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Department of Environmental Protection

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Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant Application Response to Questions May 2024

Questions regarding the Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro Grant Application were due May 1, 2024. Below are MassDEP's responses to those questions. The deadline for submitting applications is May 15, 2024.

Eligible Applicants:

Several questions sought clarification on applicant eligibility. Below are the entities eligible to submit an application.

- An organization or business (for-profit or non-profit) properly licensed to do business in Massachusetts.
- A regional entity, such as a solid waste management district, solid waste/recycling cooperative or regional planning authority, as long as the entity is recognized as a governmental body under Mass General Laws.
- An individual Massachusetts city or town, or a MA municipality acting as a lead for a multi-town regional initiative.
- Pre-K-12 schools, as well as colleges and universities, both public and private.
- **Municipal applicants:** MassDEP will consider the amount of unspent Recycling Dividend Program funds a municipality has available.

Eligible Expenses/Ineligible Expenses:

Several questions requested clarification on eligible expenses. Below is MassDEP's response.

Grant funds may be used for costs associated with developing and implementing the proposed project such as, equipment, signage, outreach/education, event space rental fees, event marketing/promotion, professional services (e.g., legal, engineering, design) and new personnel (consultants, contractors, or staff that will dedicate additional hours to the proposed project for a specified and finite period of time).

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

TTY# MassRelay Service 1-800-439-2370
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Grant funds **may not** be used for general operating expenses or costs associated with existing programs and services (e.g., rent, utilities, insurance, office equipment and supplies, personnel expenses, accounting, etc.). Any funds spent before full execution of the Standard Contract are not eligible for reimbursement.

Eligible projects/Ineligible projects:

Several questions requested clarification on eligible projects. Below is MassDEP's response.

Eligible projects will promote the reduction of waste produced (source reduction) or will extend the lifespan of products via donation, rescue, reuse and/or repair. Competitive applications will demonstrate innovation, community-wide impact, project sustainability after initial grant funding, and/or the potential to be replicated in other areas. Recycling and compost

Ineligible projects include but are not limited to:

- Compost projects.
- Recycling projects.

Other questions received:

Q: Question about grant funding, do we pay first and buy the containers or bins and after receiving them, we get paid?

A: Yes, this is a reimbursement grant. You must submit an invoice with receipts for reimbursement. The grant funds can be dispersed in one lump sum, or in two payments (see grant guidelines for specific language).

Q: If an organization is successful with a grant proposal in this round, can they submit a proposal for a different project in the next round?

A: Yes. The program will consider past performance, quality of application and overall demand for grants. Completion of existing commitments is weighted heavily.

Q: Do you think the award of a Micro Grant would in any way affect our chance to apply funding for dishwashers through another MassDEP program, such as SMRP's waste reduction fund?

A: It will depend on many different factors including number of applicants, grant award history, RDP funds available, and the impact of the proposal.

Q: Is there a place in the application to upload letters of support? We have a few organizations working together and are wondering how best to show that.

A: Letters of support can be emailed separately after you send in your application. Please email them to Janice.pare@mass.gov and Leah.kelleher@mass.gov.

Q: Where the application asks to identify “key people that will be involved in this project” and then “limit 3” does that mean we can only list 3 people or is that a minimum of 3 people?

A: Please list only three of the most relevant personnel.

Q: In the RFR, it says "Projects must focus on reducing waste generation and prolonging the lifespan of products via donation, rescue, reuse and/or repair in Massachusetts." Our project reduces but doesn't reuse or repair. Are we eligible? I originally thought so, but in the application, there are only two boxes to check: "Indicate the type of activity(ies) in your grant proposal. Reuse Repair."

A: Proposals must promote reuse and repair and demonstrate the reduction of waste.

Q: With regard to "Creation or expansion of food donation collection, storage, and distribution programs." Would it be appropriate to apply for funding for the purchase of fresh, local farm food for distribution?

A: If you are not rescuing food that would otherwise be disposed as waste, it is not eligible.

Q: Would it be appropriate to apply for funds to purchase a garden shed and tools for "lending" to residents to do their gardening?

A: A tool lending shack is eligible.

Q: Would it be appropriate to apply for seeds and tools to establish extensive cover crops on parcels throughout the Community Farm?

A: Proposals must promote reuse and repair and demonstrate the reduction of waste.

Q: Would a one-time event qualify for your grant, or does it have to be an ongoing event/setting up a more formal program? If the answer is no, would it qualify if we committed to holding one event/year for the coming few years?

A: The Program seeks innovative, impactful, and sustained projects. If it's an infusion of money to create a long-term, sustained program, that would qualify.

Q: Can we apply for it to buy reusable stainless-steel plates/trays? If so, can we purchase them first and get refund later?

