Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document

Contents

Developed by the Clean Water Initiative Program

Document Purpose

This document outlines how the Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) will structure and launch its new Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI).

> *Initiative Purpose: The Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI) will support and invest in the capacity of our clean water partners in Vermont, both current and potential, in an equitable and inclusive way to address unmet capacity needs and ensure a strong partnership network that continues to efficiently deliver high quality and high priority clean water projects.*

Guidance included in this document is subject to change and may be incorporated into other policy documents as appropriate including the CWIP Funding Policy, the CWIP Spending Plan, or the Request for Proposals (RFP) and resulting grant agreements for a Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative - Block Grant Program. This document primarily focuses on the direct grants component of CWWCDI envisioned as a Block Grant program. It is intended to serve as a program reference document to assist grant applicants, Funding Program Administrator(s), and sub-grant recipients in better understanding the intent of the new Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative – Block Grant Program. For more context on the CWWCDI and its other components aside from the direct grants please see the [Background](#) section of this document.

Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI) – Block Grant Program

A key component of the CWWCDI is a direct grants program, administered as a Block Grant through a competitively selected Funding Program Administrator. To learn more about other components of CWWCDI please see the [Background](#) section of this document.

CWWCDI Block Grant - Design Principles

CWIP aims to develop and administer a funding opportunity that builds confidence that CWIP is using the limited capacity funds in the most equitable, inclusive, and responsive way. CWIP must make sure public investments are made soundly, and in a manner that can demonstrate impact in alignment with the intent of the Clean Water Fund. In developing the design of the CWWCDI Block Grant program, CWIP considered these goals and distilled them into specific design principles. Table 1 below highlights these funding program design principles and how those were integrated into the Block Grant program:

Table 1

Funding Program Design Principle	Mechanism for Integration
Responsive	Design sought to integrate lessons learned from a Phase 1[1] and to respond to feedback and requests from clean water partners. This includes the need for an administratively simple grant opportunity, and a flexible list of eligible activities and expenses.
Impactful	Impactful capacity efforts are those that address the key challenges and gaps identified in Phase 1. Therefore, this Block Grant design directs funding towards proposals that best address these challenges and gaps. To ensure that impacts are in alignment with the intent of the Clean Water Fund[2] (one source of dollars that supports this Block Grant), the grant design also defines specific intended impacts of these investments and requires subgrantees to identify how their activities will lead to a short list of desirable capacity outcomes and long-term impacts for clean water.
Sound	Sound investments are those that can create transformational change. Design, therefore, seeks to direct funding towards investments that are most likely to have self-sustaining impacts on capacity in the absence of future funding.
Equitable[3]	Design seeks to direct funding towards areas of the State of Vermont and organizations that don't otherwise have access to, or have work that aligns well with the goals of other major capacity grants in the state (i.e. the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets Water

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[1] For Phase 1 of the CWWCDI, CWIP hired a contractor (The Clark Group, LLC.) to conduct a capacity needs assessment through outreach to current and potential clean water partners. The goals of the assessment were to uncover key Clean Water Workforce capacity challenges and to outline which investments in capacity would accelerate adoption and implementation of clean water projects statewide. A final report from The Clark Group, LLC is available here.

[2] The state has made a long-term commitment to the Clean Water Initiative to provide the mechanisms, staffing, and financing necessary to achieve and maintain compliance with the Vermont Water Quality Standards. To achieve this, the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation's (DEC) Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) coordinates with committed state and federal agencies and local partners to fund, develop, implement, and track clean water projects that protect and restore water quality.

[3] Note that this is a CWIP programmatic interpretation of the concept of equitable distribution of funding. This is not to be confused with any state or federal (EPA) equity goals as they relate to respective Environmental Justice initiatives or requirements. This grant program's scope and funding is not currently subject to state or EPA-led Environmental Justice requirements.

	Quality Division). Design also seeks to achieve equitable distribution by keeping eligible subgrantees as broad as possible to allow for new or potential partners to access funds.
Inclusive	CWIP interprets inclusive to mean participatory. Design seeks inclusivity through public participation and an adaptive management approach. Initial design is informed by the outputs from Phase 1 which included focus group interactions, partner interviews, and a follow up public survey. Design also includes reporting questions to gather more input from grant recipients and to assist CWIP in re-evaluating the CWWCDI and the Block Grant program. This is part of the intent of structuring a pilot phase of the CWWCDI Block Grant.

CWWCDI Block Grant - Structure and Funding Program Administrator Responsibilities
Funding Program Administrator Scope of Work

The CWWCDI direct grants component will be structured as a Block Grant program. The Funding Program Administrator (FPA) selected to fill this role will oversee a Block Grant program to support and invest in the capacity of our clean water partners in Vermont, both current and potential, in an equitable and inclusive way to address unmet capacity needs and ensure a strong partnership network that continues to efficiently deliver high quality and high priority clean water projects.

Funding Program Administrator must follow both the applicable Expectations for All Grant Recipients and the applicable Expectations for Funding Program Administrators as outlined in the most current CWIP Funding Policy. Note some expectations in the Funding Policy are specific to construction-type clean water projects that are unlikely to occur under this CWWCDI Block Grant.

The FPA will be expected to fulfill the typical CWIP FPA responsibilities enumerated in the most current CWIP Funding Policy as well as a few additional tasks. CWIP will accept a Program Delivery budget up to 20% of the total Block Grant/Award budget to account for this additional suite of services.[4] Below is an expected Scope of Work for the Funding Program Administrator with non-standard tasks underlined:

1. Collaborate with CWIP staff to finalize all application and reporting templates/platforms to assist with achieving administrative simplicity for sub-grant applicants and recipients.

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[4] CWIP Program Delivery budgets are typically capped at 15% of total award values.

2. Solicit competitive proposals for organizational capacity development efforts.
3. Conduct communications and outreach to publicize competitive solicitation rounds. This includes posting solicitation round information on the Funding Program Administrator's website and broadly distributing announcement of funding opportunities. Make and document a concerted effort to advertise this funding opportunity outside of the FPA's typical channels to reach new or different audiences where feasible.
4. Provide hands-on technical support to interested sub-grant applicants or selected subgrantees who need assistance completing any required materials specific to this Block Grant. An informational webinar or workshop during solicitation periods is strongly encouraged. CWIP staff may assist with Q&A period during open solicitation rounds as needed.
5. Review proposals and determine alignment with applicable eligibility criteria provided by CWIP in this Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document.
6. Develop and apply a proposal prioritization schema that incorporates CWIP proposal prioritization goals outlined in this Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document.
7. Ensure funding decisions align with the intent of the Block Grant program. This includes but may not be limited to:
   a. Including at least one CWIP staff member on the proposal selection committee for this pilot Block Grant program.
   b. Consulting with CWIP staff to address any unforeseen gaps in guidance on this pilot program. If gaps in guidance arise in the process of proposal selection/funding decisions, consult with CWIP staff to address gaps *before* making a funding decision.
   c. Consulting with CWIP staff if any questions arise on whether a proposal meets the intent of the Block Grant program.
8. Oversee subgrantee and subcontractor work. This includes but is not limited to:
   a. Ensuring all subgrantee and subcontractor work proceeds in alignment with any guidance or direction provided by DEC staff, regulatory programs, and the most current CWIP Funding Policy (if applicable).
      i. Funding Program Administrator shall obtain the most up-to-date Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document before each solicitation round to ensure subgrantees/subcontractors are adhering to the most recent requirements.

    b. Compiling, reviewing, approving, and submitting deliverables and invoices to DEC. <u>Providing hands-on technical support to subgrantees who need assistance completing any required materials specific to this Block Grant.</u>

9. Maintain standardized processes to manage equipment ownership and disposition in a manner that ensures sub-grantees commit to using retained equipment for the same purpose as originally granted.
10. Report to and communicate regularly/proactively with the Technical Project Manager (TPM). <u>This includes interim and final reporting to meet federal funding reporting requirements.</u>
11. <u>Review deliverables from subgrantees and provide a final narrative report to CWIP evaluating the CWWCDI Block Grant program and providing recommendations for improvement and adaptive management opportunities.</u> [5]
12. Coordinate with other Funding Program Administrators (if applicable) to prevent duplication of effort, ensure clear public communications, share proposals, and achieve geographically equitable distribution of funds.
13. (Optional) <u>Provide shared capacity support services to subgrantees as needed either through in-house capacity or through sub-contracted/on-retainer services.</u>

Funding Program Administrator may use project completion funds encumbered through the block grant agreement to support their own capacity development needs as long as their block grant initiative allows for fair competition and access to funds for all interested sub-grant applicants and the proposal prioritization and selection process avoids conflicts of interest.

