Watersheds United Vermont Design and Implementation Block Grant

Request for Proposal and Grant Guidelines

|  |
| --- |
| ***Overview*** |
| On March 10, 2023 WUV released the newest round of funding under WUV’s Vermont Department of Conservation (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Design and Implementation Block Grant (DIBG). Funding under the DIBG must be used to support the design or implementation of projects whose primary purpose is to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution from runoff and soil erosion that discharge into the State’s rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. WUV has approximately $225,000 to allocate to projects over two categories: 1. Stormwater projects and 2. Natural Resources restoration projects (Lake Shoreland, Rivers - Stream/Floodplain, Wetlands, and Forestry). *All projects are to be completed before November 1, 2024*. 1/3 of the projects must be under $50,000 total project cost (excluding leverage/match).  The full project application and project eligibility and readiness screening form are due on:  **April 21, 2023**  WUV anticipates funding decisions will be announced by early May 2023. All grant materials will be posted on the WUV website on March 10, 2023 at <https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants>.    Under WUV’s previous round of design and implementation funding, 3-acre stormwater projects were eligible for funding; ***3-acre stormwater projects are no longer eligible for funding under this round*.**  If you have any questions on this grant round, please contact Christian Pelletier (christian@whiteriverpartnership.org), WUV’s Block Grant Administrator and Lyn Munno (watershedsunited@gmail.com)  Please Note: DEC has awarded DIBG awards to 3 entities: WUV, the Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC) and Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC). The funding requirements are the same for all entities, though the application and grant administration process may vary somewhat. All three entities will have grant rounds this year. While we encourage for administration purposes that NRCDs apply to NRCC, watershed groups apply to WUV and municipalities apply through MARC, all eligible entities can apply through any DIBG holder. WUV, NRCC and MARC will coordinate on grant rounds, project applications, and remaining funding. |

***Grant Guidelines and Information***

|  |
| --- |
| ***Key Dates*** |
| **March 10, 2023**: WUV Design and Implementation Block Grant - Request for Proposals  **April 21, 2023**: Full project application and Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening due  **Early May 2023**: Funding Decisions announced  **November 1, 2024\***: All projects funded through this grant round must be complete with final invoicing and deliverables submitted by *November 1, 2024 or no more than 3-months after the completion of the project (whichever one come sooner)*.  \*For some preliminary and final design projects, project completion deadlines may be set with WUV before the November 1, 2024 deadline based on project scope and anticipated project completion schedule. |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Available Funds*** |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| ***Funding Category*** | ***Total*** |
| *Stormwater* | *~$100,000* |
| *Natural Resources (Lake Shoreland, Rivers - Stream/Floodplain restoration, Forestry)* | *~$125,000* |
| ***Total*** | ***~$225,000*** |
| **A minimum of 1/3 of all funding will be awarded for projects with a total cost of $50,000 or less (excluding leverage/match)** | |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Application Documents*** |
| To complete submission of the application for this grant round you must submit the following documents:   1. ***2023 Design and Implementation Block Grant Full Application*** 2. ***Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form***   Applicants can also submit the following documents at time of application submission:   * + 1. DEC O&M Form     2. Written landowner commitment to implement next project phase     3. Bid(s), Quote(s), or Proposal(s), or Site Plan(s)     4. Site Photos     5. Any other relevant documents   ***Please note that in previous rounds, WUV had a 2 step process for the application that included a Pre-Application Eligibility screening. DEC has developed a Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form that will be replacing the Pre-Application Eligibility Screening. This new form will be due at the same time as the Full Application, if in the process of completing the Full Application or the Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form please contact*** [***Christian@whiteriverparntership.org***](mailto:Christian@whiteriverparntership.org) ***with any questions.*** |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Project Eligibility*** |
| Projects funded under this grant must have a **primary purpose to improve water quality by reducing nutrient and sediment pollution**. Secondary benefits (aquatic organism passage, habitat restoration, flooding, etc) may be included in your proposal to increase project competitiveness but they cannot be the primary project benefit.  Projects must follow standard milestones and deliverables found in:  ***Design/Implementation Block Grant Eligible Projects Types, Standards, Milestones and Deliverables Spreadsheet (*view this spreadsheet at** [**https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants**](https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants)**)**  Block Grant funds **MUST** be used for:   1. Projects that will lead to improved water quality with the primary purpose of nutrient and/or sediment reduction 2. Projects that fall into one of the following 2 categories:    1. **Natural Resources (Lake Shoreland, Rivers – Floodplain/Stream Restoration, Forestry, Wetland)**    2. **Stormwater** 3. Preliminary Design and/or Final Design and/or Project Implementation   In addition, projects must meet the following guidelines:   * Projects must adhere to all CWIP FY21 Funding Policy to be eligible for funding, all applicants must review the CWIP FY21 Funding Policy: [https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04\_FINAL\_FY21\_CWIPFundingPolicy\_signed.pdf](https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04_FINAL_FY21_CWIPFundingPolicy_signed.pdf%20%20) * Projects must follow the CWIP FY21 Funding Policy. Applicants should not use the newly released CWIP FY23 Funding Policy for these projects as this grant is governed FY21 Policy. * Projects must be in the watershed projects database * Projects must be approved by Basin Planner before funds are awarded * Projects must be identified/prioritized in existing assessments or plans * For implementation projects, all permits must be in place before implementation occurs * Applicants must complete the natural resource screening that is part of the Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form which includes receiving approvals from all applicable DEC program staff * All project funding recipients must provide proof of insurance and W-9 * Implementation projects must be able to obtain a signed DEC Operation and Maintenance Agreement * All design projects must be able to obtain landowner commitment to next steps * All projects funded through this grant round must be complete with final invoicing and deliverables submitted by November 1, 2024 or no more than 3-months after the completion of the project (whichever one come sooner). * All sub-contractors used for projects must be approved using the WUV / DEC sub-contractor approval process and all subcontracts must include DEC standard subcontract language |
| **Ineligible Entities:**  The following entities are ineligible for applying for these block grant funds:   * Private citizens, individuals * Private for-profit businesses and industries * Private for-profit colleges and universities * Federal agencies * DEC programs |
| **Ineligible Projects:**  The following project types are ineligible for this funding:   * Land acquisition (may be used as leveraged funds) * Projects that solely address flooding, drainage, flood/hazard mitigation, protection of infrastructure or other priorities that do not primarily address sediment or nutrient pollution. * Projects that can be funded through other grant sources (projects may be eligible if other options are exhausted and justification is provided, subject to CWIP approval). Agriculture projects must first pursue other funding sources (e.g., Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) before pursuing CWIP funds. Municipal road projects must first pursue other funding sources (e.g., Agency of Transportation) before pursuing CWIP funds. Forestry projects must first pursue other funding sources (e.g., U.S. Department of Agriculture and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation) before pursuing CWIP funds * Operation and maintenance activities (e.g., road re-grading/surfacing, street sweeping, catch basin cleaning) * Projects dealing with private driveways, * Stream culvert replacements, unless the project meets the floodplain/stream restoration project definition and standards defined in Appendix B and improves stream geomorphology, as defined/determined by the DEC Rivers Program * General outreach and education activities. * Projects to comply with Acceptable Management Practices (AMPs) for Maintaining Water Quality on Logging Jobs in Vermont on active logging/harvesting sites * Projects related to compliance with the Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System (MS4) Permit Minimum Control Measures * Projects related to compliance with the MS4 Permit road standards (municipal road projects are eligible for funding through VTrans) * Projects that treat stormwater associated with new or expanded impervious surfaces * Dam Removals * Road projects (unless funding is not available through municipal grants-in-aid program or other source and the project meets eligibility as a stormwater project) * Stormwater projects on a public K-12 school or college/university property where the 3-acre permit will apply * Riparian buffer project (unless part of a river corridor restoration or lake shoreland project) |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Stormwater Eligibility*** |
| There are additional requirements for eligibility for Stormwater projects under this funding. Please review the following eligibility rules:  ***Eligibility for Stormwater Projects (Non-Three-Acre General Permit Sites (any basin))***  • Project located on municipal/public property - eligible  • Project located on school property - eligible  • Project located on private property - eligible, but lower priority than municipal/school projects  Please review the FY21 CWIP Funding Policy for additional guidance on stormwater project eligibility: [https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04\_FINAL\_FY21\_CWIPFundingPolicy\_signed.pdf](https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04_FINAL_FY21_CWIPFundingPolicy_signed.pdf%20%20)  ***Under WUV’s previous round of design and implementation funding, storwamter 3-acre projects were eligible for funding, stormwater 3-acre projects are no longer eligible for funding under this round.*** |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Project Selection Criteria*** |
| Projects will be selected for funding using the following criteria:  **Project Importance**: Nutrient and/or sediment reduction - Will the proposed project lead to significant nutrient and/or sediment reduction? Is the project in an area with a TMDL or nutrient or sediment impairment? The primary purpose of all projects must be nutrient and/or sediment reduction.  Will the proposed project lead to additional water quality improvements and provide co-benefits as identified in planning and prioritization documents, e.g. Tactical Basin Plans, River Corridor Plans, and Stormwater Master Plans?  **Project Scale**: Can the proposed project work be completed with the proposed grant dollars available or are sufficient matching funds available to cover the difference?  **Project Likelihood**: Does the project design and/or implementation have a high chance for success? Are there barriers to this work being completed? What is the financial risk if that is the case? How likely will the project be completed on time?  **Project Need**: Is there a demonstrated need for the work? And do the DEC design and implementation funds fill a need where other funds are not available?  **Project Budget**: Is the project cost effective for the scope of work proposed? Does the project fit into WUV’s portfolio of project type and budget requirements?  **WUV available funds and over/under 50k criteria:** As shown in the “Available Funds” table above, WUV can only obligate a certain amount of funding to projects under the natural resources and stormwater. WUV will work with applicants to if our funding breakdown does not match the project budget to see if other funding sources or working with NRCC and MARC is possible. In addition, WUV must ensure that 1/3 of all funding will be awarded for projects with a total cost of $50,000 or less (excluding leverage/match). |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Block Grant Expenses and Funding Restrictions*** |
