

Notice of Funding Opportunity

Dam Removal Preliminary Design Services - Fiscal Year 2026



This is an announcement only

Overview

The Massachusetts Division of Ecological Restoration (DER) is seeking applications from Massachusetts municipalities for dam removal preliminary design studies. These studies, contracted and managed by DER, provide the agency with critical information for future ecological restoration planning and climate adaptation. Likewise, the studies help landowners and partners assess opportunities and constraints during early planning phases of potential aquatic habitat restoration projects. DER is interested in dam removal projects that are at an early stage of development and/or decision-making. Selected projects will be eligible to receive technical assistance from DER staff and DER-led contracted technical services from qualified vendors.

There is no obligation for a municipality to move forward with a selected dam removal project after the preliminary design work is complete. Nor is there any guarantee of further assistance from DER after this effort concludes.

Eligible Projects

DER is interested in dams that are 1) subject to Massachusetts Office of Dam Safety jurisdiction and 2) that are either municipally owned, or of interest to a municipality from a restoration or resiliency perspective. A municipality may apply on behalf of another entity for a dam located within the boundaries of the municipality, or for a dam that if removed, would provide direct benefits to the applying municipality. Landowner permission for dam / site access is required.

Municipalities may apply for more than one dam site but must submit an individual application for each. However, if a single dam site contains multiple associated structures they can be submitted as a single project application.

Eligible Applicants

Eligible applicants include Massachusetts municipalities, i.e. towns, cities, districts, and commissions. A municipality may apply for a dam that it owns or is owned by another entity on its behalf. Dams owned by others must be either located within the boundaries of the applying municipality or if removed would provide direct benefits to the applying municipality.

Request for Response (RFR)

The Request For Response (RFR) for this grant opportunity is expected to be released in Summer 2025, with a minimum of two weeks to apply. A formal written question and answer period will be held prior to the submission deadline. Status designation awards for selected dam sites will commence in state Fiscal Year 2026. A complete timeline will be included in the COMMBUYS RFR posting and on DER's website. DER reserves the right to designate additional dam sites for preliminary studies among applicants for the Request For Response if additional funding becomes available within state fiscal year 2026.

Applicants are solely responsible to monitor COMMBUYS for amendments to this announcement, if any, and for the complete RFR posting. Applicants may monitor the site through publicly accessible search and browse tools in addition to visiting DER's website:

<http://www.mass.gov/how-to/dam-removal-preliminary-design-services>