

GREEN IMPROVEMENT FUND

Program Description and Application

Onondaga County

Department of Water Environment Protection

Joanne M. Mahoney, County Executive

Patricia M. Pastella, P.E., Commissioner

March 2010

Background:

The County’s Department of Water Environment Protection (“WEP”) is implementing a two year Demonstration Program, the Green Improvement Fund (“GIF”), to provide financial assistance for the installation of Green Infrastructure projects including but not limited to: tree trenches, planter boxes, porous pavement, bioswales, rain gardens, green roofs, green streetscapes and cisterns on eligible privately owned properties (commercial, business, and 501(c)3 owned properties) in the Clinton, Harbor Brook and Midland Combined Sewersheds as outlined in the attached map and generally located in the City of Syracuse.

Eligibility:

An Owner of a commercial, business or 501(c)3 facility located in the Clinton, Harbor Brook and Midland Combined Sewersheds can apply for GIF funding. An “Owner” is defined as any person or business that can provide evidence to Onondaga County of fee simple title or a lease to the property. Tenant applicants possessing a lease to the property and/or commercial facility must have the written consent of the Owner.

Eligible Project Costs for GIF funds:

Eligible Costs include: (1) the design and engineering costs for site specific Green Infrastructure measures for the property and development of a maintenance plan; and (2) construction costs to modify site and install green infrastructure.

All projects funded through this program shall conform with state and local laws. Written approval of design plans from the County will be required before construction begins or costs may not be eligible.

Application Process:

The GIF application process will be on a rolling, first come/first served basis. Any Owner seeking GIF funds must complete a GIF Application form, including all required documents, and file with:

Department of Water Environment Protection
ATTN: Bj Adigun GIF Program
650 Hiawatha Boulevard West
Syracuse, NY 13204.

Retroactive Funding Eligibility:

Green Infrastructure projects completed on/after May 1, 2009 are eligible to receive GIF funding pending review and approval by County.

Available Funding:

Eligible Applicants, if selected by WEP can receive a grant of:

Property owner’s of a commercial, business or 501(c)3 facility:

Up to 100% of Eligible Costs, with a maximum assistance of **\$100,000 per applicant** for a **single project** and no more than **\$250,000 per applicant for multiple projects.**

Grant funding will **ONLY** cover costs for the installation of Green Infrastructure solutions above and beyond traditional (not green) construction practices including: design and engineering costs, maintenance plan and construction costs.

All grants shall be on a reimbursement basis to be awarded only after Green Infrastructure is installed, verified by WEP, proof of payments and expenditures is provided and all other requirements for funding are met. All eligible projects shall have a **minimum** total project cost of at least \$20,000.00.

Selection Criteria for Green Infrastructure Projects:

Selection of grant recipients will be based on the following considerations: (1) available funding for eligible costs; (2) project contains a job training component and/or involvement of local organizations and area residents; (3) location and extent or size of project and potential volume and effectiveness on runoff reduction in the sewershed; (4) amount (sq. footage) of impervious surfaces replaced by pervious surfaces; (5) location for visibility and education; and (6) inclusion of an effective maintenance plan; (7) overall cost effectiveness of project.

Onondaga County will select projects that closely meet GIF program goals based on selection criteria.

Decisions on projects and level of funding selected for the GIF Program rest solely with Onondaga County's Department of Water Environment Protection, whose decisions shall be final.

Decisions on awards shall be made within 60 days of submittal of a completed application.

Technical Assistance Offered to Grantees:

Grantees will have access to technical assistance from WEP and its consultants to aid them in adherence to accepted design standards and guidelines.

County's Construction and Monitoring Requirements:

All recipients of GIF funding must comply with the County's construction requirements. Construction employees must be paid at prevailing wage rates. In addition, for projects receiving \$50,000 or more in GIF monies, 10% of hard costs must be paid to State Certified Minority Business Enterprises (MBEs) and 5% must be paid to State Certified Woman Business Enterprises (WBEs). However, given the limited number of contractors qualified to install Green Roof and other green infrastructure technologies and the limited amount of funds being made available under the GIF program, the Commissioner of WEP has the authority to waive the MBE & WBE percentage requirements where it is determined to be appropriate at the sole discretion of the Commissioner.

Grantees must also allow WEP and its consultants access to site for volume capture monitoring.

Other Requirements for Receiving GIF Funding:

Each applicant must complete and sign a detailed statement which outlines specific costs of the green infrastructure project as part of the overall project and project costs without green enhancements for comparison.

