
Municipal Assistance Program

Program Guidelines

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Commonwealth of Pennsylvania
Tom Wolf, Governor

Department of Community & Economic Development



dced.pa.gov

Table of Contents

| | |
|--|----|
| Introduction | 1 |
| Part 1 – Shared Service and Community Planning Activities | 1 |
| I. Funding Principles and Objectives | 1 |
| II. Eligible Applicants | 2 |
| III. Program Activities | 2 |
| IV. Funding | 4 |
| V. Evaluation Criteria | 5 |
| VI. Application Process | 6 |
| Part 2 – Floodplain Management Activities | 8 |
| I. Funding Objectives | 8 |
| II. Eligible Applicants | 8 |
| III. Program Activities | 8 |
| IV. Funding | 8 |
| V. Application Process | 8 |
| Attachment A – Sample Resolution | 10 |
| Attachment B – Sample Letter of Certification | 11 |

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Introduction

The Municipal Assistance Program (MAP) is created to help local governments efficiently and effectively plan and implement a variety of services, improvements, and soundly managed development. The program provides funding for three groups of activities – 1) shared service; 2) community planning; and 3) floodplain management. The program is administered by the Governor’s Center for Local Government Services (GCLGS) in the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development (DCED).

The MAP guidelines are divided into two parts – Part 1 for shared service and community planning activities, and Part 2 for floodplain management.

Part 1 – Shared Service and Community Planning Activities

I. Funding Principles and Objectives

The Municipal Assistance Program is created to carry out the DCED mission:

The mission of the Department of Community and Economic Development is to foster opportunities for businesses to grow and for communities to succeed and thrive in a global economy. Our mission is to improve the quality of life for Pennsylvania citizens while assuring transparency and accountability in the expenditure of public funds.

The Municipal Assistance Program has several strategic principles and objectives. Funding award decisions will be based on the degree to which proposed MAP-funded projects do the following:

- **Partnerships:** Projects should forge new partnerships with local governments, agencies, non-profits, and the private sector to advance community and economic development and encourage regional cooperation and delivery of services.
- **Performance:** Projects should advance performance-based initiatives evaluated by defined metrics, which provide consistent and positive returns on investment for taxpayers.
- **Innovation:** Local governments are encouraged to use new approaches and methods, and to change operations and decision-making in order to achieve results that would be otherwise unattainable.
- **Commitment:** Applications should demonstrate real and long-term commitments to sustain cooperative ventures or implement plans funded by MAP.
- **Results:** Projects should achieve measurable cost savings, cost avoidance, or improvement in levels of service (at affordable cost); create attractive and livable communities; and/or promote sound land use practices.
- **Competition:** Due to limited commonwealth resources, DCED will seek to fund the most competitive applications in terms of proposed results, impact, innovation, and return on investment.

- **Keystone Principles:** DCED will consider the Commonwealth's Keystone Principles for Growth, Investment and Resource Conservation in competitively judging applications and awarding funding.
- **Promotion of state and regional initiatives:** Proposed MAP-funded activities should be consistent with and promote acknowledged state and regional plans and initiatives, such as the 2010 State Land Use and Growth Management Report, LUTED regional action plans, DCNR conservation landscape initiatives, county comprehensive plans, etc.

II. Eligible Applicants

- Applicants for the Municipal Assistance Program may be any municipality – a city, borough, town, township, home-rule municipality, or county. Applicants may also be a public or quasi-public body duly authorized to act on behalf of one or more municipalities.
- For shared service activities, applications shall involve two or more participating municipalities.
- For community planning activities, applications may involve single or multiple municipalities. Multi-municipal planning is encouraged because development markets, social and cultural character, infrastructure networks and environmental systems are not limited by municipal boundaries. Single-municipal activities may be funded where the project scope is appropriately narrow, where a multi-municipal partnership is not workable, or where another compelling rationale exists. The application should state the case for and provide factual evidence in support of a single-municipal project.

III. Program Activities

A. **Shared Service Activities** – MAP funding may be used for four categories of shared service activities:

1. **High Impact Projects**

These are proposals involving multi-municipal projects that have significant administrative or service impacts for a large geographic area and/or a large population base. Priority consideration will be given to multi-county initiatives and municipal governments that work through a formal partnership to provide administration or services.

