

District Department of the Environment (DDOE)

Natural Resources Administration (NRA)

2011 Request for Applications (RFA) - January 20, 2011 Public Information Session

Questions & Answers

Due to the large number of projects advertised for application in the 2011 RFA, NRA staff held a public information session to ensure that incoming applications will be viable and competitive. After a short presentation on the application, review and granting process, detailed on pages 1 through 15 of the RFA document, attendees were invited to ask clarifying questions to aid their understanding of general grant requirements and specific project requirements. Those questions and answers were recorded, and are reproduced here for the benefit of all potential applicants. This list of questions was later circulated to grants and technical staff to ask for additional input of importance to completely answer the questions.

Additional inquiries are welcome, and should be addressed to John Wasiutynski at:

john.wasiutynski@dc.gov, or Suzy Wald at: suzanne.wald@dc.gov.

General Application Questions

Question: Can “Match” be fulfilled entirely through volunteer time?

Answer: Yes

Question: Can we charge Indirect Costs, or do we need to itemize? If so, at what %? How do you define “Indirect”?

Answer 1: Indirect costs are the costs of items or services that are required to keep your organization operational, such as phone and electrical service, or accounting services, but are not specifically tied to the project. Indirect costs can either be itemized or calculated using a percent cost allocation, as best fits your project or organization. The example of Percent Cost Allocation given, was that if this project represents 25% of the organization’s annual operating budget, that organization could request approval of a 25% cost allocation for indirect costs. This is one of

many ways to calculate indirect costs. Visit the Department of Interior website to investigate applicable alternatives.

Answer 2: Keep in mind that DDOE greatly prefers to fund projects that have the largest portion of the budget in the Direct Costs category, because that maximizes the amount of effort put toward the achievement of our collective goals of clean environment, healthy habitat and educated public. Please refer to the section of each project write-up titled, “Criteria for Proposal Evaluation” to see if the project to which you are applying includes a scoring criteria that give preference to applications with a high direct to indirect costs ratio.

Question: Can the applicant specify the preferred start date?

Answer: Yes. No cost can be incurred that would be charged to this project before the Grant agreement is signed by DDOE’s director and by the applying organization’s representative, and DDOE is not able to sign a grant agreement until it has received it’s federal funds; however, DDOE recognizes the seasonal nature of much of the work to be done, and will consciously work to ensure that, as it is possible, grant agreements are signed in a timely way that is conscious of the project’s preferred start date.

Question: Can start-up costs include personnel costs?

Answer: Yes.

Question: Should applicants include the request for start-up funding in the application, or after the grant agreement?

Answer: There is no obligation to include a request for start-up funds in the initial application; however, the need for start-up funds is an important factor for the applicant to consider during the application budgeting process. Start-up funds are no longer a standard practice, but are given only to organizations that can show a real need for those funds.

Question: Can we contact DDOE staff for technical information about the goals of the RFA or for existing data?

Answer: Yes. Please contact John Wasiutynski at: john.wasiutynski@dc.gov, or Suzy Wald at: suzanne.wald@dc.gov. They can either answer your question or forward you to the proper technical expert to answer your question.

Question: Can you submit an unsolicited proposal if it meets the mission of DDOE?

Answer 1: Yes. Submit unsolicited proposals to Sheila Besse at:

District of Columbia Department of Environment

Attn: Sheila A. Besse

Watershed Protection Division

1200 First Street, NE

5th Floor

Washington, DC 20002

Answer 2: DDOE outlined each project in this RFA to meet the goals and objectives of our federal funders, so these projects will have funding priority. More information about District of Columbia laws and policy for unsolicited proposals, and grants in general, can be found at opgs.dc.gov.

Question: What happens if no one applies for a particular grant?

Answer: DDOE will 1) continue to accept applications for that project after the February 11 due date, 2) review the viability of that particular proposal and possibly rescind it, or 3) readvertise that project in a future RFA.

Question: Are each review team's evaluation/comments available after the grant award to the respective applicants?

Answer: Yes, upon request.

Question: If the project involves another DC agency, can DDOE provide contact names in that agency to us so that we can contact them in preparation of our submission? (Ex. DPW for wildlife collisions)

Answer: Yes. The strongest applications may come from organizations that already have existing contacts with project partners, but do not hesitate to ask DDOE for sister agency contacts if you need them.

Question: Can one organization submit more than application for the same project?

Answer: Yes.

Project Specific Questions

Question: Regarding the RiverSmart Homes Rain Barrel Installation Program’s “Project Outputs and Deliverables” is the minimum number of rain barrel to be installed 900 or 1000?

Answer: This was a DDOE typo, and we apologize for the confusion. The minimum number is 1000.

Question: Regarding the RiverSmart Homes Rain Barrel Installation Program: Is it the same type/brand of rain barrel that has been used in the past?

Answer: Yes, but we encourage applicants to propose another design/brand that could better serve the purpose of the project.

Question: Will DDOE assist with the storage of rain barrels?

Answer: DDOE has helped in this way in the past, and continues to seek storage options for this purpose; however, we do not currently have a storage location. DDOE would rather provide free storage than pay for storage (through a grant) if it is possible, so DDOE will work with the selected grantee to try to find storage for the barrels.

