

Accelerating Climate Resilience Grant Program: Questions from Potential Applicants

Questions week of July 13, 2020

1. *The Town seeks to audit and revise its Rules and Regulations Governing the Subdivision of Land to ensure that they exhibit current best management practices and the Commonwealth's standards for climate resiliency. Do you think we would be eligible for this program?*

Absolutely! Revising Land Use regulations for climate is a great match for our Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant program.

2. *We are doing a floodplain protection through a land acquisition project. Does this qualify as a one-year or two-year project?*

This project could be either a one-year or two-year project. Grant funding supporting costs associated with the land acquisition such as due diligence, title, survey/engineering, etc., would qualify as a one-year grant. If the grant award was toward capital for the purchase of the land, then this qualifies as a two-year grant.

3. *As engineering/design/consulting firm, we routinely prepare grant applications on behalf of our clients with the understanding that we would be hired to complete the work if the grant is awarded. Is this allowable under MAPC's Accelerating Climate Resilience Grant?*

Yes! We encourage municipalities to work with consultants and provide assistance where applicable for their resilience projects.

4. *MAPC's Accelerating Climate Resiliency Grant Program seems to be a good fit with our non-profit organization's goal to provide and support environmental education, community supported agriculture, hunger relief and community building events year around. Can we apply?*

Your goals do sound like a good match to the grant program. We encourage you to work with your municipal partners to apply for a grant as municipalities are the eligible applicants. We strongly encourage partnerships with community-based organizations and the grant funds can be used to support the organization's work on the project.

5. *Our Town is eager to promote food resiliency to our low-income populations. COVID-19 has shed a lot of light on the challenges vulnerable populations face to getting fresh food. Is this a project eligible for funding?*

Yes, agriculture, food security, and local farm programs are all projects that qualify and MAPC is prioritizing projects that support climate justice populations which includes low-income individuals.

Questions week of July 20, 2020

1. *In Essex, we have been working to elevate two low spots that flood on tidal surges. This is on the only other road connecting the Town north-south and the main road, Route 133 floods even before the alternate floods. If we elevate just those two spots, the rest of the road is way above flood. We have been working with DER on a culvert replacement design (in the first low spot). Does this program support design and construction for infrastructure, with the tie in to the ecological improvement that will meet Mass crossing standards?*

Infrastructure resilience projects are definitely applicable for the grant program. Incorporating nature-based resilience solutions in conjunction with hard resiliency improvements will make your proposal more competitive.

2. *There doesn't seem to be an obvious place for social resilience in the priorities. We have a possible project to propose that would involve building greater social capital or social connectedness. If the project doesn't fit a priority, will it be rated lower? I see social resiliency in the priority areas, it's just not in the list of program priorities. Is there some distinction there we should be aware of?*

Social resilience projects fall under two of our program priority areas listed below. Additionally, we will consider innovative resilience projects and programs that may be outside of the program priority areas.

- Climate coalitions or convenings, such as stormwater partnerships, regional climate networks, or watershed-based climate resilience initiatives.
- Climate Change capacity building including improvements to social resiliency or cohesion, such as through dialogues, gatherings, and networks, particularly for at-risk or vulnerable populations/neighborhoods. Building municipal staff capacity to implement climate resilience.

3. *If a grant is for regulation updates would the timeline be adjusted to coincide with Town Meetings?*

If a grant includes revising local bylaws and regulations, we would encourage a two-year grant program to bring the vote to Town Meeting to implement the new regulations. In this case, the applicant will want to consider an ambitious community engagement plan that works to secure a "yes" vote at Town Meeting.

4. *Is forestry considered within the category of agriculture?*

In this program, the agricultural program priority area is designed specifically for food production, resilience, and security. However, forestry would fall under the nature-based solutions program priority areas.

5. *If we would like to leverage the funding for state and federal grant sources, is the schedule flexible to accommodate?*

The grant timelines can not be altered. However, we are offering another grant round next year for one-year projects.

6. *For 2-year capital improvement/construction projects, are projects expected to already be fully designed, permitted, and ready for construction?*

Projects are not expected to be fully designed, permitted, and ready for construction. However, MAPC will fund construction projects that can be completed within the two-year grant period, and project readiness will be an important evaluation criterion. The level of design and permitting will be evaluated in relation to the scope and scale of the project.