Funding Program Administrator Performance Measures, Milestones, and Deliverables

The selected FPA will be expected to achieve the following **performance measures**:

1. At least 15 entities that work in the Lake Champlain Basin will access a capacity building intervention.
2. At least ___ entities that work outside the Lake Champlain Basin will access a capacity building intervention.

The initial value for the second performance measure will be negotiated with selected Funding Program Administrator and enumerated in resulting agreement. The values of

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[5] CWIP has a tentative list of program evaluation questions for consideration but will work with the FPA to further refine the focus of this report.

both performance measures are subject to change via an amendment pending any additional award dollars that might be amended into the agreement.

The Funding Program Administrator is also responsible for ensuring that subgrantees complete and submit/report to the FPA subgrantee performance measures and reporting deliverables described in further detail in the Subgrantee Reporting section of this document.

Milestones and deliverables for the Funding Program Administrator will be outlined in the executed grant agreement. Some deliverables listed in the Milestone and Deliverable table may originate from the sub-grant applicants/recipients with the FPA responsible for aggregating, collating and/or synthesizing them for CWIP. Other deliverables are a product likely to originate from the FPA themselves, for example, the Final FPA Report.

Funding Program Administrator Performance Evaluation

Funding Program Administrator's performance will be discussed and assessed during quarterly check-ins with the Technical Project Manager, with a focus on addressing challenges. Performance is evaluated based on:

1. Timely, thorough, and thoughtful completion of milestones and deliverables;

2. Alignment of solicitation materials, selection prioritization scheme, and reporting materials with CWIP guidance and templates;

3. Level of effort made to reach new or different audiences during proposal solicitation;

4. Alignment of proposal selection with intent of the CWWCDI Block Grant program;

5. Level and nature of technical support provided to sub-grant applicants and recipients; and

6. Responsiveness and flexibility under a pilot Block Grant program.

Repeated misinterpretation of or disregard for CWIP guidance or the intent of CWWCDI Block Grant program will be documented as a risk factor when considering amendments or renewals or selecting recipients for new block grant funds.

Payment Provisions

Grant agreement will be structured as modified cost reimbursable. The FPA should follow payment provision guidelines enumerated in the grant agreement.

CWWCDI Block Grant – Information for Sub-grant Applicants and Recipients
Eligible Sub-grant Applicants

The design of the CWWCDI Block Grant seeks to advance an equitable distribution of funds by allowing as broad a list of eligible subgrantees as possible in the hopes this might invite new or non-traditional clean water partners to participate. All applicants are eligible to apply for a capacity support sub-grant from the FPA if they are a listed eligible grantee in the CWIP Funding Policy (see Figure 1 below) and are located in Vermont.

Figure 1

Eligible Entities	Ineligible Entities
Vermont municipalities Regional planning commissions Natural resource conservation districts Non-profit organizations State agencies State colleges and universities Public hospitals and medical centers Public schools	Private citizens, individuals Private for-profit businesses and industries Private for-profit colleges and universities Federal agencies

Eligible Sub-grant Activities and Expenses

CWIP heard through Phase 1 that flexibility is paramount to a successful capacity direct grants program. As such, in a pilot phase of this CWWCDI Block Grant CWIP is minimizing the limits on eligible activities and expenses. Other than the ineligible expenses and activities listed below, CWIP will accept any proposed activity or expense. This flexibility is subject to refinement during adaptive management of CWWCDI based on lessons learned through the Block Grant pilot phase, and with input from the selected FPA.

While most all activities/expenses may be eligible, proposals must adequately demonstrate how the proposed activities/expenses:

a. Will address at least one of the priority capacity gaps identified from Phase 1;
b. Will lead to an increase in the capacity factor(s) selected and have the proposed impact; and
c. Will be sustained (or the outcomes and impact will be sustained) after the close of the capacity grant/in the absence of future funding.
d. Proposals must also justify the budget, i.e. provide reasonable justification for how the numbers were calculated.

Failure to adequately demonstrate or address these items, as determined by the proposal review committee, will result in proposal rejection. CWIP will work with the selected FPA to determine a fair process for making this determination.

All budget categories are also eligible. This includes personnel, fringe, travel, supplies/equipment, professional services/contracts, and indirect consistent with an entity's approved or de minimis (10%) Indirect Cost rate, Cost Allocation Plan, or Negotiated Indirect Cost Rate Agreement (NIRCA).

Project Completion supports subgrantee/subcontractor (or grantee) costs associated with individual projects or capacity development efforts funded under the Block Grant. Other than the ineligible expenses and activities listed below, Project Completion costs can support any proposed activity or expense. This flexibility is subject to refinement during adaptive management of *CWWCDIBG* based on lessons learned through the Block Grant pilot phase, and with input from the selected FPA. FPA is responsible for monitoring subgrantee budgets to ensure they follow the guidelines enumerated in the resulting Block Grant agreement.

For both state and federal funds, dollars cannot be used for the following:

a. To cover costs associated with regulatory compliance, fines, or penalties

b. To cover costs related to the defense of any civil or criminal fraud proceeding or similar proceeding

c. To cover debt interest payments or to cover bad debt

d. To pay for goods or services for employees' personal use

e. To pay for charitable contributions or donations

f. To pay for certain commercial insurance

g. To pay membership costs for any social club

h. To cover certain "above and beyond" travel expenses like first class accommodations

i. To pay entertainment expenses

j. To purchase alcoholic beverages

k. To pay for for-profit advertising designed to promote the services or products of a for-profit contractor

l. To support large-scale structural debris river clean ups that may require heavy equipment or machinery or special safety gear to remove, or that would be potentially dangerous to remove, or that would supplant federal FEMA funding support.

For State Funds, no additional ineligible activities or expenses apply. For Federal Funds, dollars *also* cannot be used for the following:

m. To produce for-profit products

n. To pay for for-profit advertising designed to promote the contractor or its products, including the cost of promotional goods

o. To cover direct fundraising efforts, including expenses incurred to raise capital or solicit contributions (including hiring or contracting with a development specialist or grant writer)

p. To populate an endowment

q. To support legislative advocacy or lobbying of any kind (including membership costs for any organization whose primary purpose is lobbying)

r. To purchase food or beverage, including alcoholic beverages

s. To perform clean water project flood damage assessment work

FPAs will be directed to use federal funds to support entities that are located in the Lake Champlain Basin. FPAs may use their best judgment on how to proportionately apportion funds towards entities that are located and/or serve both inside and outside the Lake Champlain Basin. FPAs may use state funds to support entities located in the Lake Champlain Basin if they seek to fund activities that are otherwise ineligible for federal fund uses. FPAs should structure sub-agreement billing to ensure accurate and detailed accounting. FPAs should award federal and state funds in a geographically equitable manner.

