

2021-2026

Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund

Administered by the Maine Department of Transportation

Program Overview

The Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund provides direct funding to municipalities, tribes, and state agencies (“Applicants”) to adapt their critical infrastructure to reduce vulnerability to climate change resulting from extreme weather, sea level rise, inland and coastal flooding, severe heat, and other climate impacts. Investing in climate-ready infrastructure increases day-to-day functional capacity and improves asset or network performance and survivability during an emergency. This program is in support of Maine’s 2021 four-year Climate Action Plan, entitled *Maine Won’t Wait*. The plan highlights that there are existing federal funding opportunities, but these programs generally require cost-share or “matching” funds and Maine’s municipalities, tribal governments, and state agencies already struggle to fund infrastructure projects. This program is different in that the cost-share or “matching” fund requirement is only 5%.

This program builds on other available funding opportunities, including the capacity building and planning efforts available through the Community Resilience Partnership program administered by the Governor’s Office of Policy Innovation and the Future (GOPIF).

(<https://www.maine.gov/future/climate/community-resilience-partnership/grants>) The Community Resilience Partnership program will help develop a pipeline of infrastructure projects that are ready for construction and eligible for future federal support or private investment. Projects typically require predevelopment assistance (including resilient design, engineering, and permitting), grant writing and grant management, and community engagement. Enrolling in the Community Resilience Partnership is strongly recommended, but not required, before applying to the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund.

The Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund provides three modes of support for applicants: 1) grants to support scoping (problem definition) of eligible adaptation projects, and 2) grants that support the design of eligible projects that were planned through the Community Resilience Partnership program or GOPIF’s Community Resilience Pilot Project or through an alternative route, and 3) grants that support the implementation and construction of eligible projects that have a complete design.

Eligible Projects

Eligible projects are those that align with *Maine Won’t Wait* and provide adaptation or resilience solutions to infrastructure that is currently or will soon be vulnerable to the impacts of climate change hazards. Applicable infrastructure under the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds (SLFRF) established under the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) guidance includes:

- Drinking water, including replacement of lead pipes;
- Wastewater; and
- Stormwater. Note: stormwater projects may include road repairs and upgrades that interact directly with an eligible stormwater project.

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The SLFRF guidance also requires that framework for water and sewer programs are aligned with the projects that are eligible under the Clean Water State Revolving Funds (CWSRF) and EPA's Drinking Water State Revolving Funds (DWSRF). Eligibility requirements are defined in the ARPA guidance, which may be found at: <https://www.govinfo.gov/content/pkg/FR-2022-01-27/pdf/2022-00292.pdf> . Projects that propose nature-based solutions to improve community resilience are encouraged.

The Applicant should clearly demonstrate how the projects have been designed to better respond to changing climate conditions and to incorporate new climate change data. Projects should incorporate climate change projections and data that align with the lifespan of the project. Projects must identify hazards associated with climate change, evaluate their impacts on critical assets, identify adaptation practices, and present recommendations that adapt the infrastructure and reduce the vulnerability. Projects that affect a roadway will be designed to provide a smooth ride and not reduce the safety, mobility or structural quality of the road. Final design or construction plans shall be stamped by a Maine Professional Engineer, as the law dictates.

Examples of allowable projects for use of these funds (and consistent with the CWSRF and DWSRF) include:

- Direct assistance provided in the form of loans, grants, and/or cash payments provided to qualifying organizations that can demonstrate that improvements to infrastructure, such as buildings or upgrading facilities, align with the Environmental Protection Agency project categories; (Note: expenses related to buildings are allowed only insofar as work in/on the building relates directly to making the drinking water, sewer or stormwater infrastructure more resilient to climate change, e.g. if a building needs to be moved.)
- Projects that improve or install stormwater measures to manage, reduce, treat, or recapture stormwater or subsurface drainage water;
- Projects that address improving water quality and address water pollution (e.g.: control non-point sources of pollution, improve resiliency of infrastructure to severe weather events, create green infrastructure, and/or protect waterbodies from pollution);
- Projects that will improve resiliency to the effects of climate change consistent with efforts to protect lower-income communities that tend to be most affected by climate disaster; and to replace lead service lines associated with negative lifelong impacts for exposed children.

