



Critical Flood Risk Infrastructure Grant Program Summary of Application Questions & Responses



Updated: March 25, 2022

Eligible Applicants

- 1. Question:** Can an applicant apply for more than one project? Is it likely that NHDES would award multiple projects to a single applicant?

Response: Each applicant may apply for funding for multiple projects. Our goal is to fund the projects that best meet the purpose and evaluation criteria of this funding opportunity, so it is possible we would award multiple projects to a single applicant if the review panel were to rank those projects highly.
- 2. Question:** Would non-governmental organizations be eligible to apply? Would the non-governmental organization need to be based in New Hampshire?

Response: Non-governmental organizations are eligible to apply. Non-governmental organizations do not need to be based in New Hampshire, but they must be a 501(c)3 registered with the NH Secretary of State and be able to obtain a certificate of good standing, a state vendor code, and a DUNS number. They must also meet the state's insurance requirements, which includes statutory workers' compensation and employees' liability insurance for all employees engaged in the performance of the project, as well as comprehensive public liability insurance against all claims of bodily injuries, death or property damage, in amounts not less than \$2,000,000 for bodily injury or death in any one incident, and \$500,000 for property damage in any one incident.
- 3. Question:** Would a lake association be eligible to apply for the development of an a-i watershed management plan?

Response: Lake associations located within the Coastal Watershed would be eligible to apply and receive funds if they meet the non-governmental organization eligibility requirements. An a-i watershed plan would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.
- 4. Question:** Can a regional planning commission apply on behalf of a municipality?

Response: Regional planning commissions are eligible applicants, so they would be able to apply as a lead applicant or apply on a municipality's behalf where the town is identified as the lead applicant. The lead applicant must enter into a Grant Agreement with NHDES to receive funds.
- 5. Question:** Can a private consultant apply on behalf of a municipality?

Response: Yes, a private consultant can complete and submit the online application if the municipality is listed as the lead applicant and someone from the municipality is identified as the point of contact. Applicants with the highest-ranking applications must enter into a Grant Agreement with NHDES to receive funds, and since for-profit entities are not eligible applicants, the municipality would need to enter into the Grant Agreement with NHDES. The municipality could then use those grant funds to hire a private consultant.
- 6. Question:** Would a municipality be able to apply on behalf of a private landowner?

Response: Yes, a municipality may apply on behalf of a private entity. If the project is selected for funding, the municipality would need to enter into a Grant Agreement with NHDES. The municipality could then use those grant funds to work with the private landowner to complete the proposed project.

7. Question: Can a state agency be involved as a project partner (i.e., a tidal culvert analysis on state road or a project where a state agency is a landowner)?

Response: Yes, state agencies may be involved as a project partner.

Project Eligibility

8. Question: I realize some communities are only partially located within the Coastal Watershed. Are any projects in those communities eligible regardless of what watershed they are in?

Response: No, only projects located within the [Coastal Watershed boundary](#) are eligible.

9. Question: Would a stormwater utility feasibility study be eligible?

Response: Yes, that project would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.

10. Question: Could you clarify whether monitoring sea level, tides, and flooding/inundation is an eligible activity, either in its own right or as part of a project doing other work?

Response: Funding for this grant program is made available to NHDES through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which means the use of these funds is subject to requirements defined by the US Department of the Treasury. Eligible uses must be aligned with [Clean Water SRF project eligibility](#) or [Drinking Water SRF project eligibility](#) (with a few exceptions). Therefore, monitoring sea level, tides, and flooding/inundation would not be an eligible activity in its own right, but if this monitoring work was part of a project to assess wastewater, drinking water, or stormwater infrastructure vulnerability to flooding, then it could be eligible.

11. Question: We are working with a municipality to address the community's septic system issues. It is a possibility that septic system inundation at high tides and storm events is leading to high bacteria counts in local waterbodies. However, despite years of monitoring and source tracking, it has never been fully confirmed. We would like to build on these past efforts by conducting an inundation, groundwater, and vulnerability analysis for these systems. Would this project concept be eligible?

Response: Yes, that project concept would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.

12. Question: Could this funding opportunity be used for property acquisition costs? For example, could funding be used to purchase an easement or land for stormwater management purposes?

Response: Yes, land acquisition could be eligible if the need for and anticipated outcomes of the project align with the purpose of this grant program to support flood resilience and stormwater management efforts.

13. Question: We are interested in developing a model of our municipal storm drainage network to be able to make decisions about increasing capacity of the drainage network to reduce surface flooding and accommodate increases in precipitation and more intense storm events. We would focus on areas that are currently subject to flooding but also get an understanding of where there may be other pinch points within the system that are causing backups. Our goal would be to identify the critical areas in the storm drain network to develop capital improvement plans. Would such a project be eligible for funding under this grant?

Response: Yes, that project would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.

