

THE COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS

**EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY &
ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION**

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Request for Response (RFR)

**SFY 2025 MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program
Request for Responses**

July 26, 2024

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ATTACHMENT A



Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

Department of Environmental Protection

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SFY 2025 MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program Request for Responses

Total Funding Available: Up to \$250,000
Grant Amounts: \$50,000 to \$250,000 per applicant
Match Required: No

Pre-Application Meeting: August 5, 2024, at 10 a.m.
Questions Due: August 16, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.
Responses Due: September 6, 2024, by 5:00 p.m.

1. GRANT OPPORTUNITY SUMMARY

A. Proposals Sought

The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP or the Department) seeks proposals from: groups of Massachusetts cities/towns; Regional Planning Agencies on behalf of groups of Massachusetts cities/towns; Massachusetts stormwater coalitions representing two (2) or more municipalities; and/or non-profit organizations on behalf of groups of Massachusetts cities/towns, for innovative projects that will help multiple communities meet the requirements of the 2016 Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit (2016 Small MS4 General Permit). The purpose of this funding is to help groups of Massachusetts municipalities expand their efforts to meet the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit requirements and reduce stormwater pollution through coordinated partnerships that emphasize resource sharing. Only projects that meet the specific requirements of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit will be considered for funding. Interested entities should refer to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit at <https://www.epa.gov/npdes-permits/massachusetts-small-ms4-general-permit>.

Note to Municipal Assistance Grant Applicants: Grant Funding is available only for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts Fiscal Year 2025 (FY25) (i.e., July 1, 2024-June 30, 2025). MassDEP reserves the right to, in its sole discretion, extend the award period past the fiscal year to facilitate the completion of performance under the original terms of the award.

B. Overview and Goals

Since 2012, officials of Massachusetts cities and towns have come together and formed regional stormwater coalitions to share resources, training, and best management practices related to stormwater management. Those regional coalitions also formed a statewide coalition to meet those same goals. In April 2016, the United States Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) and MassDEP issued a renewal of the Small MS4 General Permit for Massachusetts, which became effective on July 1, 2018. EPA proposed modifications to the 2016 MA MS4 General Permit on April 23, 2020, and finalized those modifications on December 7, 2020. MassDEP expects that the work of regional and statewide

stormwater coalitions will continue to result in cost savings as Massachusetts municipalities implement the requirements of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit.

MassDEP seeks to help facilitate the work of these stormwater coalitions, encourage the formation of new coalitions, and promote multi-municipal collaboration on improved stormwater management and permit compliance through the MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program.

C. Eligible Projects

Eligible projects will result in tools or strategies that will help multiple municipalities meet one (1) or more requirement(s) of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit. Ineligible projects include funding for the operation and maintenance of sewer systems.

- a. Eligible projects must provide a shared benefit to multiple communities, including environmental justice communities.
- b. Eligible projects must not:
 - i. Duplicate work already done by any Massachusetts stormwater coalition or apply a previously funded project delivery to another region (previously funded projects by MS4 Minimum Control Measure at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/stormwater#municipal-resources-for-ms4-compliance->); and/or
 - ii. Fund any activity necessary to address or remedy an enforcement action such as, but not limited to, noncompliance with a local, state, or federal permit.
- c. Examples of potentially eligible, MS4-focused projects include, but are not limited to:
 - i. Assessment tool(s) for identifying retrofit sites;
 - ii. Data intake and field-certification tool(s) for Best Management Practices (BMP); operation and maintenance programs;
 - iii. Formation of new regional MS4 coalitions in areas where none exist;
 - iv. MS4 capital investments, including investments in equipment and electronic resources;
 - v. Outreach and education services, materials, and/or strategies for (a) public engagement and/or (b) establishment of stormwater enterprise funds or stormwater utilities;
 - vi. Survey research to identify the needs of smaller MS4 municipalities;
 - vii. Asset management tools for tracking and maintaining stormwater infrastructure such as catch basins, culverts, and BMPs; and/or
 - viii. MS4-related job training opportunities that benefit environmental justice populations.
- d. Both existing and proposed projects are eligible for this grant program, and funding will support work activities for any phase(s) of a project, from initial project planning through project implementation, so long as the work funded by this program is conducted during FY25 (i.e., started on or after July 1, 2024, and completed on or before June 30, 2025). All Applications must include a feasible timeline for completion (i.e., illustrating that the project can be completed on or before the June 30, 2025, deadline).
- e. Preference will be given to projects that directly assist the greatest number of municipalities including environmental justice populations. Information on which communities are classified as including environmental justice populations can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>.

