

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT ROUND 2 (SMMR2) GRANT PROGRAM

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS – 5/9/25

Q. Are school districts eligible to apply as part of a municipality? Or are they distinct and not eligible?

A. Yes, school districts are eligible as part of a municipality.

Q. If a former SMM grantee's pilot ended, but they're looking to implement a permanent and mandatory source separated program, are they eligible?

A. Yes, they are eligible, provided that the grant proposal is dedicated to establishing a permanent program. A municipality that completed an original SMM grant pilot and would like to have another pilot would not be eligible.

Q. So no applications allowed for school/university food waste programs? These are not yet mandated but will be.

A. Universities are not eligible, but school districts can apply. Universities are already subject to the Commercial Organics Recycling Law and have access to free technical assistance through DEEP.

Q. Is staffing an allowable expense?

A. Direct administrative costs such as staffing are not eligible for funding under the SMMR2 grant program.

Q. Is education and outreach an allowable expense?

A. Education and outreach that is an essential component for implementing a new permanent program or initiative would be an eligible expense, and also similar efforts for other waste management programs and services above and beyond existing legal requirements for waste and recycling collection and disposal. However, education and outreach of a more general nature centered around compliance with existing law would not be eligible.

Q. How could unit-based pricing be implemented for a municipality where the garbage hauling is done by private companies?

A. There are numerous examples in Massachusetts of UBP systems that exist within the private hauling landscape. Applicants are encouraged to research and investigate how individual municipalities in other states such as Massachusetts have achieved success with UBP under a variety of community characteristics.

Q. Will DEEP provide a rubric to determine the per capita tonnage? For example, our transfer station receives MSW from both residential and ICI generators. Back in 2017, we estimated per capita tonnage as required by the 2017 CMMS letter. However, with grant funding on the line, perhaps a rubric would allow all applicants to compute in a similar manner.

A. Municipalities can calculate solid waste tonnage per capita by separating out residential waste tonnage from industrial/commercial/institutional (ICI) tonnage for the most current year available

and then dividing by the municipality's total population figure from the 2020 Decennial Census. Sustainable CT has also developed a methodology for per capita generation that would be an acceptable form of calculation for a SMMR2 application.

Q. Category 2 - does this include all recyclable materials (other than food waste)?

A. Yes, proposals regarding all other recyclable materials would fall under Category 2.

Q. Does all funding need to go directly to program costs, or is it appropriate to request a percentage for administration (staff hours)? If not, can in-kind staff hours count as match/leverage for grant scoring?

A. While direct administration costs are not eligible for grant funding, in-kind staff hours and services could be counted as a match for purposes of grant evaluation and scoring.

Q. Is there a formal application or do applicants submit their own narrative (so long as they answer all required elements)?

A. There is no formal application with specific boxes/sections to fill in. Proposals should consist of a straight narrative with supporting documentation that addresses all the RFA requirements.

Q. Is the highest score you can get without UBP 85 out of 100?

A. No, an applicant could still achieve a score of up to 100 without the inclusion of a UBP program component. With the inclusion of a UBP component, an applicant could potentially achieve a maximum score of 115 under Category 1.

Q. Are local curbside compost companies that divert organic waste from restaurants and homeowners allowed to apply? All trash pickup is private in our area.

A. Private companies are not eligible to apply for SMMR2 grant funds. This grant program is only for public entities, such as municipalities and regional quasi-governmental organizations.

Q. What was the success rate of small towns who initiated UBP in the first round of SMM grant funding?

A. DEEP is currently reviewing a draft final evaluation report for the original SMM program. In smaller towns or towns with transfer stations, it has been easier to set up and operate transfer station-based UBP programs than trying to implement curbside collection UBP programs, but UBP can be effective in either structure. Also, a thorough presentation on the SMM program was recently made at a Sustainable CT coffee hour and can be viewed [here](#).

Q. Could this program fund the implementation of a Regional Household Hazardous Waste Collection Program, or is the priority food diversion?

A. The Category 1 priority is centered around food scraps recycling or diversion, and food recovery/donation. A proposed program such as this could be fundable through Category 2.

Q. Could Category 2 be used for bottle bill-related technology?

A. Applications for bottle bill-related programs, initiatives, or equipment would not be eligible for funding under the SMMR2 grant program.

