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MassDEP's Official Answers to Questions Regarding the Boston Harbor Water Transportation Grant Opportunity

On October 21, 2024, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) posted the Boston Harbor Water Transportation Grant Opportunity Request for Response document. Written questions regarding the grant were accepted through November 6, 2024. MassDEP also received and answered questions at a virtual public information session on October 16, 2024.

Below are MassDEP's official answers to all written questions received by the November 6, 2024, deadline, as well as certain questions received during the public information session for which MassDEP believes answers in writing may be helpful to all potential grant applicants. To provide answers that are relevant to all potential grant applicants, note that MassDEP revised some questions to present them in a more generalized format than the originally submitted question.

Question 1: Would an application to provide education for Boston young adults to acquire a Merchant Mariner credential so that they may work as a captain on a harbor ferry be eligible to receive funding through this grant?

Answer 1: Applying funding toward education for Boston young adults to acquire a Merchant Mariner credential is not an eligible use of these grant funds. Providing funding to assist young adults earn a Merchant Mariner credential is a laudable goal but does not enhance public access to the Boston Harbor waterfront in a sufficiently direct manner. Under this proposed project, the primary benefit would be to the individuals obtaining their credentials, with only the possibility of an indirect benefit to the general public.

Question 2: Can we apply for funding under the cultural/educational activity portion of the grant to support repairs and upgrades to the ferry that transports students to/from the Boston Harbor Islands?

Answer 2: Maintenance and repairs to water transportation vessels used to transport students on Boston Harbor for educational purposes is an eligible project. Such a project would be eligible to

receive funding from the Cultural or Educational Activities on Boston Harbor portion of funding so long as the vessel being repaired is used for water transportation on Boston Harbor and supports cultural or educational activities.

Question 3: Is there a limit to how much funding we can request, or an average amount for what you might anticipate these awards to look like?

Answer 3: There is no limit to how much funding an applicant may request. However, applicants should note the maximum amounts available at each Funding Site and for Cultural or Educational Activities on Boston Harbor. See Section 1.F of the Request for Response. While MassDEP may award up to the full amount available for each Funding Site, the MassDEP review committee reserves the right, in its discretion, to award smaller amounts and may elect not to award the total funding currently available during this grant opportunity.

MassDEP does not have an anticipated amount of funding that will be awarded to each grantee. Grant awards will be made based on the evaluation criteria identified in Section 3.A. of the Request for Response.

Question 4: What partnerships are permitted? Can a private company participate?

Answer 4: Applications may be submitted only by the Eligible Entities listed in Section 1.D. However, applicants are permitted to collaborate with non-eligible entities (for example, a private company). The non-eligible entity may provide matching funds that help fund the proposed project, or the non-eligible entity could provide an in-kind match that supports the proposed project, such as offering reduced-cost services to the Eligible Entity. If the applicant is partnering with another entity, the application should identify and describe the partnership and any match or other funding sources that will support the project. Applicants are not required to provide matching funds or an in-kind match, although a match is strongly preferred. All applicants are advised that grant award contracts will be executed with the Eligible Entity only, and only the Eligible Entity will be awarded grant funds.

Question 5: Can multiple grant requests be submitted and if so, should applications be separate, or can we apply for all grants in one request?

Answer 5: An applicant may apply for more than one grant. If the applicant proposes a single project seeking funding from more than one source or for more than one Funding Site, as identified in Sections 1.E and 1.F of the Request for Response, the applicant should submit a single application that clearly identifies the amount requested from each source of funding and how the proposed project supports water transportation at each Funding Site and/or is eligible for the Cultural or Educational Activities on Boston Harbor portion of funding.

If the applicant seeks grant funding for multiple distinct projects, then the applicant should submit separate, standalone applications, including separate application cover sheets, for each proposed project. Each standalone application must adhere to the requirements in the Request for Response, including the requirement not exceed ten (10) single-sided pages, not including the cover sheet and attached supporting documents (see Section 2.B of the Request for Response).

Question 6: How many awards does MassDEP anticipate giving? Will the entire \$2.5M be awarded this year?

Answer 6: MassDEP does not have a target number of awards it anticipates making. The Department may award the full amount of available funding, but reserves the right, in its discretion, to award smaller amounts and may elect not to award the total funding available during this grant opportunity.

Question 7: Will you consider awarding funds to be used after December 31, 2026?

Answer 7: All work funded by an award from this grant must be completed on or before December 31, 2026. Projects that continue beyond that date may still receive funding through this grant, but the use of grant award funds is limited to work completed on or before December 31, 2026. Please see Section 1.I of the Request for Response.

Question 8: May we apply for multi-year project funding?

Answer 8: Eligible Projects could be proposed, existing, or completed projects, so long as the activities for which the Applicant seeks funding occurred on or after January 1, 2024. All work funded by an award from this grant must be completed on or before December 31, 2026. Also see the answer to Question 7 above.

Question 9: What are the geographic limits of the grant? Must applicants be located in these areas? What if you have to walk to a proposed site from one of the geographic areas or it is linked to existing land-based transportation?

Answer 9: Eligible applicants for this grant opportunity are any governmental, quasi-governmental or non-profit entity. Project eligibility is based on water transportation benefits at certain sites around Boston Harbor, not on where the applicant is based. See Section 1.E of the Request for Response regarding Eligible Projects.

Other than a proposed project seeking funding for Cultural or Educational Activities on Boston Harbor, to be eligible a project must support water transportation at one of the Funding Sites identified in Section 1.E of the Request for Response. In supporting water transportation at a Funding site, the geographic scope for a proposed project will depend on the nature of the

funding request. Applicants should demonstrate in their applications how their proposed project meets the eligibility requirements set forth in the Request for Response.

Question 10: What if grantees are working in places that they do not own (for example, shelters at a pier)?

Answer 10: Grantees are responsible for making necessary arrangements with the property owner.