All applicants must demonstrate that they have a long-term general maintenance agreement/plan for Green Infrastructure projects if requesting GIF monies of \$20,000.00 or more.

Project Completion and Reimbursement Procedures:

Once the Grantee has finished installation of Green Infrastructure, the Grantee must contact WEP for an inspection to ensure that it has been installed in accordance with all requirements of the GIF program and the Grantee's approved application. If WEP determines that the project has been completed successfully, WEP will issue a Certificate of Completion. After the Certificate of Completion is issued, the Grantee shall have sixty (60) calendar days to submit a completed Claim Form requesting payment. Funding awarded under the GIF program will be disbursed in a one-time, lump sum payment to the Grantee.

Green Infrastructure Project Definitions

Green roof is a flat or nearly flat roof of a building that is partially or completely covered with vegetation and soil or a growing medium, planted over a waterproof membrane. Green roofs are used for stormwater management and energy savings, as well as for aesthetic benefits. Green roofs absorb stormwater and release some of it back into the atmosphere through evaporation and plant transpiration, while reducing urban temperatures. A green roof typically includes installation of an approximately two to six-inch deep system consisting of a root anti-penetration layer, a drainage layer, a water filtration mat, a growing medium and drought-tolerant living plants designed to be low-maintenance.

Bioswales (or **vegetated swale**) is a wide, shallow channel with a dense stand of vegetation covering the side slopes and bottom. Swales can be natural or constructed and are designed to promote infiltration, reduce the flow velocity of stormwater runoff and maximize the amount of time water spends in the swale, which also aids in trapping particulate pollutants and silt. Bioswales are commonly used around parking lots. Variations on vegetated swale systems, such as rain gardens, bio-retention basins and bio-infiltration systems may also be funded under this grant.

Porous Pavements (also known as **pervious paving** or **permeable pavement**), is a term used to describe paving material and methods for driveways, parking lots, sidewalks and pathways that allow precipitation to infiltrate through the paving material to the soil below. Porous paving materials available today include: porous asphalt, porous concrete, paving stones or bricks and other proprietary materials produced using a stone aggregate and a binding product.

Cisterns are large receptacles for holding rainwater/runoff that are connected to a collection system on a nearby building/structure. Rainwater can be stored in the cisterns and may be reused on gardens and lawns. Cisterns may range in capacity from a few liters to thousands of liters.

Tree Trenches/Tree Planter Boxes are designed to hold one or more trees and be built to capture and store additional stormwater runoff to keep runoff out of streets and sewers and provide water for the trees. They can be connected to a nearby facility's gutter system or placed along streets, between streets and sidewalks. Trenches may include amended soils, aggregate for storage and infiltration, perforated pipe for distribution and geotextile lining to enclose the pit structure.

Stormwater Planters are deep planting boxes that receive roof runoff releasing it to a conveyance system, cistern or groundwater. Stormwater planters can be raised or flush with the surrounding landscape. Vegetation in the planter usually is comprised of perennials and/or small shrubs. Stormwater planters are not recommended for treatment of road or parking lot runoff.

Application, Approval, Construction, and Reimbursement Process

STEP ONE: APPLICATION PROCESS

The Applicant submits the completed application, with required attachments.

The Applicant must provide the following:

- Completed application form
- Green infrastructure enhancement plan and specifications
- If project is bank-financed, a letter of interest from proposed lender
- Contractor estimate to support construction budget and green infrastructure enhancement
- Legal description of property involved, including description of leased premises (floor plan and legal description), if applicable
- NOTE:
 - Owner Applicant must supply copies of deed, title policy, or purchase option or contract
 - Tenant Applicant must supply copies of lease or lease proposal and Owner's Consent Letter with minimum 5-year lease-term agreement

WEP will review the application and notify the Applicant whether or not the project will be recommended for funding, and if so, the amount of GIF assistance it recommends.

STEP TWO: APPROVAL PROCESS

If the project is recommended by WEP, an Agreement will be prepared between the County and the Applicant.

The Applicant must provide the following prior to the signup of Agreement:

- Proof of equity and lender financing
- Detailed project budget (final estimate, including M/WBE project budget if applicable)
- Copies of building permits
- Copy of maintenance agreement/plan for project requesting \$10,000 or more from GIF.
- Any other legal documents as required by WEP including Proof of County Acceptance of design

STEP THREE: CONSTRUCTION

Prior to commencing construction:

- There shall be a pre-construction meeting involving Grantee, County and project contractor detailing proposed schedule and contracts in place.

