

## **Grant Funding for Clean Energy Projects**

### **At Drinking Water and Wastewater Facilities in Massachusetts**

PON-ENE-2014-028

#### **QUESTIONS & ANSWERS**

Posted 3/14/14

Q: We would like to know if we can apply for funding for the same project (solar PV at our WWTP) that we are planning on using Green Communities grant monies for?

A: Yes, Green Communities grant funds may be used in combination with this funding opportunity. Note that only Green Communities designation grant funds (and not competitive grant funds) may be used on solar PV at this time. Any solar PV funded through this PON must be owned by the municipality or district and funding is limited to 15% of the total cost for the system at the facility.

Q: We have some energy efficiency measures that we plan to complete at the same site as the solar PV project at the WWTP. Can we apply both for funds to do the energy efficiency work and the solar?

A: Yes, applications may include both energy efficiency and renewable energy projects but they must be included in a single application.

Q: Our DW facility recently completed many energy efficiency projects at great expense to our town. Might the town be eligible for a grant under PON-ENE-2014-028 to offset the costs of these recently completed projects?

A: No, PON-ENE-2014-028 may not be used to reimburse for clean energy projects that have already been completed.

Q: What stage may a project be at and still be eligible for funding? If we have gone out to bid and selected a contractor, would my project still be eligible?

A: To qualify for funding, a project must not have started its implementation. Procurement and vendor selection are ok before application and awards.

Q: We have a one-month project that needs to be completed by the end of June. Would this funding opportunity move quickly enough for us to receive grant funds and still complete our project by the end of June?

A: We anticipate that contracts will not be signed until early to mid-June. Thus, a one-month project receiving grant funds will not have enough time to be completed by the end of June.

Q: Our town is interested in applying for this grant. Would we be able to use this grant to install solar powered aerators at one of our reservoirs?

A: As a type of clean energy, solar aerators are eligible under this PON as long as it has been recommended by a third-party with acceptable documentation that includes an estimate for potential energy savings or generation along with a total estimated project cost. An additional

opportunity for solar-powered aerators will be released from DOER in the near future under the Municipal Resilience Grant Program.

Q: Are projects funded through this DW WW Clean Energy Grant Program (PON-ENE-2014-028) also eligible to apply for the upcoming Municipal Resilience Grant Program? Can we apply for and potentially receive grant funds from both programs for the same project? If not, which of the two grant programs will have the higher grant ceiling and would therefore be more beneficial to SESD member communities?

A: Yes, if a project meets the eligibility criteria for both the Clean Energy Grant Program and the Municipal Resilience Grant Program, then a facility may apply for, and potentially be awarded funds from, both funding opportunities for the same project. (Note that the Municipal Resilience Grant Program has not yet been released.) We do expect that the Resiliency Grant Program will have higher grant ceilings but will also have specialized project requirements for resiliency, for example islanding ability and black-start capability.

Q: Our town is planning on removing/decommissioning its largest wastewater pump station and replacing it with a gravity sewer system. The pump station currently has two 600 gpm pumps and a 125 KW generator. Will the Town qualify for the grant because they are removing pumps and an emergency generator and not replacing these inefficient power sources by installing a non-electrical solution (gravity sewers) to transport wastewater?

A: If the town has a study recommending this project that quantifies the amount of energy savings that would be gained, then yes, this project is eligible to apply for funding through this PON.

Q: Are state agencies and authorities eligible entities under this PON?

A: Eligibility is defined as "municipal facilities or districts treating or pumping DW or WW." The "municipal" applies to both facilities and districts, therefore state authorities are ineligible for this funding opportunity.

Posted 3/24/14

Q: If the actual invoices turn out to be MORE than the grant awarded (due to unexpected but required change orders), can we pay out more than the grant amount?

