

3/8/2021

1. Can the single entity subcontract to partners we feel will add value to the overall program delivery?
  - o Yes
2. What, if any, assumptions are in place about the total number of subcontractors to be procured under the subawards? Is this entirely up to the discretion of the proposer?
  - o The total number of subcontractors to be procured is up to the discretion of the block grant recipient. The number of subcontractors cannot be known until after the school enrollment process, the schools are prioritized and put out to bid, and the most competitive bids are selected. If a subcontractor bids competitively and successfully on more than one school project, then that would reduce the number of total subcontractors.
  - o It is up to applicants to justify their approach to procurement in the proposal.
3. The RFP indicates that the goal of the project is to obtain permits for 47 schools with engineering services to be bid. Please confirm that if the engineering funds are expended prior to reaching 47 schools, the program administrator will not be required to fund the additional engineering work from the funds previously paid for program administration.
  - o VT DEC acknowledges that cost of the stormwater design for each school may vary, given the nature of stormwater design work. The block grant recipient (program administrator) will be responsible for conducting a competitive procurement process and effective program delivery to ensure the most efficient use of funds to meet the target number of schools. The VT DEC Technical Project Manager will be in close contact with the block grant recipient throughout the course of this block grant so that any unforeseen challenges can be detected, communicated, and addressed in real-time. The block grant recipient will not be required to fund engineering work with program delivery funds if the 47-school target cannot be achieved with the project design and permit completion dollars. VT DEC will require sufficient justification from the block grant recipient to approve an adjustment to the target number of schools.
4. What is the status of work products delivered by previous vendor(s) and how does DEC expect these to be used by the grant recipient under this new block grant?
  - o Please refer to the response to Question #12 for a description of the available data and status of three-acre schools.
5. The scope of work includes support for an estimated 47 schools to complete Phase 1 within a budget of ~\$1.9M. How were these deliverables to costs estimated, for instance does DEC have a breakdown of estimated costs per school or per task, and can that information be shared?
  - o VT DEC established the target of 47 schools, assuming an average cost of \$30,000-\$35,000 per school, based on cost of VT DEC-funded stormwater design projects.
6. If 47 schools cannot be fully supported through completion of Phase 1 under this grant (not willing to participate, not sufficient funding to complete design and coordination work for 47 schools, not sufficient school staff capacity, or other situations), will DEC give the grantee the flexibility to advance as many schools through Phase 1 as possible rather than 47?
  - o Please see responses to Questions #3 and 5. The framing of this question highlights potential opportunities for clarification:
    - There are about 70 public schools and state colleges in the Lake Champlain Basin that will need to comply with the “Three-Acre General Permit.” The target of completing stormwater design and permitting for 47 schools is a smaller subset of the eligible three-acre public schools in Lake Champlain Basin. For this reason, VT DEC does not anticipate “not willing to participate” being a significant barrier to completing the scope of work.

- Three-acre schools in Lake Champlain and Lake Memphremagog basins will need to obtain coverage and comply with the “Three-Acre General Permit” under a regulatory deadline—regardless of financial assistance. The Green Schools Initiative provides financial and technical assistance to support schools in achieving permit compliance. Therefore, VT DEC anticipates this regulatory requirement will result in a high rate of school participation in the Green Schools Initiative.
  - A major factor in determining this RFP’s scope of work was how to reduce the burden for schools. Schools’ involvement will likely vary based on capacity, but the intent is for all schools to be able to enroll (signal interest in having stormwater design and permitting work for its school to be considered, as well as interest in Phase 2 Construction funding in the future) and have the scope of work for each enrolled school be put out to bid on behalf of the school. For this reason, VT DEC does not anticipate “not sufficient school staff capacity” being a significant barrier to completing the scope of work. The intent of the block grant program is to be as flexible as possible to assist in “Three-Acre General Permit” compliance on schools’ behalf.
7. If the previous turns out to be true (47 schools cannot be successfully supported through Phase 1 completion via this grant for some external reason), would DEC have a preference between fewer schools being supported or partnered with (but with a higher Phase 1 completion rate), or more schools being supported or partnered with (but with a lower Phase 1 completion rate)?
- All projects funded under this Phase 1 block grant must result in completion of the “Operational Stormwater Permit Obtainment” milestones and deliverables (see page 46 of the [Clean Water Funding Policy](#)). This includes completing design and obtaining coverage under the “Three-Acre General Permit” for the full school site. Partial completion of Phase 1 “Operational Stormwater Permit Obtainment” milestones is not an acceptable outcome under this block grant. It is understood some schools may have started design work with other funding. The block grant recipient and/or subrecipients should review previously completed design work to identify remaining work necessary to achieve coverage under the “Three-Acre General Permit”.
8. Would the block grant holder be allowed to work directly with schools or implementation/construction contractors, or only partner with schools via sub-awards?
- The scope of work for this RFP is to administer the block grant.
  - The block grant holder will work directly with schools as part of program delivery. Proposals should define how school enrollment and the school prioritization process will be completed.
  - The block grant holder may subaward, through competitive process, project work (design and permitting) to any entity eligible to receive/administer funds in the CWIP SFY 2021 Funding Policy.
  - Proposals should define the procurement approach and justify how it will effectively achieve the scope of work (milestones and deliverables and outputs and outcomes). The block grant recipient cannot do project work directly.
  - Point of clarification: This RFP is for Phase 1 work *only* (stormwater design and permitting) to support schools in obtaining coverage under the “Three-Acre General Permit.” Implementation/construction work is not eligible under this RFP.
9. What is the timeline and funding mechanisms for Phase 2? There are some schools that are ‘shovel ready’ and have been for several years. When should they expect to move forward?