14. Question: We are interested in conducting an analysis on the potential economic impact that future sea-level rise and other coastal hazards may have on communities. This economic forecast would

specifically assess impacts on property taxes and business revenue. Would this project concept qualify for the Critical Flood Risk Infrastructure Grant opportunity?

Response: Funding for this grant program is made available to NHDES through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which means the use of these funds is subject to requirements defined by the US Department of the Treasury. Eligible uses must be aligned with [Clean Water SRF project eligibility](#) or [Drinking Water SRF project eligibility](#) (with a few exceptions). Therefore, unless the analysis focused on the economic impact of coastal hazards on municipal drinking water, wastewater, and/or stormwater programs, it likely would not be eligible.

15. Question: Would a municipality be eligible to receive funds for the development of a coastal-focused master plan update?

Response: Funding for this grant program is made available to NHDES through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), which means the use of these funds is subject to requirements defined by the US Department of the Treasury. Eligible uses must be aligned with [Clean Water SRF project eligibility](#) or [Drinking Water SRF project eligibility](#) (with a few exceptions). Therefore, this grant program can fund the water quality portion of planning activities but likely would not be able to fund the entire coastal-focused master plan update. The details of the types of assets and infrastructure you expect the master plan to focus on would be important to help determine the portion of the plan that could be funded through this grant program.

16. Question: Would GIS mapping of stormwater infrastructure to assess vulnerability to flooding be an eligible project under the planning and assessment category (including inventory, database, GIS mapping, and condition assessment)?

Response: Yes, that project concept would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.

17. Question: Would a road safety improvements project that addresses some lacking stormwater drainage infrastructure for flood resiliency as well as safety improvements be eligible?

Response: That project concept would be eligible under the implementation category, but Critical Flood Risk Infrastructure Grant funding may not be able to fund the entire project. Grant recipients may only use funds for road repairs and upgrades that interact directly with an eligible stormwater infrastructure project.

18. Question: Would a tidal culvert replacement project be eligible?

Response: Yes, that project concept would be eligible under the implementation project category.

19. Question: Would a municipality be eligible to receive funds to replace drainage pipes to improve stormwater management?

Response: Yes, that project concept would be eligible under the planning and assessment project category.

Project Review & Evaluation

20. Question: Is there any priority for projects that intend to provide benefit to multiple municipalities or municipalities working together?

Response: Yes, projects that provide benefits to multiple communities would likely score well. Applicants should describe how the project would lead to progress toward flood resilience and stormwater management goals within multiple communities as part of their response to Section 3.3

(Desired Outcome) of the application form. If you have a project in mind where multiple communities are involved, one community should be identified to serve as the lead applicant.

- 21. Question:** The application instructions state that the amount of funding requested for implementation projects must not exceed \$2.5M. One \$2.5M project will use up more than half of the \$4.5M available. Is the intent to fund more smaller projects or a few large ones?
Response: We recognize the funding needs that exists for both planning and large-scale implementation projects. Our intent is to fund the projects that best meet the purpose and evaluation criteria of the grant program. All applications will be reviewed using the same evaluation criteria, regardless of the project category. Therefore, deciding which projects to fund will be determined based on the review team’s ranking of all the applications.
- 22. Question:** Is there a chance an application asks for more money than what they might be awarded?
Response: Under certain circumstances, it is possible for an applicant to be offered partial grant funding for a limited number of tasks proposed in the project’s scope of work. The review team will consider offering partial funding on a case-by-case basis. For example, if the combined total project cost for the review team’s highest-ranked projects is less than the total funding available for this grant program, the review team will consider whether it would be possible and beneficial to offer partial funding for the next highest-ranked project.
- 23. Question:** Are there specific flood risks that are prioritized?
Response: No, projects that address all types of flood risks will be considered and have an equal opportunity to receive funding. We recognize each community has unique flood risks and may need to prioritize certain flood risks over others. In Section 3.1 (Project Need) of the application form, applicants should describe the specific flood vulnerabilities that exist in the community or at the project site.
- 24. Question:** In terms of application scoring, do applications for projects which are primarily located in the headwaters of the Coastal Watershed have any priority or disincentives compared to applications closer to the seacoast?
Response: The application review team will not prioritize projects based on their geographic location within the Coastal Watershed. Projects located near the headwaters of the Coastal Watershed have an equal opportunity to receive funding as projects located near the Coastal Zone.

Application Process & Requirements

- 25. Question:** In the case of a consultant being a subcontractor, can the consultant be named as a project partner? For example, should the consultant’s experience be included in project partner description?
Response: Yes, any subcontractors that have been preidentified, including consultants, should be named as a project partner and their experience should be included in the project team description within Section 5.1 of the application form.
- 26. Question:** If the proposed project will be a construction project and the applicant won't know the contractor until it goes out to bid, can the applicant write TBD in section 6.3 for subcontractors?
Response: Yes, we do not expect all subcontractors to be identified at the time the application is submitted, so it is acceptable to enter “TBD” under Section 6.3 of the application form in reference to the project partners/subcontractors funded by the grant.