Sub-grant Application Content
CWIP with provide the FPA with an application template to include baseline information that must be collected. CWIP will collaborate with the FPA to finalize all application templates/platforms to assist with achieving administrative simplicity for sub-grant applicants. CWIP has identified baseline information necessary to ensure

design principles are upheld. This includes requested information from applicants on the following:

1. Whether their geographic location or sector-based expertise allows them to access capacity funding from the Lake Champlain Basin Program or the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets Water Quality Division
2. A description of proposed activities
3. A total budget request and justification
4. A selection of at least one mandatory output and estimated value for that output. Outputs become the subgrantees' performance measures.
5. A selection of at least one mandatory capacity factor that is expected to increase as an outcome of the activities
6. A selection of at least one mandatory long-term impact type
7. A description of how proposed activities:
   a. Will address at least one of the priority capacity gaps identified from Phase 1
   b. Will lead to an increase in the capacity factor(s) selected and have the proposed impact
   c. Will be sustained (or the outcomes and impact will be sustained) after the close of the capacity grant/in the absence of future funding.

Required Subgrantee Outputs/Performance Measures

Sub-grant applicants will be required to select at least one mandatory output and estimated value for that output as part of their proposal for capacity funding. Outputs become the subgrantees' performance measures. Outputs for this program were selected to represent a breadth of possible activities/expenses. The table below lists the available outputs from which one must be selected along with further details on how to interpret it or examples of activities that may lead to that output. Subgrantees will be asked to report on any selected outputs/performance measures as part of final reporting. In keeping with our grant design goal of inclusivity, CWIP will request feedback on this list of outputs/performance measures as part of pilot grant close-out to learn if any should be added or removed.

Table 2

Output/Performance Measure Type	Output/Performance Measure Details
Number of improved systems, processes, or plans	This should measure or count improvements to internal operations. Examples might include development of a communications, strategic or fundraising plan, establishment of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for

	financial processing, or staff onboarding, or software automations or updated communications platforms.
Number of pieces of equipment or technology acquired	This can also include software acquisitions such as new customer management database tools to better track and record prior landowner conversations and relationships, or accounting or bookkeeping software.
Number of materials developed and dispersed	This is counting volume of outreach or education performed. "Materials" developed might include training videos, mobile applications, guidebooks, fact sheets, flyers, brochures, newsletters, or social media posts.
Number of partner full time equivalent (FTE) employee increase	This is looking at personnel capacity in the organization. Hiring new staff may increase the total available FTE to the organization or, using capacity funds to generally support staff time may create new flexibility or availability in staff hours that might amount to some portion of an FTE.
Number of new services/qualifications accessible to organization	This is used as an alternative to counting FTEs should the capacity activities involve contracting but not hiring certain professional services.
Number of hours of trainings/workshops attended by staff	This is counting training received by staff. It can cover a range of subjects or even hours for new-staff undergoing on-boarding or shadowing or being mentored by more seasoned staff.
Number of staff with new qualifications	This is looking at the results of any training received by staff or as a result of new hiring efforts. It assumes this might result in increased or more dynamic services to be offered by the organization.
Number of community members directly assisted	This is counting volume of outreach or education performed. It should be used mainly for one-on-one technical assistance work.
Number of community events, workshops, or meetings organized/attended by staff	This is counting volume of outreach or education performed. It might include events where staff tabled or provided other outreach or education either in-person or virtually, or volunteer recruitment efforts and training days.[6]
Number of new audiences reached	New audiences may be reached in many ways and can include both as passive recipients of organizational outreach and/or more active engagement or participation from new audiences. For example, it may be a helpful measure for new volunteers recruited, new board members recruited, or new communities participating in or attending outreach events.

Required Subgrantee Outcomes – Capacity Factors

Sub-grant applicants will be required to select at least one mandatory capacity factor that is expected to increase as an outcome of the proposed activities/expenses. CWIP has developed a short list of capacities that we believe to be desirable in assisting

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[6] Note that selected/funded proposals reporting on this output are very likely to also need to complete a Clean Water Outreach Efforts NForm, although other selected/funded proposals may also need to complete the Clean Water Outreach Efforts NForm, even if they haven't selected this as an output, if their activities align with the purposes of the Clean Water Outreach Efforts NForm.

partners in their clean water efforts. These were collected as part of our preparations for Phase 1 and further refined under Phase 2 design. A suite of capacity categories and factors were developed through review of resources describing other private and public capacity building initiatives. In keeping with our grant design goal of inclusivity, CWIP will request feedback on this list of capacity factors as part of pilot grant close-out to learn if any should be added or removed. The full list of capacity factors is outlined in Table 3 below. Subgrantees will be asked to complete both a capacity pre- and post-assessment for any selected capacity factors.

Table 3

Capacity Factor ID	Capacity Category	Capacity Factor
1.01	Technical	Our organization has sufficient staff, intern, and/or volunteer resources to implement key organizational and programmatic functions
1.02	Technical	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers are sufficiently trained to implement key organizational and programmatic functions
1.03	Technical	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers have the right mix of necessary skills and knowledge to implement key organizational and programmatic functions
1.04	Technical	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers are diverse and representative of audiences served
1.05	Technical	Our organization has access to well-functioning technology, materials, tools, equipment, and facilities necessary to complete our work.
2.01	Financial	Our financial operations are responsibly managed, reflect sound accounting principles, and allow for transparent accountability through regular auditing and reporting.
2.02	Financial	Our financial operations are managed and/or overseen by a financial professional or highly qualified or experienced financial specialist.
2.03	Financial	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers are sufficiently trained to perform assigned financial duties.
2.04	Financial	Our organization has a healthy balance sheet, diverse and stable funding sources, a clear fund development plan aligned with our mission, long-term goals, and strategic direction and our organization is not overly leveraged.
2.05	Financial	Our fundraising and development efforts are managed and/or overseen by a development professional or highly qualified or experienced development specialist.
2.06	Financial	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers are sufficiently trained to perform assigned fundraising or development duties.

2.07	Financial	Our organization has sufficient staff, intern, and/or volunteer resources to implement key financial, fundraising, or development functions

3.01	Process/Management	Our organization enjoys strong human resources management practices and can efficiently and effectively identify, recruit, and train skilled and diverse staff, interns, and volunteers.
3.02	Process/Management	Our organization enjoys strong human resources management practices and can support competitive personnel compensation and benefits that retain skilled staff, interns, and volunteers.
3.03	Process/Management	Our organization is sufficiently buoyed against the impacts of staff turnover through the use of tools, technologies, and/or practices that support sharing and retention of institutional knowledge, skills, and relationships.
3.04	Process/Management	Our organization has a collection of documented systems, policies, and standard operating procedures that allow for effective and efficient use of organizational resources.
3.05	Process/Management	Our organization has a collection of vetted and documented systems, policies, and standard operating procedures that keep us in compliance with applicable state or federals laws, regulations, and grant/contract terms and conditions.
3.06	Process/Management	Our organization has sufficient staff, intern, and/or volunteer resources to implement key process/management functions.
3.07	Process/Management	Our staff, interns, and/or volunteers are sufficiently trained to perform assigned process/management duties.
3.08	Process/Management	Our organization has sufficient insurance, appropriate tax status, procurement policies, and a sufficient Negotiated Indirect Rate Agreement to be able to access and cost-effectively implement DEC clean water grants.
3.09	Process/Management	Our organization has defined diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice goals for our internal operations and/or service delivery practices.
3.10	Process/Management	Our organization has a clear plan and available resources to integrate diversity, equity, inclusion, and environmental justice goals into our internal operations and/or service delivery practices.