Question: In the FY2011 Administration of the Unified Green Roof Rebate Program, can the sub grantee be paid for goods or services by an applicant (meaning an applicant to the rebate)?

Answer: No. The project description states, “The sub-grantee’s primary responsibilities include environmental outreach, administration, verification, tracking, and reporting of Green Roof installations. The organization administering this program shall not receive payments for materials or services from the rebate recipients for work related to the design, construction or

installation of the green roof that is the subject of the rebate”. If the rebate administrator is directing work to the administrator’s own organization, it could appear that DDOE is supporting an uneven playing field to the detriment of other companies that could potentially provide the similar services. In addition, liability for products and services must fall entirely upon an entity that is not funded by the District.

Question: For the District-wide Innovative Low Impact Development (LID)-Green Infrastructure (GI) Technologies Feasibility & Demonstration Program, would you accept an education project?

Answer: Education should be part of the project in order to complete the “Demonstration” portion of the work, but the critical outcome of the project is a completed LID project.

Question: Regarding the RiverSmart Tree Installation Program, DDOE has made certain specifications (i.e. no trees smaller than Redbud). We wish to negotiate this with a different approach to achieve the same goal. Can we negotiate the critical specifications of the (projects listed in the) RFA?

Answer: Different approaches are welcome through the proposal process, however we ask that the applicant address why they prefer their approach over the approach suggested by DDOE. Without acknowledging DDOE’s approach, it may appear that the applicant has not read the grant request. Keep in mind that it is somewhat of a risk to propose another approach because it may not fit DDOE’s goals.

Question: Do the grants managers help with teaming of partners with different capabilities?

Answer: No. If applicants wish to partner with other organizations, they must make their own arrangements.

Question: Do you have a list of businesses interested in catch basin screens? Can you provide the list?

Answer: There are many businesses that make catch basin screens, including, but not limited to: Trident Solutions; West Coast Storm; National Inlet Protection; and Stormwater Systems. Contact information for these organizations can be found online. DDOE does not endorse any of

these products or manufacturers, nor does DDOE have a preference for which products are used, as long as the technology is appropriate for the application. Researching and proposing a product is part of the applicant's work for this project application.

Question: If you have a capability, can you apply to perform just that portion of the work?

Answer: Eligible organizations should apply for the entire scope of work listed for each specific project. If applying for more than one project, the applicant must submit separate applications for each project.

Question: For the District-wide Innovative Low Impact Development (LID)-Green Infrastructure (GI) Technologies Feasibility & Demonstration Program, can we assume there are designs for the WIP priority program, plans and implementation?

Answer: For this project DDOE will give preference to projects that are listed in EPA approved watershed implementation plans, which can be found on the DDOE website:

<http://ddoe.dc.gov/ddoe/cwp/view,a,1209,q,501875.asp>. The projects listed in these plans have been assessed in the field but there has not been any design work. That will be the job of the applicant along with permitting and construction.

Question: Can we propose changes to the cost shares in the RiverSmart Homes program, for example, size of individual subsidies?

Answer : Different approaches are welcome through the proposal process, however we ask that the applicant address why they prefer their approach over the approach suggested by DDOE. Without acknowledging DDOE's approach, it may appear that the applicant has not read the grant request. Keep in mind that it is somewhat of a risk to propose another approach because it may not fit DDOE's goals.

Question: I can't tell if match is required for the District of Columbia Tree Rebate Program and the RiverSmart Tree Installation Program. The "Criteria for Evaluating Proposals" for both projects states "Applicant or homeowner provides some non-federal match (10 points)".

Answer: If provision of matching funds is listed as scoring criteria for evaluating the proposal, applications providing match will score more points than project applications that do not provide

match. Match is REQUIRED for the Pope Branch Invasive Plant Management Demonstration Project. Applicants must provide thirty five thousand dollars (\$35,000) non-federal matching funds, or in-kind match.

Question: If a project is in the WIP area, but not at one of the identified sites, is it a viable location for a LID demonstration project?

Answer: Yes, while DDOE have ground-truthed the identified sites, we welcome additional locations.

Question: For the FY2011 Administration of the Unified Green Roof Rebate Program, is there a cap for dollars or square feet?

Answer: For retrofits, there is no cap. For new construction, there is a cap at 5000 square feet.

Question: Regarding the FY2011 Administration of the Unified Green Roof Rebate Program: is weight given to small versus large projects – for example row homes versus commercial business?

Answer 1: The rebates are distributed on a first-come-first-served basis. Applicants who have submitted complete applications are placed on the rebate list in the order that they applied. DDOE has an existing list of approximately 35 applicants that will be supplied to the next administrator of this rebate program. Those rebates should be awarded before additional applicants are rebated. An applicant must fully complete and submit his or her application to cue for the rebate.

Answer 2: If the applicant for this subgrant wishes to create a different scheme for administering the rebate award, detail this alternative approach in the application.

Question: Who is the contact at the Department of Public Works (DPW) for the Wildlife Collision Database project?

Answer: The DPW contact is Kevin Bryant kevin.bryant@dc.gov.

Question: For the Demonstration of In-Stream Trash Reduction Technology project will DDOE assist in obtaining permits if they are necessary?

Answer: Yes, DDOE will assist in obtaining permits from US Army Corps of Engineers if it is necessary.