

DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program Straw Proposal Feedback Public Meeting

Welcome! Please mute your mic and turn your camera off.

If you would like to sign up to speak, please send a direct message in the chat to Alanis Allen

Please note this meeting is being recorded



Rebecca French, Director
Sarah Watson
Office of Climate Planning

9. Connecticut Community Climate Resilience Program

Goal: develop a resilience project pipeline

- Directs DEEP to establish a Connecticut Community Climate Resilience program for resiliency planning and project development
- Uses funding from the microgrid and resilience grant program for plans and project development

GC3: 55a, 55b

Relevant Agencies: DEEP



9. Connecticut Community Climate Resilience Program

- At least 40% of funding resources targeted for municipalities where vulnerable populations reside
- Funding for nature-based (green infrastructure) solutions, gray infrastructure, and non-structural projects
- Projects shall be integrated into relevant plans to ensure eligibility for implementation through existing and new federal funding programs, in consultation with partners

GC3: 55a, 55b

Relevant Agencies: DEEP



Webinar Overview

- Welcome and introduction
- Ground rules and public comment logistics
- Overview of the DEEP Resilience Grant Program straw proposal
- Clarifying questions about the straw proposal
- Open comment period



Ground Rules

- Mute your mic and turn camera off until public comment portion.
- Put questions on the straw proposal presentation in the chat. We will respond either in the chat or at the end of the presentation.
- Note that the chat is public record. If you feel more comfortable submitting your comment there, please do so. Please make sure the message is sent to everyone as direct messages may not be saved.
- If you want to speak during the public comment period and have not yet signed up via email, please do so in the chat by sending a direct message to Alanis Allen
- If the meeting is disrupted, we will first attempt to remove the participant. If we have to stop the meeting, rejoin using the original Zoom link.



Public Comment Logistics

- You will be called in order you signed up, starting first with those who already emailed us
- If you have not signed up to speak, please send a direct message to Alanis Allen via chat
- Speakers will have 3 minutes. If you want to make another point or expand upon something you heard, you can sign up again via DM and we will add you to the list for another 3 minutes.
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Straw Proposal Reminders

- This is an outline of the program. We are seeking feedback today to help fully develop the program.
- Applications are **not** yet open. We will announce opening in the coming weeks after we incorporate your feedback.
- This program is **not** intended to fund construction costs or implementation costs. It is to plan and develop resilience projects, with support to assist communities with applying for federal resilience grants.



Will this program fund X activity?

We are getting questions about various activities the program may fund.

We want to hear from you what we should specifically make sure is an eligible activity.



Proposed Program Goals

- Support Connecticut communities in resilience planning and preparing for the impacts of climate change
- Foster the development of resilience project pipelines that can compete and win federal implementation funding
- Build resilience capacity in Connecticut



Permittable	Can get all necessary federal, state, and local permits
Equitable	Considers impacts to vulnerable populations
Realistic	Can be realistically engineered and is plausibly fundable
Safe	Reduces risks to people and infrastructure
Innovative	Process has considered innovative options
Scientific	Apply and improve on the best available science
Transferable	Can serve as a model for other communities
Sustainable	Socially, economically, and ecologically sustainable, <u>and</u> supported by the public and leadership



Note: Activities that fit under Track 1 and Track 2 are eligible for funding under this proposal. Expenses related to implementation and construction are not eligible activities under this program.

Track 1: Proposed Funded Activities

- **Climate resilience planning that addresses the impacts of climate-related hazards, including climate change**
 - Regional, Municipal, or neighborhood (hyper-local) scale
- **Enhanced community engagement to support climate resilience planning**
- **Grantees eligible for additional funds for federal grant writing**



DEEP Questions for Track 1: Planning

- DEEP expects to fund individual planning applications at the **minimum** level of \$50,000, with additional funds available for enhanced community engagement. **DEEP requests feedback on maximum funding levels** for plans under this program that can be at the regional, municipal, or neighborhood level (“hyper-local”) scale.
- **DEEP requests feedback on a potential match requirement** for the planning funds of at least 25% that can be met with contributions that may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the plan objectives and outcomes for applicants, except for distressed communities where at least a 10% match would be required. State funds cannot be used for match requirements. Federal funds may be used.



