

REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)

Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program

August 30, 2024

Applications to be Submitted to DEEP by Friday, December 6, 2024

The Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP) is pleased to announce the availability of solid waste infrastructure grant funding for Connecticut municipalities and regions through the Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) Grant program, pursuant to Public Act No. 23-205, § 13(c)(7). The Public Act authorized \$15 million in total. DEEP expects to award this grant funding over two (2) grant rounds, the size and scope of which are yet to be determined but will be influenced by the number, type, and amount of funding requests received in the first grant round.

DEEP invites applications seeking grant funds to help municipalities and regional waste authorities develop and construct solid waste management infrastructure. Preference will be given to proposals that have already achieved full site control and any necessary local permitting needed. Preference will also be given to projects with the potential for the largest volume of waste reduction and/or diversion in a short timeframe while ensuring consistency with the State of Connecticut's Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy (CMMS) and Connecticut's statutorily established integrated hierarchy of waste management methodologies. This RFA is posted to DEEP's Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance website: (<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/reduce-reuse-recycle/municipal-recycling-resource-center/municipal-and-regional-grants-and-technical-assistance>).

DEEP reserves the right to provide additional funding, pursuant to this RFA, if additional resources become available.

1. OVERVIEW

Connecticut is facing a waste disposal crisis as traditional options for the disposal of municipal solid waste (MSW) diminish. Four (4) waste-to-energy (WTE) facilities in the state currently manage the majority of the approximately 2.3 million tons of MSW generated in the state that is disposed of each year. The Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority (MIRA) waste-to-energy facility in Hartford ceased operations in July 2022, significantly reducing in-state waste disposal capacity. Many businesses and municipalities are increasingly relying on export of MSW to other states for disposal, resulting in approximately 40% of the state's MSW tonnage being disposed of at out-of-state landfills. In addition to this environmentally undesirable method of disposal, the fewer and aging waste disposal options in the state will compromise the Connecticut's self-sufficiency in waste disposal, making the state dependent on out-of-state communities to accept Connecticut MSW, and steadily driving tipping fees upward for residents and municipalities due to increasing transportation costs and disposal costs at out-of-state waste-to-energy facilities and landfills. Disposal capacity in Northeast landfills may decline as much as 40% by the end of the decade. Landfilling also exposes businesses and towns to unpredictable cost increases as they compete for transportation and disposal capacity as well as potential long-

term liability if a landfill has a release, is mismanaged or is otherwise a source of pollution in the future.

In response to these challenges, DEEP created and manages the Sustainable Materials Management (SMM) Grant Program. Over the course of the last two years, the SMM Grant Program has funded waste management pilot programs in 15 municipalities, with a focus on separation of food scraps from the MSW waste stream. The waste diversion modalities tested through these pilot programs included resident drop-off of separated food scraps at municipal transfer stations, co-collection of source-separated food scraps and MSW, and separate dedicated waste collection routes for source-separated food scraps. These pilot programs provided a wealth of data on waste diversion initiatives across a diverse subset of Connecticut's municipalities, and demonstrated that these various approaches are effective in reducing costs and environmental impacts associated with MSW disposal.

The results of the SMM Grant Program pilots also showed that these waste diversion strategies can achieve even great cost savings and other benefits if they are accompanied by infrastructure upgrades to reduce handling costs, for example, and if they are implemented in coordination across multiple communities and regions. Supporting municipalities that want to pursue these strategies will help to alleviate the state's waste disposal crisis by reducing the amount of MSW tonnage that may be disposed of at out-of-state landfills as in-state waste-to-energy capacity declines. These strategies also help to advance progress towards the statewide 60% diversion rate set forth in the CMMS.

2. CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

DEEP is seeking to fund innovative and impactful solid waste management infrastructure projects at the municipal and/or regional level that will support the CMMS and divert materials from the waste stream in keeping with the State's waste management goals and established integrated hierarchy of waste management methodologies. The Materials Management Infrastructure (MMI) Grant program seeks to build upon the successes of the SMM Grant Program and advance facility and infrastructure projects that will assist municipalities and regions, as well as the State as a whole, in reducing MSW disposal costs and increasing in-state self-sufficiency in waste management.

2.1. ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

To be eligible for MMI Grant funding, an Applicant must be a Connecticut municipality, a group of Connecticut municipalities, or a Connecticut regional entity (council of government, regional planning agency, resource recovery authority, recycling operating committee, etc.). All Applicants are encouraged, but not required, to join the Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management (CCSMM), which makes available information, resources, technical assistance and networking for municipal members. Applicants are also encouraged, but not required, to participate in Sustainable CT to take advantage of additional sustainable materials management support, resources, and funding. Environmental compliance history may impact eligibility, and in considering this factor DEEP may apply the standards and process set out in CGS Section 22a-6m, with other applicable environmental regulations or statutes.

