

OFFICE OF BROWNFIELD REMEDIATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OBRD)
MUNICIPAL GRANT PROGRAM – ROUND 19AO
ASSESSMENT-ONLY GRANTS
FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS
January 5, 2024 (*Addendum Dated February 2, 2024)

*** Update to Question 2**

- 1. What is the maximum and minimum amount that an eligible entity can apply for this round of the Municipal Grant Program?**
 - The maximum and minimum amount that any entity can apply for any project is \$200,000 and \$100,000, respectively. However, Councils of Governments (COG) and Brownfield Land Banks (BLB) can apply for multiple projects under a particular application submission, for a total of up to \$500,000. The projects can be within one municipality or span multiple municipalities.

- 2. Can an entity submit multiple applications?**
 - Yes, all applicants are welcome to submit multiple projects under separate applications. Municipalities can also submit for multiple unrelated sites under one application as long as the total request for the project is within the specified thresholds (minimum of \$100K and maximum of \$200K). The applicant should however be able to demonstrate that it has the capacity to handle and complete the work in a timely manner.
 - Also, request for separate [SharePoint folders for each distinct project application under any of our programs.](#)

- 3. The Application Form has limited space to provide the required information for all projects and sites for an application proposal from a COG or BLB? How should we handle this limitation?**
 - COGs and BLBs can utilize the Application Summary Cover Sheet to describe the individual requests and feel free to submit multiple Application Forms for each of the sub-projects proposed in its Application.

- 4. Why is DECD/OBRD providing COGs and BLBs the option to apply for up to \$500K?**
 - This option will help out smaller municipalities that may not have the capacity to apply to the program.
 - It will help DECD maintain a single contract (Assistance Agreement) with one entity for multiple projects with similar scope rather than multiple contracts with smaller amounts.

- 5. Will the application from a COG or BLB be scored on the collective merit of all the sub-projects that are proposed?**

- No, each of the sub-projects will be scored separately so that each of the proposed projects will stand on its own merit.

6. In preparation for this round, I already filled out the application forms that were available on the Website from a previous round. Can I submit an application based on a previous application form?

- OBRD updates its application forms from time to time. Please make sure that you use the latest Application Form for each announcement. Applications submitted using outdated application forms will not be accepted.

7. What does the Part A: Threshold Eligibility Section of the Application Form cover?

The following threshold items are covered under Part A of the Application Form. An Applicant or Application may be denied funding after review of Part A of the Application Form.-

- Proof that the site is a brownfield as per [C.G. S. Sec. 32-760](#)
- Proof that the Applicant and potential development partners have no direct or related liability for the conditions of the brownfield.
- Proof that Applicant has access or will have access to the property, site control or path to site control

8. Where do I access the forms and how can I submit my application?

- Applicants are required to fill out the Grant Round 18AO Application available on the [Grant Program Webpage](#). The Application has two separate sections – Part A: Threshold Eligibility Section and Part B: Project Details. Applications may be denied funding after review of Part A of the Application Form.

COGs/BLBs: If applying for multiple projects please complete and submit the COG/Land Bank cover sheet. Please make sure to submit a separate application form for each proposed project.

To submit: All application submittals (along with attachments) shall either be:

- Uploaded to a DECD SharePoint folder [**PREFERRED METHOD**]
 - a. Applicants must request a SharePoint link by emailing brownfields@ct.gov
 - b. Include Applicant & Project Name and Program Code (18AO) in subject line.
 - c. Please make folder request by **noon on February 28, 2024**;

OR

- Emailed to brownfields@ct.gov
 - a. Include Applicant & Project Name and Program Code (18AO) in subject line

9. Who are the eligible entities who can apply for the program?

- A Municipality as defined by [C.G.S Section 32-760 \(12\)](#); Economic Development Agency, as defined by [C.G.S Section 32-760 \(6\)](#); and Connecticut Brownfield Land Banks, as defined by [C.G.S Section 32-760 \(22\)](#). Entities responsible for the contamination are ineligible. Economic Development Agencies should provide articles of incorporation to prove eligibility. All applicants must provide proof of access to the site, site control or path to site control.

10. Are councils of government eligible entities to apply for the Municipal Grant Program?

- Yes, regional councils of government are eligible entities that can apply for the Municipal Grant Program. C.G.S. Section 32-763 lists economic development agencies as eligible entities to apply for the Municipal Grant Program. The definition of economic development agencies in C.G.S. Sec 32-760 (6) includes “ ... (D) an agency, as defined in section 32-327. C.G.S Sec. 32-327 defines “Agency” as “... any regional council of governments organized under sections 4-124i to 4-124p, inclusive, ...”

11. Can a municipality (or other eligible-entity) apply for an assessment grant under the program for a privately-owned property?

- A municipality can apply for an assessment grant for a privately-owned brownfield property as long as the owner enters into an access agreement with the municipality to perform the assessment or remediation work. At a minimum, a letter of intent from the private property owner that an access agreement will be entered into with the applicant once the grant award is made, should be included as part of the application. All reports and data produced with the grant funds would be state and municipal property.

12. Are Town-owned brownfields eligible for the program or is it only limited to privately-owned properties?

- Town-owned brownfield properties as well as privately-owned properties are eligible for the Municipal Grant Program. See above Question/Response with regards to privately-owned properties.

13. One of the private partners and the owner of the property is the Certifying Party as per the Transfer Act. Will the application be automatically denied at the pre-application stage?

