

CT DEEP Climate Resilience Funding Request for Information Public Meeting

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

If you would like to sign up to provide public comment, please send a direct message in the chat to Graham Stevens.

This meeting is being recorded and the chat is public record.



The background is a collage of three images: a scenic lake with picnic tables and trees in autumn colors on the left; a wind turbine against a sunset sky in the top center; and a black bear in a forest on the right.

CT DEEP Climate Resilience Funding Request for Information Public Meeting

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CT Dept. of Energy and Environmental Protection

October 24, 2024

Webinar Agenda

- **Welcome and Introduction**
- **Ground rules and Public Comment Logistics**
- **Overview of the DEEP Climate Resilience RFI**
- **Open comment period**



Ground Rules

Please keep your mic muted and camera off unless you are called on to speak.

Put clarifying questions on the RFI presentation in the chat. We will respond either in the chat or at the end of the presentation.

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 the meeting is disrupted, we will first attempt to remove the participant. If we have to stop the meeting, please rejoin using your 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 Graham Stevens 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.

Note that the chat is public record. If you feel more comfortable submitting your comment there, please do so. Please make sure your comment is public as direct messages may not be recorded.

DEEP is also accepting written comments emailed to deep.climate resilience@ct.gov (see RFI for directions).



CT DEEP Resilience

Office of Climate Planning in the Office of the Commissioner

- Leads climate planning and policy for emissions reduction and adaptation and resilience across DEEP

New Office in the Water Protection & Land Reuse Bureau

- Focus is on resilience implementation and project planning
- New home of the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund
- Coordinates across DEEP to implement Climate Resilience Fund projects

Office of Energy Supply & Infrastructure in the Energy & Technology Bureau

- Focus is on affordable, clean, and resilient energy policy
- Home of the Microgrid Grant Program (Climate Resilience Fund predecessor)



What Does Climate Resilience Mean?

“(T)he ability to prepare for and adapt to changing conditions and withstand and recover rapidly from deliberate attacks, accidents or naturally occurring threats or incidents, including, but not limited to, threats or incidents associated with the impacts of climate change.”

- What do impacts from hazards mean to people, property, livelihoods, health, and community services/lifelines?
- How can we reduce disruption, damage, and/or other impacts?



What Does Climate Resilience Mean?

Hazards include:

- Extreme precipitation
- Flooding from riverine, stormwater, flash flooding, tidal sources, or a combination
- Sea level rise (including groundwater impacts)
- Extreme temperatures (heat and cold)
- Extreme weather (winter storms, nor'easters, severe thunderstorms, tornadoes)
- Tropical storm and hurricane impacts
- Windstorms
- Wildfire
- Drought

How do these hazards change due to climate change through at least 50 years?

What does changing risk mean to people, property, livelihoods, health, and community services/lifelines?



What Does Energy Resilience Mean?

Energy resilience is the ability to prevent, withstand, and recover from electric power outages and/or continue to operate during electric power outages

- How can we reduce the impacts to communities of power outages?
- What support do communities need to improve energy resilience (e.g. planning, technical assistance, funding for construction)?



Prioritizing Vulnerable Communities

From EO 21-3: The DCRF requires that **at least 40% of resources** go to municipalities where vulnerable communities, as defined by C.G.S. § 16-243y, reside.

- **First round of DCRF awards, 93% of overall amount awarded, or \$8.2 million, went to vulnerable communities.** This is more than double the target set in EO 21-3.
- **In all funding categories**, DEEP proposes that **at least 40%** of funding goes to vulnerable communities, including Environmental Justice and Economically Distressed.
- Some proposed funding categories specify that environmental justice communities are the sole eligible recipients.
- Some proposed federal funding streams will require different federal definitions.



CT DEEP Resilience Request for Information

- **Guiding Principles**
- **DCRF Funding Categories**
 - **Planning**
 - **Advancement** (Previously Project Development)
 - **Deployment** (New)
- **Climate Resiliency Revolving Loan Fund**



Resilience Guiding Principles

DEEP proposes to center its strategy for supporting community climate resilience on five principles:

1. Support for Planning and Community Engagement
2. Comprehensive, Complementary Approaches that May Incorporate Nature-Based Solutions
3. Maximizing Federal Funding
4. Establishing Predictable, Equitable State and Local Match Support
5. Leveraging Multiple State and Federal Funding Resources



Proposed DEEP Climate Resilience Fund Structure

Planning

Advancement

*Formerly Project
Development

Deployment

Matching Funds

Microgrid & Energy

**LI Sound Study
& Coastal Zone Mgmt**



Planning

Funding for comprehensive community-level climate resilience planning for regions, municipalities and neighborhoods to identify risks and vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards and developing a plan to address those issues.

