is optional for a Protection Plan."
 - b. Note: Warnings call attention to issues like potentially incorrect Parameter names on an Assessment. **Warnings will not stop you from continuing with the upload or using that Parameter in the Priorities.** Check your upload file to ensure you are using the Parameter you intended. If you entered the Parameter you intended, then you may proceed with the upload, despite the Warning.
3. **Priority Assessment Unit IDs must have geospatial data in ATTAINS to count towards the measure.** Priority Assessment Unit IDs that are missing either geospatial data or catchment associations will receive zero size, so they cannot count towards the measure. To ensure that your Priority waters will count, please double-check that they are not on the list of Assessment Units Missing GIS Data.
 - a. **Example Warning message:** "Assessment Unit ID AU_01 is missing GIS or catchments and will not receive a size for the metric. Review the Assessment Units Missing GIS Data report for more information."
 - b. To check the report for more details (i.e., determine whether GIS, catchments, or both are missing), go to the Reports module.
 - i. Select Report Type: Assessment Units.
 - ii. Select Report: Assessment Units Missing GIS Data.
 - c. Any Assessment Unit IDs on that list are missing geospatial features (GIS) and/or catchment associations (CIP). Assessment Units need both GIS and CIP to receive a size for the measure.
 - i. If you see waters that have GIS but are missing CIP, contact the ATTAINS Helpdesk (attains@epa.gov) to ask when the catchment indexing (CIP) will be completed for your state.
 - ii. If you see waters that are missing GIS: Geospatial data are processed when states submit GIS data for an Assessment Cycle. To minimize costs, EPA typically limits geospatial processing to once per state per Assessment cycle. If your state has not submitted GIS for the most recent Assessment cycle and you would like to provide GIS for processing that may affect your Priority waters, please contact the ATTAINS Helpdesk (attains@epa.gov) to discuss options. Note: Given contract limitations and timing, there may be limited capacity to process additional geospatial data prior to the Sept. 30 Priority deadline.
4. Make sure your Priority file includes only one record for each Assessment Unit ID / Addressed Parameter combination. (Do not submit two rows for the same AU ID / Addressed Parameter

combination in the same file, where one row lists the Expected Progress as “In Progress” and another row lists the Expected Progress as “Complete”.) ATTAINS will not prevent you from uploading the data, so please double-check your Priorities before the Priority data entry period closes Sept. 30 and delete any extraneous rows.