



MaineDOT

2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As of 3/30/2026

A. Grant Award, Application Submission and Review, Timeline, and Compliance

Q1: What is the source of funding for this grant, and what is the total amount to be awarded?

A1: The source of funding for this grant is federal funds through [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration \(NOAA\)](#) Climate Resilience Regional Challenge (CRRRC). The total award amount for the grant is **up to \$14 million**.

Q2: What makes a strong application submission?

A2: This is a competitive grant process, and it is anticipated that many applications will be received. It is encouraged that applicants include well-documented, substantiated evidence in their applications, showing **1)** how climate stressors are affecting their infrastructure, **2)** how adapting the existing property can mitigate these impacts, **3)** how the proposed project will eliminate or greatly reduce those stressors, and **4)** identify and elaborate on safety and public health stressors and explain how this project will help mitigate these risks. If the infrastructure/location where your proposed project will be located **has not yet** experienced climate impacts, please describe the current condition of the property and concerns about failure or ability to withstand impact,

including which specific climate stressors are predicted to impact the property in the future. Overall, the project should demonstrate the goal and purpose of this grant program and not be a deferred maintenance project.

Q3: Is there a limit on the number of applications that can be submitted?

A3: Municipalities, Tribal Governments, and Infrastructure Districts are permitted to submit a maximum of three applications per legal and/or administrative applying entity. Additionally, each project requires the submission of a separate application.

Q4: Will a scoring matrix be provided to applicants that explains MaineDOT's criteria and the rationale for allocating funds?

A4: MaineDOT, NOAA, and a group of interagency partners will review and award funding for projects that align with the goals of the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund. The qualitative scoring process will determine whether projects **fully align, primarily align, align, partially align, or do not align** with the program goals. Please refer to the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Project Rating Criteria document.

Q5: What is the general timeline for this grant, and when do you expect awards for this funding to be made available?

A5: The Request for Applications went live on March 30, 2026, and will close on **May 11, 2026**, at 11:59 pm EST. Scoring will take place over a couple of months, with conditional awards expected to be issued by late Fall 2026. Conditional awardees will undergo NOAA environmental compliance review, which could take between 90 and 180 days. Grant Agreements will be issued in late Winter 2026/beginning 2027, after environmental compliance has been completed. Timeline subject to change. All projects **must** be completed by 9/30/2029.

Q6: If my project receives grant funding, when can I start?

A6: Awarded projects will be able to start once both parties have signed the Grant Agreement, the entity awarded, and MaineDOT. Work completed before the effective date (last signature) of the grant agreement is not eligible for reimbursement.

Q7: Are there federal requirements for this funding?

A7: Yes, requirements include the Build America Buy America (BABA) Act and American Iron Steel. The Davis-Bacon Act does not apply to these funds. BABA applies a domestic content procurement preference requirement to any federally funded public infrastructure project. All iron, steel, manufactured products, and construction materials used in the project must be produced in the United States. If your project is awarded, further requirements will be detailed in the Grant Agreement.

Q8: Is there a deadline for completing the awarded project?

A8: All projects must be completed by **September 30, 2029**. There will not be any opportunity for a no-cost extension.

Q9: Can Regional Planning Organizations (RPOs) submit an application on behalf of Municipalities?

A9: No, but RPOs can be involved and support the Municipalities in their application(s).

B. Eligibility: Project Types and Land Ownership

Q10: What are some examples of eligible projects?

A10: Eligible projects are publicly owned infrastructure in municipalities, tribal, and infrastructure districts. Projects could include, but are not limited to:

- Stabilizing coastal or inland shoreland through the use of vegetation and biodegradable materials (the construction of hard shoreline stabilization structures is not eligible for funding unless they are part of a hybrid green and gray NbS action);

- Replacing existing stream crossings with structures that comply with MaineDOT’s 100-year flood standards and ensure habitat connectivity;
- Adapting stormwater infrastructure to accommodate the increase in extreme precipitation events;
- Scoping and design, and/or construction of wastewater treatment plant upgrades for increased resilience to climate change stressors;
- Transportation resilience projects;
- Upgrading, retrofitting (not to be confused with in-kind replacement), or relocating existing infrastructure to reduce risk from weather and climate impacts (construction of new facilities is not an eligible activity under this grant opportunity).
- Stormwater systems upgrades, water system upgrades, and other interventions that support public infrastructure repair to reduce or eliminate climate impacts.

