

# Frequently Asked Questions: COVID-19 and DEC's Water Investment Division (WID) Grants, Contracts, and Loans

*Updated April 23, 2020*

The Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) is working to understand the COVID-19 State of Emergency's impact on grant, contract, and loan agreements, both active and pending. We want to assure you that we are examining the challenges that the "[Stay Home, Stay Safe](#)" order (Addendum 6 to Executive Order 01-20), issued by the Governor on March 24<sup>th</sup>, and associated addendums, may pose to these agreements.

We sincerely understand the challenges this may create for your organization and will do our best to provide additional guidance as quickly as possible. Below is a compilation of frequently asked questions (FAQs) with answers. Thank you for your patience as we do our best to adjust operations in response to COVID-19.

As more information becomes available, we will post updates of these FAQs at <https://dec.vermont.gov/water-investment/covid-19> and distribute via the Clean Water E-Newsletter ([subscribe for updates](#)). Please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) with any additional questions after reviewing these FAQs.

## Frequently Asked Questions

1. I have a signed contract or agreement – can I move forward and do the work in the agreement?

*If you have an executed agreement you can continue to do work under your agreement and submit invoices, so long as you are in compliance with the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order issued on March 24, 2020 or unless otherwise directed by the Department.*

2. Can I still bill for work I am doing, and will I get paid?

*If you have a signed agreement, you can continue to invoice DEC for reimbursement of costs incurred.*

3. Should I stop working on a project that I have an executed agreement for just in case you pull money back from me?

*You should stop work if it cannot be completed without violating the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order issued on March 24, 2020. Work may continue once the "Stay*

*Home, Stay Safe” order has ended unless otherwise directed by the Department. If you can complete work in your executed agreement and stay in compliance with the Governor’s “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order, you may continue work and invoice accordingly.*

4. I don’t have a signed contract but have written permission for 90-day pre-award approval – can I continue work on this project?

*If you have written permission for 90-day pre-award approval, you should immediately stop **further** work until an executed agreement is in place. If you have written permission for 90-day pre-award approval, you will be able to invoice for work completed as of midnight, Friday April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020.*

5. I don’t have a signed contract but have verbal permission for 90-day pre-award approval– can I continue work on this project?

*DEC requires written approval to authorize work in advance of a grant. However, if you believe you received verbal permission, please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) as soon as possible. DEC will be working in good faith with our partners to resolve this issue on a case-by-case basis.*

6. I can’t get my project done on-time due to COVID-19. Can I get an extension?

*As noted, DEC is currently undergoing a financial evaluation to better understand the budgetary effects of COVID-19. DEC understands that the “Stay Home, Stay Safe” order and other impacts of COVID-19 may impact certain agreements. Until DEC’s financial evaluation is complete, DEC will refrain from completing any amendments to agreements, including no cost time extensions. This applies to no cost time extensions as a result of COVID-19, as well as no cost time extensions unrelated to COVID-19. DEC-WID will establish a centralized process for gathering information on requested no cost time extension amendments. Instructions will be communicated to grantees, contractors, and loan recipients once available. If you believe that your project will require a no cost time extension, please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov). Please include the grant or contract number, DEC technical project manager name, extension date request, and any other challenges that may be facing the project.*

7. The construction season may be compressed resulting in increased costs or delays. Some contractors may go out of business and a new bid may increase costs. What flexibility will be allowed in agreements?

*DEC is unable to guarantee any amendment to allow for increased costs until DEC’s financial evaluation of the effects of COVID-19 is complete. If you have determined that*

*your project will not be able to proceed under the budget in your current agreement, please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov). Please include the grant or contract number, DEC technical project manager name, budget increase request, and any other challenges that may be facing the project.*

8. I have to cancel a project due to COVID-19 and I have incurred costs. Will I be reimbursed?

*If costs have been incurred and the related project will not happen as a result of COVID-19, these costs will still be considered reimbursable by DEC. Please invoice as soon as possible for these incurred costs and notify DEC-WID at*

*[ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) that the agreement will have to be cancelled, including the grant or contract number and DEC technical project manager name.*

9. The cost of my project has increased due to COVID-19 – I don't have enough money to meet the agreed upon performance measures. What can I do?

*It is understood that costs may change due to COVID-19. DEC accepts that there may be a need to adjust performance measures on a case-by-case basis for certain projects. Please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) as soon as possible, including the grant or contract number and DEC technical project manager name, to discuss performance measures that will be affected as a result of COVID-19. If you are unable to achieve the final deliverables in the agreement (e.g., committed to 100% design but can only reach 60% design) due to increased costs caused by COVID-19 please email*

*[ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) as soon as possible, including the grant or contract number and DEC technical project manager name. As noted above, at this time DEC is unable to guarantee any allowance of increased overall costs.*

10. I received a grant award notification several months ago but still do not have an executed agreement. It is unfair if I can't do the project now. Will I still be able to do it?

*DEC is assessing all unexecuted agreements at this time. DEC will be making determinations as soon as feasible given the current circumstances.*

11. Can any funds within a signed agreement be reallocated due to challenges of COVID-19? For example, can more of the implementation funds be used for administration if management has increased due to COVID-19?

*No, you cannot reallocate funds without a formal amendment to your agreement. Please email [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) as soon as possible to discuss the circumstances*

*further, and include the grant or contract number and DEC technical project manager name in the email.*

12. Will you be discussing with partners any of their budgetary changes for pass-through efforts as a result of COVID-19 related fiscal impacts prior to final decisions being made?

*The State of Vermont and ANR-DEC are working to understand the impact of the pandemic on revenue necessary to support grants and contracts. Financial evaluations underway are intended to mitigate the impacts of reduced revenue on our partners and our important environmental work.*

13. I don't know if the work I am doing in the agreement we have with DEC is considered essential. How can I find out?

*DEC does not have the authority to determine whether work can be conducted under the Governor's "Stay Home, Stay Safe" order. Requests for determination of essential work must be sent to the Agency of Commerce and Community Development directly. More information is available at: <https://accd.vermont.gov/covid-19/business/stay-home-stay-safe-business-faqs>.*

14. I need to adjust the timeline of incremental project milestones in my agreement due to COVID-19 (e.g., delays in project kick-off meeting, delays in landowner outreach). Do I need an agreement amendment?

*Depending on the request, these incremental project milestones in an agreement may be adjusted without a formal amendment. If you would like to request this adjustment, please email DEC at [ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov](mailto:ANR.WIDFinancial@vermont.gov) for consideration, including the grant or contract number and DEC technical project manager name. See question #6 "I can't get my project done on-time due to COVID-19. Can I get an extension?" for information regarding amendments.*

15. We need to know if you will be issuing grants or providing funding in the future (6-12 months) since our budgets are dependent on this funding. We are worried about how to keep small organizations going and people employed without knowing the future impacts. When can we expect to know next steps?

*The State of Vermont and ANR-DEC are working to understand the impact of the pandemic on revenue streams as diligently as possible. Financial evaluations underway are intended to mitigate the impacts of reduced revenue on our important environmental work.*