27. Question: Section 7 of the application instructions states that a letter(s) of approval is required for construction projects. If the applicant is a municipality and the construction project will be contained within city-owned property, should the municipality still prepare a letter of approval to satisfy the Section 7.1 application requirement?

Response: If the lead applicant is also the owner of the land where construction would occur, a letter of approval is not necessary. Therefore, in the case you described, the city would not be required to complete Section 7.1 of the application.

28. Question: If collaborators are going to help review and comment on applications, do they also have to develop an online nForm account?

Response: Yes, to gain access to an nForm application that has been started by another project partner, collaborators must register for an nForm account. Instructions on how to forward an application to other collaborators for their review can be found on the [Application Form homepage](#).

Project Administration

29. Question: Are grant funds awarded as reimbursement of eligible expenses or do awarded grant funds come to the municipality first?

Response: There will be a reimbursement process which will be outlined in more detail in each project Grant Agreement. We will either allow grantees to invoice no more frequently than monthly for tasks completed or partially completed within their scope of work, or allow grantees to submit requests for reimbursement upon completion of agreed upon deliverables. The method of reimbursement will depend on the project and the scope of work.

30. Question: If an applicant has already used an RFQ process to hire a private consultant, would the applicant be able to hire the same consultant to complete the proposed project?

Response: When grant recipients are already working with a consultant, we will ask the grant recipient to provide certification that the procurement for consulting services was conducted in a manner providing full and open competition. This is not required as part of the application process but would be requested if the project is selected for funding. The grant manager would likely approve prior RFQ processes if it is relevant to the proposed work and written justification is provided.

31. Question: Does historic preservation play any role?

Response: Any project costs related to Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act are eligible expenses so long as the proposed project is eligible. Prior to submitting an application, applicants should consider whether their proposed project would trigger a Section 106 review.

32. Question: The Certificate of Vote of Authorization form ([NHDES-C-10-003](#)) states: A... “meeting was held and that the Governing Body with Authority to Certify Actions voted to enter into a grant agreement with the New Hampshire Department Environmental Services to fund a drinking water/wastewater improvement project.” Do the ARPA requirements contain language that would waive the requirements that: “There to be a *public hearing* in accordance with RSA 31:95-b,III (a); to take testimony from those who wish to be heard concerning the following: “*To apply for, accept, and expend* unanticipated monies in amounts of \$10,000...” Is the intent of the Vote of Authorization form to give me the right to apply?

Response: A Certificate of Vote of Authorization is not required to submit an application. The Certificate of Vote of Authorization is only required if and when a project has been selected to receive grant funds. Selected grant recipients must enter into a Grant Agreement with NHDES to

receive funds, and a Certificate of Vote of Authorization is a necessary certificate that states that a grant applicant is willing to enter into a grant agreement with NHDES and that whoever signs the Grant Agreement has the authority to do so. We are not aware of ARPA requirements containing language that would waive RSA 31:95-b.

33. Question: I've heard municipal officials in some states say that labor shortages and construction material supply chain issues may make it difficult to complete projects within state and/or federal deadlines (12/31/26 is Treasury's project completion date). Is there any discussion of seeking an expenditure deadline extension? Is there value to communities identifying problems meeting deadlines? That "evidence" could make the case for a Congressional extension.

Response: We are not currently aware of any discussions on seeking expenditure deadline extensions for ARPA funds. If grant recipients experience any difficulties meeting the grant expenditure deadline due to labor shortages, construction material supply chain issues, or other challenges, they should contact Ben Sweeney at Benjamin.r.sweeney1@des.nh.gov or [\(603\) 559-0021](tel:6035590021).

Additional Funding Opportunities

34. Question: Are there any plans to offer this funding again in the future, or is this a one-time opportunity because of the ARPA allocation?

Response: This could be a one-time funding opportunity. The ability to offer this funding opportunity again in the future will be contingent upon whether the state receives additional federal funding that the state then decides to invest in critical flood risk infrastructure.

35. Question: Are there any similar funding opportunities available for flood resilience and stormwater management projects outside of NH's Coastal Watershed?

Response: The [Clean Water State Revolving Fund](#) (CWSRF) could be used to fund flood resilience and stormwater management projects. For example, some floodplain management and flood mitigation infrastructure projects, including green infrastructure designed to protect treatment works from flood waters and flood impacts are eligible under the CWSRF program. NHDES is also currently developing a [Culvert Flood Risk Assistance Grant Program](#), which will be a statewide funding opportunity that aims to support the construction of culvert replacement projects. More information about this grant program will be available in the spring.