A: Grant funds may only be used for purchases procured after the grant has been awarded and a contract has been signed.

Q: Would a cardboard baler be an appropriate equipment request for the micro-grant, and, if yes, would the grant also consider another container in which to store cardboard until we had enough to be picked up or delivered to a recycler?

A: No, a cardboard baler would not be eligible.

Q: Is this grant available to individuals, or is it just for organizations? Could I partner with an organization? Grateful for any ideas of how I might be eligible.

A: Grants to individuals are not permitted. A community group could be a subcontractor to an eligible entity. See eligibility above.

Q: I am interested in finding a grant to support our compost generation and sales.

A: Compost projects are not eligible for this grant.

Q: Will the grant fund the careful removal of items that can be salvaged/reused/recycled by other either in the community or people needing building materials?

A: Per the grant guidelines, "Conduct a deconstruction pilot program involving one or more buildings (municipal or private)" is an eligible reuse project.

Q: We see in the guidelines that operating costs are not allowed per the grant's criteria. However, would something temporary, like a short-term storage rental or a POD delivery over the summer that is specific to the project and limited in duration, be an acceptable project cost?

A: Correct, operating costs are not covered. See eligible expenses.

Q: Is it true that if awarded the grant reimbursement for expenses happens only once ... after the final report? A small non-profit has to upfront and carry costs for 12 months?

A: Yes, this is a reimbursement grant. Grantees have up to one year to submit a final report and receipts for any equipment that was purchased. See grant guidelines.

Q: The guidelines are unclear about the repair category. It sounds like funding is available for a statewide program or to set up a community repair space. Can that community space be a one-day event?

A: A repair event doesn't need to be statewide, but it must demonstrate the ability to be sustainable. Strictly funding a one-day event without intending to continue in the future is not eligible.

Q: Are public libraries eligible to apply?

A: Yes, public libraries can apply. The award would be granted to the municipality.

Q: Can community groups be sponsored by a formal nonprofit organization like ours?

A: A community group could be a subcontractor to an eligible entity.

Q: Is DEP saying grant funds can't be used for a new school or new cafeteria program(?), but can be used for an existing meal program that wants to add reusable dishware?

A: Correct, new construction/new programs are ineligible. The proposal must be to replace an existing program that is currently using single-use service ware.

Q: While much of our event entails recycling, there are also reuse and upcycle components that will be part of it. In that case would we be eligible for any funding?

A: Recycling projects are not eligible. See examples of eligible reuse projects in the grant guidelines.

Q: The two projects we have in mind for which support is needed are for 1) the 2nd year of our pilot initiative which reduces food waste from meetings and events on campus and 2) expanding our initiative which is an effort to rescue, reuse, and/or donate items from campus residence halls that would otherwise go to a landfill at the end of each school year. Would these projects be eligible for funding?

A: Rescuing food that would otherwise be disposed, is eligible. Reuse projects are eligible. See examples of eligible projects in the grant guidelines.

Q: We are partnering with 2 other nonprofits for a specific project – mattress donation and recycling which would be determined based on the condition. Is this a project that would be supported by the Grant?

A: Recycling mattresses is not eligible. Reuse and repair of mattresses is eligible.

Q: This year will be our 3rd year promoting zero waste. We set up recycling stations and collect food waste for composting. We were hoping to get some financial assistance to make signage and get volunteer vests and other promotional assistance. For example we are pushing the food vendors to have compostable paper goods and will provide info to them and promote their initiatives.

A: Recycling and compost projects are not eligible.

Q: I am wondering if multiple applications can be submitted for different projects by the same organization?

A: Yes, but the program will consider overall demand for grants during the evaluation process. Completion of existing commitments is weighted heavily.

Q: Would the purchase of a dishwasher for the purpose of implementing a reusables program fall under the reuse grants?

A: Fixing and/or replacing dishwashers are eligible expenses.

Q: Would an individual be eligible for a Reduce, Reuse, Repair Micro-Grant to assist a municipality in a research project for recycling?

A: Recycling projects are not eligible.

Q: We wonder if the grant could be used to help cover the cost of relocating the Pantry. If so, could you tell me what sort of expenses the grant could cover.

A: No, this project is not eligible.

Q: I have a lot of ideas for a grant application in conjunction with our library and possibly a few other town's libraries, would each of the municipalities have to do exactly the same events?

A: A regional application is permitted.

Q: I wonder if we could apply for a grant to fund water filling station.

A: Yes, a water filling station is eligible.

Q: Could this grant be use for a Latex re-use collection with Recolor in my town?

A: Yes.

Q: Do you think the Refuse District might be eligible for this grant? In the past, you've mentioned that you would consider RDP balances. However, the Refuse District doesn't earn RDP funds.

A: Yes regional entities can apply.