



# Department of Environmental Protection

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## MassDEP's Official Responses to Questions Regarding the August 4, 2022 MS4 2022-2023 Municipal Assistance Grant Program Posted on August 8, 2022

On July 27, 2022, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) announced the 2021-2022 Opportunity for the MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program (MS4 program). On August 4, 2022 at 1 p.m., MassDEP held a virtual Bidders' Conference and accepted both verbal and written questions from potential applicants through the 3 p.m. deadline for questions as posted in the MS4 procurement grant calendar.

Below are MassDEP's official Responses to all questions received by the August 4, 2022 deadline. All questions are formatted in **bold font** and answers are posted below questions in normal *italicized font*.

**Having submitted other grant applications via email in the past, sometimes those emails get blocked by a firewall (especially when the email includes attachments). Has that been an issue in the past? Should we send a separate email with no attachments to confirm receipt?**

*To MassDEP's knowledge submissions have not been missed due to email attachments. MassDEP sends an email reply to all grant proposal submission emails to confirm the agency's receipt. However, applicants can also send a separate email to confirm receipt to ensure delivery of attachments, and MassDEP will respond by email to these requests for confirmation.*

**Are projects that address MS4 permit requirements eligible if the requirement was due in Year 4 or earlier, if it has not yet been completed by the Permittee(s)?**

*Yes, any projects that ensure compliance with the MS4 permit are eligible for funding. Whether the requirement was due in the previous year and not completed or whether the applicant proposes to carry out work that is due in the future, MassDEP considers these projects eligible for funding.*

**How many applications do you typically receive for this program?**

*In past years MassDEP has received between 6 and 10 applications for projects.*

**A big hurdle to the MS4 and phosphorus reduction seems to be no standard for how many credits different types of BMPs provide. Seems rain gardens daily have different results, pervious pavement also was once high credit and later not as high. It makes it tough to know what direction towns should step forward.**

**How do we get funds to put GI into the ground and where? What are the right BMPs?**

**This information is available in alternate format. Contact Glynis Bugg at 617-348-4040.**

**TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370**

MassDEP Website: [www.mass.gov/dep](http://www.mass.gov/dep)

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*The 2016 MS4 Permit Appendix F Attachment 3 has Performance Curves for different kinds of structural and non-structural stormwater best management practices (BMPs) that estimate the average annual pollutant removal for phosphorus and total suspended solids. Since stormwater best management practice performance can vary from day to day based on storm size and type, using an average annual estimate is the best practice. A municipality is encouraged to make use of these performance curves when designing stormwater management projects and to track and account for the amount of pollutant removal achieved based on the estimates of the curves.*

*To identify locations for stormwater best management practices (BMPs), a nutrient identification report, a requirement for Impaired Waters in year 4 of the 2016 MS4 permit, helps identify hotspots of nutrient loading within a municipality and may assist in identifying sites for stormwater best management practices as part of retrofits or other projects. In 2021, the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission developed a process for identifying sites that are suitable for stormwater retrofits and developed cut sheets for a set of stormwater best management practices that are suitable for those sites. The report can be downloaded here: <https://www.mass.gov/doc/merrimack-valley-planning-commission-ms4-grant-report/download>*

**I appreciate that the environmental justice category in the scoring criteria linked to the State's webpage defining EJ and showing the interactive map. Curious to hear if you also consider project benefits to climate vulnerable populations (i.e., youth, seniors, etc.) in addition to environmental justice populations, when scoring project proposals?**

*MassDEP is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and environmental justice (EJ)<sup>[1]</sup> through its public investments. The agency seeks to prioritize the direction of these resources to benefit EJ communities and to address environmental inequities. To that end, MassDEP grant and funding programs include criteria and evaluation parameters that emphasize equity, diversity and environmental justice, consistent with each program's statutory authority and source of funding. While MassDEP's main focus for this MS4 Grant Program is upon providing additional evaluation points for project benefits provided to/for designated EJ populations, the agency appreciates that certain projects may also benefit specific vulnerable populations as noted in this question, and applicants can certainly mention and quantify (to the extent possible) these benefits as part of their project proposals.*

**Given that year 5 is administratively continued, are there specific "year 5" requirements you'd like to see a focus on beyond the standard 6 minimum control measures in the same way there has been for previous years?**

*Eligible projects will result in tools or approaches that will help multiple municipalities meet one or more requirement(s) of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit, irrespective of the year the requirement is due. If an applicant can demonstrate the need of the project and the project meets eligibility criteria it is eligible to receive funding under this program. Section C: Eligible Projects on page 1 of the RFR outlines eligibility requirements of the grant program. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/notice-of-grant-opportunity-ms4-municipal-assistance-2022-2023-grant-program/download>*

**Have you seen any particularly innovative strategies, collaborations, products, etc. result from previously funded projects? Anything that stands out in your mind as a great case study?**

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<sup>[1]</sup> Environmental Justice (EJ) is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental pollution and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment. EJ is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of environmental benefits.