- **Proposed Eligible Applicants:** municipal governments, regional council of governments, neighborhood organizations and non-profits, academic institutions, state and federally recognized tribes.
- **Proposed Funding Range:** \$100,000 to \$250,000.
- **Proposed Period of Performance:** Up to 24 months/2 years
- **Proposed Match:** No financial match, but DEEP is considering whether to require at least 100 hours of staff time as match for municipal government staff.



Planning

Select Request for Information Questions:

- Should funding under this category only be available to communities that have not previously conducted climate resilience planning?
- Should DEEP encourage or require the inclusion of assessing vulnerability to power outages and energy resilience in the final plan?
- Should DEEP provide planning grants on a non-competitive basis for communities impacted by extreme weather events to aid in recovery and rebuilding with resilience?



Advancement

Funding to advance previously identified climate and energy resilience projects to accelerate grantees into developing competitive grant applications for resilience programs.

- **Proposed Eligible Applicants:** entities that have the capacity to implement or support implementation of climate and energy resilience projects
- **Proposed Funding Ranges:** \$200,000 to \$650,000
- **Proposed Period of Performance:** Up to 18 months upon contract execution.
- **Proposed Match:** No financial match.



Advancement

Supported activities include:

- Studies and designs for climate resilience projects to address flooding or extreme heat
- **Ecological resilience projects such as coastal habitat restoration and living shorelines**
- Stormwater authority feasibility studies
- **Grid resilience feasibility studies**

Examples of Eligible Climate or Energy Resilience Project Advancement Activities:

- Project scoping
- Preliminary solutions identification including site studies, prioritization, alternatives analyses
- Preliminary designs
- Engineering studies and analyses
- Feasibility analyses for energy resilience and stormwater authorities
- Benefit-cost analysis
- Federal and state grant application writing
- Community engagement to support all activities



Advancement

- DEEP may release one or more requests for applications in the Advancement category, **including energy resiliency feasibility studies for critical facilities located in environmental justice communities.**
- DEEP may offer funding for applications using sources other than the DCRF bond funds, including federal sources, other state sources, and/or recommending low-interest loans through the Connecticut Green Bank.
- Projects selected under the Advancement category may need to meet additional requirements of the applicable funding source.



Advancement

Select Request for Information Questions:

- Should DEEP limit eligibility for microgrid feasibility studies solely to municipal critical facilities in Connecticut environmental justice communities?
- DEEP proposes a new funding cap for this category. Should DEEP provide additional funding amounts beyond the proposed cap specifically for stormwater authority feasibility studies and/or nature-based solutions?



Deployment

New in 2024, this category includes multiple state and federal funding pools to support construction and implementation of climate and energy resilience activities.

- Separate RFPs and calls for applications will be released under each subcategory.
- DEEP may offer funding for applications using sources other than the DCRF state bond funds, including federal sources, other state funding sources, and/or recommending low-interest loans through the Connecticut Green Bank.
- Projects selected under Deployment funding may need to meet additional requirements of the applicable funding source.
- Funding levels and match requirements may also be determined by the applicable funding source.



Deployment – Matching Funds

Overview: Provides a portion of the non-federal cost-share required by resilience grant programs. Federal grant applications **MUST** be for construction or implementation. DEEP's long-term vision is to create a priority list similar to that created for the Clean Water Fund.

Proposed Funding Range: The base percentage 25% of the non-federal cost-share portion, which varies depending on grant program.

Additional amounts can be awarded to projects based on the following:

- Up to an additional 25% of the non-federal cost-share portion for projects that serve and/or benefit Connecticut's environmental justice communities
- Up to an additional 15% for projects that incorporate nature-based solutions
- The maximum percentage provided, **up to \$5 million**, is 75% of the non-federal cost share portion.



Deployment – Matching Funds

Additional Details:

- DEEP provides **non-transferable** letter of commitment
- Awardees must notify DEEP whether grant application is successful.
- **Following applications will be prioritized:**
 - Projects developed through the Resilient Connecticut process
 - Projects in environmental justice communities as defined by CEJST tool; in Community Disaster Resilience Zones (CDRZs); or projects serving/benefitting vulnerable communities, as defined by in C.G.S. § 16-243y



Deployment – Matching Funds

Select RFI Questions:

- Should DEEP award the overall amount based on percentages for specific criteria, such as:
 - Project is located in an environmental justice community
 - Project includes nature-based solutions, and/or
 - Project is in a community with a stormwater authority
- Should DEEP allow a commitment letter to be transferable to subsequent applications if an applicant is unsuccessful in the first federal grant application?