2. **Regionalization/Consolidation/Sharing of Services**

Grants may be awarded to defer a portion of start-up or service expansion costs associated with groups of two or more municipalities/counties working jointly or cooperatively by intergovernmental agreement in performance of any government function. Common examples are regionalization of public safety (police or fire), codes enforcement, and public works operations. Applications may include shared vehicles and motorized equipment where it is clearly demonstrated that the item is either necessary for start-up of a new intergovernmental initiative or is part of an expansion of a previously established regional effort where the added vehicle or equipment is necessary to provide increased service. Applications will not be considered for replacement of existing vehicles or equipment. Applicants must also clearly demonstrate that a formal partnership has been created to address the proposed use and maintenance of the equipment. Projects meeting this description must provide at least 50% cash match. The maximum award per vehicle or motorized equipment will be no greater than \$25,000 or 50% of the cost of the vehicle or equipment, whichever is less.

3. **Boundary Change**

Applications for funding for financial analyses, feasibility studies, and public outreach and education programs for locally initiated boundary change activities will receive priority consideration and consideration for a reduced local match.

4. **Shared Capacity**

Grants may be awarded to defer costs associated with a group of two or more municipalities/counties who seek to create a shared position that will perform specific functions or services for all partners. Grant funding will not be provided to fund current positions. Requests of this nature require the creation of a job description and measurable objectives that will be attained as a result of DCED grant funding support. Past examples have included shared planners, shared codes enforcement officers and shared fire chiefs in newly merged volunteer fire companies.

B. **Community Planning** – MAP funding may be used for three categories of planning activities:

1. **Community Plans**, including but not limited to:

- Comprehensive plans, including traditional functional elements and non-traditional works such as market analysis, feasibility analysis of development opportunities and scenarios, sustainability assessment, and design concept renderings. Comprehensive plans must contain minimum content required by the PA Municipalities Planning Code.
- Functional or area plans like economic development plans, redevelopment plans, downtown or neighborhood plans, corridor development plans, etc.

2. **Plan Implementation**, including but not limited to:

- A zoning, subdivision and land development, or official map ordinance.
- Development of a regulatory or program tool such as traditional neighborhood development, planned residential development, or transferable development rights.
- Transportation capital improvements plan and impact fee ordinance.
- Effort to implement a multimunicipal comprehensive plan under Article XI of the PA Municipalities Planning Code, like a specific plan or tax revenue and fee sharing program.
- Design guidelines.
- Advisory guidelines (required by the PA MPC) published by county planning commissions to promote general consistency with an adopted county comprehensive plan.
- Implementation activities will be given greater consideration for funding if recommended in the adopted comprehensive plan of participating municipality(ies).

3. **Transit Revitalization Investment District (TRID) Planning Studies**, prepared as prescribed by Act 238 of 2004.

C. **Ineligible Activities**

- Construction, renovation or purchase of buildings and/or infrastructure.
- Costs of general administration of the MAP grant.
- Costs of procuring lobbying services or paying fines or reparations resulting from lawsuits, citations, or regulatory actions.

IV. Funding

DCED may fund up to 50% of the total cost of an approved application. The grantee is required to provide the remaining 50% or greater, normally as a cash match. At least 25% of the total cost must be funded from non-state sources. DCED will consider exceptions to the 25% non-state minimum where applicants present the case of an exceptional fiscal or other hardship. Applications that will include in-kind match and/or professional services of a grantee's staff should be discussed with the GCLGS prior to submission of the application. Match must pay for a project activity included in the approved MAP Budget Narrative specified in the grant contract Appendix A. Grantee cash or in-kind expenditures for work not specified in the grant contract Appendix A, whether or not related, will not be eligible as match.

Cash Match Requirements:

- Cash match may include general funds of the grantee, any participating municipality(ies), or any other organization that is partner to the project, or funding awards from federal, state, or local government or from private sources such as foundations.
- Cash match may include labor costs – professional or support services of the applicant or its partners, and sub-professional services such as college student work, where such individuals receive compensation for the work. Labor costs must be supported by timesheets and hourly rates and properly documented at closeout.
- Applications including a reasonable level of cash match from funds of the applicant and participating municipalities are preferred and will receive more favorable review.