During Construction:

- Grantee will maintain construction records & photograph progress. The County has the right to inspect construction progress and photograph the project.

After Construction:

- Once construction is completed and proof of completion has been provided, WEP will conduct a final inspection of the project and issue a Certificate of Completion.
- Monitoring data should be submitted if applicable.
- Maintenance records kept and submitted if applicable.

STEP FOUR: REIMBURSEMENT

The Grantee must provide:

- A completed Claim Form to WEP (provided by WEP) within 60 days of the issuance of the Certificate of Completion.

###

Green Improvement Fund Application Form



I. Applicant Information

1. Name of Applicant: _____

2. Business Name and Address: _____

3. Phone Number: _____

4. Fax Number: _____

5. E-Mail Address: _____

6. Type of Business Entity:

____ Sole Proprietorship

____ Partnership

____ For-Profit Corporation

____ Nonprofit Corporation

____ Limited Liability Company

7. Provide the street address of the property to be enhanced through green infrastructure below:

8. Attach a legal description of the project site and a description of leased premises if applicable. Legal descriptions can be obtained from the County Clerk's Office in Room 200 County Courthouse 315-435-2229.

9. Currently, does the Applicant own or lease the property? (Check one)

___ Own ___ Lease ___ Neither

10. At project completion, who will occupy (operate business on) the site? (Check one)

___ Owner ___ Renter ___ Both

11. If the Applicant is the current or prospective tenant of the property, attach a description of the premises to be leased (legal description, floor plan, etc).

12. Evidence of Site Control:

A. If the Applicant owns the project site, attach a copy of the Applicant's deed. Also indicate:

Mortgage Holder(s): _____

B. If the Applicant has a contract or option to purchase the project site, attach a copy of the purchase/option contract. Also indicate:

Date contract was signed: ____/____/____

Closing/expiration date: ____/____/____

C. If the Applicant currently leases or will lease the project site, attach a copy of the lease or lease option contract. Also indicate:

Legal name of Owner as noted on the deed(s): _____

Name of person who signed lease for Tenant (lessee): _____

Landlord/Owner's name and address: _____

13. Owner Affidavit. If the Applicant currently leases or plans to lease the property, have the Owner (and all entities having ownership interest in the property) sign the attached Owner's Consent Letter.

II. Project Description

14. Check appropriate project type:

Green Roof ____ Cistern ____ Bioswale/bioretention area/garden ____ Porous Pavement ____

Tree planting boxes/trenches ____ Other (please specify) _____

15. Provide 3 – 4 sentences to summarize the project (use additional sheets if necessary):

16. Describe existing conditions that will be improved by your project (provide photos):

17. Total Project Cost: _____

Amount of GIF funding requested _____

Amount of match to be provided by Owner _____

18. Attach Project Budget with details on anticipated costs.

19. Project Proposed Schedule:

Design completed (month/day/year): _____

Construction start: _____

Construction completed: _____

18. Area (in square feet) of roof /garden/bioswale/tree planting project if applicable:

Net roof area: _____ square feet

Green Roof area: _____ square feet

Previous impervious area to be converted to porous through green technologies: _____ square feet

19. Has a plan to illustrate the proposed project been attached herein? (Check one): __Yes __No

20. Has any other government assistance (funds, tax incentives, or other economic benefits) been provided to the applicant or the property? (Check one): __Yes __No

If so, describe the type and amount of assistance provided: _____

21. Provide a list of all properties comprising the project by Property Identification Numbers (PIN), along with receipt/proof of payment of the most recent tax bill paid for each parcel. Copies of tax bills can be obtained from the County Clerk's Office at 200 County Courthouse, Syracuse, NY.

III. Other Requirements:

Attach all other "Step One" documents required for this application.

IV. Operating Information

Business Name: _____

What does your business do? _____

IV. Signature

I, the undersigned, affirm that the project descriptions, numerical and financial estimates, and all other information I have provided in this application are true and complete to the best of my knowledge. I have read and understood the requirements described in this application. Furthermore, I certify that I am authorized to initiate the GIF funding application process on behalf of the project described.

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Title: _____

Legal Disclaimer

Completion of this application does not entitle the Applicant to financial assistance. Any such assistance must be approved by WEP.

Application with required attachments must be submitted to:

*Bj Adigun GIF Program
Department of Water Environment Protection
650 Hiawatha Boulevard West
Syracuse, NY 13204*

*Questions may be referred to the County Department of Water Environment Protection GIF program:
315-435-2260.*