- C.G.S. Sec. 32-763 requires the DECD Commissioner to consider several criteria while reviewing applications and making funding decisions including the relationship of the applicant to the person or entity that caused the contamination. Involvement of the Certifying Party in the application to the DECD will not be an automatic disqualifier if there is proof that the Certifying Party is not actually the person or

entity that caused the contamination but rather assumed the responsibility for the contamination via the requirements of the Transfer Act. The burden of proof, however, lies on the Applicant to provide to the DECD that the entity has not caused the contamination or has not willfully continued with operations that caused additional contamination after taking up ownership of the property. The DECD Commissioner reserves the right to approve or deny an application on a case-by-case basis.

14. What criteria will DECD be using to score and award funds?

- Please see the NOFA for details on the criteria that DECD will be using to score and award the funds. But more generally, some of the criteria that will be considered are: clarity on assessment needs, economic and community development impact, locational benefits and merits, level of non-DECD support and applicant experience. The Application Form, we believe, is mostly straightforward and self-explanatory. The key to a good application is providing clear responses to the questions asked or providing the information/documents that have been requested.

15. What are the criteria that need to be satisfied to be termed as a Brownfield, so the project is eligible to be funded under the Program?

- C.G.S. Sec 32-760 defines Brownfield as “any abandoned or underutilized site where redevelopment, reuse or expansion has not occurred due to the presence or potential presence of pollution in the buildings, soil or groundwater that requires investigation or remediation before or in conjunction with the redevelopment, reuse or expansion of the property.” DECD will be making sure that the proposed project meets the statutory definition of a brownfield. Projects proposed on sites that do not meet the statutory definition of a brownfield will not be considered for funding. Some aspects that DECD will consider in determining whether a site meets the statutory definition of a brownfield include, but are not limited to whether the property is abandoned or underutilized and whether the presence or potential presence of pollution is the primary obstacle preventing the site from being redeveloped, reused or expanded, given the condition of the site. Entities responsible for the contamination on a site are ineligible to apply for a brownfield project on that site.

16. If I am successful in receiving the grant, when is the project start date? When can I start the work and will I be reimbursed for work immediately?

- The project start date will be the date of the award letter from DECD. All eligible expenses from that day are reimbursable as long as consultancy services are contracted for in accordance with DECD and state guidelines and approved by the assigned DECD Project Manager. No expenses can be reimbursed until a DECD Assistance Agreement (Contract) is put in place.

17. A consultant is helping me with the application for this grant. Can the consultant get reimbursed from this grant?

- No, consultant services hired by an Applicant prior to the grant award are not eligible for reimbursement from the grant. Also, preparation of an application to DECD is not an eligible expense.

18. Do you anticipate that there will be another round in the near future?

- As per the new statutory requirements, OBRD is required to conduct two competitive grant rounds. OBRD is targeting to announce another grant round (Round 19) in Feb/March 2024 provided funding is included in the Governor's Budget for Fiscal Years 24-25 and there is available legislative and State Bonding Commission authorizations.

19. Is a Phase I mandatory for the submission?

- No, a Phase I is not mandatory for the Assessment-only grant application but a submission that includes a Phase I ESA will be more likely to score better.

20. Can a portion of the Assessment-only funds be used for planning activities to ready the project parcel for development?

- A small portion of the assessment funds, not to exceed 25% of the DECD request may be used for planning activities (conceptual plan drawings, market demand studies etc.) for a proposed brownfield project. The request will have to be justified as being instrumental in furthering the redevelopment options and picking the best plan for the brownfield site.

21. The space provided in the application forms is limited. Please can I provide an attachment with additional information to respond to the questions?

- DECD encourages all applicants to be as succinct as possible with their responses to the questions in the application forms. DECD will only accept responses to the questions included in the space provided within the forms. Material presented outside of the forms may not be reviewed. Incomplete applications will be rejected. The response fields have been restricted to include a limited number of characters. If your response text does not appear within the visible response box, then a portion of your response may be cut off when the form is signed. Please adjust your answers so that all text is visible once the document is signed.

22. I have a question that is not covered above. How can I get a response?

- Please feel free to send any questions you may have to brownfields@ct.gov (preferred) or contact the dedicated OBRD hotline number at 860.500.2395 by January 31, 2024. All responses to questions not included in this document will also be posted on the OBRD website (as an addendum) by Friday, February 2, 2024.

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Additionally, OBRD will be conducting online **Walk-in Question/Answer sessions over Microsoft Teams**. OBRD will also cover **special topical presentations** at each of these sessions. The session will begin with a brief topical presentation followed by time for questions and answers. See schedule below:

- Wed, January 17, 2024 (9 – 10AM) [*What's new in Round 19 and Remediation/Limited-Assessment Grant & Loan Program Highlights*]
- Wed, January 24, 2024 (9 – 10AM) [*What's new in Round 19 – Assessment-Only Grant Program Highlights*]
- Wed, January 31, 2024 (9 – 10AM) [*BAR Planning Program Round 4 Highlights*]
- Wed, Feb 7, 2024 (9 – 10:30 AM) [*Building your Redevelopment Project Capital Stack (a presentation from other public funding programs)*]

[Click here to join the Teams meeting](#) on your computer or mobile app.

Or call in (audio only) 1.860.840.2075; Phone Conference ID: 634-967-143#

23. What is the due date of the full application form and when can I hear back about award decisions?

- Please see the NOFA for the detailed schedule. All applications should be submitted by **noon** on Friday, March 1, 2024. Please note that DECD **will** accept submissions prior to this deadline. Please make sure you receive a receipt of application notice from OBRD staff.
- DECD hopes to make the grant award announcements in May or June 2024