When should schools brought to 'shovel ready' status under this grant be expected to begin implementation work?

- This Q&A document focuses on the scope of the Phase 1 RFP. Phase 2 (construction/implementation) is beyond the scope of this RFP. However, schools may enroll to be considered for Phase 2 funding as part of the Phase 1 program addressed in this RFP. VT DEC anticipates releasing a separate Phase 2 RFP later this year.
  - Point of clarification: A school is not considered "shovel-ready" and will not be eligible for Phase 2 construction funds through VT DEC until it has obtained permit coverage for the full three-acre site.
10. Can the State speak to how the following timelines and required deliverables of 3-acre initiatives comply or interact with each other? Does the state see challenges with how these deadlines may interact?
- Three-Acre General Permit coverage deadline - includes obtaining an 18-month permit for entities to acquire funding and reach 100% design, complete those activities, submit full application (including completed plans), and acquire a five-year permit for construction ( deadline 2023 )
  - This grant - 'Phase 1 Green Stormwater Infrastructure Grant for Schools' to reach 100% design and prepare for Phase 2 implementation of projects ( end date 2024 );
  - Future Phase 2 grant and funding rollout for implementation of projects (end date unknown);
    - The objective of this RFP is to assist schools in obtaining permit coverage under the "Three-Acre General Permit" based on a Notice of Intent pursuant to 2.2.A.b.2, a.k.a. a "Full NOI". Schools that have a 2023 deadline for the Initial Notice of Intent are able to complete the "Full NOI" in 2024 to obtain full permit coverage.
    - A significant component of the scope of work for the block grant recipient will be to prioritize schools based on their individual "Three-Acre General Permit" deadlines and starting point (i.e., baseline design status) over the period of the block grant award. It is expected that many schools will file a "Notice of Intent" in lieu of the "Initial Notice of Intent" given the funding provided by this program, and consequently will obtain full permit coverage earlier than required. For other schools, completing the Initial Notice of Intent may be a necessary step to allow for more time to obtain full permit coverage.
    - See question #9 for additional information.
11. Can the State elaborate on how it will ensure that grantees consider work already done or underway (for instance, previous vendor(s) grant, existing coordination efforts between local organizations and schools, or stormwater designs previously completed or underway through grant funding from the LCBP, DEC or other sources) in the applications review? There is a substantial amount of work and existing partnerships that do not need to be replicated and should be considered for the most efficient outcomes (especially for 'shovel ready' or near 'shovel ready' schools). Please consider that some deliverables may already be 'claimed' by other funding sources where work is underway (such as an existing LCBP or DEC grant to deliver 100% stormwater design of a school).
- How can ongoing or completed coordination and design work or other activities of local organizations best be considered in the competitive distribution of funds to sub-awardees?
  - Would the State consider costs to further or complete those ongoing efforts or designs as eligible?
  - In addition, for schools that are near (or are) 'shovel ready', would coordination, verification of status, and enrollment for these schools count towards the deliverable of Phase 1 completion for an estimated 47 schools?

- VT DEC acknowledges work is underway between local organizations and schools, and the existence of multiple funding sources that have supported stormwater design at schools.
  - VT DEC requests proposals describe the most efficient approach to achieve schools' obtainment of coverage under the "Three-Acre General Permit", without replicating completed design work. Block grant recipients may consider established partnerships with schools in selection criteria for subawards.
  - This Phase 1 RFP is intended to provide financial and technical assistance to take schools to full permit coverage.
  - The Phase 1 target is for 47 schools to obtain coverage under the "Three-Acre General Permit." This may include some schools with stormwater design mostly complete that need financial and technical assistance to obtain permit coverage.
  - Coordination with ongoing partners, verification of baseline status, and enrollment of schools for Phase 1 and/or Phase 2 (regardless of participation in Phase 1) is expected to be part of the school enrollment phase, see bullet "a" in the *Green Schools Block Grant Program Development* section on page 4 in the RFP.
12. The Lake Champlain Green Schools Table may not be the most up-to-date information on the status of eligible schools in the Lake Champlain Basin. Can applicants use more up-to-date information (such as work done under the previous vendor(s) or known coordination activities previously completed with local groups) for an assessment of eligibility and school project status instead?
- The Lake Champlain Green Schools Table is the most comprehensive Green Schools Initiative dataset on the status of eligible three-acre schools in the Lake Champlain Basin to date. The table and the accompanying files include information on funded grants and deliverable files funded through VT DEC and Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP). Applicants, schools, and partners are welcome to email input/corrections on the table or documents with subject line: "Suggested updates to Lake Champlain Green Schools Data" to [ANR.CleanWaterVT@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.CleanWaterVT@vermont.gov). A Word document and tab in the Lake Champlain Green Schools Table will keep a record of the updates to the files.
  - The block grantee's school enrollment process (described in bullet "a" in the *Green Schools Block Grant Program Development* section on page 4 in the RFP) will verify schools' baseline design status and interest in participation.
  - Phase 1 school eligibility is based on a school being designated as a three-acre site and being located in the Lake Champlain Basin. Any questions about a school's status regarding "Three-Acre General Permit" designation should be referred to VT DEC's Stormwater Program.
13. To our knowledge, capacity and funding for Lake Champlain Sea Grant to support this work may be somewhat limited. Would costs or objectives associated with furthering or supporting the education and outreach objectives described at the top of Page 3 of the RFP be considered eligible costs under this grant? For instance, direct subawards to supplement current funding and capacity for outreach and education tasks? Would direct communication with specific school officials made by the grantee or sub-awardees be considered outreach or program delivery/project completion expenses?
- The overarching goal of the scope of work in the Phase 1 RFP is to complete stormwater permitting and design for three-acre public schools in the Lake Champlain Basin. Communication with schools to achieve program delivery and project completion milestones and deliverables are considered eligible costs.

