

# Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Summary Document

## Summer 2023 Flood Response and Recovery Addendum

**Posted:**8/21/2023

**In effect through:** 7/31/2024

### Introduction

In the summer of 2023, Vermont experienced catastrophic rain and flooding events statewide that severely impacted local communities, businesses, organizations, and homes. This weather event happened while the Clean Water Workforce Capacity Development Initiative Block Grant Request for Proposals (RFP) was posted and pending proposals. CWIP has developed this Summer 2023 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.<sup>1</sup> This addendum is active for roughly one year from its posting date. CWIP will consult with the selected Funding Program Administrator on whether to continue this addendum beyond this initial timeframe.

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 Verification. 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](mailto:ANR.CleanWaterVT@vermont.gov).

Developed by the Clean Water Initiative Program



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<sup>1</sup> 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>

## 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 <sup>2</sup>	The catastrophic flooding and rain events of the summer of 2023 across Vermont impacted 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	<b>CWIP seeks to support organizational or community-level flood relief and recovery efforts.</b> This may include activities or expenses that support the organization and its staff, as well as activities that the organization	->Replacing lost or damaged equipment, technology, or tools <sup>3</sup> ->Moving expenses due to loss of workspace ->Participating in local, regional or statewide forums on flood response or recovery ->Organizing river clean-up events <sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Note that CWIP is exploring expanding this priority to cover other climate change-related disasters and challenges in future iterations of this funding initiative.

<sup>3</sup> CWIP recommends using this capacity funding as a last resort once insurance and FEMA assistance for these types of replacement costs are fully capitalized.

<sup>4</sup> Customarily river clean ups have not been eligible for DEC funds, however, DEC understands due to the summer 2023 flooding events, organizations are facing a great degree of unmet and unfunded demand to support these activities. This flood addendum opens one-time 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>. Page 5 of this document provides additional guidance.

	participates in or leads to support their community or service area.	->Performing preliminary assessment of clean water project losses and workload planning/priority setting <sup>5</sup> ->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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<sup>5</sup> Should organizations choose to use this capacity funding to assess projects for flood damage, CWIP requires they complete the **Clean Water Project Flood Response Verification** survey as part of their final report. See page 4 of this document 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 3 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 Verification 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 Verification

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 Verification as part of their final report. A verification survey is required for each project and practice visited. Materials for the Clean Water Project Flood Response Verification can be found on the [CWIP Applicant and Recipient Resources Page](#) under the 2023 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.