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MassDEP Official Responses to Questions regarding the December 23, 2021 PFAS6 Interim Response Grant Opportunity, Round 2

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has appropriated \$2,281,450 to the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) to establish a grant program (consisting of up to 3 Rounds of Grant Opportunities) in State Fiscal Year 2022 (which ends on June 30, 2022) to help offset the cost of emergency response to MCL exceedances of "PFAS6" (the sum of six per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances) contamination in drinking water. This grant program provides funds (including reimbursement for costs and expenses already incurred) to impacted public water systems for emergency measures taken to respond to a discovery of PFAS6 contamination in the drinking water supply. Round 1 was recently completed, resulting in the funding of grant awards in the total amount of \$1,281,450. MassDEP is now offering Round 2 of this grant program, which makes up to \$1,000,000 available for reimbursements for qualifying applications from eligible entities. Only projects that meet the specific requirements of the PFAS6 program as outlined in the Round 2 Grant Reimbursement Opportunity will be considered for funding.

Round 2 Grant Program Goal: The goal of the Round 2 MassDEP PFAS6 Interim Response Grant Program is to provide grant funds for the reimbursement of previously incurred costs associated with a Public Water System's (PWS) immediate response to PFAS6 contamination in its drinking water supply. The full Round 2 Grant Opportunity is posted at (<https://www.mass.gov/info-details/water-resources-grants-financial-assistance>). Questions regarding the PFAS6 Interim Response Grant Opportunity, Round 2, were accepted by email until January 6, 2022. The following questions were received by that deadline, and MassDEP's official responses are provided below each question. Please note that, where multiple applicants essentially asked the same question, MassDEP has combined the content of these duplicate questions in order to provide a single, consistent, and uniform response.

Q.1. When does the money need to be spent to be eligible for reimbursement? Is it before/by the grant application date (February 1, 2022) or between the program dates (i.e., the CONTRACT dates) of March 28 through June 30, 2022? If a contract for water vending was, for example, a years' worth of service, can a full years' worth of service be provided, or would the grant only cover the term period above or the contract year (assuming contract was for the year)?

A.1. The funds need to be spent by February 1 2022. As stated at page 2 of the Grant Opportunity (Round 2) for MassDEP's PFAS6 Interim Response Program, the Round 2 Grant Purpose is as follows:

Grant purpose: The goal of this program is to provide grant funds for reimbursement of previously incurred costs, associated with a Public Water System's (PWS) immediate response to PFAS6 contamination in its drinking water supply.

As noted in **the Evaluation Criteria section**, "this is a **reimbursement** grant program based upon presentation of eligible costs by Eligible Applicants to address PFAS6 contamination on an interim, emergency basis. Eligible applicants will receive funding [for]

[e]ligible expenses [that] are already incurred to be submitted for reimbursement" (Grant Opportunity, page 4).

Therefore, the Round 2 Application requires eligible applicants to submit "**Documentation detailing eligible reimbursement costs incurred up to and including the application date (i.e., through the February 1, 2022 application deadline.)**"

With respect to the water vending services contract, the reimbursement of the eligible expenses will be for those costs incurred as of the Round 2 application deadline, which is February 1, 2022.

Q.2. Does this eliminate the funding being used for design services (say up to 25-30% design for example which could be done in the timeframe of the grant) as being considered excluded as new work?

A. 2. The "planning, design, or construction of new or reconfigured drinking water treatment facilities" are ineligible expenses for the PFAS6 Interim Response Grants, Round 2. (see Grant Opportunity, page 3)

In addition, as stated above in A.1., the reimbursement is for costs incurred up to the date of application submittal, February 1, 2022. Applications or invoices submitted for projected contractual costs or for work that has not actually been completed by February 1, 2022 will not be considered.

Q.3. Can this grant program funding be used to investigate the depth of a plume of PFAS?

A.3. No. As noted in A.1., the purpose of this grant program is to provide reimbursement for previously incurred costs associated with the immediate emergency response of a PWS to a discovery of PFAS6 contamination in the drinking water supply. Investigation activities regarding known PFAS6 contamination are not eligible for reimbursement through this grant program. See Grant opportunity, page 3 (Ineligible Costs include: "Pilot studies or other investigations that will lead to permanent resolution of the PFAS6 contamination problem.")

Q.4. A Community PWS took immediate action after detection of PFAS in the finished water at one of their water treatment plants. They had GAC filters on-site but the media was 8 years old and exhausted. They designed, bid, and completed the replacement of the GAC in one of their GAC filters, and are now non-detect for PFAS6. Would this be an eligible reimbursement for the PFAS6 Interim Response grant?

A.4. No, this work is ineligible for reimbursement. Ineligible activities (Grant Opportunity, Page 3) include:

- Planning, design, or construction of new or reconfigured drinking water treatment facilities and
- Expenses relating to ongoing maintenance and treatment at drinking water facilities (whether or not related to PFAS6 treatment)

Q.5. Last year a Community PWS hired an engineering company to generate a contingency plan for both temporary and long term PFAS6 treatment. Would this be eligible for PFAS6 Interim Response Grant, Round 2? The PWS did have an MCL exceedance last summer (not an NON – just one month above the MCL) at one of its treatment plants.

A.5. No, these activities would be ineligible for reimbursement through this grant program. As stated in the Grant Opportunity on page 3, Ineligible Expenses include activities that consist of “Planning, design, or construction of new or reconfigured drinking water treatment facilities.”

Q.6. We applied for funding in Round 1 and received a partial award. The Round 2 guidance states that if awards were given in Round 1, we are not eligible for Round 2 funding. With so little of our Round 1 request funded, is it possible for us to decline the Round 1 award and resubmit our application for Round 2?

A.6. No. As stated in the Round 2 Grant Opportunity, the requirement is "awarded" rather than "accepted." (“No awards previously received by the PWS in Round 1 of this PFAS6 Interim Response Program;” Grant Opportunity, page 4). This application was fully evaluated during Round 1 and received a partial award from MassDEP for all eligible work activities.