In-kind Match Requirements:

- In-kind match may include donated products or services, such as GIS files and mapping, reproduction, equipment, etc., where the cost cannot be tracked back to a cash transaction.
- Value of in-kind contributions must be properly documented and reflect the actual, regular, or fair-market value of the contribution.
- Unpaid work of interns, volunteers, advisory committees, and planning commissions is not eligible as in-kind match.

Consideration of Reduced Match:

The GCLGS reserves the right to reduce local match requirements under certain circumstances. DCED may reduce a grantee's required match if the municipality(ies) can provide written evidence documenting one of the following situations:

- Applications that identify a formally designated Act 47 distressed municipality as the applicant or as a project partner will receive priority funding consideration as well as consideration for reduced matching requirements.
- Applications from municipalities that are in the process of a consolidation/merger or boundary change or from communities that were recently formed as a result of one of these two processes shall provide a minimum of 25% match. If a boundary change is approved by voters, DCED staff may consider waiving this match requirement so that transition costs may be funded.
- Other applications GCLGS may deem appropriate given the unique circumstances as presented by the applicant.

V. Evaluation Criteria

- A. **General** – MAP-funded projects must address the strategic principles and objectives on pages 1-2. Applications should indicate how and the degree to which proposed projects will do this. Funding award decisions will also consider the following:
1. **Need.** Is there a significant need for the project, problem to be solved, or opportunity to be pursued? Is the need regional? Is MAP funding integral to making the project happen, or to yielding a critical level of results not achievable without MAP funding?
 2. **Overall Quality of Project.** Does the project appear to be well planned and ready to undertake? Is it a sound, well-thought out, and workable plan for addressing the stated need? Will the project address long-term solutions?
 3. **Local Commitment and Partnerships.** Will applicant municipalities be participating both financially and otherwise in the project? To what extent? What partnerships have been established as part of the project? Does the project reflect a broad community commitment to the proposed activity? Are documents included that reflect broad community/regional support for the project?
 4. **Funding Adequacy, Source and Timetable.** Is the amount of money applied for and the grantee contribution a reasonable amount to complete the project? Are there alternative means or sources of funding available? Does the project outline an implementation time schedule? Is it a reasonable project within the contractual time frames of the program?
 5. **Past Performance.** If the applicant has received previous DCED grants, how have the grants benefitted local municipalities? Have grant funds been spent properly? Have projects been implemented and completed in a timely manner?
 6. **Financial Disadvantage.** Will the project benefit municipalities that are designated as distressed under Act 47 or experiencing a degree of fiscal distress as identified in the Survey of Financial Condition or through participation in DCED's Early Intervention Program.
- B. **Shared Service Activities** – In addition to general criteria, shared service projects should address:
1. **Overall Quality of Project.** Will municipalities actually be working together, or merely performing independent tasks concurrently? Will the project strengthen the capacity of participating municipalities to provide for basic municipal services? Will the project explore a new area of intergovernmental cooperation? Will the project address long-term solutions to service delivery issues?
 2. **Cost Savings Potential.** Can participating municipalities expect to reduce expenditures or increase revenues as a result of the project? Will it contribute to the financial efficiency of local government? Are actual or estimated project cost savings or cost avoidance provided? Does applicant describe methodology for estimating cost savings or cost avoidance?
- C. **Community Planning** – In addition to general criteria, community planning projects should address:
1. **Practical Value, Implementation** – Will the planning activity produce critical information and/or workable plans and ordinances that will be put to use to achieve desired development or community improvements? What steps will the applicant municipality (and partner municipalities, if any) take to ensure the plan or ordinance prepared with MAP funding will be implemented? Applications will receive more favorable consideration if they incorporate suggestions from the “Five Keys to a Valuable, Implementable Plan” on page 73 in the 2010 State Land Use and Growth Management Report.
 2. Emphasis will be given to plans and ordinances that are “**entrepreneurial**” or “**innovative**” in provoking community and economic development and improvements to community assets.