A list of previously funded awards under the MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program is presented in Table 1 below. Deliverables and reports from previously funded projects can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stormwater-permitting#resources-and-tools-for-ms4-compliance->

Table 1

<b>Award years</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Applicant</b>	<b>Title</b>
2017-2018	\$50,000	Berkshire Regional Planning Commission	A regional approach toward meeting Illicit Discharge Detection & Elimination (IDDE) requirements
2017-2018	\$170,375	MA Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition	Development of the Think Blue Massachusetts campaign
2017-2018	\$50,000	Pioneer Valley Planning Commission	Development of offsite mitigation manual for redevelopment projects
2018-2019	\$25,000	Central MA Regional Stormwater Coalition	Development of MS4-permit Standard Operating Procedures and templates for SWMP
2018-2019	\$205,300	MA Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition	Expansion of the Think Blue Massachusetts campaign
2018-2019	\$64,645	The Greenscapes Coalition with Salem Sound	Three tools for MS4 Communities
2018-2019	\$50,000	Southeastern Regional Stormwater Coalition	Training workshops on Stormwater Management Programs and Illicit Discharge Detection and Elimination programs
2019-2020	\$107,795	MA Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition	Think Blue Phase 3
2019-2020	\$28,000	Central MA Regional Stormwater Coalition	IDDE Training
2019-2020	\$55,000	Southeastern Regional Stormwater Coalition	SWPPP Preparation
2019-2020	\$62,504	Northern Middlesex Council of Governments	Northern Middlesex Capacity Building for Local Oversight of Development and Redevelopment Projects
2019-2020	\$46,700	Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative	IDDE Trailer and Training
2020-2021	\$75,354	MA Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition	Think Blue IV
2020-2021	\$66,776	Neponset Stormwater Partnership + Connecticut River Stormwater Collaborative	Nitrogen and Phosphorus Source Identification Report Development Project
2020-2021	\$45,000	Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative	Stormwater Best Management Practices (BMP) Retrofits and Modification Reports for the Merrimack Valley Stormwater Collaborative Communities
2020-2021	\$59,771	Charles River Stormwater Collaborative + Central MA Regional Stormwater Coalition	Model Phosphorous Control Plan Development and Implementation Planning
2020-2021	\$ 47,000	Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Buzzards Bay Stormwater	The Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative Illicit Discharge Investigation and MS4 Support
2021-2022	\$75,000	MA Statewide Municipal Stormwater Coalition	Think Blue Massachusetts – Phase IV
2021-2022	\$65,000	Merrimack Valley Planning Commission	Code Review to Decrease Impervious Area Creation and Encourage Use of Low Impact Development
2021-2022	\$49,470	Charles River Watershed Association	Continued Phosphorous Control Planning and Initiation of Implementation
2021-2022	\$69,000	Massachusetts Maritime Academy and Buzzards Bay Stormwater Collaborative	Train the Trainers in Practical Illicit Discharge Investigation
2021-2022	\$31,100	Mystic River Watershed Association	Mystic River Watershed Adopt-a-Drain Program

Your mention of education and workshops also makes me wonder - any especially innovative projects related to outreach and engagement, maybe especially that found creative ways to connect with folks during COVID?

To date the Statewide Stormwater Coalition has developed projects that focus on stormwater education and outreach. With MassDEP funding from this grant program, the Coalition has developed an educational video, which has also been translated into Spanish; developed social media messages that have also been translated into the 6 most commonly spoken languages in Massachusetts; and carried out social media educational campaigns to spread awareness on stormwater. If there are additional ideas on how to increase awareness around stormwater, especially for the additional audiences that should be targeted by stormwater educational messages as part of the MS4 permit (for example: residents; businesses, institutions, and commercial facilities; developers (construction); and industrial facilities), an applicant is invited to submit a proposal.

Is there any guidance on application structure?

Section 3: Application Structure, at page 8 of the MS4 Program document contains an outline that applicants may follow when putting their application together. <https://www.mass.gov/doc/ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program-2022-2023-opportunity/download>

**Is there a page limit?**

*Grant applications, including budget sheet, but excluding the cover sheet, must not exceed fifteen single-sided (15) pages in length. The cover sheet is available at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program>*

**If we wanted to include images or maps that didn't fit within the page limit, can we link to that?**

*The page limit for the application is 15 pages. If additional materials are included in the application and the total application materials exceed 15 pages, only the first 15 pages will be evaluated by the MassDEP grant team. MassDEP therefore encourages the applicant to only include images and maps if necessary and if so, ensure they do not result in an exceedance of the page limit.*

**Is there a date for when applications will be awarded?**

*In order to provide awarded grant projects with an expanded timeline for project completion prior to the FY2023 June 30 deadline, MassDEP's grant procurement calendar has been updated to provide an expedited timeline for this grant program to facilitate the review, evaluation and award of MS4 grants for this year. Once MassDEP receives all applications, the grant team will review, evaluate and recommend grant projects for funding to agency administrators. However, applicants should note that all grant award recommendations must obtain multiple agency approvals in order to be finalized for the MS4 grant awards, which may extend the timeline beyond the dates reflected in the MS4 grant procurement calendar.*

**Can you share a bit about what the reporting requirements are for those awarded?**

*Upon completion of the project and with submission of the final request for reimbursement, all applicants shall submit at a minimum a one-page summary of their project tasks and links or copies to the produced resources.*

**Is there a list of past awardees, amounts and short description of the project?**

*A list of previously funded awards under the MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program is presented in Table 1 above. Deliverables and reports from previously funded projects can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stormwater-permitting#resources-and-tools-for-ms4-compliance->*

**If Contracts/Notice to Proceeds aren't done until January/February, as we have seen in past years, and the deadline is 6/30/23 projects have to be designed to be done in a few months, correct?**

*In order to provide awarded grant projects with an expanded timeline for project completion prior to the FY2023 June 30 deadline, MassDEP's grant procurement calendar has been updated to provide an expedited timeline for this grant program to facilitate the review, evaluation and award of MS4 grants for this year. Once MassDEP receives all applications, the grant team will review, evaluate and recommend grant projects for funding to agency administrators. However, applicants should note that all grant award recommendations must obtain multiple agency approvals in order to be finalized for the MS4 grant awards, which may extend the timeline beyond the dates reflected in the MS4 grant procurement calendar. Therefore, it is possible that grantees may need to expedite their projects, and MassDEP recommends that applicants build into the proposed project timelines the potential need to expedite the completion of tasks and deliverables to the extent feasible.*