



## Stormwater & Septic Leachate Toxics Reduction Grant Program

August 1 – August 30, 2024

### Public Comments

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1. Our organization expects this program to be widely used because of its relative simplicity: applicant eligibility requirements are broad, maximum award sizes are substantial, and match requirements are only 25%.

***Response: Thank you. We hope these awards are useful as well. Our staff is available throughout the process from talking about program ideas to application through closeout to assist organizations in creating sustainable programs and impactful community projects in Western Montana.***

2. Page 7 includes Libby as an eligible town but does not include Lincoln County under the eligible county section. Our group is focused on water quality in a rural community located in Lincoln County on the 18 lakes in the Thompson Chain of Lakes watershed but 40 miles outside of Libby. I hope our nonprofit could be considered for this grant.

***Response: Apologies, our mistake! Yes, Lincoln County is located within the eligible area for these grants.***

3. Page 7: Note the extra numbers behind some of the words.

***Response: Thank you for the notice. We have gone through and removed extra numbers in the text.***

4. Page 7: Wouldn't the fiscal year run beginning on July 1 and ending on June 30 (July 1 – June 30)?

***Response: Thank you for catching that, WMCC follows the state fiscal year July 1 – June 30.***

5. Would like to see the guidelines and the appendices be two separate documents. This is a long document and could be overwhelming for smaller communities/groups.

***Response: Thank you for your suggestions, there is value in being concise and providing an easily readable document for all applicants. Our goal is to provide a document that is accessible for all applicants and can be a single source of information for various audiences. We aim for the document to provide a full scope of the program as well as details about each grant program individually. Applicants can click on sections within the table of contents to take them to specific sections for more details.***

6. Include a calendar/timeline of when the call for applications will open, close, review period, when funding is available towards top of document.

***Response: Thank you for this suggestion, this program is a rolling award process. We will include information about application timeline, award, and funds remaining for applicants on our website.***

7. Consider including examples of how to calculate required match.

***Response: Thank you for suggesting, a 25% non-federal match is required for each subgrant, page 29 provides examples under the Examples for Match section.***



## Stormwater & Septic Leachate Toxics Reduction Grant Program

### Frequently Asked Questions

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Q1. The 25% matching funds on \$50,000 would be prohibitive for our organization. We are reliant on grants and have received some substantial ones but none that we have received so far would allow us to use their funds to match to another grant. Is there any way this could be reduced?

***A1. The 25% match is an EPA federal grant requirement, in addition to cash match there are multiple match types that can be used, see examples on page on page 29, Examples for Match section.***

Q2. Is this only for tribal and underserved communities?

***A2. There are many eligible entities for these grant programs. Eligible entities are listed in the Eligible Applicants section on pages 4-6 of the grant guidelines.***

Q3. In the “how to apply” section for each grant category, is there a definitive application deadline or timeframe associated with these funds that could be stated here?

***A3. Applications will open in January 2025 and will be reviewed on a rolling basis. Grant funds must be fully utilized by March 2029.***

Q4. Does each funding category run with the State’s typical grant cycle and is it every two years? More details on the specifics for grant application timing would be helpful.

***A4. This grant program may be different than other State of Montana grant programs. Funding is provided on a rolling basis with all funds becoming available in January 2025. Grants will be awarded until all funds are exhausted. Each subawardee must fully expend their awarded funds by March 2029.***

Q5. Are you hoping to have enough showcase GSI project applications during next year’s funding cycle to be able to choose two next year or is it likely that one project will be awarded per funding cycle?

***A5. Yes, we intend for both projects to be awarded in 2025. Funding is provided on a rolling basis with all funds becoming available in January 2025. Grants will be awarded until all funds are exhausted. Each subawardee must fully expend their awarded funds by March 2029.***

Q6. If the projects submitted don't quite meet the intent, no awards would be made, would funds be rolled into the next funding cycle?