Q. If questions will be answered on June 20th, and the grant is due on June 27th, that only gives one week to write the grant based on the responses. Could you please clarify if you will respond to any questions earlier - especially foundational questions like "is such-and-such eligible" or "is this concept appropriate?"

A. We will post answers to submitted questions generally weekly on a rolling basis so that potential applicants will receive answers in a timely fashion.

Q. Will the DEEP relationship with CET provide any assistance with this round 2 of SMM grant applications?

A. Technical assistance for SMMR2 grant applications will not be part of CET's scope of work.

Q. If DEEP cannot fund a full request, will you award partial funding if the budget is clearly broken down?

A. Yes, partial awards are possible based upon a sufficiently itemized proposed budget.

Q. What is the expected implementation timeframe. With notice in summertime, towns would have to add other funding into their 2026-27 budget for a July 1, 2026 implementation.

A. The execution of assistance agreements with awarded grantees is expected to be completed by early 2026, which should permit grantees ample time to make any necessary adjustments to their proposed 2026-27 municipal general fund budgets.

Q. Assuming there is no match requirement, correct?

A. There is no match requirement. However, scoring for proposals under the financial feasibility criteria will be enhanced if they include a match. Matches may consist, in part or entirely, of in-kind staff time and/or services.

Q. What is DEEP using to determine a town's population? Decennial? DPH?

A. DEEP will be utilizing the 2020 Decennial Census total population figure when establishing the municipality size cohorts under Category 1 in the SMMR2 Grant program.

Q. Will the grant application require the Town to have approved UBP at time of application submission? We know this takes time to move a proposal through the Town Council for approval. Or can the application reference working with respective Town entities on the approval process?

A. Prior approval of UBP by a municipality is not required at the time of application submission. However, applications would benefit by demonstrating a level of public support commiserate with the level of grant funding requested.

Q. We have been told that public schools are mandated to comply with food scrap diversion by mid-2026. Is that true? If yes, I gather you will not fund projects that work toward that compliance. Correct?

A. While it is true that K-12 schools will be subject to the Commercial Organics Recycling Law effective July 1, 2026, applications for projects that address food scrap recycling or diversion at schools would be eligible for funding through the SMMR2 Grant program.

Q. I have a qualifying question about the town size determination. If we were to apply as a Council of Governments with municipalities in each range, would we be competing in a larger pool? Are there any benefits to applying regionally if the individual municipalities might fit into differing size determinations?

A. Regional Councils of Governments that apply under Category 1 will automatically fall into the “Large” size cohort as they all have total populations in excess of 60,000. While DEEP cannot specify the potential benefits and drawbacks of applying under the two different categories and/or as a region versus as individual municipalities, applicants should carefully consider the characteristics of their respective applications and in what ways these characteristics would make them most competitive.

Q. Am I correct that this grant is trying to build out infrastructure and not geared towards helping municipalities develop collection routes? I'm curious what angle is most suited for this grant. Bins for residents? Totes for schools and transfer stations? A collection truck? Or all on the compost infrastructure side? Collection routes from municipal schools and residents in the area?

A. While municipal/regional infrastructure is certainly eligible under SMMR2, it is not the sole focus of the SMMR2 grant program. The other items listed, including creating a municipal program of collection routes as part of a permanent food scraps collection initiative, would be eligible. Also, just a reminder that only public entities such as municipalities and regional quasi-governmental organizations/authorities are eligible to apply.

Q. I get the feeling Unit Based Pricing is just another term for Pay as you Throw. Assuming that's the case, does that mean you want composting to be pay as you throw too? Not a flat subscription rate?

A. You are correct that Unit Based Pricing is synonymous with Pay As You Throw. Ideally, food scraps would be handled on a UBP basis, but there are a number of program forms that could be workable.

Q. We have two potential ideas for regional applications. However, we wanted to check with DEEP to see if these concepts would a) be eligible under the grant parameters and b) represent competitive proposals that align with funding priorities - Discounted Backyard Compost Bins, and Funding for Potential Regional Waste Authority Startup Costs.

A. While we can't give specific guidance as to how competitive proposed grant concepts would be, we can say that we believe both of these concepts would be eligible for SMMR2 funding.