Funding Availability

Applicants may request up to \$10,000 to support project scoping, \$75,000 to support project design, and \$4 M to support project implementation. Exceptions may be made at the discretion of the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Grant Review Team (Grant Review Team), comprised of qualified reviewers from multiple state agencies. Of the funding currently available for infrastructure adaptation projects through the Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan (MJRP), approximately 5% of the funds will be allocated for scoping projects, 15% of the funds will be allocated to design projects and approximately 80% of the funds will be allocated to implementation projects. The funding allocation can be updated at the Grant Review Team's discretion. These federal funds cannot be used as state or local funds to pay the matching costs for another federal program, with the exception that local (municipal or tribal) ARP funds may be used as a match for Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Funds – see below.

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Cost Share Requirement

There is a 5% cost share requirement for the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund; however, this requirement can be waived for towns and/or cities that demonstrate affordability as a hardship based on Municipal Valuation less than \$150 Million. Typical acceptable cost shares are local funds, local in-kind contribution, other agency co-funding, or some combination of partnerships. Any applicant money that is not currently being used to match other government supported programs can be included as match. All local match must be directly related to the proposed project and tasks, and necessary substantiating documentation must be provided. Municipalities are encouraged to use local ARP funds. Costs incurred prior to execution of the grant agreement including application preparation costs will not be considered as part of the match requirement. Cash match spending details must be provided. Applicants must include a signed statement from the authorized signatory acknowledging and accepting that: the entity commits to match 5% of the total project costs and all matching funds provided by the applicant have been approved and/or appropriated.

Invoicing and Payment

Funding will be distributed in no more than three progress payments. The final progress payment requires sufficient evidence of project completion to satisfaction, such as an engineer's stamp. Further details of funding distribution will be determined upon execution of the grant agreement.

Anticipated Duration of Agreement

Funds need to be allocated by Dec 31, 2024 and fully spent by December 31, 2026. Grant agreements are anticipated to terminate 3 years after the award, unless the anticipated project completion is longer than 3 years, for which the agreement will be terminated after 4 years. Deliverables are due within 2 years of the award. Extension of the grant agreement is at the sole discretion of the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Grant Review Team and funding may not be available for an extension. The applicant may forfeit the unpaid balance of this grant if these deadlines are not met or they cannot demonstrate earnest and good faith efforts to meet them.

Reporting

If selected for an award, the applicant will be required to submit quarterly progress updates and a final project report. Quarterly updates will include description of project progress, any scheduling changes, and invoicing/payments. Additionally, the applicants must provide the information on the selected outcome indicators selected by the Department of Transportation. The final project report should include brief project summary and lessons learned. Other project deliverables will be identified at the time of grant agreement.

Social Vulnerability and Equitable Outcomes

To ensure funding is distributed across all geographical and social classes of Maine, projects will be reviewed for location and social vulnerability. Social Vulnerability relates to the circumstances of a person or community that affect their capacity to anticipate, confront, repair, and recover from the effects of a disaster. The Maine Social Vulnerability Index (MSVI) was developed to help identify where vulnerable populations are located within the state and what factors drive those vulnerabilities. The MSVI uses 17 socioeconomic and demographic indicators taken from the US Census data. These

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indicators include poverty, minority status, people without vehicles, people with disabilities, older adults, and people with limited English proficiency. The Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund encourages applicants to integrate equity into proposals.

Applying for Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Support

As noted above, enrollment in the Community Resilience Partnership (administered by the Governor's Office of Policy Innovation and the Future) is strongly encouraged but not required.

The Department of Transportation will issue a Request for Application (RFA) for the Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund, which is anticipated to be released by April 22, 2022. New applications will be processed twice per year. The first round of applications will be accepted between April 22 and May 31 of 2022. Applicants must submit a completed proposal and will be scored by the Grant Review Team who will judge the merits of the proposal(s) received in accordance with the criteria defined in the RFA. Entities who have successfully enrolled in and completed the Regional Capacity Building Grant or Community Action Grant processes through the GOPIF's Community Resilience Partnership program will receive special consideration under the Project Scope and Design Details category. Based on project information, projects may be referred to alternative and better-suited grant or loan programs.