4.01	Network/Leadership	Our organization enjoys strong relationships with other clean water workforce entities and professionals.
4.02	Network/Leadership	Our organization enjoys strong relationships with community members and landowners.
4.03	Network/Leadership	Our community/ies rely on our organization to provide clean water services and we are seen as a local clean water expert.
4.04	Network/Leadership	Our organization has high visibility and is a known and trusted name.

4.05	Network/Leadership	Board leadership is representative of beneficiary communities and responsive to changing community needs.
4.06	Network/Leadership	Board leadership is engaged and effectively oversees and supports the organization's policies, programs, and operations.

5.01	Strategic/Adaptive	Our organization has a strong and clear vision, mission, and identity.
5.02	Strategic/Adaptive	Our organization has an active strategic plan and an ability to plan adaptively by monitoring, assessing, and responding to internal/external changes.
5.03	Strategic/Adaptive	Our organization performs inclusive planning processes to ensure services remain relevant and vital to benefitting communities.

Required Subgrantee Impact

Sub-grant applicants will be required to select one mandatory long-term impact. To ensure that impacts are in alignment with the intent of the Clean Water Fund (one source of dollars that populates this Block Grant), CWIP has identified three specific/desirable impacts of these investments on clean water efforts (see Table 4 below). In keeping with our grant design goal of inclusivity, CWIP will request feedback on this list of impact types as part of pilot grant close-out to learn if any should be added or removed. Subgrantees will be asked to complete a brief narrative reflection on resulting impacts as part of a final report and a follow-up retrospective impact report.

Table 4

Impact Type
Our organization is able to perform more clean water work
Our organization is able to perform more complex clean water work
Our organization is more effective at propelling the clean water efforts of others

Priority Capacity Gaps/Challenges

The Phase 1 assessment illuminated many capacity challenges for Vermont's Clean Water Workforce and provided many recommendations for intervention. Please see the [Phase 1 Main Takeaways](#) sections of this document to learn more about the Phase 1 assessment. In particular, it became clear that traditional clean water project-based funding has created some critical capacity gaps in clean water workforces and

16

organizations. CWIP has summarized this into three key goals for this capacity funding so that it is impactful and targeted towards these gaps. Proposed activities should address at least one of these priority gaps/challenges. Strong proposals will have a very convincing narrative on this linkage. Note these priorities are described broadly to allow for flexibility. Sub-grant applicants are encouraged to review Tables 5 and 6 below for example activities and reasoning in how those activities can contribute to CWIPs priorities.

Table 5

Priority ID	Priority Goal	A description of the challenge/gap	Why this matters for capacity and clean water work
1	Catalyze community engagement, relationship-building, and enhanced representation	Community engagement and relationship-building is a critical yet underfunded aspect of advancing voluntary clean water projects. Organizations spend countless (self-funded) hours growing a community ethos for clean water stewardship, communicating and educating the public on the value of their work, rallying, inspiring, and training volunteers, and building relationships with potential clean water project site hosts and landowners. Since this work can rarely be tied to a specific project, organizations cannot rely on project grant funding to support these efforts. Since many organizations lack sufficient unrestricted funding, however, outreach/engagement is one of the first activities to be sacrificed. Sometimes organizations rely on previously built reputations and relationships, but these depend on long staff tenureship to sustain. With staff turn-over many organizations are struggling to maintain community relationships and a strong public-facing reputation. Engagement with underrepresented, disadvantaged, or non-traditional communities are particularly vulnerable to underfunding these efforts or to the loss of trusted community liaisons. This type of engagement may look different or be more time intensive and organizations need the support to perform this work in a manner that broadens the inclusivity of water quality conservation and restoration. This inclusivity is critical to ensuring services provided by these organizations are relevant and valuable to their communities.	Organizations flourish when their surrounding community appreciates, feels connected to, and supports their work. An organization that has invested in community relationships becomes a known and trusted name which invites more clean water projects to the table and increases landowner confidence in recommended clean water solutions. Coupled with a community of residents educated and primed to say "yes" to conservation and restoration, these organizations benefit from these social resources and more effectively accelerate adoption and implementation of clean water projects across the landscape. Furthermore, these relationships can be the backbone to successful locally-driven fundraising efforts fostering more financially stable operations.
2	Transition administrative, financial, and fundraising roles and processes towards sustainable and streamlined solutions	Some organizations are unable to hire dedicated administrative, financial and fundraising staff due to a lack of funding not tied to project-based deliverables (and the fact that overhead funding from project-based grants is not sufficient to cover all personnel and general operating costs). This means project-based/programmatic staff are relied on to perform administrative and fundraising work. This leads to both 1) unstable administrative, financial and fundraising conditions as organizations rely on staff with limited if any expertise in these areas and 2) loss of project capacity as programmatic staff attention is diverted. 1) When an organization's administrative, financial and fundraising functions lack professional-level expertise this can have ramifications on the organization's financial and operational stability making it difficult for the organization to competitively recruit and retain qualified programmatic staff. 2) Even organizations that have strong administrative, financial and fundraising capacities may struggle with inefficient processes or software that hampers the organization's ability to perform clean water work. Specifically, when clean water professionals/programmatic staff need to balance	Allowing organizations to on-board administrative, financial and fundraising expertise or to grow that expertise in-house will pay dividends in organizational financial stability. Financially healthy and operationally efficient organizations can better compete in the job market to recruit and retain programmatic staff with the skills needed to accelerate adoption and implementation of clean water projects. Similarly, investments to streamline or improve administrative, financial and fundraising duties can free up programmatic staff time to focus on advancing clean water projects.

		their time between pursuing funding and administering grants/performing basic operational work with actual project development and implementation, and when this work is particularly inefficient or burdensome, this limits their capacity to scale up clean water project services.	
3	Support professional development and a workforce pipeline for careers in clean water project management	There is a need for clean water project managers who have the skills and experience to oversee projects and manage subcontractors. This work requires a specific set of expertise that can be curated through experience but that can be lost with staff turnover. Many clean water partners in Vermont operate in very small organizations such that when well-trained project managers leave, there are few well-trained employees ready to fill the gap. These small organizations also struggle with limited organizational resources to invest in effective recruitment of diverse and qualified new staff and in meaningful or holistic on-boarding and trainings. In particular, staff mentoring between new and seasoned employees or across peer networks is a significant value-add for increasing the breadth and depth of institutional knowledge, but it can be difficult to support financially. As clean water projects grow in size and complexity, even well-seasoned project managers need support to attend trainings that help them stay up to date on new best management practices (bmps), regulations, requirements, or tools, as well as to learn about the complexities of new project types. These positions can also serve to alleviate capacity gaps in the engineering sector by gaining skills in and providing new services in conceptual design or landscape assessment work.	Staff turnover is costly from the perspective of lost expertise. A stable workforce is critical to carry institutional knowledge through long range and complex clean water projects. Investments that support a more consistent and diverse pipeline of staffing and training in this field will help reduce the costs associated with staff turnover and ensure these organizations can continue to advance clean water projects in step with the demand and in a manner that represents the needs of the communities they serve.

