

## **MATERIALS MANAGEMENT INFRASTRUCTURE (MMI) GRANT PROGRAM**

### **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – 11/1/24**

**Q: Given that CT incinerates 97% of biosolids, wouldn't the possibility of a Regional Drying Facility that recovers water, avoids tonnage being incinerated be a worthy project?**

A: I don't believe that they would be eligible for MMI Grant funding because biosolids are not a component of the MSW stream that we are trying to reduce and divert. Even if they were eligible, it is likely that such projects would score low and/or struggle to meet the goals of the grant.

Currently between 800,000 and 900,000 tons per year of MSW is being transported many miles out of state. In comparison, the five sewage sludge incinerators in the state have adequate capacity to handle all of the sludge generated in Connecticut. As such, we do not have an acute capacity shortage with sludge like we do for MSW. Hence the prioritization of MSW over sludge.

The CMMS, drafted in 2016, focused heavily on organics, recyclables, and other components of the MSW waste stream and not on sludge/biosolids. The SMM Grant Program, which we're looking to capitalize on, was focused on source-separated food scraps and Unit Based Pricing approaches. And to my earlier point about the on-going waste crisis, the return path to waste management self-sufficiency in Connecticut really runs through MSW as opposed to other smaller waste streams where demand and capacity are more in sync.

Managing all the waste streams in Connecticut is a concern for us, but for particular grant programs we do need to prioritize certain waste streams as the focus.

**Q: Can you advise whether this program can fund wastewater biosolids management?**

A: Similar to the answer to the question above, wastewater biosolids management technology is not a focus for this grant program and would not be eligible for funding.

**Q: Does the purchase of a new recycling compactor and windrow turner qualify for funding under this grant?**

A: Yes, equipment such as this would be eligible for MMI Grant Program funding.

**Q: Are planning costs and/or consultant fees eligible through the Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program?**

A: We understand that some proposed projects will require a certain level of planning and/or engineering services and associated consulting fees. While the MMI Grant Program is intended for primarily hard construction and related costs, the proposed use of some requested funds for planning, engineering, and/or consulting services will not negatively impact the evaluation of an application. However, as the percentage share of the requested funds for such services increases, it will have a proportionally negative impact on the proposal's evaluation score under Criteria #7. Applications that consist solely of proposed planning or engineering studies or design will be deemed non-responsive.

**Q: Say an eligible entity wanted to purchase Big Belly-type organics collection receptacles to place at the municipal transfer station(s) and at various locations around town. Is this an eligible grant expense?**

A: The purchase of organics collection receptacles as part of a waste diversion program would be an eligible expense under the MMI Grant Program.

**Q: Would the following products/activities be eligible to receive funding under this grant?**

- **Compostable bags to distribute to residents to use in the new drop off locations**
- **Small food waste containers to distribute to residents to carry their waste to the new drop off locations**
- **Funding to contract with a hauler to pick up the food waste dropped at each drop off location**
- **Promotional / educational materials / staff time to make residents aware of the program and teach them how to use the receptacles**

A: All of the above items would fall under the heading of operational expenses for a waste diversion program and would not be eligible expenses under the MMI Grant Program.

**Q: I would like to know if private entities (such as a WTE operator) are eligible applicants. And if not, can an eligible applicant apply for work to be done on a privately-owned facility such as a WTE?**

A: Private entities are not eligible to apply for the MMI Grant Program. In addition, grant funds are not permitted for use by an eligible applicant to perform work or add infrastructure to a privately-owned waste facility.

**Q: Would conducting a study to determine best / most suitable food waste drop off locations in a municipality be an eligible grant expense?**

A: Conducting such a study generally would not be an eligible grant expense as a standalone project. However, a study as a component of a larger infrastructure development project could be an eligible expense. While the MMI Grant Program is intended for primarily hard construction and related costs, the proposed use of some of the requested funds for planning, engineering, and/or consulting services will not negatively impact the evaluation of an application. However, as the percentage share for such services increases, the amount of points awarded in the evaluation process under Criteria #7 will be proportionally reduced. Applications that consist solely of proposed planning or engineering studies or design will be deemed non-responsive.