These funds can be used to strengthen **existing infrastructure**, including hardened/gray shoreline stabilization, adapt existing infrastructure to maintain access and functionality, and build infrastructure higher to withstand future storm events. Please refer to the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Resiliency Guidelines document for more information. **Construction of new facilities is not allowed under this grant program.**

Q11: Are private, state-owned, or state-aid infrastructure eligible for this funding opportunity?

A11: No, this grant is federally funded, and therefore, private, state-owned, or state-aid infrastructure is not eligible to apply. This includes state-owned infrastructure and state-aid infrastructure located within urban compact areas, which are not eligible.

Q12: Are demolition or upgrades to dams eligible?

A12: No. Dams, including demolition, rehabilitation, or upgrades, are not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Q13 Is dredging an eligible activity for this grant opportunity?

A13: No. Dredging is not eligible for this funding opportunity.

Q14: Are piers, wharves, and other working waterfront infrastructure eligible for this grant opportunity?

A14: No. Since the Maine Public Working Waterfront Infrastructure Fund was specifically created and funds were allocated to directly address existing public wharves, piers, and other working waterfront infrastructure, these existing public infrastructures are excluded from eligible projects for the upcoming 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund. The purpose of the Maine Public Working Waterfront Infrastructure Fund is to adapt public working waterfront infrastructure.

Q15: Are proposed projects on land that have a public easement eligible?

A15: Yes. However, the applying entity must possess an easement at the time of submitting the application, which shall, at a minimum, be for the expected life of the project (09/30/2029), but for a minimum of 20 years. Documentation, such as Title, Right, or Interest (TRI) and other legal documents, must be included in the Application.

C. Match Requirements, In-Kind Contributions, Reimbursement

Q16: Could you clarify what the minimum 5% local match requirement of the total project costs means?

A16: The 5% local match requirement must be raised or appropriated by the Municipality, Tribal Government, or Infrastructure District applying, which can include cash or in-kind. Total project cost refers to the project phase that is being applied for funding through the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund. For example, if the applying entity has completed final design and is applying for construction funds, the

5% local match would be 5% of the total construction costs, not the entire project from conceptual design through construction.

Q17: Can other federal (including Congressional Direct Spending) and/or state grants, private contributing parties, or non-governmental organizations serve as the local match requirement?

A17: No, the 5% local match requirement must be raised or appropriated by the Municipality, Tribal Government, or Infrastructure District applying for the project. The local match requirement can be through cash or in-kind, including labor, equipment, or materials.

Q18: What do you mean by in-kind (match)?

A18: An in-kind match may include documented labor (personnel time), equipment, and materials that have been contributed to the applicant for the project. The Municipality, Tribal Government, or Infrastructure District should track hours and contributions specifically tied to the project. It must be presented with the invoice reimbursement request; some use Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for this purpose.

Q19: Does the local match need to be secured by the time the application(s) are submitted?

A19: No, the funds do not need to be secured by the time the application(s) are submitted. However, if your project(s) are awarded, the local match should be secured before signing the Grant Agreement.

Q20: Can previously incurred project costs be applied toward the 5% match?

A20: No. Costs incurred prior to the effective date of the grant agreement, including, but not limited to, application preparation costs and other costs related to the project, will not be considered part of the match requirements.

Q21: Can these federal funds be used as match towards other federal programs?

A21: These funds are eligible as match for other federal grants, if that grant program allows it.

Q22: What does reimbursement mean?

A22: The 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund is **reimbursement only**. Reimbursement means that eligible project costs have been paid by the Municipality, Tribal Government, or Infrastructure District, and then submitted for reimbursement. Reimbursement requests will be based on the project schedule and milestones discussed in the Grant Agreement. At a minimum, each project will have three reimbursement requests throughout the project. For example, if a project is requesting final design and construction funds, reimbursement requests could be 1) after final design has been completed, 2) 50% through construction, and 3) 100% through construction. If awarded, the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Team will send an invoice template and a step-by-step guide. Each reimbursement request must include supporting documentation, such as an invoice with an itemized list of expenses incurred, timesheets, purchase orders, etc., along with corresponding proof of payment, such as a copy of a bank wire transfer or a canceled check.