- The work that will take place through the Lake Champlain Sea Grant Partnership, described in the Introduction on page 3 of the RFP, is intended to be complementary and support broader education and outreach about stormwater in Lake Champlain Basin.
14. Do applicants have the ability to propose an altered timeline or order of deliverables? For example, if the grantee would like to propose a competitive grant process for services that leverage pre-existing partner relationships to help the grantee develop the list of interested schools? As in, can the competitive sub-award process include more services than solely design and permitting?
- The RFP proposes a timeline. Applicants' proposals should justify any adjustments to the RFP's proposed timeline.
  - Applicants may propose sub-granting program delivery tasks (e.g., school enrollment). Applicants' proposals should clearly address plans to subaward any aspects of the Phase 1 scope of work.
15. Can/should the responses from DEC's RFI request to schools be considered in the enrollment processes? Are those responses to DEC's RFI from schools available to the grantee? Did DEC ever respond to those schools on next steps in the green schools enrollment process?
- The RFI (request for information) previously conducted by VT DEC did not receive responses from all eligible three-acre schools and may be outdated.
  - The block grant recipient's enrollment process will ensure every three-acre school in the Lake Champlain Basin is contacted and given the opportunity to participate in the program. The enrollment process (see bullet "a" in the *Green Schools Block Grant Program Development* section on page 4), is the next step for any three-acre school in the Lake Champlain Basin to participate in this program.
  - Please see the response to Question #12 about the Lake Champlain Green Schools Table for additional information about resources on school status.
16. Is it allowable for the grantee to directly subgrant to a partner organization who is already engaged with a given school on stormwater work as long as it is agreed upon by both the school and the partner organization? In those cases, the competitive RFP process would be at the next level - for the consultant for the design. Or does each school need a competitive RFP process at the initial subgrant level?
- See answer to question #11.
17. For schools that are ready for implementation (have final designs complete), will they still need to receive their permits through this Phase 1 grant or will they be able to directly receive their permits through the Phase 2 grant if they have not already obtained them?
- Full coverage under the "Three-Acre General Permit" is the final required milestone of Phase 1. Schools will not be eligible for Phase 2 funding until they have obtained "Three-Acre General Permit" coverage.
  - Schools with final designs have the option and are eligible to participate in Phase 1 to obtain coverage under the "Three-Acre General Permit".
  - Participation in Phase 2 for implementation is not contingent on participation in Phase 1. For example, a school could complete designs and obtain "Three-Acre General Permit" coverage without funding from the Phase 1 Green Schools Initiative and enroll to be considered for Phase 2 construction/implementation funding.
18. Can the designs include stormwater practices that are above and beyond the 3-acre permit requirements?

## Green Stormwater Infrastructure for Schools RFP Questions

3/8/2021

- VT DEC supports maximizing stormwater mitigation through the Green Schools Initiative within a reasonably cost-effective range to maintain funds to support “Three-Acre General Permit” compliance for as many schools as possible.
  - Maximizing stormwater mitigation may involve exceeding the redevelopment standards or treating “off-site” stormwater.
  - Any school participating in the Green Schools Initiative that exceeds the “Three-Acre” stormwater treatment requirement of the “Three-Acre General Permit” will not be eligible to receive stormwater impact fees pursuant to Part 4.2 of the “Three-Acre General Permit” and the CWIP SFY 2021 Funding Policy.
19. Is there any match required from schools or others for this project or will the state pay 100% of all design and permitting costs?
- Schools participating in the Green Schools Initiative will not have project design leveraging or cost share requirements but there may be other expenses associated with the “Three-Acre General Permit”. Please see terms for schools defined under bullet “a” in the *Green Schools Block Grant Program Development* section on page 4 in the RFP.