Track 1: Proposed Review Criteria

- Overall potential impact of the plan to improve community climate resilience
- Clearly identifies the plan as regional, municipal or neighborhood level (“hyper-local”) scale
- Degree to which assessment and planning process is collaborative and stakeholder-driven
- Demonstrated plan to have participation from multiple related local government departments
- Demonstrated collaboration and partnership between local government and relevant community organizations for plan development



Track 1: Proposed Review Criteria

- Strength and depth of stakeholder and community involvement and engagement, with at least one public workshop
- Demonstrated understanding and inclusion of current and future climate conditions out to 2050 due to climate change and sea level rise for planning and assessment
- Vulnerability assessment centered on impacts from climate change and resulting community impacts, including to identified critical facilities and community lifelines
- Vulnerability assessment examines social vulnerability, including data documentation to support federal grant applications



Track 1: Proposed Review Criteria

- Planning serves or benefits environmental justice or vulnerable communities
- For neighborhood-level planning: demonstrated collaboration and partnership with community organizations and local governments
- Inclusion of prioritized list of next steps that:
 - Strongly ties in CIRCA's PERSISTS framework for project identification
 - Identifies federal resilience grant competitions they will target for funding future implementation steps
 - Includes federal resilience grant project narratives for selected next steps
 - Includes a locally derived match funding strategy for highest priority next steps



Track 1: Proposed Review Criteria

- Plan should have co-benefits (i.e. addresses multiple issues, creates an amenity to the community, reduces GHG emissions, comprehensive approach to risk reduction)
- Proposal is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline
- Proposal costs are allowable and reasonable
- For those applicants who have previously received funding through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, past performance will be a factor considered in the approval process



DEEP Questions for Track 1: Planning

Proposed Review Criteria

- Are there additional review criteria that DEEP should consider?
- Are there criteria that should not enter into DEEP's consideration?
- Are there specific types of planning activities that DEEP should consider for eligibility?
- DEEP intends to develop a resource document with examples of types of community resilience planning to assist applicants. What should be included? Send to DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov



Track 2: Proposed Funded Activities

- Site studies and selection
- Preliminary designs
- Engineering and hydrological studies and analyses to support climate resilience project development
- Benefit cost analyses
- Final designs
- Community engagement to support all activities
- Additional activities that lead to the development of a competitive application to federal resilience competitions.
- **Grantees eligible for additional funds for federal grant writing**



DEEP Questions for Track 2: Project Development

- DEEP expects to fund project development applications at the **minimum** level of \$50,000, with additional funds available for enhanced community engagement. **DEEP requests feedback on maximum funding levels** for project development under this program.
- **DEEP requests feedback on a potential match requirement** for the project development funds limited to at least 25% that can be met with contributions that may include cash, in-kind contributions of staff and volunteer time, work performed, materials and services donated, or other tangible contributions to the plan objectives and outcomes for applicants, except for distressed communities where at least a 10% match would be required. State funds cannot be used for match requirements. Federal funds may be used.



Track 2: Proposed Review Criteria

- Overall potential impact of the proposal to improve community climate resilience
- Application identifies and aligns with federal resilience grant programs that the applicant intends to pursue to fund implementation
- Project to be incorporated into a draft grant project narrative and application supporting materials for identified funding sources will be prepared
- Strength of locally derived match funding strategy for implementation
- Project is identified in previous climate resilience planning activities



Track 2: Proposed Review Criteria

- Project incorporates the impacts of climate change into design
- Project connects with CIRCA's PERSISTS framework
- Project serves or benefits environmental justice or vulnerable communities
- Strength and depth of community involvement and engagement
- Project should include elements of nature-based solutions



Track 2: Proposed Review Criteria

- Project should have co-benefits (i.e. addresses multiple issues, creates an amenity to the community, reduces GHG emissions, comprehensive approach to risk reduction)
- Project is technically sound and feasible, and the proposal sets forth a clear, logical, and achievable work plan and timeline
- Project costs are allowable and reasonable
- For those applicants who have previously received funding through the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection, past performance will be a factor considered in the approval process



DEEP Questions for Track 2: Project Development

Proposed Review Criteria

- Are there additional review criteria that DEEP should consider?
- Are there criteria that should not enter into DEEP's consideration?
- What kind of resilience projects and project development activities should be included under this track?
- DEEP intends to develop a resource document with examples of resilience projects to assist applicants. What should be included? Send to DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov



Applicant eligibility

Government
Community Organizations/Non-Profits/NGOs
Academic Institutions
Private sector

Prioritize partnerships as much as possible

For example: If primary applicant is not a municipality, letters of support from local governments must make staff time commitments for specific tasks in planning processes



Vulnerable Populations Priority Eligibility

Pursuant to EO 21-3, “Funding for this program should be allocated to ensure that at least 40% of resources for municipalities are targeted to municipalities where vulnerable populations, as defined in CGS Sec. 16-243y, reside and where plans are developed specifically to address the needs of identified vulnerable populations.”



