

## **SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT (SMM) GRANT PROGRAM**

### **Expression of Interest - Questions and Answers**

**October 19, 2021**

**Q. When will applications be due?**

A: The Request for Applications (RFA) process is a two-step process. Phase 1 Expression of Interest (EOI) forms are due by October 29, 2021 11:59PM. If you are invited to move on to Phase 2, applicants will be given a deadline for submission of the application following the meetings with the technical assistance provider. We expect that all invited applicants will have a due date in the last quarter of 2021 or the first quarter of 2022.

**Q: How will I know if my Expression of Interest proposal moves on to Phase 2?**

A: DEEP will let all applicants know of their status by email on or before November 16th and coordinate a meeting with DEEP's technical assistance provider.

**Q: Is there an advantage to submitting an Expression of Interest early versus waiting until October 29?**

A: Yes, the sooner you get your Expression of Interest form submitted, the sooner the team can review and set up a meeting with our technical assistance provider.

**Q: When do I receive the grant award?**

A: If your application has been approved for funding, you will begin the contracting process with DEEP. In order to preserve the refundability of program costs you should not start your project before your contract is fully executed (signed by all parties).

**Q: Since the Expression of Interest is not due until October 29th, is it still possible to submit questions past the October 5<sup>th</sup> deadline?**

A: Yes, please continue to submit questions about the grant program to [DEEP.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.RecyclingProgram@ct.gov) and we will do our best to answer your questions in a timely manner. Please be sure to fully review the grant RFA document which contains the details on the RFA process.

**Q: If we submit a grant application for a single town and later find it more advantageous to partner with other towns, can we apply our grant funds towards a regional program?**

A: If multiple Expressions of Interest identify similar projects or are submitted by municipalities within the same regional Council of Government (COG) or Regional Waste Authority, DEEP will help coordinate. Once grant contracts have been awarded, it will not be possible to alter the plans without express written approval, which will delay the disbursement of funds and could result in funds no longer being available. We recommend that you reach out to towns in your region or COG to see if there is interest in joint programs and submit Expressions of Interest as soon as possible to be considered for Phase 2 of this process.

**Q: Will grant applications for food scrap collection be given the same consideration as those that look at both food scrap collection and Unit-Based Pricing (UBP)?**

A: The SMM Grant Program is seeking proposals that will deliver the highest impact on waste reduction and diversion. Expressions of Interest that focus on food scrap collection and UBP will be reviewed preferentially over those that focus on food scrap collection alone. Please submit an Expression of Interest so we can review your proposal and work with you to create a program with the highest impact.

**Q: Do you have examples of proposals that would be funded?**

A: DEEP is seeking innovative projects that initiate and scale up UBP and food waste collection programs. Examples of proposals that DEEP is seeking through this RFA include but are not limited to:

- Implementation of UBP or UBP + curbside food scraps program in a community with municipal or contract curbside collection, subscription collection, or residential drop-off at transfer station using variable priced bags or carts. Food scrap collection may be implemented co-collected with trash in separate bags or as a separate route alongside trash and recycling.
- Curbside food scrap collection program implementation with phase in of UBP program. UBP programs increase diversion of food scraps by creating incentive to residents to participate and create funding mechanism for covering costs of food scrap program.

**Q: How much funding is being offered to each municipality?**

A: The funding amounts will depend on scope of project (e.g., number of residents served, length of project, projected tons of materials diverted), number of applicants, proposed budget, and timeline. Each municipality or regional entity is expected to submit a proposed budget and DEEP will do its very best to fund highest-impact projects.

**Q: Is funding available to start a brand-new program or more so to enhance existing programs or partnerships?**

A: Funding is available for new programs or to expand programs within the scope of the SMM Grant.

**Q: Can folks receive funding as part of a COG and as an individual town?**

A: A municipality can potentially receive grant funding for multiple projects if the projects have different scopes.

**Q: Are there projects DEEP will not fund?**

A: Please review Section 2.2 Eligible Proposals of the RFA for specific guidance on the high impact projects that the SMM Grant Program is targeting. These funds are not available to bring a town into compliance with existing Connecticut statutes and regulations.

