

# Department of Environmental Conservation

## Water Quality Improvement Program (WQIP) Frequently Asked Questions

### Funding Questions

#### **Can multiple projects on the same property be funded through WQIP?**

Yes, WQIP may fund multiple projects located on the same property. Separate Consolidated Funding Applications must be submitted for each of the proposed projects. Also, the applications should clearly state how the projects coordinate and do not duplicate each other.

#### **Can an applicant submit more than one WQIP application?**

Yes. Eligible applicants may submit more than one application for WQIP funding, but only one application per project. Applicants are limited to 5 applications per round. Applicants may receive more than one grant award per round.

#### **Can a municipality apply for both the DEC/EFC Wastewater Infrastructure Engineering Planning Grant (EPG) Program and WQIP the same year?**

Yes, but not for the same project. WQIP projects are supposed to be ready for implementation (construction). If a facility needs to have a preliminary engineering report completed under EPG, then the project is not ready to be built, and therefore not ready for WQIP funding. In addition, for wastewater treatment projects, an engineering report is required to be attached with the WQIP application.

#### **Does WQIP have a Median Household Income requirement?**

No. WQIP does not have an income requirement.

#### **Can a municipality submit an application to obtain more funding for a project already awarded a WQIP grant in a previous round?**

Applicants that have received funding in a previous round will not receive additional funding in this or a future round for the same scope of work. However, WQIP will fund distinct phases or different activities and costs of a project in consecutive rounds of funding if the applicant sufficiently describes how the planned scope of work is distinctly different from the previous scope of work.

#### **Are costs incurred prior to the time of award eligible for reimbursement?**

For projects other than Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection projects, eligible costs incurred May 13, 2024 or later may be eligible for reimbursement if you receive a WQIP grant. For Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection projects, the contract term could begin August 1, 2022. However, any costs incurred prior to executing a contract are at the risk of the applicant. There is no guarantee that you will receive a WQIP grant or that the costs will be approvable for reimbursement.

**Do WQIP applications all require a budget supported by a proposal prepared by an engineer?**

The budget form itself does not need to be prepared by an engineer. If you are required to have an engineering report for a category type that is developed by an engineer, this report typically includes an estimated cost breakdown.

**Application/Contracting**

**Are there any resources for State Financial System (SFS) questions/technical assistance after receiving a WQIP award?**

Yes, there are [resources](#) available on how to utilize SFS. The system administrator can also provide assistance for any questions specific to utilizing the grants gateway system. Contact information is available on the [Grants Management Contact Page](#).

**If a proposed project is not physically within an Environmental Justice (EJ) district, but serves a considerable amount of EJ-designated areas, can that be used in the application?**

This depends on the location of the project and it's proximity to an EJ or Disadvantaged Community (DAC) area. The [EJ and DAC user guide](#) provides the step-by-step process to determine if the project location would impact an EJ or DAC area.

**Can applicants provide additional documentation with the WQIP application?**

Applicants should only submit the supporting documentation that is required by the WQIP application for their particular type of project.

**Is a municipal resolution required to be submitted with a WQIP Program application?**

No. A municipal resolution is not required to be submitted with applications for the WQIP program.

**If a municipality currently has an open WQIP grant, will that negatively affect their chances of getting awarded another grant in this round?**

Municipalities with open WQIP grants are eligible to apply again this round. Applicants should keep in mind that a municipality's "Experience and Ability" are considered during the application review process; therefore, municipalities are encouraged to make sure the existing WQIP grant is up to date with the Department.

**Is it possible to view the WQIP application questions in the Consolidated Funding Application (CFA) before filling out the application**

Yes, they are available to view or download on the [CFA Program Questions webpage](#) (leaves DEC website).

**Where can I find help filling out the CFA?**

DEC does not administer the CFA. For technical questions about the CFA, contact the CFA helpdesk at [cfa-tech@ny.gov](mailto:cfa-tech@ny.gov). Tips and resources are also available on the [CFA Help webpage](#) (leaves DEC website).

**Can more than one entity apply for a WQIP grant together as co-applicants?** Only one entity can be the applicant as DEC can only execute a contract with one entity per project.

## **Scoring**

**What is the "Classification Points Factor" in the scoring criteria for several project types?**

These points are allotted to a project on the basis of the state-assigned classification of the receiving water at the point of discharge where appropriate. For more information on the classification of waterbodies in NYS, please refer to the [DECinfo Locator](#) where you will find the Waterbody Inventory/Priority Waterbodies List segment factsheets for each waterbody with additional information.

## **Project Timeline**

**How long does an awardee have to complete a WQIP project?**

Projects selected for funding through WQIP should complete construction within 2-3 years of receiving the grant award. Some projects may extend to 5 years.

**Will there be future rounds of WQIP if the July 31, 2024 deadline is missed?**

DEC anticipates that there will be future rounds of WQIP.

