

Questions and Answers Related to the Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant Program

Q: Is the purchase of devices and equipment eligible for this grant opportunity?

A: Yes, in general the purchase of devices and equipment is eligible for reimbursement through this program. However, certain purchases will not be eligible, such as:

- Any related costs incurred prior to the execution of this grant or after the contract has ended
- Unrelated equipment purchases
- Ongoing operations and maintenance
- Travel costs not directly related to project implementation
- Any costs funded by any other Federal or other State grant or loan to the applicant
- Costs incurred by police details
- Costs to acquire an interest in real property

Please refer to the RFR for details on allowable and unallowable costs.

Q: Is there a match requirement from applicants?

A: No, there is no match requirement for this program.

Q: What is the total available funding under this grant program?

A: The total available funding for this program is \$500,000. The target amount for individual awards is up to \$50,000, with the possibility for larger awards depending on the number of qualified applications received.

Q: Are there any requirements related to Minority Business Enterprise (MBE), Women Business Enterprise (WBE), and/or Disadvantaged Business Enterprise (DBE)?

A: No, there are no requirements for applicants or contractors working with applicants to meet MBE/WBE/DBE criteria to be eligible for this program.

Q: Do proposals need to be new or if an ongoing project fits the requirements, could you apply for funding?

A: The project does not need to be a new project to be eligible. However, only costs incurred between the start of the contract and June 30th, 2025 are eligible for reimbursement.

Q: Are extra rating points given for Environmental Justice communities?

A: Preference will be given to projects that provide direct benefit to EJ populations. Project benefits to EJ populations will be evaluated as one scoring metric within the broader category of "Alignment with Program Goals". Information on which communities are classified as EJ populations can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/environmental-justice-populations-in-massachusetts>.

Q: Can the project start before the grant is awarded?

A: The project can start before the grant is awarded. However, only costs incurred between the start of the contract and June 30th, 2025 are eligible for reimbursement.

Q: is the closing date for the application a hard date or soft?

A: The closing date for applications is January 31st, 2025 at 5:00 PM. This is a hard deadline and applications received after this time will not be reviewed.

Q: Would a professional services contract to lease leak monitoring equipment be an allowable cost?

A: A professional services contract to lease leak monitoring equipment is an allowable expense, assuming the equipment would be used to fulfill tasks that are within the scope of the program. Improvement of water loss control is within the scope, so leasing of leak detection equipment generally would be an allowable cost. However, please keep in mind that for all awards, the contracts will end on June 30th, 2025. Therefore, we would not be able to reimburse any lease payments made after June 30th. We would also not be able to provide funding to cover the cost of lease payments that are due after the contract end date. We also encourage applicants interested in projects related to leak detection to define how their proposed projects fit within broader water loss control programs for their system.

Q: Would the purchase of leak detection equipment be considered?

A: The purchase of equipment is an allowable cost, assuming the equipment would be used to fulfill tasks that are within the scope of the program. Improvement of water loss control is within the scope, so leak detection equipment generally would be an allowable cost. We encourage applicants interested in projects related to leak detection to define how their proposed projects fit within broader water loss control programs for their system.

Q: Do you expect that this grant might be offered again in the future?

A: While EEA hopes to have future funding for this Drought Resiliency and Water Efficiency Grant program, we do not have confirmation of funding available for this program beyond the current fiscal year.

Q: Do you have the capacity to work with an applicant to refine or develop ideas about xeriscaping, irrigation wells and perhaps Board of Health regulations governing landscape irrigation using municipal and/or private wells? For example, a study to determine how much water is being used by private wells, with the intent to develop regulations to better manage this type of use.

A: State staff are not allowed to work with an applicant to refine any proposal ideas. Staff can only confirm if certain projects are eligible for funding under the scope of the grant program as described in the RFR. Projects related to xeriscaping (i.e. water efficient landscaping) are eligible under the current scope. More specific details on the project costs would be needed to determine if the specific costs are allowable. A project related to determining the water use of private wells may or may not be eligible, depending on the specific goals of the project.

Q: Can the final report, which is specified as a requirement in the RFR, be submitted after June 30th assuming that the portion of the project funded is completed before the 30th?

A: There is some flexibility for submission of the final report. Please describe plans/timeline for submitting the final report in your application if extenuating circumstances might impact the ability to submit the final report by June 30th. As a reminder, the funded portion of the project must be completed by June 30th, and any reimbursable costs must also be incurred by June 30th.

Q: Are engineering services paid by the grant required to go through an RFQ process, beyond the requirements of MA bid laws?

A: Any RFQ processes that an awardee must follow are determined by the awardee's internal policies and protocols. The state does not require a specific RFQ process for products or services reimbursable through this grant program.

Q: If an applicant/community needs engineering services to populate the required contract forms, would the cost of engineering services under this situation qualify for reimbursement since the grant is technically awarded, but just not executed?

A: The only costs that can be reimbursed are those that are incurred **after** the contract between the awardee and the state is executed.

Q: Would development of education and outreach materials to help communities communicate about water conservation to residents be an allowable cost?

A: Yes, professional services or costs related to the development of education and outreach materials to help communities communicate about water conservation would be an allowable cost.

Q: Would a comprehensive water supply resiliency study looking at strategies such as reuse, aquifer recharge, graywater systems, etc. fit within the scope of this program?

A: Yes, a comprehensive water supply resiliency planning project would fit within the scope of this grant program.

Q: Would installation of an ihydrant be eligible, and would an ihydrant manufactured by Clow/Kennedy with sensors in the main water valve be considered "new technology"?

A: Installation of an ihydrant could be eligible for funding, assuming the specific goals of the installation fall within the scope of the program and are explained in the application. While the equipment generally is eligible for associated scoring points for new/innovative technology, applications should explain how the technology would be used to advance the mission of this grant program as outlined in the RFR.

Q: Would allocating funds to a rebate program for the next fiscal year be an allowable cost? (i.e. the funds would not be spent on reimbursing rebate purchases by June 30th, but funds would be dedicated to the program by June 30th?)

A: Simply allocating funds to a program without the funds actually being spent by the deadline of June 30th, 2025 would not be an allowable cost.

Q: Is this a reimbursable grant where the municipalities have to front the cost and then get reimbursed?

A: Yes, awards will be in the form of reimbursements for allowable project costs.

Q: Are applicants allowed to apply for more than one award?

A: Yes, applicants can apply for multiple awards.

Q: If a community is not compliant with the new MBTA Zoning requirements, are they disqualified from applying for this grant?

A: There has not been a final determination at the state level in terms of whether a community can receive grant funding if they are not in compliance with the MBTA zoning requirements. Currently all communities may apply for grant funding.

Q: Does an applicant have to create a full Water Loss or Water Conservation plan or can they apply to enact small-scale changes like conservation device incentive programs, public sector facility upgrades, and a water loss audit?

A: The development of full Water Conservation or Water Loss Control plans are not required components of a project scope to be eligible for funding. Smaller projects that promote water efficiency, water loss control, and drought management such as the ones listed above are eligible for funding.