All assets, equipment, data, and/or other property purchased as a result of awards made through this program shall be owned by the grant applicant and/or municipalities partnering on an application, not by MassDEP.

D. Eligible Entities

Eligible Entities are groups of two (2) or more Massachusetts municipalities that are subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit; Regional Planning Agencies acting on behalf of two (2) or more municipalities that are subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit; Massachusetts stormwater coalitions representing two (2) or more municipalities that are subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit; and/or non-profit organizations acting on behalf of two (2) or more municipalities that are subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit.

E. Environmental Justice

MassDEP is committed to advancing equity, diversity, and environmental justice (EJ)¹ 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. Preference will be given to projects that provide direct benefit to environmental justice populations. Information on which communities are classified as environmental justice populations can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>.

F. Application Deadline

Applications are due electronically by 5:00 P.M. on September 6, 2024.

G. Page Limit

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

H. Funding Availability

The total funding currently available for projects under this Grant Announcement and at the time of posting is \$250,000. Grant awards may range from \$50,000 to \$250,000 per applicant, although the MassDEP review committee reserves the right, in its discretion, to grant smaller awards to proposals of exceptional merit. If additional or unspent funds become available during the period between the announcement of this grant opportunity and the announcement of the grant awards, MassDEP may allocate supplemental funds to this grant solicitation. Applicants must only propose project scopes with timelines that can be completed on or before June 30, 2025. All funding of awards issued through this program are subject to the availability of appropriations or funding from other Department sources.

I. Match and Other Funding Obligations

¹ "Environmental justice is based on the principle that all people have a right to be protected from environmental hazards and to live in and enjoy a clean and healthful environment regardless of race, color, national origin, income, or English language proficiency. Environmental justice is the equal protection and meaningful involvement of all people and communities with respect to the development, implementation, and enforcement of energy, climate change, and environmental laws, regulations, and policies and the equitable distribution of energy and environmental benefits and burdens." See Environmental Justice Policy of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (updated June 24, 2021): <https://www.mass.gov/doc/environmental-justice-policy6242021-update/download>.

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Applicants are not required to provide matching funds. However, Applicants are encouraged to identify other known sources of funding for a proposed project on the Application Form, from both secured and anticipated sources. In addition, Applicants are advised that grant awards involving capital funds, which is the case here, are required to be disbursed on a cost reimbursement basis, meaning that grantees will be reimbursed for funds already expended.

Applicants may seek funding for Eligible Projects that will exceed the length of the grant award period (i.e., past June 30, 2025); however, only work that is proposed to be performed during FY25 (June 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025) is eligible for funding under this Grant Opportunity. Please be advised that to receive reimbursement for project expenses incurred during FY25, but prior to the grant award, applicants must submit documentation (i.e., invoices, purchase orders and proof of payment, and/or vendor contracts) during the contracting process. All work funded by the grant must be completed on or before June 30, 2025. All funding for awards issued through this program are contingent upon appropriation by the Massachusetts Legislature, or availability of funds from other authorized Department sources.

J. Pre-Application Meeting

A Pre-Application Meeting will be held using Microsoft Teams on Monday, August 5, 2024 at 10:00 am E.S.T. The purpose of the meeting will be to provide information on the application process and the grant program. Please note that MassDEP cannot address the substance of any particular application. To obtain the Teams link please contact Courtney Starling via email at courtney.starling@mass.gov with 'FY 2025 MS4 Application Training Details' in the email subject line.