General Application Requirements

Applications, whether for scoping, design or construction funding, must address the following (as applicable):

1. Vulnerability and Climate Change Adaptation (25 points)
 - a. Identify the climate change natural hazards and their potential risk to your system. Natural hazards (include but are not limited to): heavy precipitation and floods, severe storms, stronger winds, sea level rise, storm surge, drought, wildfire, temperature change.
 - b. Describe the vulnerable asset, including location, asset age and condition, elevation.
 - c. Demonstrate climate change impacts or vulnerability to hazards, such as projected sea level rise or flooding.
 - d. Provide documentation of asset vulnerability from historic events, such as available reports or photos.
 - e. Identify the risks to public safety associated with vulnerability, such as infrastructure, vulnerable populations, public health, and natural resources from extreme weather and other climate change impacts. Describe anticipated impacts and resulting consequences, such as infrastructure damaged by flooding, ice jams, erosion; inaccessibility; inoperability; and service disruption. Identify those who will be impacted and describe the anticipated hardships.
2. Project Scope and Design Details (25 points)
 - a. Describe the proposed climate change adaptation project and rationale for the project selection, organized by project tasks, and including work to be completed, methodology, deliverables, and assigned project team members.
 - b. Provide available construction and site plans.

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- c. Provide details on how climate change projections and data have or will be considered and incorporated into the project design. This includes 1.5 ft and 3.9 ft of sea level rise along the coast by 2050 and 2100, respectively, as recommended by the MCC STS.
 - d. Describe how the proposed project will reduce the asset's vulnerabilities.
 - e. Describe how the project will improve community resilience at, adjacent to, and beyond the project site, and how outcomes will benefit the public. Indicate on what timescales these benefits and outcomes are expected.
 - f. Description of how the project will incorporate principles such as low impact design, green infrastructure, natural flood protection, or increased awareness of these types of techniques should be included. Describe any emissions reduction benefits (direct or indirect) the project may have due to energy efficiency, carbon sequestration, or inclusion of renewable energy in the design.
 - g. Describe metrics for how success will be measured.
 - h. Special consideration and/or lower match percentage (2.5%) will be given to projects that have been identified through the Community Resilience Partnership program.
3. Project Feasibility and Schedule (25 points)
 - a. Detailed timeline with anticipated completion dates for the project, including deliverables. Preference will be given to projects that are construction ready (permits obtained) or demonstrate ability to complete within the project period.
 - b. Provide likelihood of project success based on factors such as landowner, public, and partner support; technical feasibility; funding feasibility; technical, financial, and management capacity and qualifications of project team; and regulatory hurdles.
 - c. Description of transferability of project to other locations.
 - d. Include plans for education and outreach efforts to communicate goals, progress, and lessons learned.
 - e. Demonstrate public engagement with impacted groups, including socially vulnerable communities.
4. Budget (15 points)
 - a. Provide detailed budget by project task with an explanation of how any other required funding (grant funds and 5% cost-share) and other support by project partners will ensure success of the project.
 - b. Include whether project has already received or applied for other state funds in the past year? If so, what are they?
5. Project Management and Partners (10 points)
 - a. Include name and qualifications of an employee to serve as the local project manager and point of contact (name, resume and summary of experience). The name of the designated project manager shall be given to the Department of Transportation.
 - b. Provide name and contact information for the authorized responsible person in charge (owner and/or operator) of infrastructure.

Proposals should address Equitable Distribution of Benefits and include geographical location of asset and impacts. The Review Team, in its discretion, will give consideration to an Applicant's relative ranking on the Maine Social Vulnerability Index (MSVI) in making final award decisions.

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Scoring Process

The funds for this program will be administered by the Department of Transportation and will be awarded through a competitive process by Grant Review Team, comprised of qualified reviewers from multiple state agencies. The Grant Review Team will use a consensus approach to evaluate and score all sections listed in the RFA. Members of the review team will not score those sections individually, but, instead, will arrive at a consensus as to assignment of points for each of the sections. The Department of Transportation reserves the right to communicate and/or schedule interviews/presentations with applicants if needed to obtain clarification of information contained in the proposals and the Department of Transportation may revise the scores assigned in the initial evaluation to reflect those communications. The Grant Review Team could consist of Commissioners or their designees from agencies including DOT, DHHS, GOPIF, MEMA, and DEP and may also include other agencies.

Contract Requirements

Successful applicants will enter into a contract with MaineDOT prior to receiving funds.

Contracts will be similar to the Municipal Partnership Initiative (MPI) administered by the Department of Transportation. A contract template can be provided upon request.

Decisions by the Grant Review Team are final.

Application and Submission Instructions

Submit proposal, resumes, and letters of support by email in accordance with schedule above.

Proposal should cover requirements listed in “Applying for Maine Infrastructure Adaptation Fund Support” section above.

Submit proposals to <Adaptation.DOT@maine.gov>

Information will be available on the Department’s grant page:

<https://www.maine.gov/mdot/grants/mjrp>

Contact Information

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