

Healthy Homes Manufactured Housing Communities

Round 2 Request for Applications

Questions & Answers Document

Questions and Answers

1. Can stormwater management be included in a proposal?
 - a. Improving stormwater management systems or plans are eligible uses of ARPA Healthy Homes Funding. This may include flood mitigation strategies. However, if the MHC has over 3 acres of impervious surface and is subject to the 3-acre stormwater rule, the project may be better suited for the three acre ARPA program: <https://anr.vermont.gov/special-topics/arpa-vermont/treating-stormwater-runoff>
2. Can park expansion be included? i.e. if I am putting together a proposal for replacing/modernizing our water system, can I also include the design and construction of a new 6 unit septic system to allow us to add lots to the park?
 - a. Work solely for new development is not eligible.
3. Will all applications be considered at the end of the application timeframe based on merits, or is there a benefit to getting an application submitted ASAP?
 - a. There is no benefit to having an application submitted ASAP. All proposals are considered equally against eligibility criteria by the Scoring Committee at the end of the application period.
4. If the MHC is not a Co-Operative, nor a Non-Profit, nor a private business, nor a government entity, which application they should use?
 - a. It depends on what type of entity the MHC owner is. Ultimately, prospective applicants should select the application that is closest to their ownership structure, and if the Healthy Homes program recognizes later on that the applicant should be in a different category the applicant will be notified and may be required to provide more information after the application period has closed. Here is more information about each application that may help clarify the categories:
 - i. Attachment A (for Coops): This should be used if any of the park residents are partial or full owners of the MHC property (beyond owning their individual home). Most often, this is the case for cooperatively owned manufactured housing communities, but could be the case for other ownership structures as well.
 - ii. Attachment B (for Non Profits): This should be used if the park owner is a not for profit entity or similar.
 - iii. Attachment C: (for privately owned, for profit entities) This should be used if the MHC is owned and operated as a private for profit business. There is a unique requirement in agreements with

privately owned MHCs that sale of the MHC within 3 years of receiving the grant funding would require approval by the State. If approval is not granted and the property is sold, the recipient may be required to pay back some or all of the funding received through this program.

5. If the MHC wanted to contract with a firm of their choice, could they still qualify for the needs assessment?
 - a. In this case, the MHC should apply for the “Technical Assistance and Permitting” category of funding, and specify what they would apply the funding for (conducting an assessment of all the water infrastructure in the park) and specify that they would like to select a firm of their choice to conduct the work.
6. If the MHC cannot chose the firm to perform the needs assessment, can the State provide a list of the potential firms that could be assigned to them?
 - a. The firm that is currently conducting the needs assessment Preliminary Engineering Reports is Dubois and King. The firm doing the work next year has not yet been finalized. The Healthy Homes program cannot provide a list of potential firms that could be assigned to them at this time, since that decision is not yet finalized.
7. Can the MHC apply for the Technical Assistance and Permitting without a needs assessment?
 - a. Yes. Applicants may apply for any level of assistance and should make that determination based on their needs and project status.
8. Could the MHC pay a firm themselves to complete the needs assessment?
 - a. Any MHC could hire an engineering firm to complete a preliminary engineering report and environmental review, which are the services included in an ARPA Healthy Homes needs assessment.
9. Can the needs assessment be a letter report that outlines the issues and required improvements or does it need to follow USDA bulletin 1780-2?
 - a. It depends what the “needs assessment” is being used for. ARPA Healthy Homes does not require that a needs assessment is conducted for any level of funding, so any information you can include in your application regarding project status or assessments that have been completed should be included in the application, regardless of the format. However, if the MHC is applying for other funding programs such as USDA-RD, the MHC should follow that program’s requirements.
10. The format of the Permit Navigator referenced in Attachment D, on page 5 of 30 does not accommodate a straight up connection to a municipal wastewater system. Can the MHC still apply for a connection to a municipal wastewater system? If yes, what are the permitting requirements?
 - a. Yes, connecting to a municipal wastewater system is an eligible project in the ARPA Healthy Homes program. Applicants should fill out Permit Navigator to the best of their ability. Permit Navigator is an assistance tool

to help applicants understand in advance the permits their project might require. It is not a permit application. If an applicant requires assistance using permit navigator, they may reach out to the community assistance specialists for their region:

Jeffrey McMahon, Community Assistance Specialist: 802-477-2241,
jeff.mcmahon@vermont.gov

Rick Oberkirch, Community Assistance Specialist: 802-282-6488,
rick.oberkirch@vermont.gov

11. The main difference between the Private and Non-Profit application package is the Private ownership application requires the Certificate of Good Standing (Attachment G), otherwise the questions and required attachments seem to be the same. Is this correct?
 - a. Yes
12. Our community has 2 projects that we'd like to apply for. Do these need to be submitted on two separate applications or the same one for both?
 - a. They should be submitted on the same application as long as it's for the same community. There should be one application submitted per MHC, and you can provide information about each project in that single application.
13. Can we ask for both Technical Assistance and Construction at the same time? Is there specific criteria which constitutes Technical Assistance? For example, we have Indirect Discharge reports from our engineers stating the need for the replacement of the septic field. Would this suffice? We also have prior information regarding the necessity of the ditch excavation. Is this information sufficient or is there other specific criteria the grant requires?
 - a. An applicant can apply for both technical assistance funding and construction funding at the same time. The applicant would need to specify what work they are planning to do within each award. For example, they could specify that they are applying to obtain the permits and designs necessary to complete a construction project, AND they are applying for construction funding to implement the project.
 - b. There is not specific criteria that constitutes technical assistance other than work related to project planning, obtaining project designs specifications, and obtaining permits. For the examples given, an engineer's assessment of a septic system would count as technical assistance as would an assessment of a drainage ditch in need of excavation. However, since the ARPA Healthy Homes MHC program cannot reimburse recipients for work already completed, and it sounds like these assessments have already been completed, the costs to obtain these example assessments could not be reimbursed using Healthy Homes MHC funding because they were completed before award costs were approved for the applicant.

