Can you clarify that the requested file naming convention should reflect the municipality that is applying, not necessarily the municipality in which the property is located? 
Yes, file names should reflect the name of the applicant, this may differ from the municipality in which the property is located. As a reminder, the file naming convention is, “[Name of municipality]_[Shorthand version of project title]_[Name of attachment from attachment checklist]_DWSP”

How long does NHESP review for the requested comment letter require?
It is recommended that you contact NHESP to request this letter as soon as you are confident your agency/municipality will be pursuing an application. The NHESP letter is not required by the grant deadline, but your application must provide evidence (a copy of your request letter) that you have contacted NHESP to solicit the comment letter. Please follow the instructions in the BID Document when you request this letter.

If the applicant has unresolved orders with DEP at the time of application, will this preclude consideration of the application?
It’s recommended you reach out to DEP to determine what is required to achieve compliance. Per the grant’s BID document, “Applicants with outstanding enforcement orders may receive grant awards, with payment contingent upon their satisfactory resolution, at the sole discretion of EEA.”

Should the vote to authorize the project take place in same Fiscal Year as the grant award, or should it take place in advance of submitting the application?
Town meeting, city council, PWS Board authorization or any other vote required to apply to this grant and acquire land for water supply and land conservation purposes must take place prior to the grant contract being signed. Draft language of the vote must be included with application materials with the specific date of the proposed vote identified. If your community’s Town Meeting vote will happen prior to the grant application deadline or before the grant announcement, you will have to keep that timeline in mind.

If Community Preservation Act (CPA) funding is anticipated to fund a portion of project costs, does the Community Preservation Committee vote need to be before application is submitted?
The DWSP grant is a reimbursement grant. A grant contract cannot be authorized until all proposed funding has been approved and/or authorized. The vote does not have to happen prior to the application being submitted, but it would have to happen prior to the contract being signed as a successful Town Meeting or City Council vote is required for a contract to be signed.

Can grant funding be used for a public water district to purchase a wellhead from the municipality?
Although in certain circumstances a water district may be eligible to purchase municipal land, applications for projects that achieve protection for non-municipal owned land will be prioritized.
Is a comment letter from NHESP still required if the property is located within established NHESP designated lands (e.g. “Priority Habitat”)?
Yes. A NHESP comment letter is required for all proposed projects.

Can parcels in Connecticut be purchased with grant funding?
If you anticipate incorporating acreage outside Massachusetts, please contact the grant manager to review the details of the project further.

Does the appraisal affect the value of the grant award if different from the price negotiated with the landowner?
The grant award will reflect the lower of either the appraised value or negotiated purchase price.

Can you explain the difference between a conservation restriction (CR) and watershed protection restriction?
A Watershed Preservation Restriction (WPR) is a legal agreement between the Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) and a private landowner where the landowner sells or donates the development rights of their property to DCR for water supply protection purposes while keeping ownership of the land. A CR is an agreement between a willing landowner and qualified grantee (usually a municipal conservation commission, state agency or non-profit land trust) to achieve permanent conservation of their land for any of a diverse number of benefits.

Is the purchase of property with a term-limited deed restriction eligible for funding?
Yes. Only property protected under a permanent conservation restriction as defined under Sections 31-33 of Chapter 184 of the General Laws or protected under Article 97 of the Massachusetts Constitution are considered ‘permanently protected’.

Is there a specific template CR or template CR terms for drinking water supply protection?
If grant funds are used for the purchase of a CR, the CR must be reviewed and approved by DEP prior to the Secretary’s approval. A model CR with language designed to assist public water suppliers and municipalities in protecting land located in Zones A, B and C of surface waters used for public drinking water is available at: https://www.mass.gov/lists/groundwater-wellhead-protection-and-surface-water-supplies#forms,-checklists-and-templates

How competitive is the DWSP Grant Program?
This depends upon the total number of applications and fiscal year budget. Applications are reviewed and rated according to the evaluation criteria provided in the BID document, and ranked for funding. In some years, all eligible projects have been funded.

When do you anticipate awards to be announced?
Per the BID document, awards are announced approximately 120 days after the grant deadline.

What is the deadline to submit additional questions?
There is not a deadline to submit questions.

If the acquisition of a parcel will require a subdivision plan to exclude an existing residence, does the plan need approval prior to the application deadline or is a conditional approval acceptable? Conditional approval is fine.

Which division at DEP is best suited to address questions?
You may contact the Drinking Water Program at your MassDEP regional office with questions pertaining to drinking water supply jurisdiction or the public hearing process. You may find your regional office here: https://www.mass.gov/service-details/massdep-regional-offices-by-community.

Is the Drinking Water Supply Protection Grant Program always offered annually?
The DWSP grant is generally offered annually, but we cannot guarantee that it will be offered in any given year, as that decision is not made at the staff level.

Is there any preference awarded to applications that propose the purchasing of land in fee vs. purchasing a Conservation Restriction?
There is no preference for the acquisition of a CR vs. fee interest per the grant’s selection system.