

Frequently Asked Questions

Dam Removal Preliminary Design Services

Fiscal Year 2027 Request for Response

Q: How do we submit the application?

A: Applications will be accepted on DER's website. In addition to this, applicants are solely responsible to monitor the Commonwealth's official procurement record system, COMMBUYS, for amendments to this Grant RFR announcement, if any, and for the complete RFR posting. Applicants may monitor the COMMBUYS site through publicly accessible search and browse tools in addition to visiting [DER's Website](#).

Q: If a dam received a preliminary design service award previously, can I apply to this program again to advance the design further?

A: No, this opportunity cannot be used to advance a project beyond preliminary design. This program is intended to develop preliminary level design only.

Q: If we have any dams in our area that are managed by a State Agency, would they be excluded from this RFR process or can the Towns work with a State Agency to participate?

A: The landowner may be a municipality, or another entity on whose behalf the municipality applies. In either case, the landowner(s) must provide a signed access agreement with the municipality's application.

Q: What will be the Town's role if the dam is selected by DER?

A: If the municipality is also the dam owner, we expect the municipality to coordinate site access, share information about the dam and nearby infrastructure, and communicate with DER regarding the study and deliverables. Typical coordination with the municipality and dam owner includes (1) 1-2 days of data collection, where DER and hired consultants would need site access and the municipality and dam owner are invited to attend, (2) providing information about the site and nearby infrastructure during the site visits and/or before/after the site visits, and (3) discussing and reviewing draft and final designs and reports developed from the study.

If the municipality is not the dam owner, we expect the municipality to work with DER and the dam owner to facilitate the above-mentioned coordination and communication, as well as provide information they may have about the dam and nearby infrastructure.

In both cases, we expect to have a responsive, designated point of contact within the municipality (and dam owner if the municipality is not the dam owner).

DER will hire engineers directly to do the study and develop the preliminary designs for the dam. The municipality will not be responsible for this, and no funding will pass through the municipality. The deliverables of the work will be shared with both the municipality and the dam owner.

Q: If a municipality submits two projects, could one application be weakened in some way by doing two separate applications?

A: Each dam will be evaluated individually, and municipalities can submit multiple dams. Each dam should be submitted as its own application. We anticipate selecting up to seven dams out of this solicitation.

Q: If a dam has multiple owners, do we need a signed Dam Owner Access Agreement Form from each owner to apply?

A: If there are multiple owners for a single dam, yes, we need all owners to acknowledge dam ownership and sign a Dam Owner Access Agreement form.

Q: If only one owner signs the agreement, could the engineering work be done from only their parcel?

A: If there are multiple owners, we need all owners to sign a Dam Owner Access Agreement form to provide access to the site.

Q: What are the components of the study DER will be conducting at selected dam sites?

A: The overall goal of preliminary design studies is to gather and synthesize information on a future potential dam removal project. Typical components include a site visit by a qualified engineering consulting firm, topographic and bathymetric survey, sediment quality testing for potential contaminants, assessment of sediment quantity in the impoundment, hydrologic and hydraulic modeling, preliminary design development, and a technical report summarizing the results of the study including an estimate of cost for necessary future design and permitting as well as for removal.

Q: Are municipalities eligible to apply for a dam where the owner is absent, unknown, dissociated or a defunct/dissolved corporation?

A: No, if the dam owner cannot be reached to sign the required access agreement, DER cannot consider the application. A signed Dam Owner Access Agreement is required with the application. Applications that do not include a signed Dam Owner Access Agreement will be considered an incomplete submission and ineligible for consideration.

Q: Can a bordering town submit the application for a dam, particularly if that town experiences impacts from the dam?

A: Yes, however if the municipality does not own the dam, the dam owner must sign the Dam Owner Access Agreement which is a required part of the application.

Q: When will the awards will be announced and how will we find out?

A: All applicants will receive notice of decisions via email. Awards will be announced as soon as possible.

Q: Can I have a conversation with you about the merit of a dam and its removal for this RFR?

A: A Q&A period will be held during the RFR period to address written questions regarding the RFR, please reference RFR timeline for scheduling details.

Q: Can private dams be submitted for this opportunity?

A: Yes, a municipality can apply for this opportunity on behalf of a private dam owner. The private dam owner(s) must provide a signed access agreement with the municipality's application.

Q: Is this the same preliminary design services opportunity offered in previous years?

A: Yes, this is essentially the same opportunity offered in previous years and provides preliminary design services only.