EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY & ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
Rebecca Tepper, Secretary
Grant Announcement
Request for Responses
Posting Date: September 15, 2025

Land Conservation Assistance Grant
FY2026

BID: BD-26-1042-ENV-ENV01-120952

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

A. PROPOSALS SOUGHT FOR: Financial assistance to municipalities, qualified 501(c)(3) conservation organizations, tribal governments, conservation districts, water or fire districts and/or public water suppliers ("qualified applicants") seeking to achieve permanent protection of land. Funding is available for consultant or contractor services to: 1) assist with preparing a grant application for funding to permanently protect land; 2) complete other tasks necessary to advance land protection transactions that accomplish permanent protection of land for conservation values and/or eligible outdoor recreation; 3) plan for the development or renovation of a park to facilitate the submission of a park development or renovation grant application to the Division of Conservation Services (i.e., PARC or LWCF); or 4) develop a municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan.

B. OVERVIEW AND GOALS: The Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EEA) protects, conserves, and restores the natural resources of the Commonwealth. This program assists municipalities, 501(c)(3) conservation organizations, tribal governments, conservation districts, water or fire districts or other public water suppliers in securing services necessary to achieve property transactions that will result in the permanent protection of land. Applications will be reviewed, and funding will be provided, to approved eligible applicants on a first-come, first-served basis.

This program is a component of the Healey-Driscoll Administration's goal of increasing the pace of land protection to address climate change, achieve the goals of the Clean Energy & Climate Plans for 2030 and 2050, and to improve access to greenspaces and outdoor recreational opportunities. It is part of a longstanding tradition of protecting the Commonwealth's rich natural heritage for generations yet to come.

C. ELIGIBLE PROJECTS: Municipalities, 501(c)3 conservation organizations, tribal governments, conservation districts, water or fire districts and other public water suppliers may seek funding to hire contractors or consultants for any, or a combination, of the following project types:

1.) Assist with preparing a grant application to municipal, state, or federal funding programs and private foundations, including DCS grant programs, for land conservation, acquisition of land for eligible outdoor recreation projects, or park development/renovation.
2.) Complete some or all of the steps involved in land transactions for the acquisition of a fee interest in land or a Conservation Restriction (CR), Watershed Protection Restriction (WPR), or Agricultural Preservation Restriction (APR) for the protection of conservation values (described in greater detail under "Eligible Projects", below.)

3.) Prepare a municipal Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Examples of eligible expenses include:	Examples of ineligible expenses include:
Due diligence costs: • Appraisals • Title examination • Environmental site assessments • Surveys • Legal fees associated with the acquisition (subject to EEA approval) Consultant services to assist with negotiation, drafting, or recording of real-estate transaction agreements: • Negotiating with landowner(s) • CR, WPR, APR, or Deed drafting • Baseline Document Report (BDR) preparation work Other project planning costs such as Recreational Site Development Plans and Cost Estimates for parks Work associated with the preparation of an Open Space and Recreation Plan	• Property acquisition* • Applicant staff salaries • Trail construction* • Signage • Stewardship or monitoring endowments • Equipment or goods *Expenses are eligible under other EEA grant programs.

D. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: Municipalities, qualified 501(c)(3) conservation organizations that have been formed for one of the purposes described in Section 4 of Chapter 180 of the General Laws, tribal governments, conservation districts, and water or fire districts and other public water suppliers. See further detail on eligible applicants in Section 2B.

E. APPLICATION DEADLINE: Applications are accepted on a rolling basis through **April 30, 2026**. Funding is available to approved eligible projects on a first-come, first-served basis until all allocated funds have been awarded. See further detail on the application deadline in Section 4.

F. FUNDING AVAILABILITY:
This grant reimburses 90% of approved project expenses up to the following amounts:

- **Grant application preparation assistance:** up to $5,000 per grant for grant writing/preparation; up to $5,000 per grant for appraisal (if applicable); up to $10,000 in total per grant application.
- **Open Space and Recreation Plan assistance:** up to $25,000 per plan.
- **Other eligible consultant/contractor services:** up to $50,000 per project.

Eligible applicants may apply for funding for one or more projects, services, or deliverables, including applications for regional projects with neighboring communities; however, the maximum award amount is $60,000 per applicant per grant round. See further detail on funding availability in Section 2C.

G. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: Applicants selected to receive grant funding must show expenditures for

the total cost of the service(s) rendered, per project (if applicable) to receive reimbursement under this program. See further detail on the budget requirements in Section 2D.

H. TOTAL ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACT(S): The contract period will begin on the date EEA executes the contract. Approved project costs must be expended by June 30, 2026 or June 30, 2027, as noted in the grant contract. See further detail on the duration of contracts in section 2E and 2F.