**Q: Where can I learn more about Pay-As-You-Throw (SMART) programs that use different types of collection systems?**

A: Our webpage on SMART/ Pay-As-You-Throw programs has detailed information on how these programs work in different communities with different types of collection systems. Visit the webpage for more details: [Save Money and Reduce Trash \(ct.gov\)](https://www.ct.gov/deep/cwpr/SMART/PAY-AS-YOU-THROW)

**Q: Can businesses or non-profit agencies that are interested in food waste reduction or collecting food waste access these grant funds?**

A: To be eligible for SMM Grant funding, applicant must be a Connecticut municipality, a group of Connecticut municipalities, or a Connecticut regional entity (council of governments, regional planning agencies, resource recovery authority, recycling operating committees, or other entity representing Connecticut municipalities). You can include businesses in your application as partners, but the grant funds will be awarded to the municipality or other eligible applicant as described above.

**Q: Would the purchase and installation of scales at transfer stations to weigh solid waste as a form of UBP be considered?**

A: We are interested in innovative and creative approaches to managing and reducing waste. Please submit this idea as part of your Expression of Interest Form and if you are invited to move to Phase 2, DEEP's technical assistance provider will help develop this idea further.

**Q: Would we be able to use grant funds to scale up or expand a school food waste collection or composting program?**

A: The SMM Grant Program is focused on large scale projects that result in significant reductions of waste. Grant Funds may be used for school food waste composting programs if it is part of a larger scale project within the municipality.

**Q: How does membership in CCSMM affect the review of an Expression of Interest (EOI) form?**

A: We encourage all municipalities to join CCSMM, which makes available information, resources, technical assistance, and networking for members. However, CCSMM participation will not influence the review of the Expression of Interest form.

**Q: Is there any requirement that the public be involved in the planning of proposed EOI projects?**

A: While it's important to plan educational and outreach messages in implementing any new program, there is not a grant requirement to involve the public in planning of the proposed project. If you are invited to move to Phase 2 of the grant process, the technical assistance provider will be able to help you further with planning.

**Q: Will UBP programs using variable-sized toters be given the same consideration as UBP bag programs?**

A: UBP with variable-sized toters will be considered for the SMM Grant Program. However, research shows that UBP bag programs have a larger impact on diversion from the waste stream and increased participation in recycling and reuse programs.

**Q: Are food waste prevention efforts covered under this grant program (e.g., source reduction tracking technology and educational materials)?**

A: Proposals that include food waste prevention efforts with high impact waste reduction and diversion projects will be considered.

**Q: At what stage would a cost estimate of each intended project be required?**

A: The Phase 2 application will request a detailed budget for the project. Please keep in mind that the technical assistance provider will be available to assist in refining your project proposal during Phase 2, including helping to develop a budget.

**Q: Can the grant funds be used for operating costs of the program such as site prep, electricity, machinery, and part time staff to run a pilot program?**

A: Costs fundamental to the program will be considered, incidental costs such as utility costs are the grantee's responsibility. Please also review Section 2.2 of the RFA for a list of eligible expenses and for more details.

**Q: Can the grant be used to cover transportation costs to commercial composting farm or other permitted food scrap processor and/or tipping fees for food scraps?**

A: Yes, please review Section 2.2 of the RFA for a list of eligible expenses and for more details. Please, keep in mind the SMM Grant Program is focused on high impact waste reduction and diversion projects.

**Q: Can the grant be used to purchase a municipal food scraps hauling truck?**

A: Yes, please review Section 2.2 of the RFA for a list of eligible expenses and for more details.

**Q: Are expenses related to on-site commercial composting (i.e., lease or purchase of unit(s) for businesses, installation expenses such as electrical or plumbing, staffing of composting operations, carts for collection of food scraps and storage of compost) allowed with this grant program?**

A: SMM Grant is intended for municipality and regionally managed waste diversion projects with potential for high impact. Please also review Section 2.2 of the RFA for a list of eligible expenses and for more details. All applicable DEEP authorization requirements must be met and can be addressed with the Technical Assistance provider during Phase 2.

**Q: Can the grant be used to purchase carts for collection of food scraps for participants?**

A: SMM Grant Program funds may be used for food scrap collection carts related to municipally and regionally managed waste diversion projects.

**Q: Can grant funds be used for educational outreach materials or collateral for food scrap recycling or prevention programs?**

A: Yes. Please also review Section 2.2 of the RFA for a list of eligible expenses and for more details.