Table 6

Priority ID	Objectives	Example Activities (not a complete list)
1	**CWIP seeks to fund activities that help clean water workforce organizations catalyze community engagement, relationship-building, and enhanced representation.** This may include activities that increase the organization's presence in the community or grow the community's awareness or knowledge of the organization, activities that grow community commitment and interest in the organization's clean water efforts, activities that inspire the clean water efforts of others, activities that help an organization sustain relationships over time, and activities that diversify and build audience inclusion or	->Develop and implement a strategic and responsive communications plan ->Hire a communications professional or a "community liaison" to reach new audiences ->Implement education campaigns or materials development (including websites, mobile apps, recorded webinar series, guidebooks, fact sheets, and resource libraries on content such as water quality conservation benefits and practices, research trials, regulatory requirements, grant opportunities, innovative practices and initiatives) ->Host or perform outreach at in-person or virtual workshops, events, and trainings ->Design and deliver enhanced volunteer recruitment and trainings to grow the size and skillset of an organization's volunteer network. This might include volunteer recruitment efforts and tools, training opportunities, more volunteer days, or hiring a volunteer coordinator. ->Foster stronger personal relationships with landowners through one-on-one technical assistance ->Support board stipends to incentivize participation on boards from community members who would not otherwise be able to join, with an aim of making the board more representative of the community the organization serves.

	that increase a community's representation within organizational decision-making.	->Invest in customer management database tools to better track and record prior landowner conversations and relationships.
2	**CWIP seeks to fund activities that help clean water workforce organizations transition administrative, financial, and fundraising roles and processes towards sustainable and streamlined solutions**. This may include activities that shift administrative, financial and fundraising responsibilities away from programmatic staff, activities that increase an organization's administrative, financial and fundraising competencies, or activities that help organizations streamline administrative, financial and fundraising work.	->Hire or contract with development or financial management/bookkeeping professionals who are knowledgeable in nonprofit and governmental budgeting, fundraising, and accounting. ->Hire or contract with human resource or administrative professionals. ->Contract with a legal or human resource expert to vet personnel and other policies ->Attend external trainings for staff, volunteers, or board members in topics including payroll planning, project and organizational budgeting and nonprofit and governmental accounting, and calculating/negotiating indirect and billable rates. ->Perform a financial audit ->Document Standard Operating Procedures for certain administrative or financial processes ->Update sales platforms or accounting software ->Support programmatic personnel expenses during gaps in project work to provide longer term stability in personnel planning
3	**CWIP seeks to fund activities that support professional development and a workforce pipeline for careers in clean water project management.** This may include activities that focus on recruitment and on-boarding of a diverse "next generation" workforce, activities that support professional development and training in clean water project topics, and activities that strengthen peer-peer and co-learning networks.	->Attend trainings in a range of clean water project topics for staff to grow skills or knowledge in clean water project implementation. ->Support personnel hours for new programmatic staff unable to charge time to existing project-based grants or while shadowing seasoned staff on tag-along or mentorship days. ->Develop formal onboarding procedures and training materials, or human resource systems that encourage professional development growth plans. ->Develop Clean Water Project Management Standard Operating Procedures or best practices and considerations to train new staff in. ->Perform staff recruitment in new and diverse venues. ->Host a collaborative project demonstration day for peers

Sub-grant Proposal Prioritization

First and foremost, while most all activities/expenses may be eligible, proposals <u>must</u> adequately demonstrate how the proposed activities/expenses:

a. Will address at least one of the priority capacity gaps identified from Phase 1;
b. Will lead to an increase in the capacity factor(s) selected and have the proposed impact; and
c. Will be sustained (or the outcomes and impact will be sustained) after the close of the capacity grant/in the absence of future funding.
d. Proposals must also justify the budget, i.e. provide reasonable justification for how the numbers were calculated.

Failure to adequately demonstrate these items, as determined by the proposal review committee, will result in proposal rejection. CWIP will work with the selected FPA to determine a fair process for making this determination.

All proposals that adequately demonstrate these pieces can be considered and prioritized should there be greater demand than available funding. The selected FPA will be expected to develop a prioritization scheme that reflects the following prioritization and programmatic goals for the CWWCDI Block Grant. CWIP will work with the FPA to sort out appropriate weighting or how to address competing goals if needed:

1. Funding should be directed or prioritized towards areas of the state and organizations that don't otherwise have access to, or have work that aligns well with the goals of other major capacity grants in the state (i.e. the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the Agency of Agriculture Food and Markets).
2. Funding should be directed or prioritized towards new or non-traditional clean water partners.
3. Funding should be directed or prioritized towards the strongest proposals. Stronger proposals are those that:
    a. Have a well-researched and justified budget
    b. Propose a range of capacity improvements and impacts
    c. Have compelling narrative explanations of the link between proposed activities and priority gaps, capacity, impact, and self-sustainability
4. FPAs should seek to fund a large number of strong proposals and to, therefore, be critical when reviewing both the quality and the cost-competitiveness of proposals.

Sub-grant Proposal Selection

Given the flexibility baked into the direct grants design, the FPA will be required to include CWIP representation on the proposal review and selection committee. CWIP participation on the selection committee is primarily to serve as a learning opportunity to see how the design components have informed the suite of capacity requests but CWIP staff will also serve in a consultation role to address questions on specific proposals and their alignment with the intent of the Block Grant program. The FPA will be expected to collaborate with CWIP staff on proposal review and selection in a manner that ensures funding decisions align with the intent of the Block Grant program in instances where drafted guidance may be missing. As outlined in the scope of work above, this includes but may not be limited to:

1. Including at least one CWIP staff member on the proposal selection committee for this pilot Block Grant program.
2. Consulting with CWIP staff to address any unforeseen gaps in guidance on this pilot program. If gaps in guidance arise in the process of proposal selection/funding decisions, consult with CWIP staff to address gaps *before* making a funding decision.
3. Consulting with CWIP staff if any questions arise on whether a proposal meets the intent of the Block Grant program.

Otherwise, the FPA has flexibility in how they will structure and support a proposal review committee.

Subgrantee Reporting

CWIP with provide the FPA with a reporting template to include baseline information that must be collected from subgrantees. CWIP will collaborate with the FPA to finalize all templates/platforms to assist with achieving administrative simplicity for subgrantees. CWIP has identified baseline information necessary to ensure design principles are upheld.

The Funding Program Administrator is responsible for ensuring that subgrantees complete and submit/report to the Funding Program Administrator the following reporting deliverables:

1. A capacity pre-assessment, completed before capacity investments or efforts are initiated.

2. A final report, completed at most one month after capacity investments or efforts are complete, to include a capacity post-assessment.

3. Complete all required fields in the Clean Water Outreach Efforts "NForm"[7] as applicable per intervention activities.

4. A retrospective impact report, completed at least one year after capacity investments or efforts are finished.

5. Completed Clean Water Project Flood Response Project Surveys as applicable per intervention activities.

6. Any other data as requested by the State

Other reporting requirements may be enumerated in the Block Grant agreement(s). Figure 2 below provides a visual for the timing of expected deliverables from sub-grant applicants and recipients:

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[7] State agencies are required to report to the Legislature on the extent of clean water activities statewide, including outreach, under the Vermont Clean Water Act (2015 Act 64). Reporting the state's clean water outreach applies to state agency staff, as well as partners conducting outreach under the scope of a state grant or contract agreement. The Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) has developed this online form for event organizers to record information on individual events to consistently track outreach across state agencies and partners. Clean water outreach is defined as organized outreach to the public, stakeholders, and partners with the overarching intent of increasing adoption and effectiveness of projects to improve water quality. This may involve outreach to landowners to increase adoption of clean water projects, raise awareness on new or changing regulatory requirements, provide financial or technical assistance, or collect input on regulatory or funding programs to support clean water implementation. Outreach events are categorized as trainings, workshops, and public/stakeholder input meetings. Targeted or one-on-one technical assistance efforts should *not* be reported using ANR Online, as these activities are *not* considered clean water *outreach* and will be captured through other reporting mechanisms.