- c. It also sounds like this question asker is wondering whether they are required to submit documentation of Technical assistance work in order to apply for construction funding. The answer to that is no, applicants are not required to submit documentation of technical assistance in order to apply for construction funding, but it is recommended that applicants submit all the information they have regarding the project so the scoring committee can adequately assess the project. If some technical assistance and permitting work has been done, but the applicant still has technical assistance and permitting needs, they should indicate that in their application and either apply to fund those needs, or note that they intend to pay for those needs independently from ARPA Healthy Homes funding.
14. Please confirm what it means to be "shovel ready" in the context of the Healthy Homes program. We have a long way to go before we are ready to break ground, so I presume we are not "shovel ready".
- a. The project would need to be ready to go out to bid for construction work. Typically this means all the designs are fully complete and permits are acquired or already in process.
15. If we request Tech Assistance how exactly does that work given that we have an engineer? Are our engineering and permitting costs covered if we ask for Tech Assistance?
- a. If you have already hired an engineer, you may apply to fund future expenses associated with design and permitting work using Healthy Homes funding. Healthy Homes funding cannot be applied retroactively to reimburse MHCs for past expenses, so the current work the engineer is doing could not be reimbursed once an award is executed. The MHC would also need to make sure that the existing engineer was hired using the required procurement for Healthy Homes, which is explained in the application in order for future costs to be eligible expenses.
 - b. To answer the second question, engineering and permitting costs are both allowable expenses for a technical assistance and permitting award through ARPA Healthy Homes MHC.
16. The excavation for the sewer lines and laterals to each lot will tear up the existing roads and pavement. Can repaving be included in the application?
- a. Yes. Repaving can either be included as a stormwater/drainage improvement project, or in this case it can be included as a component of a wastewater project (since the reason for repaving is construction of the wastewater system improvements).
17. Could home or other property repairs due to stormwater issues be funded?
- a. Home repairs are not eligible, but repairing damage to wastewater or stormwater system could be. Eligibility is based on a project providing a water quality benefit.
18. What is a PER/ needs assessment? This is referenced in the Project Description Criteria.

- a. A PER stands for a preliminary engineering report, which is a particular format for an engineering firm to document early phase planning work for a project. This would include:
 - i. Assessment of existing water infrastructure, including any deficiencies observed.
 - ii. Suggested options for addressing those deficiencies.

Read more about the standard PER format that is agreed upon by multiple funding agencies here: <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/water-financing/srf/srfstep1/PER>

Questions and Answers from the Q&A Webinar held on 9/13/2023

19. What is a MHC SPAN Number?

- a. A SPAN Number is the number of your property. All properties in VT have a SPAN number associated with it. It can be found in parcel data online : <https://maps.vcqi.vermont.gov/parcelviewer/>. It is sometimes referred to as a “Social Security number for real estate”, because it does not change even if the ownership of property changes.

20. [MHC] is privately owned but the State of Vermont considers us a "for profit". Which application should we submit?

- a. Attachment B – Private

21. If we want to apply for more than one project (design and permitting and construction), would it all be in one application?

- a. One application should be submitted per MHC. If an MHC owner owns several MHCs, each MHC should submit an application. But yes, if an MHC has more than one project it should be under one application.
- b. If you're applying for design/permitting for a Drinking Water system, and construction for a Wastewater system, do we need to submit more than one application?
 - i. No, only one application is required.

22. Is there an easy access to view examples of successfully approved applications? Especially for construction purposes.

- a. The applications from the 2022 funding cycle will be made publicly available once all of the agreements have been fully executed. As of September 22, 2023, there is one outstanding agreement that has not been executed so the applications cannot be made public yet.

23. Is there an approved format for the RFP and the procurement standards?

- a. The RFP is fancy wording for a Request for Proposals. The application for MHCs to apply for the Healthy Homes program is considered an RFP. An MHC's written request to publicly procure (hire or buy) goods or services from a contractor to complete a project is another form of an RFP. There is not a standard for the RFP that an MHC would put out during their procurement process. There are procurement standards (listed in the

State's RFP) but there is no standard template. The MHC owner should have an established procurement policy and follow it.

24. If the filing deadline is October 17th, and it may be difficult to get contractors to estimate the amount of the project, what is the most responsible way to submit a project estimate on the application?
 - a. Do the best you can to estimate the project cost. A possibility would be to see if you can get an estimate on the project without putting it out to bid.
25. Who or what makes up the scoring committee? Are they all State employees? Can you describe the composition of the scoring committee?
 - a. The purpose of the scoring committee is to fairly score the proposals. The scoring committee is made up of at least 3 members: 1 person not on the Healthy Homes Team, and at least 2 other scorers (can be State employees, but don't have to be).
26. What is the extent to which projects are scored against similar sized projects? In terms of how many people are impacted by each project.
 - a. Review the scoring criteria as closely as you can. There is some information on population, but the State will stick as closely to the scoring criteria as possible.
27. Can additional questions be asked after the Q&A period closes?
 - a. All questions need to be submitted by 9/15 in order to receive an answer. All questions asked during the Q&A period will be posted publicly to make the application process fair and equitable. Any questions asked after the Q&A period closes may not be answered.