VI. Application Process

A. General Information

1. All applications for the Municipal Assistance Program must be completed and submitted online using DCED's Single Application, which can be accessed at dced.pa.gov or www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. Paper applications will not be accepted. Help can be obtained by contacting DCED Customer Service at 1-800-379-7448 or ra-dcedcs@state.pa.us.
2. While not a requirement, the applicant is encouraged to discuss its project with a representative from the GCLGS prior to submitting an application. Contact the Center at 1-888-223-6837 or 717-787-8158. This preliminary step permits the Center's staff to offer technical assistance, alerts the staff to upcoming Single Application submissions, and provides an opportunity to identify other potential funding sources.
3. Applicants should carefully follow instructions outlined in the on-line Single Application and provide requested information. A hard copy signature page must be printed from the on-line application, then signed and submitted via US Mail. Addenda requested by the Single Application or additional documents may be attached electronically to the application on the Addenda tab, or submitted via US Mail with the Signature page. Please reference the Single Application number on any documents sent with the signature page.

B. Submission Requirements

1. Complete the Project Narrative in the Single Application. The applicant should describe the project and make the case why it should be funded. If the Single Application does not provide enough space, a separate narrative document should be submitted. Information should include:
 - Full and clear description of the project and its component activities.
 - How the proposed project will meet MAP's funding principles and objectives (pages 1-2), and address evaluation criteria (page 5).
2. Complete the Program Budget in the Single Application.
 - In the Spreadsheet tab, enter budget amounts in grant and match columns for line items appropriate for the project. If listed line items do not match proposed project activities, feel free to create one or more new line items in blank lines under "Other". Make budget entries in even hundred dollar increments and no cents.
 - In the Basis of Cost tab, provide a Budget Narrative that describes and supports the line item expenditures listed in the Spreadsheet. There should be details telling how project funds will be spent. If the Single Application does not provide enough space, a separate narrative document should be submitted. For ALL community planning applications and other applications involving consulting services, attach a separate file with an itemized scope of services describing the nature or scope of the consulting services and the expected results or deliverables from such services. Include a breakdown of costs by major work tasks. (Four to six major work tasks is a reasonable number.)

3. Submit resolution(s) from the applicant's governing body or board indicating authorization and commitment of match for the application. See sample resolution in Attachment A.
 - If a multi-municipal project, each participating municipality must submit a resolution.
 - If the applicant is a Council of Governments (COG), the COG must submit the resolution and may submit a letter of certification (see Attachment B) on behalf of participating municipalities in lieu of resolutions from each municipality.
 - If the applicant is another public or quasi-public organization on behalf of one or more municipalities, the organization and participating municipalities must submit resolutions.
4. Support letters may be submitted from other organizations (e.g., school districts, chambers of commerce, colleges/universities) where such letters attest to the need for the project or value of the outcome, and/or commit the organization to participate in the project. Generic support letters are discouraged.
5. For community planning projects only, the applicant must provide a letter of comment from the respective county planning agency verifying that the proposed project as detailed in the submitted scope of work is consistent with the county comprehensive plan.

C. Application Submission Timeframe/Application Review Period

1. **Application Window** – The DCED Single Application process permits applications to be submitted at any time.
2. **Application Review** – After reviewing the Single Applications, subject to availability of funds, DCED will determine which proposals will be given further consideration. These applicants may be requested to submit additional documentation pertaining to the Department's review of the proposal. Funding decisions will be made subject to availability of funds. Applicants whose projects are not selected for funding will be notified in writing by the GCLGS.

Part 2 – Floodplain Management Activities

I. Funding Objectives

MAP funding will be used to reimburse municipalities for costs incurred in preparation, enactment, administration, and enforcement of floodplain management regulations. This is a statutory responsibility of DCED under the Pennsylvania Flood Plain Management Act, Act 166 of 1978.

II. Eligible Applicants

Municipalities participating in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and complying with Act 166 of 1978.

III. Program Activities

Preparation, enactment, administration, and enforcement of floodplain management regulations required by Act 166 of 1978:

- **Preparation and enactment of floodplain management regulations** – Technical, legal, and clerical staff services, plus advertising, public hearing, and consultant costs.
- **General administration of floodplain management regulations** – Staff and consultant costs for reviewing and processing building permit applications and for monitoring and inspecting floodplain development, plus related mileage costs.
- **Enforcement of floodplain management regulations** – Staff and consultant costs for restraining and prosecuting violations, defending against appeals, etc.

IV. Funding

MAP funding for floodplain management activities will be a reimbursement for costs incurred in the prior full calendar year. Reimbursement will be for 50% of eligible costs. There is no maximum dollar limit. Funding decisions will be made subject to availability of funds.