Figure 2
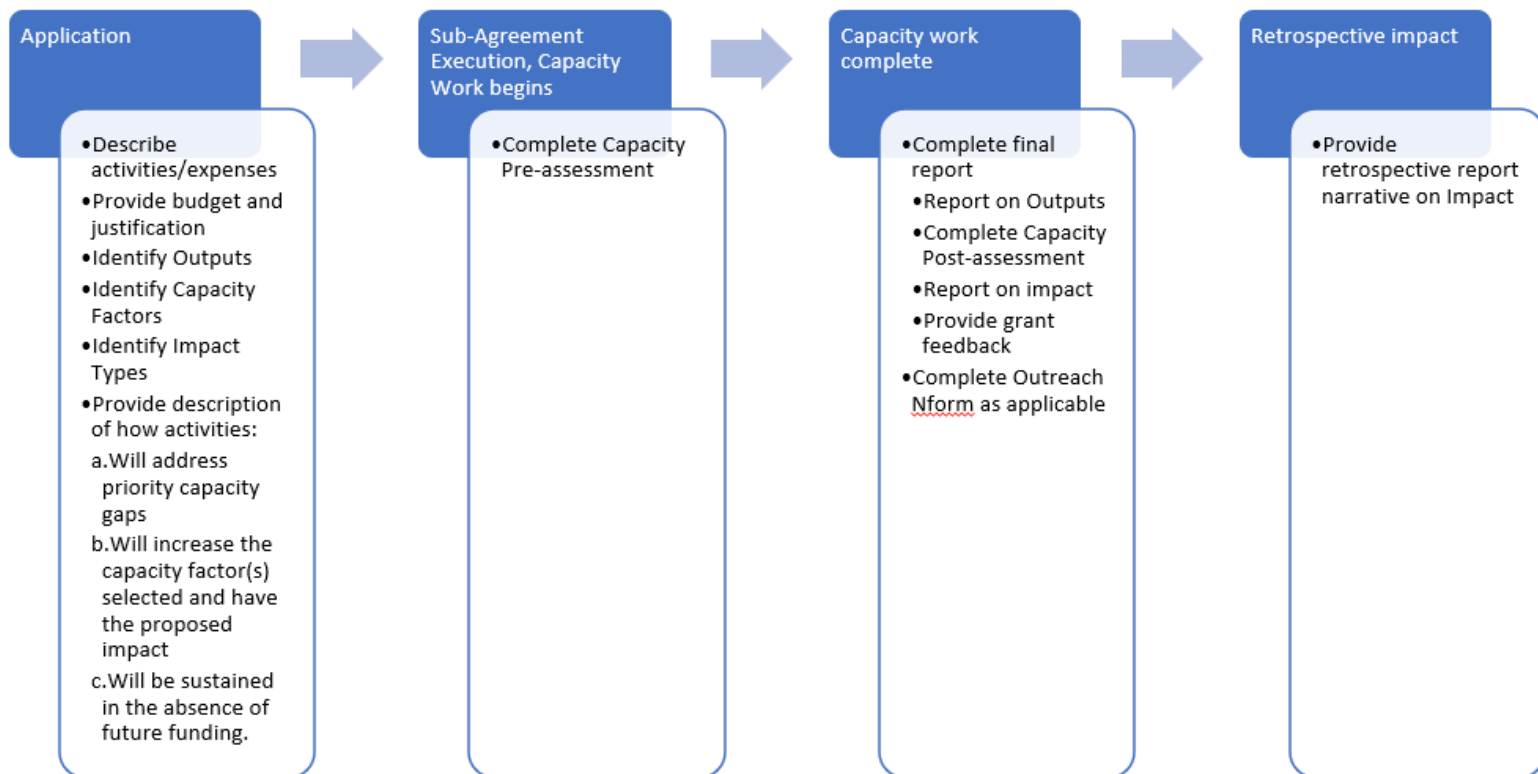
The Clean Water Performance Report

The Vermont Clean Water Initiative Annual Performance Report summarizes the State of Vermont's clean water efforts and demonstrates how investments are making a difference in water quality of Vermont's rivers, lakes, and wetlands. Outputs, outcomes, impact and other reporting components of the CWWCDI Block Grant program will be integrated into this public-facing performance report. Reporting metrics have been chosen and designed for both simplicity and relevance. **FPA and subgrantee active and thorough participation in reporting will help shape the story for the impact and value of this capacity funding.**

The Capacity Pre- and Post- Assessment

Subgrantees will be asked to complete both a capacity pre- and post-assessment for any selected capacity factors. In keeping with the grant design goal of simplicity, CWIP will mobilize a likert-scale approach to measuring change to these capacity factors rather than expecting subgrantees to collect any specific or additional data points. Below are tentative instructions:

Please complete this capacity assessment twice. First, before implementing any capacity improvements ("pre-assessment"), and second, immediately after (at most one month after) completing the capacity improvements as part of your final reporting ("post-assessment"). Only complete the assessment for capacity factors that you have identified as part of your original funding application. These are the capacity factors that you indicated will be improved by your capacity work and so these are the ones we'd like to measure any change in. **For each factor you are reporting on, indicate how true the statement is for your organization with 1 being "not at all true" and 5 bring "completely true". Whole numbers are encouraged but not required**.

FPA will be responsible for collating capacity pre- and post- assessments from all sub-grant recipients and synthesizing data onto a single template for reporting to CWIP. CWIP will provide a template for this synthesis work.

Impact Reporting

Recognizing the time it might take for impacts to be realized we have structured impact reporting to happen both at the end of the capacity efforts as well as 1-2 years later. Subgrantees will be asked to complete a brief narrative reflection on resulting impacts as part of a final report and a follow-up retrospective impact report. In keeping with our grant design goal of simplicity, CWIP will just ask for a short narrative reflection from the subgrantee rather than expecting subgrantees to collect any specific or additional data points. Below are tentative instructions:

For all impact types listed in your application, please provide a narrative reflection on whether your activities resulted in the intended impact. Specifically, please indicate 1) the extent to which you agree that your capacity efforts resulted in the impact as described, and 2) what information you're using to make that determination (for example, are you relying on specific metrics? or can you provide an example or anecdote that demonstrates this impact?). For the retrospective report, has anything changed since the final report (for example, have any of the impact statements become more or less true over time? Have you had any other experiences as an organization that may have affected these impacts?)

Background on the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI)

Due to additional investments from the Vermont Clean Water Budget, American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), the Lake Champlain Basin Program, and other opportunities, the total funding for clean water projects over the next few fiscal years is expected to be orders of magnitude greater than historical levels. Implementation of clean water projects across multiple sectors requires expanded capacity and evolving technical

expertise of a network of partners that are numerous, diverse, well-trained, and well-resourced. With a relatively sudden increase in federal and state funds, Vermont DEC's Clean Water Initiative Program (CWIP) wants to ensure that our valued partners can effectively and sustainably meet the upsized demand for more clean water project development, design, implementation, and maintenance.

Funding Source

The Vermont Clean Water Board has allocated several fiscal years of funds to broadly support the Clean Water Initiative Program's Program and Partner Support efforts. In the Clean Water Budgets for State Fiscal Years (SFY) 2023 and 2024, this line item more specifically includes all initiatives under the ANR-DEC CWIP that are foundational to supporting the structure and function of the Clean Water Fund and program obligations under Act 76 of 2019 and Act 64 of 2015. Since SFY 2022 the Clean Water Initiative Program has obligated dollars under this line-item to a CWIP Spending Plan line called the "Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative" in anticipation of accelerating demands on partner capacities.

The CWIP has also secured one Federal Fiscal Year (FFY 2022) of funds from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) through the Lake Champlain Basin Program budgeting process and is coordinating to apply for an additional year of federal funding support.