A: All applicants should try with their utmost effort to secure an accurate cost estimate for their projects. However, should a project unexpectedly exceed its awarded cost due to unforeseen complications, DOER would review the specific situation and its circumstances on a case-by-case basis. There are no guarantees that any additional funding would be granted.

Posted 3/28/14

Q: We are looking to replace old inefficient 60HP sewer pumps with new efficient models. We already have VFDs. Will the grant pay for the pump upgrade? If so, what kind of documentation do we need?

A: If your facility can demonstrate energy savings by replacing the pumps, then this project would be eligible. For pumps, this would likely involve looking at the operating point on the old pump

curves vs new pump curves. You need documentation from a third party regarding the projected energy savings. You also will need to submit evidence of applying for an efficiency incentive through Mass Save if you are served by an investor-owned utility; this could be an email stating that the measure qualifies or a copy of an application.

Q: Is an estimated Mass Save energy efficiency incentive included in an energy audit sufficient documentation to apply for this funding opportunity?

A: No, the application must include evidence of communication between the applicant and their Mass Save contact (electric or gas utility representative) such as notice of receipt of application or a communication indicating that the proposed clean energy project(s) are likely to be eligible for a grant or incentive.

Q: Are municipal light plants eligible to apply for this grant opportunity?

A: Yes, facilities served by municipal light plants (MLP) are eligible to apply. If the MLP offers any efficiency incentives for the proposed project, please include this documentation in the application.

Posted 4/07/14

Q: We are planning to apply for over \$100,000, so not looking at the first come / first served funds. When can I submit my grant application for the DW / WW Clean Energy Grant? Can I do so before April 16th?

A: The PON states in the timeline that DOER will begin accepting all applications on April 16th. Therefore, even applications for >\$100,000 in grant funding that are being competitively evaluated must wait to submit their application until April 16-April 23.

Q: What time will applications first be accepted on April 16th, 2014 for this grant opportunity?

A: PON-ENE-2014-028 Clean Energy for DW and WW Facilities will accept applications **beginning at 9:00 am on April 16, 2014**. Any applications received prior to this time, even on April 16th, will be invalid and would need to be re-submitted to be considered for funding.

Q: We are working on a sewer extension project. Could we use this program for heat recovery at the plant in conjunction with the [sewer extension] upgrade project?

A: If the waste water heat recovery project at the plant has a third-party study quantifying the projected energy savings, then this project would qualify and could apply for funding under this grant opportunity. A sewer extension project in and of-itself does not qualify for funding unless quantifiable energy savings can be demonstrated.

Q: Our town is interested in applying for this grant, if applying for less than \$100,000 how important (is it mandatory) to have additional funding sources?

A: Having additional funding is not required if there is not additional funding available. If additional funding is available, we do require that applicants leverage all non-lended funding sources such as other grants, incentives or rebates.

Q: We have a pumping station that is being reconstructed and is currently underway. New energy efficient pumps and other efficiency measures are part of this project – are they eligible for this grant?

A: To qualify for funding, a project must not have started its implementation. Procurement and vendor selection are ok before application and awards.

Q: We have a pump station building designed for rooftop solar PV panels. Could we use this grant for the solar PV panels and switch gear? If we installed the solar PV system instead of an emergency generator, would that qualify as energy savings?

A: Facility-owned solar PV projects do qualify for funding to a maximum of 15% of the total cost for installations with a capacity of 200 kW or less under this grant opportunity. If the solar PV replacement of an emergency generator has a third-party study quantifying the projected energy savings that includes projected solar PV generation plus avoided energy usage by the generator, then this energy savings amount could be used in the grant application for the solar PV system.

Posted 4/11/14

Q: The application states that the evaluation criteria will include the project cost effectiveness (\$ Grant invested / MMBtu Saved). Is there a target level of Grant \$ / MMBtu saved that the DOER has established for this PON?

A: There is not a target level of Grant \$ / MMBtu that DOER has established, but this will be one of the evaluation criteria for applications requesting more than \$100,000 in grant funds.