7. *Can a design project for green infrastructure be a 2-year project with a budget up to \$150,000? Or do all design projects need to be 1-year with budget up to \$55,000? As noted, most construction projects would have a larger budget that would need additional alternative funding.*

We may consider funding a design project that is worth more than \$55,000. The applicant will need to articulate a strong case based upon the financial, climate, and community need, for requesting a grant that is outside the given parameters.

8. *Can funds from this program be combined with CZM grant funding to complete construction?*

Absolutely! This is a great use of grant funds.

9. *Is it correct that the grant commences about Oct 15, 2020? So for a 1-year program, it would be expected to be completed by Oct 15, 2021?*

Our intent is that the grant would begin in October 2020 and completed by October 31, 2021. However, the timeline is subject to change based upon extenuating circumstances, such as delays due to COVID-19.

10. *Is the community able to apply with multiple project submittal?*

Yes, communities can submit multiple applications. MAPC would only fund one of them, but we welcome your presenting your best potential projects!

11. *In reviewing maps so we can talk with our North Shore communities to look at LID/stormwater/Greenscapes projects, we've noticed the two Future Flood vulnerability maps only extend as far north as Revere. If we have other data on future flooding concerns is it appropriate to cite that research? Thanks! -*

If the Climate Vulnerability Indicators data analysis includes future flood projections from only the Boston Harbor Flood Risk Model. If you need assistance in determining your community's

flood vulnerability risk, please reach out to Darci at dschofield@mapc.org to provide additional data for your climate equity analysis.

12. Would this grant funding opportunity cover a Sustainability Director/Coordinator for our municipality?

Yes, this year we are supporting capacity building for a municipal climate staff position. A couple things to consider in your proposal:

- Demonstrated commitment from municipal leadership to continue staffing this position. A good example the Town providing some portion of the staff salary and the grant funding is a seed to the position. However, mostly we are seeking a demonstrated commitment for the position for the long term.
- Since this program is for accelerating climate resiliency, the job description would need to be specific to that work. It could include clean energy work but mostly we would be looking for the position to be advancing/implementing your MVP, Natural Hazard, or other climate planning/resilience work.
- Please articulate the need for the staff position and the roles/responsibilities of the proposed position in your proposal.
- MAPC would consider funding a part-time position.

13. With COVID, specific climate staffing requests were removed from the spring budget in anticipation of funds being needed to cope with COVID; can this program fund, or match, temporary staffing needs?

Yes, please see the answer above regarding funding a municipal staff position for climate resilience.

14. Re Food & Agriculture – would VEHICLES be covered by this, e.g. switching to an electric tractor as part of a larger town education program around both mitigation and resilience?

Vehicles would be considered particularly as it helps to eliminate food insecurity and advances climate equity through delivery and production.

15. What's the total budget for grants and roughly how many are you expecting to make?

We have approximately \$1 million for grant awards over a two-year period. The number of grants we award each depends on the proposals we receive.

16. Can MAPC itself be part of a project team for one of these grants?

We may consider grants where MAPC is part of the project, particularly where it relates to a specific area of MAPC's expertise that is required to complete the project.

17. *For a project that has received MVP grant funds, such as a Climate Action Plan, could the MAPC grant fund additional community engagement in environmental justice communities or vulnerable populations?*

Yes, that is a great use of the grant funds!

18. *Would a municipally used electric charging stations be considered as part of this grant?*

We are considering clean energy and climate mitigation projects that align and have synergies with climate adaptation/resilience to promote multiple benefits. So in this example, we might suggest creating a “green” parking lot that provides electric charging stations as well as green infrastructure to manage stormwater and reduce the urban heat island effect.

19. *Would beach nourishment be considered for a private stretch of beach.*

Beach nourishment would definitely be considered for the grant program, however, since MAPC is a public agency, the project would need to demonstrate a larger community public benefit.

20. *Would you be interested in discussing the MAGIC climate vulnerability/resiliency work and seeing if there would be the basis for a MAGIC municipality applying for a project to create a climate coalition? Could include implementation of MVP plans.*

Implementing a climate vulnerability plan through coalitions is a great match for the grant program. Particularly as it relates toward regional collaboration of implementing MVP plans.

21. *NOAH does a lot of work on Climate and Resiliency in East Boston. We have some real needs around funding for work in Central Square/Liberty Plaza where King Tides begin to flood Shaw’s supermarket.....and are inching towards Central Square 2030, if you follow the maps. Does this work qualify for the grant and can we apply?*

We definitely want to support resilience projects in high-risk communities where exposure is imminent. We strongly encourage municipalities to partner with community-based organizations on their projects, however the municipality is the only eligible applicant. Please reach out to your municipality to discuss the project and formulating a partnership.