As of April 2023 the full Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative has the following funding. Asterisked columns are pending approval:

	Clean Water Fund (CWF)				Lake Champlain Basin Program (LCBP)			
	SFY22	SFY23	SFY24*	CWF TOTAL	FFY22	FFY23*	LCBP Total	Total
Phase 1	$76,265.57			$76,265.57			$ -	$76,265.57
Phase 2	$269,284.43	$ 294,984.00	$ 471,580.00	$1,035,848.43	$ 100,000.00	$ 300,000.00	$ 400,000.00	$1,435,848.43
Total	$345,550.00	$ 294,984.00	$ 471,580.00	$1,112,114.00	$ 100,000.00	$ 300,000.00	$ 400,000.00	$1,512,114.00

Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI) Program Design Efforts to Date

After securing an initial pot of funds in State Fiscal Year 2022, the CWIP defined a purpose for the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative (CWWCDI) as follows:

The Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative will support and invest in the capacity of our partners, both current and potential, in an equitable and inclusive way to address unmet capacity needs and ensure a strong partnership network that continues to efficiently deliver high quality and high priority clean water projects.

Throughout 2021, CWIP worked to define the scope of CWWCDI and determine next steps. This included:

1. Performed an internal review of several CWIP grant programs as they relate to clean water project work. Identified which entities are likely to receive support from these grants through the Act 76 transition and where capacity development support may help fill in the gaps.
2. Reviewed capacity development resources for grant-making institutions and developed a CWIP-specific diagram of capacity categories and factors.
3. Performed informational interviews with staff from the Lake Champlain Basin Program and the Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets Water Quality Division on their lessons-learned providing capacity grants for clean water partners and reviewed their granting materials.
4. Convened a Focus Group which included a small collection of clean water partners that we regularly engage with to broadly discuss this Initiative and to help us refine the purpose and structure of a Phase 1 assessment.

Recognizing that we needed to know more about the ground-level capacity needs of our clean water partners, CWIP refined the Initiative purpose, Core Questions, and Considerations for Priority Interventions, and then drafted and released a request for proposals (RFP) for an external consultant to help us with a Phase 1 assessment. Throughout the course of 2022, CWIP collaborated with a selected vendor to perform an assessment of partners. Once the final report was completed, CWIP solicited additional public input/reflections on the report's findings through an online survey announced via CWIP's Mail Chimp Grants Notification Listserv. CWIP also hosted a public presentation on the Phase 1 assessment in October 2022. Since January 2023, CWIP has been actively refining the design of the CWWCDI broadly and the direct grants component more specifically.

Phase 1 Capacity Assessment and Public Feedback Main Takeaways

The Phase 1 assessment illuminated many capacity challenges for Vermont's Clean Water Workforce and provided many recommendations for intervention. CWIP's main takeaways from Phase 1 are as follows:

1. We received feedback relevant to DEC's internal operations or policies that add administrative burdens to our partners.

2. We received requests for training topics but also heard that training is only one of many capacity needs for clean water partners.

3. We heard that organization needs are diverse and that flexibility in direct grant design is critical to a successful capacity building effort.

4. In particular, traditional clean water project-based funding is ill-equipped to support critical capacity gaps in clean water workforces and organizations.

Current CWWCDI Structure

CWIP is advancing several components of the CWWCDI to address some of the key takeaways from Phase 1.

1. To address the feedback related to internal auditing/process improvements, CWIP has integrated into our long-term programmatic strategic plan to make system-wide process improvements in a manner that can simplify processes where feasible.
2. To address the multitude of training requests, CWIP is exploring its role to serve as a clearing house for clean water-related training content and as a content developer where gaps exist as requested by subgrantees. This component of the initiative is still under development as of June 2023.
3. CWIP is implementing the first recommendation out of the Phase 1 report to establish a multi-year capacity-building grant program via the CWWCDI Block Grant. The majority of this document focuses on this component of the CWWCDI. The pilot phase of the CWWCDI Block Grant will be apportioned a subset of total available funds for the initiative.
4. CWIP is exploring the integration of adaptive management principles where feasible into the CWWCDI structure. To begin, CWIP has included reporting questions of the CWWCDI Block Grant FPA and subgrantees to provide feedback on grant design and training needs. We are continuing to refine our adaptive questions, but some tentative questions include:
    a. Who is/is not applying to the CWWCDI Block Grant opportunity, who is/is not selected for funding, and what does this tell us about need for capacity funding?
    b. What are groups spending their capacity money on? What can we learn from that? Which are leading to more clean water/long term impacts?
    c. To what degree do we want to know "capacity" broadly, or specific capacities like type (leadership, staff) or sector (wetlands, dams)?

    d. What are the trends or major lessons that can be gathered through feedback provided by the subgrantees of the CWWCDI Block Grant?
        i. Do we need to adjust our definition of capacity, quantification of capacity, or long-term clean water impact measures?
        ii. Do we need to make changes in grant administration/reporting/application requirements?
    e. Is our definition of capacity missing anything?
    f. Should we host other centralized investments beyond training?

Works Reviewed for Phase 2 Design

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4. Connolly, P., and Lukas, C. (2002). *Components of Organizational Capacity - Excerpt from Building to Last: A Funder's Guide to Capacity Building. A work in progress by Paul Connolly of The Conservation Company and Carol Lukas of Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.* Amherst H. Wilder Foundation. Retrieved 2022, from https://apps.oac.ohio.gov/grantsprogs/BuildingCommunitiesEnglish/ComponentsOrganizationalCapacity.doc

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9. Mass Cultural Council. (n.d.). *Cultural Investment Portfolio Organizational Capacity Measurement Tool.* Retrieved 2023, from https://www.massculturalcouncil.org/documents/CIP_Capacity_Measurement_Tool.pdf

10. National Council of Nonprofits. (n.d.). *What is Capacity Building?* Retrieved 2022 from https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/running-nonprofit/governance-leadership/what-capacity-building

11. Pond, A. (2015). *Supporting Grantee Capacity – Strengthening Effectiveness Together.* Grant Craft - A Service of Foundation Center. Retrieved 2022, from https://learningforfunders.candid.org/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2018/12/Capacity_Building_Guide_-_locked.pdf

12. The Clark Group, LLC. (2022). *Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development – Phase 1 Final Report*. Available: https://dec.vermont.gov/sites/dec/files/WID/CWIP/2022%20Clean%20Water%20Workforce%20Capacity%20Development%20Phase%201%20Final%20Report_PDF%20(1).pdf

Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document

Flood Response and Recovery Addendum

Posted:8/21/2023
Updated: 7/19/2024
In effect through: 8/31/2027

Introduction

Vermont continues to experience catastrophic rain and flooding events statewide that severely impact local communities, businesses, organizations, and homes. CWIP has developed this Flood Response and Recovery Addendum to the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document to expand the eligible uses of these funds under the Block Grant to support flood relief and recovery efforts with a continuing emphasis on how that assists with clean water workforce capacity needs.[8] This addendum is active for the time period listed above. CWIP will consult with the selected Funding Program Administrator on whether to continue this addendum beyond this initial timeframe. A July 2024 update to this addendum removes specific reference to the 2023 summer flooding events in recognition that the State continues to face severe weather challenges including the December 2023 and Summer 2024 rain events.

This addendum includes additional content for 1) the Priority Goals, 2) outputs, 3) eligible expenses, and 4) a survey specific to clean water project Flood Response. Please submit questions on this addendum to the selected Funding Program Administrator for the *Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Block Grant*, once selected. The Funding Program Administrator will work with their DEC Technical Project Manager to provide an answer. The selected Funding Program Administrator and their contact information will be listed on the CWIP Funding Opportunities site page. If a Funding Program Administrator is not yet selected, you may submit questions directly to the Clean Water Initiative Program at *ANR.CleanWaterVT@vermont.gov* .

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[8] Other assistance can be found here:
- https://www.vermont.gov/flood#damage-disaster-relief
- https://vermontcf.org/our-impact/programs-and-funds/special-and-urgent-needs/
- https://labor.vermont.gov/dua

Developed by the Clean Water Initiative Program

Priority Goals

This addendum adds a fourth priority goal to the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Block Grant. Proposed sub-grantee activities should address at least one of the priority goals and can solely focus on priority 4 if needed.

