

GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE GRANT PROGRAM FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

April 2019

Eligibility Criteria for Award

Q: Will you consider applications from organizations or people that are not located in San Francisco but for projects on a property within San Francisco?

A: Yes. We will consider applications for any property that is connected to the SFPUC system.

Q: Can individuals or organizations submit multiple applications and receive multiple grants?

A: Yes, applicants can submit multiple applications for separate projects on separate project sites. A grantee may be awarded multiple grants for different project sites, pending eligibility and funding availability.

Q: If you're an active grantee, can you still apply for another project site?

A: Yes.

Q: Can individuals or organizations group multiple projects on different project sites in one application?

A: No. Each project site requires a separate application.

Q: Can adjacent properties on separate parcels be submitted as a single project?

A: Adjacent properties that collectively manage stormwater under a single project concept may be considered on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the grant administrator to discuss the concept before proceeding with the grant application process.

Q: Can an entity, such as a HOA, apply for a grant by managing stormwater from multiple rooftops, driveways and roadways?

A: Yes, however the legal property owner of both the location of the green infrastructure facility and the associated drainage areas must be willing to sign the Stormwater Management Agreement.

Q: What about sites with impervious soils? Does this count as impervious area managed?

A: If it's rock, then yes.

Stormwater Management Ordinance Coordination

Q: Can a project that is required to build green infrastructure to comply with the Stormwater Management Ordinance apply for grant?

A: The Green Infrastructure Grant Program is intended for retrofit projects and cannot be used to pay for compliance with the Stormwater Management Ordinance (SMO). Therefore, new development projects that trigger the SMO are not eligible for grant funds.

However, the SFPUC may consider, on a case-by-case basis, funding stormwater management systems (green infrastructure) that are proposed as a separate and fully independent system that manages an otherwise unmanaged portion of a Project with documented SMO compliance. In other words, the proposed system must be a standalone project that able to be installed or removed without affecting the project's stormwater management systems required for SMO compliance.

For projects complying with the SMO, the following conditions must be met to be eligible for a GI Grant:

1. The proposed green infrastructure must be an entirely separate and fully independent system ("Addition") that manages an otherwise unmanaged portion of a project with documented SMO compliance ("Baseline"); and
2. The separately managed Addition to a project site must not be connected to, or dependent on, a green infrastructure facility required for Baseline SMO compliance; and
3. The Project must receive Preliminary SCP approval for the corresponding Baseline stormwater management system before a GI Grant can be awarded.

Co-benefit Opportunities

Q: Can you expand on why disadvantaged communities and environmental justice areas are considered a co-benefit?

A: The mission of the San Francisco Public Utilities Commission (SFPUC) is to provide our customers with high quality, efficient, and reliable water, power and wastewater services in a manner that is inclusive of environmental and community interests and that sustains the resources entrusted to our care. As part of the agency's core mission, the SFPUC is proud to be the first public utility in the nation to adopt an Environmental Justice Policy (the "EJ Policy" 2009) and a Community Benefits Policy (the "CB Policy" 2011) which seek to ensure the inclusion of environmental and community interests by being a good neighbor to all whose lives or neighborhoods are directly affected by our water, wastewater, and power operations, programs or policies. By supporting projects in these communities, the grant program provides critical investments in our infrastructure while providing community benefits for the people and places in need.

Q: How are EJ areas defined?

A: The SFPUC uses the [CalEnviroscreen](#) definition. The [Grant Program Map](#) is available online for your reference.

Q: Is there a public access requirement for private property projects?

A: Public access is not required, but highly encouraged as a co-benefit in the grant award process.

Schedule and Deadlines

Q: When are grant applications due?

A: The SFPUC will review grant applications on a rolling basis and will award grants on a first-come, first served basis. Incomplete applications will be removed from the queue and sent back to the applicant for revisions. Projects that meet the eligibility requirements will be awarded grants, subject to availability of funding.

Q: Are there any schedule limits on when construction must start after award?

A: Yes, construction must start within two years from the date of signing for the Stormwater Management Agreement.

Q: Are there any restrictions on the construction duration?

A: No, there are not any limits on the construction duration since it depends on project size and complexity. However, grantees will be responsible for completing the construction of the project within the timeframe specified at time of application. Any grant extensions must be requested in writing and approved by the grant administrator.

Grant Funding (What project elements can be funded)

Q: Can every project get the maximum grant amount per impervious acre managed? How do you determine how much you will award each project?

A: The grant amount each project receives is dependent on the amount of impervious surface it can manage AND the concept design and corresponding budget. BMP type, soil permeability, and site conditions all impact project costs. Your requested budget will be reviewed for consistency with your concept design and industry standard costs for San Francisco.

Q: Will the grant cover the cost of required permits and environmental reviews?

A: Yes, as all construction permits and environmental review costs are eligible soft cost expenses. However, no more than 20% of the total grant amount may be used for non-construction activities.