## **Flood Resiliency Requirements**

**Where can I find floodplain maps and more information about WQIP flood resiliency requirements?**

Resources to help with this application requirement are on DEC's WQIP webpage at: <https://dec.ny.gov/get-involved/grant-applications/wqip-program>. Links to the FEMA Flood Map Service, Floodway Development and Floodway Guidance, and National Flood Insurance Technical Bulletins are in the Applications Resources table on this webpage. Send questions to [user.water@dec.ny.gov](mailto:user.water@dec.ny.gov).

## **Wastewater Treatment Improvement**

**Can a natural resource conservation project, be used toward a match request for a wastewater treatment improvement project that could protect the same natural water resource from the county project?**

No, a project in the same area that is not related to the work that is being applied for under WQIP itself would not be eligible as match.

## **Land Acquisition for Source Water Protection**

### **Where can I identify public water supplies?**

Contact your local county health departments to verify active public drinking water supplies. Contact information can be found by visiting: [https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact\\_information/](https://www.health.ny.gov/contact/contact_information/)

### **Once the land is acquired, can it be turned over to the local municipality? Can that happen within the three-year grant term or would it need to happen after the term is completed?**

Upon approval by DEC, an applicant who acquired an interest in real property using this grant funding may sell, lease, exchange or donate the real property to a not-for-profit or municipality, who will continue to use the real property for the same public purpose, without an express act of the New York State Legislature. Any sale, lease, exchange or donation which will result in the real property no longer having a public purpose must be approved by an express act of the New York State legislature. There are no time constraints on when that transfer has to happen.

### **Which TMDLs qualify for WQIP Land Acquisition Points?**

In order to receive points, the project must be identified in a DEC-**approved** watershed implementation plan (i.e., TMDL, Nine Element Watershed Plan or DEC HABs Action Plan). The list of approved TMDLs are on DEC's website at:

<https://dec.ny.gov/environmental-protection/water/water-quality/clean-water-plans>

### **Will public water supplies listed as "Groundwater under the influence of surface water" be scored as a surface water or a groundwater?**

If the public water supply is groundwater under the influence of surface water (GWUDI), it will be scored as a ground water system.

### **Could a single WQIP Land Acquisition Program or Project application be submitted for a HUC 12 watershed that benefits multiple public water supplies?**

Yes, a single application can be submitted for a HUC 12 watershed that will protect one or more active public water drinking water supplies within that watershed.

### **Is there a maximum grant amount for Land Acquisition?**

Yes, the maximum award amount for Land Acquisition is \$5,000,000.

### **Are Indigenous tribes/nations included in "municipalities" as eligible applicants?**

Yes, Indian nations are included in the definition of municipality, which are an eligible applicant for this project type.

### **Would the water source of private wells fall under the definition of public water source?**

Only active public water supplies as defined by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) are eligible. NYSDOH defines a public drinking water supply as "any system with at least 5 service connections or that regularly serves an average of at least 25 people daily for at least 60 days out of the year".

## **Can you provide more information about the Drinking Water Source Protection Program Plans that are identified in the land acquisition scoring criteria?**

A list of communities that are participating in the Drinking Water Source Protection Program can be found on NYS DEC's website under *DWSP2 Participating Communities*: [Drinking Water Source Protection Program \(DWSP2\) - NYS Dept. of Environmental Conservation](#). As noted underneath the table, the bold text signifies that a plan has been state accepted. You will need to contact the DWSP2 participant for information on the critical (and/or source water) area. The critical (and source water) area is not the same in every plan as it is specific to the drinking water source being protected.

## **Salt Storage**

### **Would "deconstruction" of an old salt shed be an eligible cost under the salt storage category? What about security measures such as security cameras?**

Neither deconstruction costs nor security measures would be eligible costs.

## **Vacuum Trucks for MS4 Areas**

**Part of my municipality is combined sewer and part is MS4; which catch basins can I include in my application for a vacuum truck i.e. in the total count, plan and procedures?** The Vacuum Truck for MS4 Areas project type is to provide resources to benefit the regulated MS4 areas in NYS. Therefore, the catch basin plan, count, and procedures associated with the WQIP application should only include those catch basins that are regulated under the MS4 permit. Combined sewer catch basins are regulated under a different program.

### **As a regulated MS4 entity, am I able to apply for and use the vacuum truck outside of my MS4 area?**

The Vacuum Truck for MS4 Areas project type is to provide resources to benefit the regulated MS4 areas in NYS. Therefore, the catch basin plan, count, and procedures associated with the WQIP application should only include those catch basins that are regulated under the MS4 permit.

### **For applications to purchase a vacuum truck for an MS4 area, where do I find the "focus areas" that are required in the catch basin clean-out plan that I will submit with the application?**

The "focus areas" that are required in the catch basin clean-out plan associated with this grant opportunity, are the same as the "focus areas" identified on the required comprehensive mapping status worksheet (<https://dec.ny.gov/sites/default/files/2024-05/mapwrsht2024.pdf>).

## **Dam Safety Repair/Rehabilitation**

### **Is there funding for the removal of high hazard dams?**

This grant is for the repair, rehabilitation or removal of Class B intermediate and Class C

High Hazard Dams. If the project is specific to improving aquatic connectivity, there is potential for dam removal in that category.

