



# **DRINKING WATER SUPPLY PROTECTION GRANT PROGRAM**

## **GRANT INFORMATION SESSION WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 11, 2024**

**Executive Office of  
Energy and Environmental Affairs  
Division of Conservation Services**

# Program Goals

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- Protect and conserve the quality and quantity of public drinking water supply sources in the Commonwealth.
- Acquisition of land in DEP approved drinking water supply protection areas or, if a planned future wells or intakes, estimated protection areas.
- Encourage compatible public passive recreation use.



# Grant Program Details

- ❑ **Maximum Award:** \$350,000
- ❑ **Reimbursement Rate:** 60%
- ❑ **Application Deadline:** 3:00PM on Friday, March 8, 2024

Contracts can be issued for FY 2024 or FY 2025. Most applications are anticipated to request funding in FY25.



# Grant Program Eligibility

- ❑ **Eligible applicants:** municipality, municipal water suppliers, water or fire districts.
- ❑ **Eligible projects:** purchase of land in fee simple, a conservation restriction (CR) or watershed preservation restriction (WPR).





# Eligible Projects

- Land that protects **existing** wells or reservoirs.
  - ▣ 50% or more of the land must be located in DEP approved Zone I (pre-1990)/II/III (for groundwater) or Zone A/B/C (for surface water) or an Interim Wellhead Protection Area (IWPA).
  - ▣ Projects with >50% in Zone II are ranked highest.
- Land that protects **future** wells or reservoirs.
  - ▣ Must be in an area identified to be of value for anticipated future water supply through an appropriate process and with documentation included in a new source review application. (More information on page 3-4 of the Grant Bid document).



# Eligible Projects

- The goal is to conserve unprotected acreage.

## Projects cannot:

- ▣ Include any Zone I land designated *after* 1990 (*this acreage must be excluded from the project*).
- ▣ Be permanently protected under Article 97 or a CR/APR or WPR. (Chapter 61/61A/61B enrolled land is eligible.)
- ▣ Already be owned by the applicant.
- ▣ Already be owned by a 501 (c)(3) environmental or conservation organization unless it was purchased no earlier than December 14, 2023 with the sole intention of pre-acquiring for Grant purposes.

# Eligible Projects – Additional Notes

- Applicants may submit more than one application.
- Municipalities may apply on behalf of any public water supplier (PWS).
- Water supply land can be in another municipality.



# Eligible Expenses



- Property purchase (including fee, CR or WPR)
- Recording fees
- Title research & Certification
- Property survey / plan of land
- Baseline conditions report for CR (up to \$1,500)

Expenses can only be reimbursed after a grant award is finalized and contract has been executed.



# Grant Application

## **An application must include the following:**

- ▣ Appraisal report(s)
- ▣ Application form.
- ▣ Cover letter by authorized signatory (Selectboard Chair, Mayor etc.) authorizing the project manager to submit the grant
- ▣ Vote authorizing the acquisition for water supply protection
- ▣ Project narrative
- ▣ Maps
- ▣ NHESP letter
- ▣ A draft CR (or WPR) *if funding is requested for the purchase of a CR or WPR.*

# Appraisals

- **Parcels with estimated value of up to \$1 million:** A certified appraisal report (a restricted appraisal report is acceptable if <\$100,000).
- **Parcels with an estimated value over \$1 million:** Applicants strongly encouraged to obtain a second appraisal report, or review appraisal.
- Appraisals must not be dated more than one year prior to the grant deadline (not earlier than March 10, 2023)

*More information on page 5 of Grant Bid document.*

# Application evaluation

- In person site visit to verify project details
- Complete applications are scored by EEA & DEP review committee and ranked
- Grant funding recommendations are made to Secretary & Governor according to ranking





# Application evaluation

- **Demographics (11%)**
  - ▣ Population served
  - ▣ Environmental justice
- **Resource Management (17%)**
  - ▣ Existing water resource management / rate structure
- **Project Quality (72%)**
  - ▣ Project importance
  - ▣ Resource protection
  - ▣ Landscape conservation
  - ▣ Recreational opportunity
  - ▣ Applicant's stewardship capacity
  - ▣ Overall project quality
- **Bonus Points (4pts maximum)**
  - ▣ Community Compact Agreement
  - ▣ Drought Management Plan

# Additional Project Approvals

- Grant award constitutes preliminary DEP approval for drinking water land acquisition.
- Must finalize approval through public hearing process.
  - ▣ Can take up to 6 weeks to complete
  - ▣ Abutters must be notified, a public notice posted.
  - ▣ Contact the Drinking Water Program at your regional office for instructions.
  - ▣ Final approval letter issued; required for reimbursement.

# Additional Project Approvals

- If you are **purchasing a CR** (or WPR) with grant funds:
  - ▣ See DEP template for groundwater or surface water protection CRs
  - ▣ Submit to DEP for preliminary review prior to DCS review and approval.
- If you are **purchasing land** but a **CR is required** to satisfy CPA or other requirements:
  - ▣ See DCS template for CRs and submit directly to DCS.
  - ▣ DCS will coordinate review with DEP.

*See page 10 of Grant Bid document.*



# Project timeline & procedures

- ❑ Submit application (Deadline: March 8, 2024)
- ❑ Site visit (scheduled in March/April)
- ❑ Grant awards are announced (July/August?)
- ❑ Applicant receives grant contract materials
- ❑ Applicant ensures votes have been secured
- ❑ Applicant initiates DEP approvals
- ❑ Applicant submits CR for DEP/DCS review/preliminary approvals
- ❑ Applicant pursues due diligence (title, survey, etc.)
- ❑ Purchase property
- ❑ Complete project and submit for reimbursement

*See page 10 of Grant Bid document.*

# Grant Contact



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# Questions?