Q: Is the limit for the 'ask' linked to the organization's income or solely based on the cost of the project?

A: The grant is a performance-based award system. A person or organization's income does not factor into the award.

Q: Is the cost of ongoing maintenance eligible for grant funding?

A: No, ongoing maintenance is not eligible for grant funding. It is the responsibility of the property owner.

Q: Would the cost of replacement plants be reimbursed? Could it be a line item in the grant application for funding?

A: No. Replacement of plants is considered an ongoing maintenance cost and is the responsibility of the property owner.

Q: What assistance is available if there are performance issues after the project is built?

A: The property owner is responsible for ensuring the system is performing for the duration of the grant. However, SFPUC staff will conduct inspections throughout the grant duration and will be available to provide technical assistance if required.

Q: Is there a matching funds requirement?

A: No, there is no match requirement for this program. However, projects typically include many non-green infrastructure elements (benches, play equipment, public amenities) that cannot be funded through this grant.

Q: Is educational programming or training an eligible cost?

A: Ongoing programming and training are not eligible costs. However, educational signage is eligible for grant funding.

Q: Are there other grants to help pay for ineligible costs, such as benches?

A: Yes, applicants are encouraged to look into other programs outside of the SFPUC to support the delivery of a successful project.

Applicant Team

Q: Can the Project Manager be the Project Engineer?

A: Yes, any member of the project team can serve as the Project Manager.

Q: Are contractors required to have GI experience?

A: No. However, someone on the grant team must have GI experience. There is also contractor training available for free through the SFPUC and is strongly encouraged.

Q: Who is eligible to be lead applicant? Must they be a 503(c)?

A: Anyone can be the designated applicant for the project as long as the team meets the experience requirements. They do not need to be a 503(c), but please note grants are taxable income to private for-profit entities.

Q: If the grantee is not the property owner, do they also have to sign the maintenance agreement?

A: Yes, both the grantee and the property owner will need to co-sign the agreement. Only the property owner will sign the restrictive declaration.

Q: Are applicants allowed to use vendors not on the GI vendor list?

A: Yes! The list is an informational resource only and is intended to help grantees identify potential resources. The SFPUC in no way endorses or requires the use of any vendors identified on the list.

Application Assistance

Q: What application assistance do project teams have access to?

A: The SFPUC has a technical assistance program that can help applicants understand the stormwater opportunities on their site through site visits and in-person meetings. However, applicants will be responsible for assembling their grant teams, creating the concept designs and applying for the grant.

Q: What would be entailed in a site visit prior to application?

A: Members from the SFPUC technical team will meet potential project teams onsite to evaluate stormwater management opportunities and constraints. Technical teams can help identify potential drainage management areas, recommend BMP types, and answer any questions that come up during the site visit.

Maintenance and Inspection

Q: How will the 20-year Stormwater Management Agreement be enforced if the grant manager (such as a non-profit) goes away?

A: The property owner is responsible for maintenance and must sign the agreement.

Q: Is the 20-year Stormwater Management Agreement an easement?

A: No. The Stormwater Management Agreement includes a Declaration of Deed Restriction ensuring the 20 years of maintenance travels with the property. It does not provide any ownership to the SFPUC.

Q: In a multi-owner complex or neighborhood, who would be the project owner responsible for maintenance?

A: The legal property owner of both the location of the green infrastructure facility and the associated drainage areas are responsible for maintenance. If there is more than one legal owner, all owners must sign the Stormwater Management Agreement.

Q: What happens to maintenance of the BMP after 20-years?

A: The grant obligation is considered fulfilled. The owner may continue to maintain, rehabilitate or remove the infrastructure at that time.

Q: How much does 20-years of maintenance cost?

A: Maintenance costs will vary by several factors including BMP type and size, location, and site usage.

Relationship to Other SFPUC Grants and Policies

Q: How is this program different than the Urban Watershed Stewardship Grant Program?

A: The UWSG Program provides funding to non-profits to fund stormwater management projects in public spaces. The maximum grant amount is \$100,000 and it does not have a minimum performance requirement. More information can be found about this grant, and other SFPUC grants at sfwater.org/grants.

Q: Can an applicant apply and be awarded different SFPUC grants?

A: Yes, receiving a green infrastructure grant does not prohibit award of other SFPUC grants, listed here: sfwater.org/grants.

Q: If a person or organization have previously received a grant from the SFPUC, will that effect their eligibility?

A: No.

Best Management Practices (BMPs)

Q: Does stormwater management (capture) include detention or retention?

A: Yes, both qualify and facilities can be lined. You can temporarily capture stormwater and then release it back to the system, but the BMP must meet performance requirement.

Q: Our green infrastructure BMP does not fall under the available categories. How do we choose which category to apply in?

A: BMPs not listed in the grant guidebook are allowed on a case-by-case basis. Please contact the grant administrator to receive approval and directions for filling out the application.