I. REGULATIONS, STATUTES, OR AUTHORIZATION GOVERNING THIS GRANT PROGRAM: Chapter 209 of the Acts of 2018, § 2A, 2000-7072 and Chapter 268 of the Acts of 2022.

J. CONTACT INFORMATION:

Darya Mattes, Resilient Lands Open Space Grants Administrator
Division of Conservation Services
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs
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Boston, MA 02114
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2. PERFORMANCE AND CONTRACT SPECIFICATIONS

A. ELIGIBLE PROJECT(S)/SCOPE(S) OF WORK: Funding is offered through this grant program for several different services and deliverables. Only work conducted during the grantee's contract period (after a contract is signed by EEA and prior to the contract deadline) is eligible for reimbursement.

1) **Costs for assistance with the preparation of a grant application** to municipal, state, or federal funding programs and/or private foundations, including DCS grant programs, for permanent land protection and/or eligible outdoor recreation projects. The specific grant to be pursued must be clearly identified. **If the grant program is not a DCS program, applicants are encouraged to contact the grant manager to determine eligibility before submitting an application.** Grant funded assistance may include:

   Drafting or development of funding application materials: This may include consultant services required to create funding applications including the development of suitable project maps, drafting CRs, APRs, WPRs, or compiling other materials necessary to ensure a complete proposal. Applicants should include a recent fee proposal for such consultant services as part of the application. Staff time contributed by the applicant is not eligible for funding, but may be applied toward the 10% match.

   Property appraisals as may be required by specific open space preservation grant opportunities: Applicants should consult the specific grant program to which they anticipate applying to ensure they understand applicable appraisal requirements. For DCS grant programs, generally one certified appraisal report is required. For DCS grants, the grantee must be the named client for the appraisal, and the appraisal must be prepared in accordance with EEA Specifications for Analytical Narrative Appraisal Reports, or the appraisal standards of the entity to which the applicant intends to apply for funding. EEA appraisal policy and specifications are available here. For guidance on Yellow Book appraisals for LWCF and

some other federal funding opportunities, visit this site and be in touch with Melissa Cryan to coordinate the process. A recent fee proposal for such appraisal services should be submitted, if available at the time of application, if funding for an appraisal is being sought.

2) **Services that advance transactions to secure a fee interest, CR, WPR, or APR for the permanent protection of land.** Transactions must support land values including open space, habitat protection, drinking water supply protection, farmland protection, climate resiliency, or eligible outdoor recreation. For an acquisition project to be eligible for assistance, the land associated with the proposed project must be currently unprotected. The application to hire a service provider must be accompanied by a cost estimate, including a description of the scope of services to be provided, hourly rate, and overall cost from a service provider. Land already protected for any purpose under Article 97 or a CR, APR or WPR is not eligible for funding for land protection.

Note: Those pursuing a grant to prepare an application for a DCS funding program should be aware that any property acquired with DCS grant assistance requires that the deed include terms confirming it is permanently protected. Specific deed language will be provided with receipt of grant contract.

All recreational properties acquired with this grant assistance must be open to the general public (not local residents only) for appropriate outdoor recreational use. For transactions that secure a CR, APR, or WPR on lands to which public access is either undesirable or infeasible, a clear and significant public benefit must be achieved through the protection of drinking water supply, farmland managed for food production, or forests that will be managed for climate benefit. Potential applicants to DCS programs should incorporate involvement of local Environmental Justice populations or other underserved communities in their project planning process.

To be reimbursed for grant application-preparation related costs, the grantee must submit with their request for reimbursement an eligible application to a DCS open space or recreation grant program or other eligible federal, state, municipal, or private foundation grant program.

3) Costs associated with writing municipal Open Space & Recreation Plans. To be reimbursed for OSRP-related costs, the grantee must submit with their request for reimbursement a completed Open Space & Recreation Plan, or the funded plan elements, if funding is not requested for a full plan. The request for reimbursement must include a letter from the DCS OSRP reviewer stating that the plan has received final approval in the case of grants awarded for a complete OSRP or that the funded plan elements are in compliance with the OSRP Planner's Workbook for individual elements. Preparation of an OSRP may include creating a new plan, updating an expired plan, or updating a plan that will expire by the end of the fiscal year for which the community is seeking funding. Consult the OSRP Workbook for details. Contact Melissa Cryan with specific questions about the OSRP process at melissa.cryan@mass.gov.

B. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS: This Bid is open to:

- **Massachusetts municipalities** that meet the following criteria:
  - No unresolved protected open space conversion issues consistent with EEA's Article 97 Policy (See Article 97 information here).
  - If seeking reimbursement for expenses related to submission of an eligible DCS grant application, municipalities must have an approved OSRP on file with the Division of Conservation Services by the grant application deadline.
  - Applicants are advised that compliance with Section 3A of MGL c. 40A (the MBTA

communities multifamily zoning requirement) will be considered when making grant award recommendations.