Questions answered during this meeting will be summarized and included in the written Q&A. A recording of the meeting will be available online at the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program->

K. Written Questions via the Grant Q&A Process

As noted in the Estimated Grant Procurement Calendar, Applicants may submit written questions, via e-mail, to Elizabeth Clark at Elizabeth.clark2@mass.gov on or before August 16, 2024, by 5:00 pm E.S.T. MassDEP will post official responses to questions regarding this grant RFR on or before August 30, 2024 at 5:00 pm E.S.T. It is the Applicant's responsibility to verify receipt of questions with MassDEP.

MassDEP reserves the right to condense, summarize, or combine related questions and/or answers. The Q&A document for this Grant RFR will be available on COMMBUYS, as well as online at the following link: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program->

All answers are final when posted. Any subsequent revisions to previously provided answers will be dated.

L. Amendment Deadline

MassDEP reserves the right to make amendments to the Grant RFR after initial publication prior to the Application Deadline in the Estimated Procurement Calendar. It is each Applicant's responsibility to check for any amendments, addenda, or modifications to this Grant RFR, as well as any Q&A related to this RFR and any amendments thereto.

M. Total Anticipated Duration of Grant(s)

The contract duration will be through June 30, 2025. MassDEP reserves the right to extend the contract duration solely for the purposes of performance completion consistent with the terms of the Grant Award contract.

N. Final Report

Upon completion of the project and with submission of the final request for reimbursement, all Grant Awardees shall submit a one (1)-page summary of their project tasks and links or copies to the produced resources.

MassDEP reserves the right to request additional materials, information, and/or other documentary evidence demonstrating completion of work and/or compliance with program requirements. MassDEP also reserves the right to withhold funding until receipt of said materials, information, and/or evidence.

O. Applicable Procurement Law

Grants—MGL c. 7A, § 7; St. 1986 c. 206, § 17; 815 CMR 2.00.2.

2. INSTRUCTIONS FOR APPLICATION SUBMISSION

A. Evaluation Criteria - General

In order to be considered for a grant award, Applicants must: (1) submit a completed application that includes all required supporting materials; (2) agree to the program conditions; (3) commit to completing the project by June 30, 2025; and (4) meet the eligibility requirements. A MassDEP review committee will evaluate proposed projects based upon the criteria listed below. The review committee reserves the right to reject any or all proposals.

B. Evaluation Criteria – Components

The review committee will evaluate and score the grant applications from Eligible Entities (as defined previously in this Grant Opportunity) based upon the following criteria:

Project Description (15 points)

- Does the Application adequately describe the Proposed Project and the work to be covered by this funding?
- Does the Application clearly state how multiple municipalities will be helped by the Proposed Project?
- Does the project description clearly identify proposed project tasks, personnel, and desired outcome(s) for the project?
- Does the project provide support to activities from a prior MS4 grant application?

Meet MS4 Permit Requirements (15 points)

- How well does the Application demonstrate that the proposed project will assist a greater number of municipalities meet one (1) or more specific requirement(s) of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit?

Promote Regional Collaboration (15 points)

- How well does the Application demonstrate that the Proposed Project will encourage multi-town/regional cooperation and collaboration to achieve improved stormwater management and MS4 compliance efforts regionally or statewide?

Financial Need (5 points)

- How well does the Application demonstrate the communities' need for financial assistance to implement the Proposed Project?

Project Budget and Timeline (10 points)

- Does the application include a sufficiently detailed project budget that includes cost and time estimates by project task and milestone? Does the budget indicate responsible parties by task?
- Does the Application sufficiently identify and describe any match or other funding sources that will support the project?
- If the project includes a request for reimbursement for eligible costs incurred after July 1, 2024, but before submission of this Application, does the Application include all documentation supporting the request for reimbursement for those project costs?
- How well does the Application demonstrate a realistic timeline and budget to achieve the proposed work?