***A6. Funds will be available in January 2025 and will be distributed on a rolling basis until fully allocated. Subawardees are required to use all their funds by March 2029.***

Q7. How does the Residential and Community Green Stormwater Infrastructure grant apply to smaller side Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) on the community level. A way to incentivize the development community/subdivisions to use GSI. Is this part of the focus or can it be for the communities too?

Q7. Additional Question: What about one-off projects?

***A7. This grant is applicable GSI projects at the community level. It aims to incentivize the development of applicable GSI programs by encouraging education and sustainable practices for residents and communities. No minimum fund request is required for this program, there is a maximum of \$50,000 per award. Pages 17 – 21 provides more detail on this program.***

○ ***A7. Additional Question: This funding is geared toward program development.***

Q8. Is this the same processes as RDG and RRG? Reporting can be difficult for awardees and can be cumbersome for applicants? Is there any way to make this easier? Will you be able to help applicants?

***A8. WMCC is working to make this process as simple as possible for all applications and three staff have been hired to assist organizations from public comment to application and through the grant close out process. Please reach out to staff at any time in the process for assistance or with questions.***

Q9. As applicants, as long as we are eligible, are we allowed to apply for more than one program and if so, are we allowed to submit one application for both, or will they need to submit multiple?

***A9. WMCC is working through the application process on Submittable but haven't figured that piece out yet. We are trying to simplify the process for applicants and are still working on that functionality.***

Q10. Can I use an Apple laptop with your grant program?

***A10. WMCC grant program applications will be accepted through Submittable and Apple devices will work with the Submittable program.***

***If you have problems with Submittable, please reach out to WMCC staff for assistance.***

Q11. Would staff labor from our Environmental Health employees or local septic installers count towards the 25% match in replacing individual residential septic systems?

**A11. Employee time can be used as match as long as it's not federally funded. The pumpers themselves likely are not eligible for match but staff time implementing the program (like conservation district staff) would be considered match. Page 27, Appendix D: Match Information provides more detail on grant match.**

Q12. What is meant by "Assistance for other septic tank maintenance?"

**A12. Other forms of maintenance that don't include specifically pumping the tank.**

Q13. How will you determine whether the respective septic professionals such as pumpers, installers, and inspectors are certified? Each county might have different requirements for certification. A question that comes up when a system is allegedly failing, who makes that choice, what's the criteria. Seems to be defaulting back to the pumper's opinion. If WMCC has requirements that could be a standard, this could be helpful to standardize the process. Or provide a list of qualified/certified pumpers.

**A13. Subawardees will be responsible for checking with their county Sanitarian and/or will complete a request for qualifications before funds are contracted with a licensed pumper or installer.**

Q15. The first goal of program is to conduct comprehensive research for baseline knowledge. What monitoring and research will be conducted? Will this research be used for decision making in the other two goals?

**A15. General community research will be the responsibility of WMCC staff to complete and is a part of the Community and Research Education program.**

**Separately, each grant subaward program awardee will be required to evaluate effectiveness of their programming using pre and post surveys for individuals participating in these programs. WMCC staff will support grantees in the creation and implementation of these pre and post surveys.**

Q16. Goal three is providing financial report for septic system maintenance. Is a risk assessment conducted? How will problem areas and areas of higher concern be determined?

**A16. The goals at the beginning of the document refer to the broader goals of the full grant. To meet these goals, there are various projects, programs, and grants which support the larger goals.**

**The Residential Septic System Education and Maintenance grant program aims to support development and expansion of septic system maintenance programs in**

***western Montana. The specific Subawardees's determination of risk and problem areas will be dependent on the resources available for the relevant area.***

Q17. How are these projects being scored/evaluated? Is there an evaluation sheet with associated points you can share in the appendix?

***A17. WMCC is in the process of creating ranking criteria and will make it publicly available before applications open.***

Q18. Would there be a way to include pdfs of the applications for potential applicants to view prior to getting into Submittable? It would be helpful for them to know what all is needed for a complete application.

***A18. Yes, this is a great idea! We will provide application templates on our website prior to the application opening.***

***More questions? Please contact us – we're here to help.***

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