- **Qualified 501(c)(3) organizations** that have been formed for one of the purposes described in Section 4 of Chapter 180 of the General Laws
- **Tribal governments**
- **Conservation districts** in compliance with sections 19 through 24 inclusive of G.L. Chapter 21.
- **Water districts, fire districts and other public water suppliers or Selectboards acting as such.**

C. FUNDING AVAILABILITY, BUDGETING GUIDELINES & ALLOWABLE EXPENDITURES: This is a reimbursement program, and reimbursements may total up to 90% of the cost of all project types. Reimbursements will be based upon proof of expenditure, and are capped as follows:

- Grant writing and preparation: $5,000 per project
- Appraisal (for grant application): $5,000 per project
- Assistance with conservation transactions: $50,000 per project
- OSRP preparation: $25,000 per community

The maximum grant award is $60,000 per grant round. Applicants may submit multiple applications and/or bundle multiple projects in one application, as long as the total of all grants does not exceed $60,000. Work must be contracted with outside vendors to be eligible for reimbursement; in-kind services or applicant employee wages or salaries will not be reimbursed.

Funding is available in FY26 and project timelines may extend into FY27; all projects funded in this grant round must begin in FY26.

All contracts shall be subject to available funding, whether through the appropriation and authorization of sufficient funds or the receipt of sufficient revenues. If available funding ceases for any reason, a contract shall be deemed under suspension and contract performance must halt. A contractor will not be entitled to compensation for any performance provided during the period of contract suspension. EEA may lift the suspension if available funding is received. In the absence of foreseeable available funding, EEA may terminate the contract.

D. BUDGET REQUIREMENT: Applicants selected to receive grant funding will be required to submit documentation of expenditure for total approved project cost(s), as shown by canceled checks issued by the applicant, wire transfer statements, and/or a signed treasurer's statement.

E. PROJECT TERMS: If awarded, all projects will be required to abide by the Standard Commonwealth of Massachusetts Terms and Conditions. EEA does not guarantee that any contracts may result from this bid or that any particular funding level will be awarded. Contracts may be extended or otherwise amended at the sole discretion of EEA. Only costs incurred during the contract period are eligible for reimbursement.

F. ANTICIPATED DURATION OF CONTRACTS: All contracts for grant assistance will end on or before June 30, 2026 or 2027, depending on the timeline specified in the grant award.

G. DELIVERABLES, OWNERSHIP, AND CREDIT DUE: Technical assistance or services funded through this bid must be used to prepare an application to an eligible federal, state, or private foundation

grant program for conservation or outdoor recreation, or to facilitate the acquisition of land for conservation or eligible outdoor recreation purposes. EEA representatives must be invited to any public events sponsored by the applicant in celebration of a grant award.

H. REPORTING: Interim reports may be required at the discretion of the grant manager. Applicants receiving funding through this grant to prepare an eligible grant application must submit an eligible application to the intended grant program on or before the deadline of the grant program to which they plan to apply.

I. INVOICING: This is a reimbursement program. Applicants selected to receive funding will be required to execute a State Standard Contract prior to commencing work. A reimbursement billing form, which will be sent to Applicants with their contract, must be submitted with documentation of payment. If funding is split between two fiscal years, awardees will be required to request reimbursement separately for each fiscal year.

3. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

A. EVALUATION CRITERIA: This is a non-competitive grant; all eligible and approved applications will receive funding on a rolling basis, as funds remain available. If only a portion of listed costs are eligible and approved, EEA may award partial funding. Funding for grant assistance services is **not** contingent upon being selected to receive an eligible DCS or other grant award. EEA reserves the right to ask clarifying questions on applications prior to making a final award.

B. APPLICATION SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS:
New for FY26, EEA is pleased to announce the launch of our new, comprehensive Grants Management System (GMS), which can be found at **greenhub.mass.gov**. This system is designed to streamline the grant search and application process, allowing applicants to search, apply for, and manage EEA grants including those from DCS, MDAR, DCR, MassDEP, DFG, DOER, CZM, as well as the MVP program.

Users will need to create a login using MyMassGov, a secure service that allows members of the public to use a single account and password to sign in to all participating Massachusetts state services and applications. This user profile may require one or more days to receive verification. **Therefore, we encourage users to become familiar with this new GMS in advance of seeking to prepare a grant application.**

Please Note: Applications **must** be completed and submitted by an authorized employee or person formally affiliated with the applicant seeking the grant funds (e.g. an employee, commission member or formally designated volunteer). Applicants may authorize multiple users to create a login and submit grants on their behalf. However, this system does **not** presently support the preparation of grant applications by outside consultants or individuals with partner organizations.

