

**April 25, 2022**  
**DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program**

**NOTICE OF ISSUANCE OF STRAW PROPOSAL and PUBLIC MEETING**

DEEP requests oral and/or written public comments on the elements of the [DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program Straw Proposal](#), including the questions in this Notice, to ensure the program meets the charge in Executive Order 21-3 (“EO21-3”). In Section 9 of EO21-3, DEEP was charged with developing a program, pursuant to CGS Sec. 16-243y and authorized bond funds under Public Act 21-111, to provide funds for climate adaptation and resilience planning and project development with the following conditions:

- The program must ensure that at least 40% of funding resources are targeted to where vulnerable populations reside and that those plans address the needs of those populations.
- Funding should be available for the design of nature-based solutions, including green infrastructure; flood prevention, climate resilience and erosion control systems; gray infrastructure; and non-structural project solutions.
- Projects funded under this program should be integrated in plans that ensure their eligibility for federal funding through existing and new resilience programs, in consultation with resilience partners and/or programs.

*A primary outcome of the DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program is to help Connecticut communities develop a climate resilience project pipeline that can win competitive federal grant funding to substantially fund implementation and construction.*

**Who should participate?** DEEP wants to hear from anyone interested in conducting or participating in climate resilience planning and project development in their community, particularly potential applicants and partners under the grant program, including municipal government, councils of governments, state agencies, community organizations, nonprofit, academic, and private entities.

**How to participate?** DEEP is hosting a virtual meeting to deliver a presentation and receive comments on the straw proposal on Monday May 9, 2022 at 1:00 pm Eastern via Zoom. Participants can choose to attend the meeting and share their feedback by registering at the link below or they can send in written comments. Written comments may be submitted directly to DEEP at [DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov) on or before May 16, 2022, by 4:00 p.m. Please include “DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program” in the email subject line. All materials submitted by stakeholders in this proceeding will be posted on the DEEP website. Any questions may be directed to [DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov](mailto:DEEP.ClimateChange@ct.gov).

**Public Meeting: Monday May 9, 2022, 1:00 pm Eastern**

**Register Here:** [https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqc-ytqTwvEtdyexCUFp18N4\\_eC8Kk3M2Q](https://ctdeep.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEqc-ytqTwvEtdyexCUFp18N4_eC8Kk3M2Q)

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity Employer that is committed to complying with the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act. Please contact us at (860) 418-5910 or [deep.accommodations@ct.gov](mailto:deep.accommodations@ct.gov) if you are seeking a communication aid or service, have limited proficiency in English and may need information in another language, require some other accommodation or wish to file an ADA or Title VI discrimination

complaint. Any person needing a hearing accommodation may call the State of Connecticut relay number — 711. Requests for accommodations must be made at least two weeks prior to any agency hearing, program, or event.

## **QUESTIONS FOR FEEDBACK ON THE DEEP CLIMATE RESILIENCE GRANT PROGRAM STRAW PROPOSAL**

**DEEP seeks input on the following topics or questions, which refer to the [DEEP Climate Resilience Grant Program Straw Proposal](#) issued together with this notice.**

### **Questions on 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.

### **Questions on 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.

### **Questions on 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.

### **Questions on 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.

## Questions on Vulnerable Populations Priority Eligibility

- 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 funding program? Should DEEP advise applicants to use the [CDC social vulnerability index](#)? Should DEEP use the UConn CIRCA [Climate Change Vulnerability Index \(CCVI\)](#) for areas of the state where it is available (Fairfield and New Haven counties)? 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 plans specifically address the needs of identified vulnerable populations?
  - How should DEEP evaluate whether a plan or project addresses vulnerable populations identified by the GC3 Equity & Environmental Justice Working Group<sup>1</sup> including:
    - Communities of color, including Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color (“BIPOC”), low-income communities, people with disabilities, pregnant women, and other historically disadvantaged people that may be at greater risk and have limited capacity in their communities to adapt to climate change due to disparities in health outcomes, inequities in living conditions, and lack of political power
    - Populations impacted by the social determinants of health, which are conditions in which people are born, grow, live, work, and age, as well as the interrelated social and economic structures and systems, that shape conditions. The social determinants of health include demographic factors, such socioeconomic status, racial discrimination, disability, and education levels, aspects of the physical environment, such as proximity to environmental hazards, and health status, for example.
    - Populations identified by the American Public Health Association:<sup>2</sup> children, older adults, communities of color, and low-income communities, and describing other vulnerable communities as including pregnant women, immigrant groups with limited English proficiency, indigenous peoples, people with disabilities, vulnerable occupational groups, and people with pre-existing or chronic medical conditions

## 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?

## Questions on Required Meetings and 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.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-working-group-reports/GC3\\_Equity\\_EJ\\_Final\\_Report\\_111320.pdf](https://portal.ct.gov/-/media/DEEP/climatechange/GC3/GC3-working-group-reports/GC3_Equity_EJ_Final_Report_111320.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.apha.org/topics-and-issues/climate-change/vulnerable-populations>