22. *We are working on a Harbor Resiliency Master Plan and were discussing applying for funds from this grant program to supplement that effort. We also are seeking to create a Climate Action Grant and the community is really pushing to move this forward. My question is – would this be an appropriate place to apply for funds for Assistance developing a scope and schedule for the development of a comprehensive climate action plan?*

The Harbor Resiliency Planning effort does fit our District-Scale resiliency program priority area, so the planning effort would certainly qualify. The Comprehensive Climate Action Plan could also qualify if it included synergies with climate adaptation. For example, evaluating

the Town's natural assets and creating a plan for restoration/preservation to ensure no net loss of carbon capturing natural assets.

23. *Does building a greenhouse qualify for the grant program? Our community farm provides food for food banks that are currently in significant need of more food. We would like to make our farm a year-round operation to increase our production and provide greater educational programs to the community?*

Yes, building a greenhouse would qualify as long the structure is used to reduce food insecurity, create agricultural resilience to climate change risks, and prioritize climate equity.

Questions week of August 7, 2020

1. *Would it be appropriate to apply for this grant to cover engineering costs associated with solar installation on the schools? Or costs for installation of solar panels on municipal buildings?*

The grant is not really designed to support clean energy projects by themselves, but clean energy projects that have synergies with adaptation and resilience strategies.

2. *Is the grant program appropriate for buying back-up batteries for municipal emergency response?*

Emergency preparedness is a grant program priority area and this expense would apply. However, to make your proposal more competitive, I would suggest a broader emergency preparedness approach that includes networks and strategies that build community resilience/social cohesion in the City, as part of an emergency preparedness strategy.

3. *Our project involves raising of the roadway profile of one of the significant thoroughfares in the Town vulnerable to flooding. My question is, since this is project is a major corridor raise the engineering and permitting fees are substantial, but they exceed the \$55,000 cap for a one-year project. Would it be appropriate for the Town to apply for a two-year grant for the engineering and permitting associated with this important project?*

Great question! I think there are two ways you could go about this, and it depends on whether you have funding secured for construction.

- A. If funding is secured for the construction, then apply for a two-year grant for the total amount needed. You may finish early but I am asking our applicants to account for delays due to COVID-19 disruptions, which could affect the timeline for your permitting anyway. If you finish before two years-great!
- B. If funding is not secured for the construction, then I would suggest a one-year grant for the design/engineering that also includes a plan for permitting and securing funding for construction. We will have another grant round next year, so that is also a consideration for future funding.

The project becomes less competitive if cost of permits are included without secured construction funding. This is because we would be potentially funding permits that may not be used if they were to expire before construction funding is secured. Given the challenges of public budgets, that is a possible outcome. But the design/engineering is a perfect fit for a one-year grant.

Also, I would consider enhancing the ecological benefits of the project around raising the road and the culvert improvements.

- 4. I've been working with the Council on Aging and the Housing Authority to combat social isolation for seniors, particularly during the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. One of the biggest gaps is technology access especially since community centers, library and senior center are closed. We want to implement building wide WiFi at our senior housing and provide tablets. Is this applicable for the program, providing access to technology and technological resources for those who would truly benefit from it? This pilot would be tested in COVID but create a foundation for emergency preparedness with climate-change.*

Yes, addressing emergency preparedness, public health (isolation and mental health), community cohesion for vulnerable populations is applicable for the program.

- 5. Will you review our proposal outline to help ensure we are on the right track for the grant program?*

Yes, we can review your proposal outline up until August 21, 2020.

- 6. We would like to create a farmer's market along our widely used bike trail to support our local farmers, connect residents to local food, and promote walking and biking for transportation. Would the grant program support this effort?*

Yes! This project touches upon multiple program priority areas-local food, public health, and transportation emission reductions. In addition, ensure your project has a clear plan for community engagement and addressing equity.

Questions from weeks of August 14 and August 21

- 1. Can MAPC staff assist with developing our proposal or is that a conflict of interest?*

We welcome applicants to speak with MAPC staff to provide expertise and technical assistance to develop your best proposal. If MAPC staff assist on proposal development, they will not participate in the evaluation process for determining grant awards.

