***2023 Watersheds United Vermont Design and Implementation Block Grant (DIBG) Common Questions***

This document covers some of the common questions that WUV has received about these funds; if you have any additional questions, please contact Christian [*christian@whiteriverpartnership.org*](mailto:christian@whiteriverpartnership.org) *and Lyn* [*watershedsunited@gmail.com*](mailto:watershedsunited@gmail.com)

|  |
| --- |
| ***Application Process Questions*** |
| ***How does WUV’s application process work?***  In former rounds WUV has had a 2-step application process for this funding that included a pre-application and a full application. For this round there will be **no pre-application.** Applicants will complete the **WUV Design and Implementation Block Grant Application** and **the DEC Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form** (new to this grant round). WUV asks that applicants submit both documents at the same time through email to both Lyn and Christian ([*christian@whiteriverpartnership.org*](mailto:christian@whiteriverpartnership.org) *and* [*watershedsunited@gmail.com*](mailto:watershedsunited@gmail.com)*)* |
| ***What are the due dates for this grant round?***  The full project application and Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form are due on **April 21, 2023** |
| ***When do you expect funding decisions to be released?***  Funding decisions will be released in early May, 2023. |
| ***What DEC funding policy should I be using for this grant round?***  You should use the FY21 DEC CWIP Funding Policy. DEC has just released their FY2023 CWIP Funding Policy; however, these funds are still governed by the FY2021 CWIP Policy. Please DO NOT use the FY2023 policy to understand the requirements of this funding round as there are some significant differences between the FY2021 and FY2023 policy. |
| ***When do projects have to be completed by for this round of funding?***  All projects and project reporting (invoice and deliverable submission) must be completed by November 1, 2024. Deliverables must be completed by that date or no more than three months after the completion of the project (whichever comes sooner). |
| ***Are there any major changes to this round from previous WUV DIBG Block Grant Rounds?***  Overall the grant round is very close to WUV‘s previous DIBG round; the process and general eligibility and funding requirements have remained the same. There are some changes from our original two rounds including:   1. In previous rounds, WUV has had a 2-step process including a pre-application eligibility screening and a full application. For this round it will not be a 2 step process. Applicants will submit the full application and the new DEC Project Readiness and Eligibility Screening Form at the same time (on or before April 21, 2023) 2. Under this round of funding, 3-acre stormwater projects are no longer eligible 3. Under this round, some awarded funds can be used as required leverage/match to other funding sources with permission from WUV. |
| ***Can an organization submit more than 1 application?***  Yes, we invite organizations to submit multiple applications. If you are submitting multiple applications, we appreciate a ranked order of priority for submission. |
| ***Can one project with multiple stages (for example an application for design and implementation) be submitted?***  Yes, an application can include multiple project phases, though proceeding to the next stage will require an interim check in with all deliverables and determination to proceed at the completion of the first phase. A combined application could be for any of the following:   1. preliminary and final design 2. final design and implementation   If an application is submitted with multiple project phases, we will require that deliverables and invoices are submitted at the time that each project phase completes. |
| ***Can multiple projects be submitted in one application if they are under the same project type?***  No, each application should include one project. There may be some very limited situations were a bundled proposal makes sense. Please contact [christian@whiteriverpartnership.org](mailto:christian@whiteriverpartnership.org) if you think you may have a situation like this. |
| ***If I have already received funding from WUV under the previous rounds of design and implementation block grant funding, can I apply for this round?***  Yes, if you have eligible projects ready for this round of funding, we invite you to submit an application. |
| ***Is there any information or tools to help navigate the application process?***  Yes, please read the 2023 WUV DIBG Grant Guidelines, this document provides details on the grant application process.  WUV also recorded a webinar for the last round of DIBG funding, the grant round is almost identical to this round with the exception that stormwater 3-acre projects are no longer eligible. The webinar is recorded and posted on WUV’s block grant webpage, please review the video for details on the grant process. You can also always reach out to WUV with any questions or for guidance. |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Project Eligibility Questions*** |