Deployment – Microgrid & Energy Resilience

Overview: This category provides state and/or federal formula funding for microgrids and energy resilience construction grants to help critical facilities avoid outages or provide clean backup electric supply during electric grid outages. This category may also provide non-federal cost-share for federal DOE energy resilience grants.

Eligible Applicants: Any local or regional governmental entity, municipal corporation, regional council of governments, public authority, state and federally recognized tribe, electric distribution company, participating municipal electric utility, energy improvement district and nonprofit, academic and private entity.

Proposed Funding Range:

Up to \$4,000,000 per state grant, subject to change when the final program design is complete



Deployment – Microgrid & Energy Resilience

Select Key Proposed Review Criteria Details:

- Applicant demonstrates that it is working with **Eversource or UI or a municipal electric utility** to ensure the project can safely connect and disconnect from the grid and not negatively impact other customers, or impede restoration during or after an outage
- Project can operate **independent of the grid 24/7 for an extended period**
- Project demonstrates **community benefits while disconnected from the grid**

Select Key Proposed Review Criteria for Additional Subawards from Grid Resilience Formula Funding:

- Identification of the program metrics that are met by the proposed project
- Project demonstrates ability to achieve each of the program's policy goals
- Project provides Community Benefit(s)
- Project provides direct benefits to an environmental justice community



Deployment – Microgrid & Energy Resilience

Select RFI Questions:

- What microgrid configurations for construction grants should be considered?
- What grant funding structure would be optimal for securing financing for the matching funds for the balance of microgrid or other energy resilience construction costs?
- Is there anything else DEEP should consider for this funding subcategory?



Deployment – LISS/CZM

Overview: Uses federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) funds to support the implementation of (1) coastal habitat restoration, (2) coastal land acquisition, and (3) green stormwater infrastructure.

Funding goal is to increase ecological resilience through landscape-scale habitat restoration, restoration planning, and land conservation in coastal ecosystems, **AND** promote coastal resilience in underserved coastal communities and communities most vulnerable to climate impacts.

Proposed Funding Range:

- Coastal Habitat Restoration Implementation: \$200,000 to \$1,000,000
- Coastal Land Acquisition: \$300,000 to \$1,000,000 (up to 85% of the appraised value)
- Green Stormwater Infrastructure Construction: \$300,000 to \$1,000,000

No additional match requirements



Deployment – LISS/CZM

Projects under this section must fall into one of three categories:

1. Habitat Restoration – Implementation/Construction Projects

- Project examples include reducing barriers (e.g., under-sized culverts and dams) to fish passage, restoration of coastal marshes, living shorelines, etc.

2. Land Acquisition (Fee Simple or Conservation Easement)

- All projects must be accessible to the public for passive recreational purposes
- Projects that provide direct access to Long Island Sound and have marsh migration potential and/or restoration value will be prioritized

3. Construction of Green Stormwater Infrastructure

- Projects must focus on any of the following: reducing stormwater runoff, reducing flooding, replenishing groundwater through infiltration, reducing urban heat island effects, enhance riparian buffers

Project examples include green roofs, rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavements, etc.



Deployment – LISS/CZM

Select proposed program requirements

- All projects must accelerate one or more goals of the Long Island Sound Study Comprehensive Conservation Management Plan (LISS CCMP)
- **All projects must provide demonstrated benefit to an environmental justice community defined in C.G.S. § 22a-20a. Depending on federal funding requirements, this may change to federal definitions**
- **Land acquisition projects must be located within an environmental justice community defined in C.G.S. § 22a-20a. Depending on federal funding requirements, this may change to federal definitions**
- All projects must build adaptive capacity of ecosystems and communities as defined by EPA



Climate Resiliency Revolving Loan Fund

Public Act 24-151 § 58-59 awarded \$10 million in state bond funds to DEEP to establish a Climate Resiliency Revolving Loan Fund. The statute further states that:

- This revolving loan fund may be granted to “municipalities and private entities for infrastructure repairs and resiliency projects in response to unplanned climate events.”
- “Such repairs and projects may not include rehousing or temporary assistance costs.”
- DEEP shall develop eligibility criteria and application forms for selecting applicants.



Climate Resiliency Revolving Loan Fund

- Who should the eligible applicants and entities be? What sorts of projects should be eligible projects? What sorts of projects should NOT be eligible?
- Should this revolving loan fund only open for applications immediately following an extreme weather event?
- Should it be an additional funding source for projects submitted under Deployment in the DEEP Climate Resilience Fund?
- What is the level of interest in securing revolving loan funds for implementing climate resilience?



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Public Comments

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