Qualifications of Organization and Project Manager (10 points)

- Does the Application demonstrate the Eligible Entity, and/or their contractor(s), the project manager, and any other staffing assigned have sufficient qualifications and project experience to perform the Proposed Project?

Project Benefit (20 points)

- MassDEP will evaluate the Proposed Project's environmental benefits and economic benefits. Specifically, the Department will look at how the Proposed Project:
 - Furthers the goal of improved MS4 compliance and stormwater management for multiple municipalities;
 - Reduces community costs, both individually and on a multiple municipality and/or regional basis; and
 - Promotes collaboration and inclusive information sharing among multiple communities.
- MassDEP will also evaluate the extent to which the grant product(s) will benefit the Massachusetts communities subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit.

Environmental Justice (10 points)

- How does the proposal describe direct benefits to environmental justice communities?
- How well does the project specifically benefit EJ populations?
- How are environmental justice communities involved in the Proposed Project?
- Which environmental justice communities or organizations are included in the Proposed Project?
- Are new partnerships being formed to benefit environmental justice communities?
- Does the Proposed Project promote collaboration and inclusive information sharing among multiple communities, including maximizing compliance benefits in environmental justice

communities (information on which communities are classified as environmental justice communities can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-communities-in-massachusetts>)?

C. Application Completion and Submission Instructions

All grant applicants must include the attached application form in their application and submit the packet electronically as a Microsoft Word or Adobe PDF file by **5:00 P.M. on September 6, 2024**, to: Courtney Starling, Grant Administrator at courtney.starling@mass.gov with the Applicant's name AND "MS4 Municipal Grant Assistance Program" in the subject line (e.g., Subject line: "Applicant Name MS4 Municipal Grant Assistance Program").

Attachment A, Section 1 and 2 are available for download at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program>

Applications received after the deadline will be rejected automatically. MassDEP reserves the right to reject any and all proposals or request additional information if needed.

D. Additional Required Documentation:

Additional Forms: If selected for a grant award, the Applicant will be required to submit the following forms to complete the contracting process. Forms with an asterisk (*) need not be submitted, if they have been completed previously and are already on file with the Commonwealth:

- Commonwealth Standard Contract Form filled out and signed by the Applicant. Standard Contract Form is listed under Contracts on this website:
www.macomptroller.org/forms/.
- Commonwealth Terms and Conditions. www.macomptroller.org/forms/
These Terms and Conditions are incorporated by reference into the Standard Contract Form, and do not need to be executed separately.
- Commonwealth W-9 tax information form filled out and signed by the applicant with DUNS number and Federal Tax ID (*) www.macomptroller.org/forms
- Completed Contractor Authorized Signatory Listing Form
<https://www.macomptroller.org/forms>
- Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) form (*)

<https://www.mass.gov/how-to/tips-for-completing-the-electronic-funds-transfer-eft-form>

Applicants are encouraged to review these forms prior to submission of an application.

3. ESTIMATED PROCUREMENT CALENDAR FOR GRANT APPLICATION/AWARD:

Procurement Activity	Date	Time
Notice of Grant Opportunity (posted on COMMBUYS and MassDEP website)	Friday, July 26, 2024	
Bid Release Date (Posting Date) on MassDEP website	Friday, July 26, 2024	
Pre-Application Meeting: Via Microsoft Teams. To obtain dial-in information or the Teams link please contact Courtney Starling via email at courtney.starling@mass.gov with 'FY 2025 MS4 Application Training Details' in the email subject line.	Monday, August 5, 2024	10 A.M.
Deadline for Submission of Questions to MassDEP, via email to: Elizabeth.clark2@mass.gov	Friday, August 16, 2024	5 P.M.
Official Answers for Q&A published on MassDEP website	Friday, August 30, 2024	5 P.M.
RFR Amendment Deadline	Friday, August 30, 2024	5 P.M.
<u>GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE; ELECTRONIC SUBMISSION TO:</u> courtney.starling@mass.gov	Friday, September 6, 2024	5 P.M.
Notification of Grant Award(s) (Estimated) (POSTED ON COMMBUYS AND MASSDEP WEBSITE)	Thursday, December 5, 2024	
Estimated Contract Start Date	Thursday, December 19, 2024	