D. Nature-Based Solutions and Hybrid Adaptation Actions

Q23: Could you clarify what is meant by nature-based solutions and hybrid materials (green and gray adaptation actions) for the construction of hard shoreline stabilization?

A23: The 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund grant opportunity encourages all projects to use [nature-based solutions](#) and/or a combination of green (natural) and gray (structural) solutions (hybrid) where applicable. However, this is not a requirement for this program. This exclusion applies to the construction of hard shoreline stabilization structures, as these structures are not eligible for funding unless integrated into a hybrid green-and-gray adaptation approach.

- Nature-based solutions (NbS) is defined as infrastructure projects that intentionally use natural and nature-based habitats and processes to reduce risks and deliver multiple benefits.
- Hybrid materials utilized for hard shoreline stabilization are defined as a combination of structural approaches that combine structural approaches (e.g., limited riprap/armoring) with nature-based solutions (NbS) (e.g., root wads, planting native vegetation) rather than relying solely on fully hardened shoreline treatments. For more information on shoreline stabilization projects that must utilize NbS, please visit the Maine Department of Environmental Protection's [O.U.R. S.H.O.R.E. Program](#).

E. Eligibility: Activities and Other

Q24: Are there specific projects that are not eligible for funding through this program?

A24: The purpose of this funding is to adapt existing public infrastructure, and therefore, the **i) construction of new facilities** is not eligible. Funds cannot be used to add any additional linear feet of hard shoreline stabilization. Any increase, measured in linear feet, in hardened shoreline stabilization infrastructure such as breakwaters, riprap, jetties, or seawalls, is not eligible. Additionally, activities such as **ii) dredging** and **iii) projects that may be considered part of deferred maintenance management** are not eligible. Further, projects related to **iv) dams** (e.g., rehabilitation, demolition, or upgrades) are also ineligible.

Q25: Does this program fund Vulnerability, Feasibility, or Planning Studies?

A25: No, this program will not fund Vulnerability, Feasibility, or Planning Studies. This program will fund scoping and design of existing public infrastructure projects. The scoping and design efforts should aim to identify the issue and then develop recommendations or solutions to address it.

Q26: If I am interested in applying for construction-only funds, do I need to have the final design completed?

A26: When applying for construction-only funds, it is preferred that you have completed a preliminary design or final design, but it is not required.

Q27: Am I allowed to apply for grant funding to fund a phase of construction?

A27: Yes, you can apply for construction funding using a phased approach. Please be clear in your application(s) that you are applying for funding for a specific phase of the proposed construction project. Be descriptive about why (e.g., size, costs, schedule, etc.) and the benefits of a phased approach.

Q28: Is there a certain percentage of funding that is going to each “bucket” (i.e., scoping, construction, combo)?

A28: No, there is not.

Q29: If I have an outstanding Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund project, can I apply for funding for a different project within the same entity

A29: Yes, provided that it satisfies the criteria established in the Request For Applications, and will be completed by the grant end date of 9/30/2029.

Q30: What is the difference between the Maine Public Working Waterfront Infrastructure Fund and the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund?

A30: As stated in question 15, page 5, the Maine Public Working Waterfront Infrastructure Fund is to adapt public working waterfront infrastructure. The purpose of the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund is to provide funding for municipalities, tribal governments, or infrastructure districts to adapt their critical infrastructure to reduce vulnerability to climate change. For information about each program, please visit our [website](#) or email us at Adaptation.DOT@maine.gov.

Q31: Can you differentiate between the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund and the Maine Stream Crossing Program?

A31: The intent of the Municipal Stream Crossing Program is to replace municipal stream crossings (e.g., culverts, minor spans, bridges) under local government roads to improve fish and wildlife habitat and community safety. The purpose of the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund is to provide assistance to municipal, tribal, and infrastructure districts to adapt their existing critical infrastructure to reduce vulnerability to climate change. This program supports multiple infrastructure types (e.g., stormwater, wastewater, road relocation/elevation, and stream crossings), which are types of public infrastructure eligible under the 2026 Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund.