



## ***CWSRF Stormwater Planning Guidance Document March 2024***

### **Stormwater Planning Principal Forgiveness**

The NHDES Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) loan program is offering up to \$100,000 in principal forgiveness for stormwater planning evaluations or assessments.

Eligible planning efforts will have a vision of implementing a future project with a tangible water quality benefit, for instance: final design, permitting and /or construction, or a federal permit requirement.

This document does not encompass all potential aspects of every project type. This document is meant to be a broad overview of project types and baseline requirements. Please discuss specific project requirements with your NHDES project manager.

CWSRF is a federal-state partnership that provides communities with reduced-cost financing (loans) for a wide range of water quality projects. Once all eligible project expenses are incurred, and subsequently disbursed, the loan is closed and principal forgiveness is then applied to the principal balance.

Communities **must receive authority to borrow for the entire loan amount** through a town warrant article or city equivalent process, even if the full principal amount is forgiven. The CWSRF loan amount may be greater than \$100,000, depending upon the estimated cost for the project, but only up to \$100,000 per project will be forgiven.

To maintain eligibility for CWSRF principal forgiveness, NHDES must approve the work scope. Prior to review of the full loan application, applicants will submit work scope proposals related to planning evaluations for approval by a project manager from the NHDES Watershed Assistance Section. The NHDES Grants Management Section will assist with loan processing and disbursements.

### **Eligible Projects**

There are many eligible activities that fall within the scope of planning. Planning activities that have a reasonable prospect of resulting in a capital project are eligible. Principal forgiveness is offered only to municipalities.

The following activities are eligible, pending NHDES approval:

- Cost and Effectiveness analyses.
- Stormwater Capital Improvement Plans.
- Integrated planning.
- Long-term control plans.
- Stormwater management plans.
- Improving the data-driven decision support/business-case development ability of an existing asset management program (AMP) to incorporate additional data sets into the AMP such as, but not limited to:
  - Criticality/risk data from a facility plan or vulnerability assessment.
  - Asset level condition assessment.
  - Implementing recommendations in an AMP.
- Planning activities that assess vulnerability to extreme weather and climate change:
  - Risk/vulnerability assessments.
  - Emergency preparedness, response, and recovery plans, security plans/safety plans.
  - Water conservation/drought management plans.
  - Climate adaptation plans.
- Environmental management systems.
- Watershed management plans, consistent with EPA Watershed Plan Elements a-i or alternative plan.
- Source Water Protection Plans.
- Nitrogen or Phosphorus Load Reduction Plans.
- Planning activities to implement a priority in the New Hampshire Cyanobacteria Program Plan.
- Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) implementation plans.
- Assessment of project effectiveness:
  - Equipment (e.g., sensors, meters, gauges, hardware, and software used to store and interpret data).
  - Activities (e.g., sampling, lab work, data analysis).
- Other activities as approved by NHDES.

### **Minimum Requirements**

To maintain principal forgiveness eligibility, all eligible planning projects must meet the following requirements.

## ***General Requirements***

The scope of work must include water quality elements addressed in one or more of the following documents:

- Watershed Management (“a-i”) plan: [Handbook for Developing Watershed Plans to Restore and Protect Our Waters | US EPA](#).
- [2020-2024 New Hampshire Nonpoint Source Management Program Plan](#).
- [Resilient Tidal Crossings an Assessment and Prioritization to Address New Hampshire’s Tidal Crossing Infrastructure for Coastal Resilience](#).
- NH [MS4 compliance](#).
- [2010 Piscataqua Region Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan](#).
- [NH Aquatic Restoration Mapper](#).
- [New Hampshire’s Cyanobacteria Plan: A Statewide Strategy](#).
- Asset Management Program.

In addition, the scope of work must include all the following elements:

- **Scope of Work Tasks:** Breakdown of tasks with clearly defined roles.
- **Required Meetings:** Three meetings that include NHDES attendance: kick-off, mid-level, and wrap-up.
- **Progress Reports:** At a minimum, quarterly project progress updates or meetings.
- [Basis of Design Reports](#), as appropriate.
- [Federal Flood Risk Management Standard](#), as appropriate.
- **Draft reports and documents** will be provided to NHDES for review and comment.
- **Final documents** will be provided to NHDES in electronic form.
- **Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA):** All publications must be ADA compliant. All final work products must meet the applicable Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Title II Regulations to the extent practicable and shall be guided by best practices outlined in the Revised Section 508 Standards of the Rehabilitation Act and the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG). At a minimum, final work products shall include sans-serif fonts, underlined and descriptive text links, color best practices, captions for audio and video content, headers in tables, images with alt text, gender-neutral text, and consideration of the Plain Writing Act. Examples of final work products and outreach materials include, but are not limited to, project reports, press releases, newsletter articles, websites, videos, and signage.

### ***Eligibility of Costs***

Expenses directly related to planning are eligible for CWSRF funding, subject to prior approval by NHDES. Typical expenses that may be incurred include, but are not limited to:

- Preliminary design, up to 30% design.
- Equipment purchases/rental such as GPS and tablets.
- Software purchases.
- Laboratory fees.
- Consulting fees\*.

\*If you wish to hire a consultant/engineer they must be chosen using Qualifications Based Selection (QBS) procedures and use the [standard state engineering contract](#) available on the NHDES website.

### ***NHDES Review and Approval***

Work scopes and contracts need to be pre-approved by NHDES prior to entering into a CWSRF loan. Work scopes must be approved, and contracts executed prior to initiating work.

### ***Deliverables and NHDES Oversight***

To maintain eligibility for CWSRF principal forgiveness, NHDES must attend the kick-off, mid-level, and wrap-up meetings and be notified in advance of other meetings and trainings relative to the project. At a minimum, quarterly project progress updates or meetings must be sent to NHDES as outlined in the scope of work. NHDES also requires a report to be developed as a deliverable for a planning loan.

### **Questions/Contact Information**

For stormwater projects/questions/approvals, contact Deborah Loiselle at [deborah.s.loiselle@des.nh.gov](mailto:deborah.s.loiselle@des.nh.gov).