V. Application Process

A. General Information

1. All applications for floodplain management reimbursements under MAP must be completed and submitted on line using DCED's Single Application. It can be accessed at dced.pa.gov or www.esa.dced.state.pa.us. Paper applications will not be accepted. Help can be obtained by contacting DCED Customer Service at 1-800-379-7448 or ra-dcedcs@state.pa.us.
2. Applicants should carefully follow instructions outlined in the on-line Single Application and provide requested information. A hard copy signature page must be printed from the on-line application, then signed and submitted via US Mail. Addenda requested by the Single Application or additional documents may be attached electronically to the application on the Addenda tab, or submitted via US Mail with the signature page. Please reference the Single Application number on any documents sent with the signature page.

B. Submission Requirements

1. Complete the Project Narrative in the Single Application. Entries of at least 100 characters must be made or the application cannot be submitted. Since this is a reimbursement request, not a competitive application, entries should be brief.
 - For the question, “What do you plan to accomplish with this project?” – You may enter, “Encourage management of floodplain lands within the applicant’s municipality in accord with Act 166 of 1978.”
 - For the question, “How do you plan to accomplish it?” – You may enter, “By preparing, enacting, administering, and/or enforcing the applicant’s floodplain management ordinance.”
 - For the question, “How do you plan to use the DCED funds?” – Enter a brief statement of at least 100 characters describing uses of funds for which reimbursement is requested.
 2. Complete the Program Budget in the Single Application.
 - In the Spreadsheet tab, enter budget amounts in grant and match columns for line items appropriate for the reimbursement request. If listed line items do not match proposed project activities, feel free to create new line items in blank lines under “Other”.
 - In the Basis of Cost tab, provide a Budget Narrative that briefly describes nature/type of expenditures for each line item having expenditures in the Spreadsheet.
 3. All applicants must complete and submit a DCED-GCLGS-58 Floodplain Management Activities Reimbursement Application Form and DCED-GCLGS-57 Floodplain Management Activities Annual Report Form along with documentation of costs requested for reimbursement (time sheets, invoices, etc.).
- C. **Submission Timeframe** – Applications will be accepted on an annual basis. Applications must be submitted by the last business day in February for reimbursement of costs incurred in the prior full calendar year.

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Attachment A – Sample Resolution

If a multi-municipal project, each municipality must submit a resolution.

If the applicant is a Council of Governments (COG), the COG must submit a resolution and may submit a letter of certification (see Attachment B) on behalf of the participating municipalities in lieu of resolutions from each municipality.

If the applicant is another public or quasi-public organization on behalf of one or more municipalities, the organization and participating municipality(ies) must submit resolutions.

RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING AN APPLICATION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

RESOLUTION NO. _____
(NAME OF MUNICIPALITY, COG, OR OTHER ELIGIBLE APPLICANT)

WHEREAS, *(name of municipality or municipalities)* will be undertaking a project to *(brief description)*; and

WHEREAS, the Pennsylvania Department of Community and Economic Development makes available grants-in-aid to such projects through the Municipal Assistance Program;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the *(governing body)* of *(name of applicant or participating municipality)* hereby authorizes submission of an application to the Municipal Assistance Program; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the *(governing body)* of *(name of applicant or participating municipality)* hereby commits municipal resources in the amount of *(amount of local share)* as match for said project.

Adopted by the *(governing body)* of *(name of applicant or participating municipality)* this _____ day of _____, 20____.

ATTEST:

*(NAME OF APPLICANT
OR PARTICIPATING MUNICIPALITY)*

(Title of secretary or other signer)

(Title of chief official)

Attachment B – Sample Letter of Certification

Use only if the applicant is a Council of Governments (COG). The COG must submit a resolution and may submit a letter of certification on behalf of the participating municipalities in lieu of resolutions from each municipality.

LETTER OF CERTIFICATION FOR AN APPLICATION TO THE PENNSYLVANIA MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

I hereby certify that the *(name of)* Council of Governments is actively operating and meeting on a regular basis at the present time. The following municipalities are active members of the *(name of)* Council of Governments and desire to participate in a project funded by the Municipal Assistance Program.

(List all participating municipalities)

ATTEST:

SIGNED:

(Title of secretary or other signer)

(Title of chief official)

Date

Date