| ***What projects are eligible for this funding?***  This funding supports design or implementation of projects where the primary purpose is to reduce sediment and nutrient pollution from runoff and soil erosion that discharge into the State’s rivers, streams, lakes, ponds and wetlands. Eligible projects fall into two major categories: Stormwater and Natural Resources: Lake Shoreland, Rivers - Stream/Floodplain restoration, Wetlands, and Forestry.    The best resource to use to determine of you project is eligible and the correct type of project for this funding is the *Design/Implementation Block Grant Eligible Projects Types, Standards, Milestones and Deliverables Spreadsheet (*view this spreadsheet at https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants) |
| ***What other resources are available to understand project eligibility?***  Please review the ***FY2021 CWIP Funding Policy*** to understand all eligibility requirements.  [https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04\_FINAL\_FY21\_CWIPFundingPolicy\_signed.pdf](https://watershedsunitedvt.org/sites/default/files/inline-files/2021-02-04_FINAL_FY21_CWIPFundingPolicy_signed.pdf%20)  Other resources to help clarify some of the information found in the FY2021 CWIP funding policy include:  ***-CWIP Funding Policy Q&A***  ***-Summary of 2021 CWIP Funding Policy Updates and Clarifications***  Please also see the ***2023 WUV DIBG Grant Guidelines*** for details on the grant round and eligibility information.  All of these documents can be found at: <https://watershedsunitedvt.org/resources/block-grants> |
| ***Are match/leveraged funds required for a project to be eligible?***  No match/leverage is not required for this round for most projects (see question below for details). We do encourage voluntary match for projects.  For details on the full leveraged funds policy, refer to page 22 of the ***FY21 CWIP Funding Policy***.  **Leveraged Funds/Match Requirements:**  50% match is required for all stormwater projects in MS4 communities  WUV has no other required match commitment for this grant round. WUV will not consider match as criteria for selection on public land. On private land, WUV will consider the context of the projects and may consider match in our selection process. Regardless, match is always appreciated by DEC to meet overall match goals, so please include anticipated match amounts. |
| ***Can awarded funds be used as leverage/match for other funds?***  Under this round of funding, some awarded DIBG funds can be used as required match for other funders. The budget table in the application has an area to indicate if awarded funds would be used for required match, please make sure to accurately indicate if you plan to use this funding as required match/leverage. |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Other Common Questions*** |
| ***Should I alert my DEC Watershed Planner that I am applying for these funds?***  Yes, for a project to be eligible for this funding, the project must be in the DEC Watershed Project Database. If your project is already in the Database, please alert your Watershed Planner that you are applying for this funding. If the project is eligible but not yet in the database, contact your Watershed Planner to have the project added. See Project Eligibility/Project Readiness Screening Form for details on this process. |
| ***Do I have to complete a natural resource screening for design projects?***  Yes, even if you do not have a plan available for DEC technical staff to review or approve, you still should complete the natural resource screening as part of the full application. Even if there are not many project details to review, we recommend starting the process of communicating and alerting DEC technical staff to the project as early as possible. Natural Resource Screening and steps for completing that process are now in the Project Eligibility/Project Readiness Screening Form. |
| ***Can I apply for these funds if there are funding sources besides DEC CWIP funds available that would cover the full cost?***  No, Projects that can be funded through other grant sources (projects may be eligible if other  options are exhausted and justification is provided, subject to CWIP approval) are ineligible. Agriculture projects must first pursue other funding sources (e.g., Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and Vermont Housing and Conservation Board) before pursuing CWIP funds. Municipal road projects must first pursue other funding sources (e.g., Agency of Transportation) before pursuing CWIP funds. Forestry projects must first pursue other funding  sources (e.g., U.S. Department of Agriculture and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and  Recreation) before pursuing CWIP funds |

|  |
| --- |
| ***Other Funding Opportunities Questions*** |
| ***Will WUV be releasing future grant rounds?***  Possibly – but unlikely! If there are remaining funds, WUV will be releasing an additional round of funding in Fall/Winter 2023. However, it is likely that this is WUV’s final round of significant funding under this grant program. |
| ***Is there a difference between the WUV DIBG and the MARC and NRCC DIBGs? Will MARC and NRCC have upcoming funding rounds also?***  DEC has awarded DIBG awards to 3 entities: WUV, the Natural Resources Conservation Council (NRCC) and Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC). The funding requirements are the same for all entities, though the application and grant administration process may vary somewhat. While we encourage for administration purposes that NRCDs apply to NRCC, watershed groups apply to WUV and municipalities apply through MARC, all eligible entities can apply through any DIBG grant holder. WUV, NRCC and MARC will coordinate on grant rounds, project applications, and remaining funding. |