2.2. ELIGIBLE PROPOSALS

Eligible proposals will support waste reduction and/or diversion and may include, but not be limited to, separation, sorting, and disposal infrastructure; and composting/anaerobic digestion infrastructure, with the goal of improving diversion of municipal solid waste to recycling and regaining self-sufficiency in managing MSW disposal within Connecticut's borders. Highly-rated eligible proposals will include infrastructure components that support adoption of Unit-Based Pricing (UBP) programs and/or food scrap collection programs that contribute to reducing the volume of MSW requiring disposal and increasing diversion of food scraps. Some examples of such components include, but are not limited to:

- Sorting, de-bagging or other projects related to co-collection of bagged food scraps and bagged MSW;
- De-packaging projects related to composting of food scraps;
- In-vessel composting equipment for multi-family housing, congregate housing, and schools and other institution;
- Pilot approaches to bear-proof collection systems for food scraps;
- Aerated static pile and other composting system infrastructure supporting food scrap diversion and recycling.
- Purchase of real property for the hosting of new and/or expanded waste management infrastructure.

Eligible proposals should also include a clear and comprehensive strategy and timeframe for achieving full and efficient utilization of the proposed facility or infrastructure project. Identification of municipalities and their total populations, regions and other entities, to be served by the proposed facility or infrastructure must be based upon clear, logical, and supportable assumptions or data, preferably with inclusion of letters of support from target participants. Proposed projects that are part of a regional approach to waste management will be viewed more favorably.

Funds shall not be authorized to achieve compliance with state recycling laws and regulations.

3. SUBMISSION PROCESS

3.1 APPLICATION

To receive funding under the MMI Grant program, applicants must first submit a completed Application to DEEP (refer to timeline in 3.3 below), outlining the infrastructure development proposal parameters and providing basic information to DEEP. The Application will require a detailed narrative to include specifics on the proposed project, details on the how the grant will assist the municipality/municipalities and/or regional entity in establishing an economically self-sustaining waste management facility, and what level of funding is sought for the proposal.

This RFA can be found on DEEP's Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance [webpage](#).

The Application narrative shall include the following, as appropriate and applicable:

1. A detailed description of the proposal, including:
 - a. the essential elements of the proposed facility or waste management infrastructure;
 - b. the components of the waste stream that will be diverted and directed towards reuse, repair, recycling, composting, or captured for other waste management options;
 - c. the proposed location for the subject waste management facility or infrastructure;
 - d. the expected municipalities, regions, and/or non-governmental entities served; and
 - e. an explanation of how the proposed facility or infrastructure will improve, expand, or provide waste reduction, recycling, or organics management services.
2. A description of the need for the proposed facility or infrastructure and how it has been identified, including any relevant data;
3. If full site control for the specific location for the proposed facility or infrastructure has not been achieved, a detailed description of the status of the efforts to date to secure site control and a roadmap of steps that must be completed to achieve full site control;
4. An estimate of the types and amounts of materials expected to be diverted annually from traditional MSW disposal means such as waste to energy and landfilling;
5. A description of how the feasibility of the proposed facility or infrastructure has been evaluated, including information on the likelihood of community support and the establishment of partnerships necessary for successful implementation.
 - a. Identification of proposed acquisitions of equipment;
6. A description of any proposed facility construction, facility renovations, or other improvements, including a site plan clearly showing all existing relevant facilities and the changes that will result from the proposal;
7. An explanation of how the proposal and any existing facilities and operations tie together and complement one another;
8. The number of estimated residents who will be able to utilize the proposed facility or infrastructure;
9. A qualitative discussion and, where feasible, a quantitative analysis of the ameliorating impacts on identified environmental justice issues accomplished by the proposal;
10. A description of the data gathering and record keeping systems that will be used to measure the amount of materials diverted from traditional waste disposal, and the related cost savings realized by the participating entity(ies) to report to DEEP;
11. An explanation of how the project will impact the current and future operating costs of the expected municipalities, regions, and/or non-governmental entities served by the proposed facility or infrastructure, including any financial pro formas or supporting materials that have been developed;
12. Identified level of grant funding requested, and if the requested grant funds are to be integrated into a larger financial structure with other funding sources, a detailed description of how the grant funds would be integrated and utilized within the overall capital stack; and
13. The timeline for the development and implementation of the proposed waste management facility or infrastructure that includes a permitting timeline for all necessary federal, state and local authorizations.