New users will find more information about the GMS at https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-management-system-gms, and may reference the video tutorials provided on the GMS Help Page for specific instructions as they create a login.

To create an applicant profile:
Click on “Login to Applicant Portal”,

Select "Login/Register"
Select "Create a Business Account"
Follow the instructions provided.
For help, see EEA's Grant Management System User Guide or Instructional Videos.

Applications received after April 30, 2026 will not be accepted. It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify receipt of the application.

C. REQUIRED APPLICATION DOCUMENTS:

- ❑ The application form (online form to be completed in EEA's Grants Management System)
- ❑ A project budget that clearly shows the project costs, grant share, and match share (please use the template provided)
- ❑ A cost estimate for the work to be performed (supports the figures in the budget)
- ❑ Letter from applicant's CEO authorizing the application and naming a Project Manager as grant contact.
- ❑ A map showing the project location, for site-specific projects (not required for OSRP updates)

D. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED UPON APPROVAL FOR FUNDING: If selected, the Applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete a contract:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, filled out and signed by the Applicant, and accompanied by Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing Form
- For conservation organizations:
    - Commonwealth W-9 Request for Taxpayer Identification Number and Certification
    - Authorization for Electronic Funds Payment

Applicants may review the Commonwealth Standard Contract Form, Commonwealth Scope and Budget Form, and Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing prior to submission of an application at https://www.mass.gov/lists/osd-forms.

E. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED FOR REIMBURSEMENT: Reimbursement requests will require grantees submit a copy of the bill(s) or invoice (s) from the contractor providing services, as well as evidence of grantee's payment for the services such as a copy of the cancelled check(s), wire transfer, or a statement by a municipal treasurer attesting to municipal payment for the work. In addition, the following will be required as applicable:

If the award is for assistance with a grant application:

- A complete and eligible application to the grant program. *Note, to be eligible for a LAND, PARC or LWCF grant, applicants must have an approved OSRP on file with DCS by the grant deadline.*

If the award is for appraisal costs:

- A copy of the appraiser's summary letter/estimation of value (typically the first 1-3 pages of the full appraisal) verifying the grantee was the named client for the appraisal. If the appraisal was solicited for purposes of an eligible DCS grant program, the full appraisal must be submitted to DCS with the qualifying grant application.

If the award is for other assistance with advancing conservation or eligible outdoor recreational

land transactions or for assistance with an OSRP

- For those projects resulting in documents being recorded at Registries of Deeds prior to submission of reimbursement, those recorded documents must be submitted with the request for reimbursement and no later than the contract deadline of June 30, 2026 or 2027, according to the specific terms of the awarded contract. Other contractual obligations will be determined by EEA at the time of contracting as needed.

4. DEADLINES AND PROCUREMENT CALENDAR

A. RELEASE OF BID: September 15, 2025

B. INFORMATION SESSIONS: Information sessions will be offered on Wednesday, October 1, 2025 at 11am and Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 11am. Both will be held virtually on Microsoft Teams. To register and find more information, please visit https://www.mass.gov/how-to/apply-to-the-land-conservation-assistance-grant-program.

C. APPLICATION DUE DATE: Applications will be accepted on a rolling-basis through April 30, 2026**.**

D. ESTIMATED AWARD DATE: We expect that applicants will be notified of funding decisions within four weeks of submitting a complete application. An initial contract will be provided immediately thereafter.

E. ESTIMATED CONTRACT START DATE: Rolling. Notwithstanding any verbal representations by the parties, or an earlier start date listed in the Standard Contract Form, and only after an award is issued and a final scope of services has been negotiated, the effective start date of a contract shall be the latest of the following dates: the date the Standard Contract Form has been executed by an authorized signatory of the contractor and the procuring department; the date of secretariat or other approval(s) required by law or regulation; or a later date specified in the Standard Contract Form.

5. MISCELLANEOUS

A. TYPE OF PROCUREMENT: Grant

B. USE OF THIS PROCUREMENT BY SINGLE OR MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS: This Bid is a single department procurement. All grant awards under this BID will be made by EEA.

C. REQUEST FOR SINGLE OR MULTIPLE CONTRACTORS: This BID will result in multiple contracts.

D. BID DISTRIBUTION METHOD: This BID has been distributed electronically using the CommBuys system. It is the responsibility of every Applicant to check CommBuys for any addenda or modifications to a BID to which they intend to respond. The Commonwealth of Massachusetts and its subdivisions accept no liability and will provide no accommodations to Applicants who fail to check for amended Bids and submit inadequate or incorrect responses. Potential Respondents are advised to check the "last change" field on the summary page of Bids for which they intend to submit a response to ensure they have the most recent Bid files.

E. ATTACHMENT: application questions. Applicants may use this attachment to familiarize themselves

with the application requirements, but all applications must be submitted online through EEA's new Grant Management System.