Vulnerable Populations Priority Eligibility

Pursuant to CGS Sec. 16-243y, “vulnerable communities” means populations that may be disproportionately impacted by the effects of climate change, including, but not limited to:

- Low and moderate income communities,
- Environmental justice communities pursuant to section 22a-20a,
- Communities eligible for community reinvestment pursuant to section 36a-30 and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, 12 USC 2901 et seq., as amended from time to time,
- Populations with increased risk and limited means to adapt to the effects of climate change,
- Or as further defined by the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection in consultation with community representatives.



Vulnerable Populations Priority Eligibility

- For environmental justice communities, DEEP proposes to use the map of environmental justice communities on the DEEP website. Projects that fall within any communities or census block groups in that map will be considered targeting a vulnerable population.
- Applicants that are communities eligible for community reinvestment pursuant to section 36a-30 and the Community Reinvestment Act of 1977, 12 USC 2901 et seq. will be considered targeting a vulnerable population.



Vulnerable Populations Priority Eligibility

- Additional definitions and indices may be included to identify vulnerable populations that are low and moderate income and/or that have increased risk and limited means to adapt to the effects of climate change based on feedback on this straw proposal, including responses to questions posed by DEEP in the Notice of this straw proposal.



DEEP Questions on Vulnerable Populations

- What tools and criteria should DEEP use to define low- and moderate-income communities?
- Should DEEP use the Income Limit Area Definitions Connecticut Metropolitan & Non-Metropolitan Areas as defined by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development?
- How should DEEP/applicants evaluate the location of populations with increased risk and limited means to adapt to the effects of climate change for the purposes of this program?



DEEP Questions on Vulnerable Populations

- Should DEEP advise applicants to use the CDC social vulnerability index?
- What other tools are available to assist DEEP and applicants?
- Should DEEP recommend consultation with directors of public health or other government entities?
- For applications that meet the criteria pursuant to CGS Sec. 16-243y, what criteria should DEEP use to determine whether proposed projects or plan specifically address the needs of identified vulnerable populations?



DEEP Questions on Vulnerable Populations

- How should DEEP evaluate whether a plan or project addresses vulnerable populations identified by the GC3 Equity & Environmental Justice Working Group including:
 - Communities of color
 - Low-income communities
 - People with disabilities
 - Pregnant people
 - Other historically disadvantaged people
 - Populations impacted by the social determinants of health
 - Populations identified by the American Public Health Association



Project Duration

Track 1: Planning:

12-18 months depending on project scope, complexity, and community engagement plan.

Track 2: Project Development:

Up to 12 months for design and engineering studies



DEEP Questions on Project Duration

- Given the balance between sufficient time to complete plans and project development activities, and the grant application timelines for federal programs funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (IIJA), which will run through 2026, are these project duration limits reasonable?



Required Meetings and Technical Assistance

- DEEP will support all grantees with technical assistance to ensure they are able to effectively apply the best available science and can maximize climate resilience resources
- The grant review panel will determine TA meetings based on the submitted application.
- Final report should include an executive summary of how the team accomplished project goals, include a copy of funded activity.
- Report must also include a locally derived match funding strategy and draft grant application components for next steps



Questions on Required Meetings & Deliverables

- DEEP requests feedback on the requirement for project teams to attend technical assistance meetings.
- A primary goal of this program is to help communities prepare competitive grant applications. As such, DEEP is considering requiring specific deliverables to support application development. Please comment on the reasonability, effectiveness, and anything else related to these proposed requirements.



Questions about the Straw Proposal?

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Thank you for attending!!

Reminder for providing additional feedback

DEEP is accepting written comments until 4pm, Monday, May 16.

Please email comments to DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov



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