3.2 APPLICATION EVALUATION AND REVIEW CRITERIA

Submitted applications will be reviewed for completeness, and to determine if the proposal satisfies the minimum program requirements. Any proposal failing to meet the minimum standards will be disqualified and will not receive further consideration from the evaluation team. DEEP reserves the right to communicate with Applicants, if needed, to obtain clarification of information contained in the applications received. Changes to applications, including updating or adding information, will not be permitted unless specifically request by DEEP. Therefore, Applicants must submit applications that present their proposal and other requested information as clearly and completely as possible.

An evaluation team, composed of qualified DEEP staff reviewers, will judge the merits of the proposals received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA. That team will evaluate the proposals and select proposals for funding based on the following Review Criteria:

1. Eligibility of applicant and proposal (see Sections 2.1 and 2.2);
2. Level of site control;
3. Quality and thoroughness of the proposal;
4. Consistency with the CCSMM Menu of Options, the CMMS, and the State’s established integrated hierarchy of waste management methodologies;
5. Level of indicated support from key stakeholders;
6. Estimated number of residents served by the proposed facility or infrastructure, and whether the proposal is a component of regional approaches to waste management;
7. Financial feasibility and long-term sustainability of the proposal components;
8. Overall potential impact of the proposal on waste reduction and diversion;
9. Environmental justice issues ameliorated by the proposal; and
10. Duration of development timeframe.

The goals of the evaluation process are to ensure fairness and objectivity in review of the applications and to ensure that all grants are awarded to the Applicants whose proposals provide the best value to the residents of the State of Connecticut.

Evaluation of the proposals will weigh the criteria listed above in the following manner:

Review Criteria	Weighted Percentage
Criteria 1 – 3	25%
Criteria 4 – 8	60%
Criteria 9-10	15%
TOTAL	100%

All applicants will be notified in writing regarding the status of their applications following DEEP’s review. Notification may include a request for interview, request for additional information, deferred action, or denial.

3.3 SCHEDULE & DEADLINES

Below is a detailed schedule of the grant application deadlines and key dates for the selection process. DEEP reserves the right to postpone or reschedule any of the actual or proposed deadlines.

- Request for Applications (RFA) issued Friday, August 30, 2024.
- An MMI Grant Information Session will be hosted by DEEP staff on Monday, September 16, 2024 at 2:00pm via Zoom. A link for this Information Session Zoom call will be posted on DEEP’s Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance website (<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/reduce-reuse-recycle/municipal-recycling-resource-center/municipal-and-regional-grants-and-technical-assistance>) at least 24 hours prior to the session.
- Questions pertaining to this RFA may be submitted any time to DEEP.MMCAPPlanning@ct.gov. Questions must be submitted by Friday, October 18, 2024. DEEP staff will post answers to any questions received concerning the RFA on the DEEP’s Municipal and Regional Grants and Technical Assistance website (<https://portal.ct.gov/deep/reduce-reuse-recycle/municipal-recycling-resource-center/municipal-and-regional-grants-and-technical-assistance>) on a rolling basis, but no later than Friday, November 1, 2024.
- Applications must be submitted no later than Friday, December 6, 2024, at 11:59 PM EST.

CT DEEP will review application submissions on a rolling basis and will be making grant award determinations throughout the fall of 2024, but no later than January 17, 2025.

4. IMPLEMENTATION AND REPORTING REQUIREMENTS

4.1 AWARDS

Approved proposals will enter into a contract and receive awards as reimbursement. Contractually-covered actions may not proceed until such time as the contract is fully executed. Successful Applicants will be required to begin their proposed projects within 60 days of an executed contract or funds allocated may be reallocated by DEEP. The timeframe for initiating construction activities funded will depend on the scope of the project and will be determined during the review process and be specified in the contract. All reports and documentation of actions must be submitted to DEEP prior to final disbursements of any award(s)/retainages. Final request for reimbursement must be submitted to DEEP no later than 90 days following the expiration of the date of the grant contract.

Any municipality receiving an award but that is not in compliance with the following will be expected to achieve compliance within six (6) months of being awarded a grant and prior to any reimbursement request is submitted to DEEP pursuant to the contract for the grant:

1. C.G.S sec. 22a-241j – requiring collection for designated recyclable items in the same manner as the municipalities offer collection of MSW (“equitable collection”). The size of collection containers provided for designated recyclable items shall be of sufficient

capacity to accommodate the volume of recyclable items that are generated at each household;

2. C.G.S. sec. 22a-241j requirement that collectors integrate recyclable items collection costs in the charge for solid waste collection (i.e., one bundled price for trash and recycling collection). This requirement applies to private collectors operating within the municipality;
3. Relevant DEEP solid waste and recycling reporting requirements (Annual Municipal Recycling Report, Municipal Transfer Station Quarterly Reports, etc.); and
4. C.G.S. sec. 22a- 220a(d)(1) requirement that municipality registers haulers.