ATTACHMENT A

Section 1 and 2 of application Form available for download at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program->

MS4 Municipal Assistance FY25 Grant Program Application

Overview: The Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP or the Department) seeks proposals from: groups of Massachusetts cities/towns; Regional Planning Agencies on behalf of groups of Massachusetts cities/towns; Massachusetts stormwater coalitions representing two or more municipalities; and/or non-profit organizations on behalf of groups of Massachusetts cities/towns, for innovative projects that will help multiple communities meet the requirements of the 2016 Small Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) General Permit (2016 Small MS4 General Permit). The purpose of this funding is to help groups of Massachusetts municipalities expand their efforts to meet the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit requirements and reduce stormwater pollution through coordinated partnerships that emphasize resource sharing. Only projects that meet the specific requirements of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit will be considered for funding.

Section 1: Applicant Information

Applicant Name: _____

Participating Communities:

Number of Participating Communities: _____

Project Title: _____

Short description of the work (<5 sentences)

Requested Funds: _____ Matching Funds (optional): _____

Name of person completing form: _____ Title: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

By checking this box ☐ the applicant confirms that they are authorized to submit this grant application on behalf of the specified organization and participating municipalities.

Section 2: Ability to Perform Proposed Project

- A. Ability to Use Funds:** If awarded a MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant, the Awardee must be able to enter into a contract with MassDEP within 15-30 days of award.

By checking this box ☐ you agree that your entity is able to enter into the contract and perform the project and meet all requirements of this state grant.

Section 3: Application Structure

Please include the following sections in your application:

Project Description: Describe the Proposed Project and the proposed work to be covered by this funding. This project description should include proposed project tasks, personnel, desired outcome(s), and how multiple municipalities will be helped by the project.

Project Benefit: Provide information about both the environmental and economic benefits of the Proposed Project; specifically, how the project furthers the goal of improved MS4 compliance and stormwater management across multiple municipalities; how it reduces community costs, both individually and on a multiple municipality and/or regional basis; how it promotes collaboration and information sharing among multiple communities; and to what extent the grant product(s) will be transferrable to benefit all communities statewide that are subject to the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit.

Meet MS4 Permit Requirements: Describe how the Proposed Project helps multiple municipalities meet one or more specific requirement(s) of the 2016 Small MS4 General Permit.

Promote Regional Collaboration: Describe how the Proposed Project will encourage multi-town/regional cooperation and collaboration to achieve improved stormwater management and 2016 Small MS4 General Permit compliance efforts regionally or statewide.

Financial Need: Explain the need for financial assistance to implement the Proposed Project, including other anticipated or secured funding sources that will support portions of the project.

Project Budget: Please fill out the budget table below for the proposed project (use as many rows as needed). If all or some of the proposed project includes a request for reimbursement for eligible costs incurred after July 1, 2024, and before submission of the Application, please attach documentation supporting these project costs.

MS4 Grant - Budget Table

Key Project Tasks/Milestone (Responsible Party)	Estimated Cost	Estimated Match* (if applicable)	Known or Estimated Task Completion Date
Project Total:			
Grant Request Amount:			
Source of Match*: For any in-kind or monetary match, explain how extensive it is and how it will be made available to the project here. Matches are not required for the MS4 Grant.			

Project Timeline: Describe the timeline for the work proposed, including a commitment to achieving final completion by the deadline of June 30, 2025, or earlier. Explain how the work can be feasibly completed by June 30, 2025, or earlier. Describe a plan for written and/or oral communication of the project's status and progress between the awardee and MassDEP throughout the project period.

Qualifications of Organization and Project Manager: Describe qualifications the organization and the project manager, and address how they will assist in the successful execution of the proposed project.

Environmental Justice: Describe in detail how environmental justice communities will benefit directly from the Proposed Project. If partnerships for the work are being formed, describe which organizations will be part of the work and what role they will play.