



Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Energy & Environmental Affairs

# Department of Environmental Protection

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## **NOTICE OF GRANT OPPORTUNITY** **MS4 MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE 20222023-20232024 GRANT PROGRAM**

**Summary of Grant Opportunity:** 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.

**Grant Opportunity Application and Requirements:** The MS4 Municipal Assistance Grant Program document was issued on October 3, 2023, and is posted on MassDEP's website at the following link:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program->

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

**Eligible Projects:** Eligible projects will result in tools or strategies that will help multiple municipalities meet one 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 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->).

This information is available in alternate format. Please contact Melixza Esenyie at 617-626-1282.

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

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- 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 the contract period (i.e., started on or after July 1, 2023, and completed on or before June 30, 2024). All Applications must include a feasible timeline for completion (i.e., illustrating that the project can be completed on or before the June 30, 2024, 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 environmental justice populations can be found at <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>.

**Funding Availability:** The total funding currently available for projects under this Grant Announcement and at the time of posting is \$300,000. Grant awards may range from \$50,000 to \$300,000 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 consider allocating supplemental funds to this grant solicitation. Applicants must only propose project scopes with timelines that can be completed on or before June 30, 2024. All funding of awards issues through this program are subject to the availability of appropriations or funding from other Department sources.

**Environmental Justice:** 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. Preference will be given to projects that provide direct benefit to environmental justice populations. Information on which communities are

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<sup>1</sup> “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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**Grant Application Process:** The MS4 Grant Program document on MassDEP’s website contains a grant application form, a procurement schedule describing the steps of the application process, all project proposal and qualification requirements, and a specific format for responding to this Grant Opportunity.

**Bidders’ Conference:** A Bidders’ Conference using Microsoft Teams will be held on Tuesday, October 10, 2023, at 1 P.M. To obtain the meeting link information or the Teams link please contact Elizabeth Clark via email at [elizabeth.clark2@mass.gov](mailto:elizabeth.clark2@mass.gov) with ‘FY 2024 MS4 Bidders’ Conference Details’ in the email subject line.

**Evaluation Criteria:** The evaluation criteria components for MassDEP’s review and scoring of proposals are as specified in the MS4 Grant Program Document.

**Application Deadline:** Applications are due electronically by 5:00 P.M. on November 10, 2023.

**Match and Other Funding Obligations:** 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. To receive reimbursement for funds expended, grantees must submit a written request for payment, along with any other required documentation. All work must be completed on or before June 30, 2024, and grantees are strongly encouraged to submit written requests for payment, and any corresponding supporting documentation, on or before June 30, 2024, as well. Please see section L. for more information on required documents.

**Additional Information:** for additional information regarding the MS4 Grant Program, please refer to the MassDEP website link:

<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/grants-financial-assistance-watersheds-water-quality#stormwater-ms4-municipal-assistance-grant-program>