Priority ID	Priority Goal	A description of the challenge/gap	Why this matters for capacity and clean water work
4	Support organizational or community-level flood relief and recovery efforts[9]	The recent catastrophic flooding and rain events across Vermont impacts landscapes, businesses, and homes. We expect some of our partners are persevering with community-level flood relief and recovery despite experiencing their own personal and/or professional losses. Since this work is not tied specifically to clean water project implementation, organizations must rely on insufficient unrestricted funding to cover their time and expenses in these efforts. It is currently unclear what extent of damage has occurred to our clean water workforce or the communities they serve. Damages may be physical, or may also be unrealized or lost potential, as well as causing an emotional toll on individuals.	Organizations trying to financially weather the impacts of these recent storms can hardly thrive to advance more or more complex clean water funding. Flexible financial support at this juncture is essential to ensuring these organizations and their staff can get back on their feet and assist their communities with flood-related damages and needs.

Priority ID	Objectives	Example Activities (not a complete list)
4	**CWIP seeks to support organizational or community-level flood relief and recovery efforts.** This may include activities or expenses that support the organization and its	->Replacing lost or damaged equipment, technology, or tools[10] ->Moving expenses due to loss of workspace ->Participating in local, regional or statewide forums on flood response or recovery ->Organizing river clean-up events[11]

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[9] Note that CWIP is exploring expanding this priority to cover other climate change-related disasters and challenges in future iterations of this funding initiative.

[10] CWIP recommends using this capacity funding as a last resort once insurance and FEMA assistance for these types of replacement costs are fully capitalized.

[11] Customarily river clean ups have not been eligible for DEC funds, however, DEC understands due to the recent flooding events, organizations are facing a great degree of unmet and unfunded demand to support these activities. This flood addendum opens eligibility to allow organizations to meet this need. Note this funding is not intended to support large-scale structural debris clean ups that may require heavy equipment or machinery. These types of activities are possibly FEMA-eligible and the CWIP capacity funding should not supplant Federal FEMA support or other emergency flood response/recovery sources. Capacity grant subrecipients should consult with the applicable landowners and municipalities to confirm their work will not supplant FEMA-eligible reimbursements. If clean-up crews encounter any large structural debris or hazardous materials that would require heavy machinery or special safety gear to remove or that would be potentially dangerous to remove, they should not attempt removal but rather report debris to the applicable municipality. Please see guidance on best practices for clean-ups post flooding available https://anr.vermont.gov/flood#clean-up.

	staff, as well as activities that the organization participates in or leads to support their community or service area.	->Performing preliminary assessment of clean water project losses and workload planning/priority setting[12] ->Covering refund expenses or revenue losses due to forestalled or cancelled programming or projects ->Covering otherwise unbillable personnel time spent on a range of response and recovery efforts like filing insurance paperwork, or consulting with landowners on how to "build back better."

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[12] Should organizations choose to use this capacity funding to assess projects for flood damage, CWIP requires they complete the **Clean Water Project Flood Response Project** survey as part of their final report. See below for more details.

Outputs

If the proposed activities address priority goal 4 and can be counted by one or more of the outputs/performance measures listed in table 2 of the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative summary document, then the subgrant applicant should use these outputs. If a subgrant applicant is proposing activities to address priority goal 4 but cannot find a suitable output, they may suggest to the Funding Program Administrator an output metric and a proposed value for that metric. Note that outputs/performance measures should be quantifiable and easily measured. The Funding Program Administrator may consult with the Technical Project Manager to determine whether the suggested output meets these standards for quantification and measurability. Note proposals must still select at least one outcome/capacity factor, and one impact from the pre-existing lists and have a convincing narrative on how the proposed work supports their capacity and has a clean water impact.

Pre-award Costs and Eligible Expenses

The Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Block Grant will be executed allowing pre-award costs starting on July 10, 2023. The pre-award cost eligibility is restricted to activities and expenses targeting priority goal 4. Activities and expenses targeting priority goals 1 through 3 are ineligible for pre-award costs. Note that while the Funding Program Administrator is awarded this pre-award cost eligibility, individual subgrant applicants still need to propose the suite of work as completed, and be selected for funding, in order to be reimbursed for any capacity expenses incurred from July 10, 2023 onward.

CWIP requires that organizations who choose to use this funding to assess projects for flood damage complete the **Clean Water Project Flood Response Project Survey.** This survey requires some level of data collection which would trigger the need for a Quality Assurance Project Plan (QAPP) to meet federal funding requirements. As there is no data collection QAPP associated with this block grant, any data collection should only be supported with state funds. The list of ineligible expenses for the federal funds is amended to include clean water project flood damage assessment work.

Clean Water Project Flood Response Project Survey

CWIP is developing a state-wide response to the potential for clean water project loss to include verification efforts that evaluate the condition of projects, extent and cost of needed maintenance and repairs, and whether the projects continue to operate as intended to provide reportable pollution reduction benefits. To assist with planning this effort, should organizations choose to assess their previously implemented projects with capacity funding, they must complete the Clean Water Project Flood Response Project survey. A survey is required for each project and practice visited. Materials for the Clean Water Project Flood Response Project survey can be found on the CWIP Applicant and Recipient Resources Page under the Flood Response and Recovery header.

Agency of Natural Resources - River Cleanup Recommendations August, 2023

- Any human-made debris – things like construction materials from damaged buildings such as lumber, roofing material, and metal, or building contents such as appliances and furniture – is rightly considered solid waste, there are no restrictions for manually removing these materials from rivers and streams as part of flood clean-up efforts.

- As far as natural debris – sediment, rocks, logs and branches – removal needs to be approached somewhat more thoughtfully.

- There absolutely are locations where flooding deposited excess sediment and rock in the stream channel, diverting stream flow toward homes or businesses that necessitates work within rivers and streams to protect public safety and existing infrastructure.

- Another very typical example where some amount of removal is needed is location where downed trees and other woody material have come to rest near a bridge or culvert and risk plugging the bridge or culvert during future high flows. If the conditions caused by natural debris are creating an immediate risk – for example, there is wood, boulders or debris changing or redirecting the flow of the river that immediately threatens your home or business – emergency work to remove the material can proceed under town authority, so long as the Agency of Natural Resources is notified of the work within 72 hours.

- With authorization from the town, individuals can hire a contractor to do the work to stabilize the river as an emergency protective measure. Alternatively, towns have the authority to implement emergency protective measures to protect public infrastructure and public safety. There are a number of targeted locations across Vermont where this sort of work is well underway.

- If removal of natural material is considered necessary, but is not considered an emergency, ANR's River Management Engineers should be contacted. They will schedule a site visit to provide technical assistance and help ensure that work intended to solve one problem does not (further) destabilize the river or impact adjacent infrastructure. This is important because the most common issue after a flood is over-dredging of river bottoms, excessive streambank filling and the unnecessary removal of natural debris.

- While limited excavations and streambank stabilization may be needed to maintain river channel capacity and protect nearby roads and buildings, over-

dredging or over-filling creates a much more unstable river which do more damage to adjacent property and infrastructure during the next flood. As we have all seen this month, rivers have a lot of energy, and one of the ways they consume some of that energy is by tossing around logs and boulders in flood flows and accessing floodplains where they can spread out and dissipate… so to the extent flood-deposited natural debris is not creating a specific hazard, it is best to leave it where the river dropped it off.

- The most important thing to know is that before starting any in-stream work, you should check with your town or a DEC River Management Engineer, to get site specific advice on your work.

- For anyone who may have questions or need additional help, we have compiled all of our flood recovery resources on the Agency of Natural Resources home page; Vermonters can also call (802) 828-1115 for assistance with work in or along rivers and streams.