

Culvert Replacement Municipal Assistance

For the Replacement of Ecologically High Value Culverts

FY21 Grant Program - Questions and Answers

1. **Are culvert rehabilitation projects considered eligible if they incorporate some (but not all) of the stream crossing standards?**
 - a. *Only projects that intend to meet the goals of the Massachusetts Stream Crossing Standards will be considered for funding.* In-kind replacements and/or slip lining projects are not eligible projects under this grant program. Incorporating these Standards into culvert replacement designs will improve river function and access for fish and wildlife, and will reduce hazards to public safety, such as flooding, culvert failure, and road washout. Interested communities should refer to an overview of the Stream Crossing Standards in Appendix A of the RFR.

Site constraints may limit the ability to fully meet all six of the important design variables outlined in the Stream Crossing Standards. The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) considers the feasibility for and extent to which the proposed project will improve ecological function at the site. For example, DER will weigh whether the new stream crossing will (a) allow natural stream processes to occur, (b) allow the channel to naturally adjust and change over time, and (c) improve passage for fish and wildlife. DER will consider the severity of the existing barrier to fish passage and the expected magnitude of improvements of the proposed project.

2. **Will the grant pay for engineering and environmental permitting? Or is the grant only allowed for construction? What is the total available funds per project?**
 - a. Yes, the grant program provides funding towards any culvert replacement project phase. Typical project phases include *planning and field data collection (i.e new projects), engineering and design, permitting, and construction.* **Applicants should only apply for funding for the portion of the project that can be completed by June 30, 2021.** Most culvert replacement projects need more than one fiscal year to complete the design and engineering, permitting and construction. Awards may range from \$25,000 to \$200,000, depending on the project phase and work proposed. Construction awards are not anticipated to exceed \$200,000. See pages 2-4 of the RFR for additional details.

- 3. Could a project qualify for construction funding considering it has received design/permitting funding already?**
 - a. Municipalities awarded funding through the CRMA grant program in a previous year are eligible to apply for a new project or apply for continued work on the previously awarded project.

- 4. I was curious if a culvert had failed over a coldwater fishery and the replacement of such a culvert brought the infrastructure up to stream crossing standards, would this be a competitive project? And if the stream is a tributary of an ACEC and interests of NHESP.**
 - a. The Division will evaluate the proposed culvert replacement's benefit to the environment based on the existing site condition, proximity of the culvert to important habitat, available ecological data, information from the Massachusetts Wildlife Climate Action Tool and information provided by the applicant. Applicants should review the evaluation criteria outlined on pages 7-9 of the RFR and *Appendix C: DER's Tools to Evaluate Environmental Benefits for Culvert Replacements* for additional details on how environmental benefits are evaluated by DER.

- 5. How do I access the application and submit on-line?**
 - a. Application forms and related grant materials can be found on our website <https://www.mass.gov/how-to/culvert-replacement-municipal-assistance-grant-program>. To apply applicants will need to complete the Application Form and then submit via an online submission portal (<https://www.mass.gov/forms/culvert-replacement-grant-application>). Applicants can refer to pages 6-7 for additional application submission instructions. To make arrangements for emailing files exceeding the file size limit or if you have trouble with your online submission, please contact **Ryan Barney**, Program Assistant at Ryan.Barney@mass.gov or 617-626-1545.

- 6. If the proposed culvert design will have an opening ratio of 0.80 where the minimum recommended value in the Stream Crossing Standards is 0.82, would this be acceptable to apply for the grant?**
 - a. Site constraints may limit the ability to fully meet all six of the important design variables outlined in the Stream Crossing Standards. In these cases, the projects are still eligible to apply. The Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) considers the feasibility for and extent to which the proposed project will improve ecological function at the site. For example, DER will weigh whether the new stream crossing will (a) allow natural stream processes to occur, (b) allow the channel to naturally adjust and change over time, and (c) improve passage for fish and wildlife. DER will consider the severity of the existing barrier to fish passage and the expected magnitude of improvements of the proposed project.

7. **(The RFR) stated all construction needs to be done in FY21 which isn't possible because we haven't started the planning (phase 1) which is estimated at \$75,000. Could we get some guidance?**

- a. Applicants may apply for any phase of a culvert replacement project based on what the project needs, e.g. a new project might apply to complete field data collection, design and engineering tasks. **Applicants should only apply for the work that can be completed by June 30, 2021.**

8. **When looking at budget narrative, would you recommend a specific cost estimate for Field Data Collection? Are there any other resources I could use to help determine this estimate?**

- a. We have included a sample ***Bid Request for the Culvert Replacement Field Data Collection Phase*** on our website (<https://www.mass.gov/doc/bid-request-template-culvert-replacement-field-data-collection/download>). This outlines the typical tasks included in the initial phase of a culvert replacement project and can be used to generate and request cost estimates. For new projects, applicants should indicate in the budget narrative how cost estimates were generated (e.g. based on other projects in town, engineer cost estimates, etc.). For more advanced projects, applicants should include supporting documentation (e.g. Engineering Opinion of Probable Costs, Construction Bids, etc.).

Awards for the field data collection phase for a new project have typically ranged from \$25,000-\$35,000 depending on the complexity of the project (e.g. number of utilities or nearby infrastructure). Awards for design and engineering have typically ranged from \$40,000-\$90,000 depending on the complexity of the project and whether the proposed scope of work included permitting tasks. Construction awards are not anticipated to exceed \$200,000.