| **Project Management/Completion:**  Personnel time spent completing the following grant administration-related activities will be considered project completion costs under this grant including:  ●Implementing a procurement policy;  ●Selecting and awarding projects to subcontractors;  ●Developing and monitoring subgrants and subcontracts;  ●Preparing invoices;  ●Verifying project results; and  ●Preparing and compiling required deliverables (e.g., final report, operation and maintenance agreements, match certification, press release).  **Proj** |
| **Indirect Expenses:**  You can take up to 10% indirect for up to $50,000 of contractual costs. You can additionally take up to 10% on all other eligible expenses (project management, mileage, etc).  ***Indirect expenses example:***  **Budget:**  Project Management staff expenses: $6,000  Contractual: 65,000  Mileage: $600  Other Eligible Expenses: 2,200  **Indirect:**  Project Management indirect: $600  Contractual indirect: $5,000 (10% of $50,000)  Mileage indirect: $60  Other Eligible Expenses indirect: $220  **Total indirect: $5,880** |
| **Leveraged Funds/Match:**  50% match is required for all stormwater projects in MS4 communities.  WUV has no other required match commitment for this grant round. WUV will not consider match as criteria for selection on public land. On private land, WUV will consider the context of the projects and may consider match in our selection process. Regardless, match is always appreciated by DEC to meet overall match goals, so please include anticipated match amounts.  Under this round of funding, awarded DIBG funds can be used as required match for other funders. The budget table in the application has an area to indicate if awarded funds would be used for required match, please make sure to accurately indicate if you plan to use this funding as required match/leverage. |
| **Ineligible Expenses include:**   * Any expense that is not directly necessary for the reduction of sediment and nutrient pollution from runoff and soil erosion that discharge into the State’s rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. * Expenses incurred outside award duration. Agreements must be fully executed (signed by both parties) before incurring expenses. Ninety-day pre-award expenses are no longer authorized for any CWIP agreement. * Operational stormwater General Permit 3-9050 (i.e., Three-Acre General Permit) impact fees. * Annual fees associated with permits that require/compel implementation of the clean water project * In Lieu Fee payments to mitigate wetland impacts. * Tools and/or equipment (unless intent of project is to purchase equipment to implement clean water best management practices). * Office supplies such as computers, cell phones, uniforms/staff apparel. * Food/beverage/event space costs (such as for a meeting); * AmeriCorps host site or member costs (costs can be counted as leverage/match); * General outreach and/or education; * Political advocacy; * Fundraising and grant writing |
| **Invoicing:**  As with all DEC funded projects, all project costs are cost-reimbursable. Grant recipients will need to provide WUV with detailed invoices for all expenses in order to receive reimbursement. WUV will reimburse subgrantees upon receipt of funds from DEC.  Finalized deliverable and invoicing schedule will be provided upon awards being granted.  Please note that WUV needs sub-level invoices for costs incurred under these projects in addition to the invoice for payment that you submit to WUV from your own organization.  *Example:* If you have contractual costs as part of your project from a construction company and an engineering firm, WUV will need the invoices that the construction company and engineering firm submitted to your organization as documentation to support the invoice that you submit to WUV for payment. In addition, please make sure that your invoices are detailed and expenses listed on the invoice align with the categories of spending indicated on your application. |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Submitting Your Eligibility Screening and Full Application*** |
| Please complete and save the Full application and Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form and submit forms at the same time to WUV (Word or PDF format).  Email the Full Application, Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form, and any attachments to:  WUV Director Lyn Munno at [***watershedsunited@gmail.com***](mailto:watershedsunited@gmail.com)  *and*  WUV Grant Administrator Christian Pelletier at[***christian@whiteriverpartnership.org***](mailto:christian@whiteriverpartnership.org)  Attachments to the application can include:   * + 1. DEC O&M Form     2. Written landowner commitment to implement next project phase     3. Bid(s), Quote(s), or Proposal(s), or Site Plan(s)     4. Site Photos     5. Any other relevant documents |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Questions*** |
| If you have any questions on this grant round, please contact Christian Pelletier, WUV’s Block Grant Administrator, at [chrisitian@whiteriverpartnership.org](mailto:chrisitian@whiteriverpartnership.org) and Lyn Munno at watershedsunited@gmail.com  Please don’t hesitate to reach out to ask questions, we are happy to help navigate any issues throughout the application process! |