4.2 REPORTING

Applicant agrees to provide timely quarterly progress reports on the proposed waste management facility or infrastructure project during the term of the contract, unless otherwise requested in writing by the Commissioner. Such reports shall include, but not be limited to:

1. A narrative description of milestones achieved and any challenges to the project implementation, detailing how such challenges were or will be resolved;
2. Projected milestone accomplishments for the next quarter and identification and discussion regarding any expected project schedule slippage;
3. Accounting of MMI Grant funds used to date and expected grant fund expenditures during the next quarter;
4. Status of overall budget and financing stack, including identification and discussion of any possible budgetary issues for the project; and
5. Submission of all invoices paid for the quarter in question for DEEP review and comment.

5. OTHER

5.1 INQUIRY PROCEDURES

Applicants may reach out to DEEP.MMCAPlanning@ct.gov with questions about the RFA.

5.2 CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

Applicants are advised not to include in their proposals any proprietary information. The Connecticut Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) generally requires the disclosure of documents in the possession of the State upon request of any person (C.G.S. sec. 1-200 et seq.). Certain categories of information may be protected from FOIA. However, such information must be identified as proprietary or confidential prior to its submission to DEEP. Both redacted and unredacted versions of the protected information must be submitted if required by the application. FOIA-protected information must be isolated from other material in the application and labeled "CONFIDENTIAL." With this submission of information claimed and labeled as confidential, you must also provide the legal basis for the confidentiality claim, describe what efforts have been taken to keep the information confidential, and provide whether the information sought to be protected has an independent economic value by not being readily known or provide the exemption under FOIA that is applicable to the information. With your legal support and reasonable justification for confidentiality as described herein, the Department is better equipped to safeguard your confidential information should it become the subject of a

Connecticut Freedom of Information Act inquiry. Information deemed confidential will remain confidential until no longer deemed as such by the Department or the applicant withdraws the exemption for the information.

6. RESERVED RIGHTS OF THE STATE – DEEP / TERMS AND CONDITIONS

“Proposal” shall mean quotation, bid, offer, application, Expression of Interest, and/or services. “Applicant” shall also mean proposers, offerors, bidders, or any municipality, council of government or regional authority responding to the RFA.

Neither DEEP, its staff, its representatives, nor any of its consultants or agents will be liable for any claims or damages resulting from the solicitation, collection, review or evaluation of responses to this RFA. DEEP reserves the right to accept or reject any and all proposals, in whole or in part, the right to partner proposers, to waive any technical defects, irregularities, and omissions, and to give consideration to past performance of the Applicants and their partners or identified sub-contractors, where the interests of the State will be best served. DEEP reserves the right, for any reason and without prior notice, to supplement, amend or otherwise modify this RFA or otherwise request additional information. The State reserves the right to request interviews of Applicants to discuss all project details.

DEEP shall not be responsible, in any manner, for the costs associated with responses to the solicitation. The individual responses to this solicitation including all artwork, drawings, plans, photos, models, and narrative material submitted to DEEP shall be public information upon receipt. DEEP shall have the right to copy, reproduce, duplicate, publicize, or otherwise dispose of each response to this solicitation in any manner that the State chooses unless otherwise agreed upon, in advance, with the Applicant.

The RFA Is Not An Offer. Neither this RFA nor any subsequent discussions shall give rise to any commitment on the part of DEEP or confer any rights on any Applicant unless and until a contract is fully executed by the necessary parties. The contract document will supersede all prior negotiations, representations or agreements, alleged or made, between the parties. DEEP shall assume no liability for costs incurred by the Applicant or for payment of services under the terms of the contract until the successful Applicant is notified that the contract has been accepted and approved by the DEEP and, if required, by the Attorney General’s Office.

Acronym Summary

CCSMM: Connecticut Coalition for Sustainable Materials Management

C.G.S.: the Connecticut General Statutes

CMMS: the State of Connecticut’s Comprehensive Materials Management Strategy

DEEP: the Connecticut Department of Energy and Environmental Protection

FOIA: the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act

MIRA: the Materials Innovation and Recycling Authority

MMI: the Materials Management Infrastructure Grant Program

MSW: municipal solid waste

RFA: Request for Applications

SMM: Sustainable Materials Management Grant Program

UBP: Unit-Based Pricing

WTE: Waste-to-Energy