- 2. We are interested in updating our subdivision control laws and zoning bylaws and we would like to include climate mitigation, resiliency, and adaptation. Is this an applicable grant project?*

Yes, that is a great fit for the grant program. It falls within the Municipal climate resiliency regulations, zoning, financing, or infrastructure program priority area.

3. *Is there a Word version of the Accelerating Climate Resiliency grant application?*

Yes, please contact Ella Wise at EWise@mapc.org for a word copy.

4. *Groups are interested in having the town start a composting program, and they are searching for potentially relevant grant opportunities. Is that something that the MAPC grant would potentially fund?*

Without knowing the details, I would say that this would generally fit the grant requirements. I would encourage articulating how the composting improves climate resilience in your proposal.

5. *I am wondering if there is any flexibility in the grant parameters that would allow us to apply for a non-capital grant for a 2-year period for \$100,000. Our focus is on coalition building/public engagement, environmental justice, and the advancement of specific action steps addressing mitigation, resiliency, and adaptation measures.*

We are reserving the two-year grant program for capital and/or construction projects. The one exception is if you are planning to redesign your zoning for climate resilience and were seeking Town Meeting approval. I would suggest breaking down your scope into a phased approach to best qualify for the grant.

6. *Alternatively, do you anticipate there to be another round next year and would a second one-year award for our efforts be a possibility?*

We will release another one-year grant round next year. It is possible to receive a grant in two consecutive years if the project/ program meets the criteria.

7. *If a municipality is participating in a regional proposal, can we also submit our own individual municipal proposal?*

Yes

8. *Would request of funds to get a consultant to help us lead a sustainable Action plan update be within the aims of the grant.*

Grant funds can be used to hire a consultant. However, this grant program is largely to support implementation of completed planning efforts on climate change.

9. *I must appear before the Select Board to secure its authorization to designate a Project Manager and to submit the grant application. I was hoping that you would provide me with an extension to September 4th, which would allow me to go before the Board on the evening of September 3rd.*

The grant does not require formal authorization from the Board of Selectmen to designate a project manager. A letter from your Town Manager/Administrator is sufficient.

Alternatively, if your municipality requires an authorization from the Board of Selectmen, please submit your application by the August 31, 2020 due date, then send the letter of authorization as soon as you have it, making note of its pending arrival in your proposal.

10. *We have a project concept that includes both construction and capacity building. Can we submit an application that covers both project types with the capacity building part scoped to be completed in 1 year and the construction part scoped to be completed in 2 years? If we were to submit two applications, am I reading the Q&A document correctly that we would only receive funding for one application?*

I suggest submitting one application for both construction and capacity building, which creates a stronger proposal. If you submit two applications, which is perfectly acceptable, it is likely you would only be funded for one project.

11. *We are a community-based organization whose mission and work are a great fit for the ACR grant, and we are poised for growth in 2021. Can we apply?*

We strongly encourage community-based organizations to work with municipalities for the ACR Grant program, however, municipalities are the only eligible applicants. To apply, you will need to work with your municipality to submit the application and your organization could be paid as a contractor.

12. *I am trying to differentiate our response to question 3 from our response to question 4. It was my understanding that benefiting socially vulnerable populations and climate justice was the criteria for evaluation.*

On question 3, projects should meet at least one of the program priority areas. If it meets more than one, then that adds value to your proposal. But if it only meets one—that does not necessarily make your project less competitive. On question 4—Climate Vulnerability Indicators, please describe the extent you are engaging, offering leadership, and/or investing in vulnerable populations and/or equity. This gives value to your proposal. Since equity is a priority for MAPC, this is an area that you can achieve greater value to your proposal. For example, using innovative engagement techniques that prioritize investments in vulnerable populations.

13. *On the budget, for community-based organization, volunteer, and municipal staff's time, do we need to show an hourly rate?*

Not necessarily, an estimated total amount for each category is sufficient for the budget. However, for grant reimbursement, you will need to document the time and hourly rate in the invoice to MAPC. Staff time will also require a supervisor's signature for reimbursement.

14. *Can we also add travel (mileage)—just in case we can have in-person meetings again? If so, we use the 57.5 cents per mile federal 2020 rate?*

Travel costs are an allowable expense for the grant program. You can provide an estimated total amount anticipated for travel expense in your proposal budget.

However, you will need to provide documentation for travel expenses such as gas receipts, miles travelled and rate for miles.