**Q: Where do I access the application form for the MMI Grant Program? I found the link for the RFA and webinar, but I do not see the link for the actual grant form.**

A: There is no formal application form for the MMI Grant. We are simply looking for a narrative document that contains all of the information requested in Section 3.1 of the RFA.

**Q: COGs are eligible but COGs would not be a permittee. Could a municipality be a permittee for a COG project and the COG be the applicant?**

A: Yes, if a COG were to partner on a project with a municipality, the two could be joint applicants with the municipality serving as the permittee.

**Q: Any portion available up front or will there be reimbursement model?**

A: A maximum of 20% of awarded grant funds may be provided upon execution of the grant contract, at the Department's discretion. Remaining funds will be disbursed by way of the standard grant reimbursement model either on a monthly or quarterly basis.

**Q: Would adding radiation detectors at the transfer station apply.**

A: Given that these items do not constitute infrastructure that reduces or diverts solid waste from the MSW waste stream, they would not be considered eligible for funding under this grant program.

**Q: Supposing you had implemented a bag program and you had an enforcement issue. Could you install cameras to monitor the bag drop off under this program?**

A: Again, given that these items do not constitute infrastructure that reduces or diverts solid waste from the MSW waste stream, they would not be considered eligible for funding under this grant program.

**Q: Does a program to refurbish electric vehicle batteries qualify for funding?**

A: As electric vehicle batteries are generally not a component of the MSW waste stream, such a program would not be eligible for funding under this grant program.

**Q: We plan to partially fund countertop food waste bins and bags, as well as host an informational session for residents in order to facilitate this change. Would these expenses be considered eligible for the purposes of this project?**

A: Items such as household collection containers and bags would not be eligible for funding under the MMI grant.

**Q: We recognize the ideal solution is to have a few municipalities and/or a region apply for the MMI grant together. However, if one applies on its own, are they definitely out of consideration?**

A: It is completely fine for a municipality or a COG to apply for an MMI grant on their own. They are eligible individually and would not be disqualified for applying by themselves.

**Q: Would a conveyer system and/or auto loader be considered "sorting, separation, recycling..." equipment and covered by the MMI grant?**

A: Yes, this equipment would be eligible for funding under the MMI grant program.

**Q: We are working on a pilot of the 24/7 food scrap collection bins (ie. Big Belly & Metro Stor) and are looking for sources of funding. Specifically, we'd like to understand if the grant would be a good fit?**

A: Yes, this equipment would be eligible for funding under the MMI grant program.

**Q: A citizen reached out to me looking for grants for a school composting project. Can a high school apply to this grant?**

A: A public high school would be an eligible applicant for the MMI Grant Program, as they ultimately fall under the jurisdiction of a municipality.

**Q: If two eligible organizations are interested in partnering on a grant application, what does that look like? Does one of them need to be the lead applicant who receives the funding, does most of the administrative work/reporting, and then the other organization is a subawardee? Or can both organizations just be partners with equal weight/responsibility for managing funds and reporting?**

A: The process would be that one eligible organization will be the lead applicant with primary grant management responsibility, and the other co-applicant would be a subawardee. The most important element would be providing a very clear picture of the delineation of responsibilities for each entity as part of the application.

**Q: We received a question asking if the funding could be used “to build a new transfer station,” given that this town’s current TS is outdated and causes a number of problems. Because the RFA puts so much emphasis on waste reduction and diversion, I’m seeking clarification as to whether a straight transfer station rebuild would be funded.**

A: A project such as this would be eligible under the MMI grant.

**Q: Would a private entity be eligible for the MMI grant program if we qualify for Food Residual Composting facilities that use anaerobic digesters as well to install an integrated carbon capture system to convert CO2 to soda ash?**

A: If you are partnered with a municipality or similar governmental entity where they were the permittee, then yes that would likely be eligible.

**Q: I'm reaching out to ask if funding used to purchase land for the purpose of developing an organics recycling facility/materials management facility can be used as reimbursement for a purchase that has already been made. It is possible that we may need to make the purchase prior to award and contracting completion as to not lose the land. Would we still be able to be awarded funds if the transaction has already occurred?**

A: We are not able to award grant funds for the reimbursement of land purchases that occur prior to the award date.