

# **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

April 2010

**Background:**

The County’s Department of Water Environment Protection (“WEP”) is sponsoring a two year Demonstration Program, the Green Improvement Fund (“GIF”), to determine whether providing financial incentives will stimulate 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 as an aspect of the development or redevelopment and/or retrofitting of certain classes of 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 or Midland Combined Sewersheds who is proposing to undertake an otherwise privately sponsored development or redevelopment project can apply for a GIF grant. 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 Reimbursement Costs for a GIF Grant:**

Eligible reimbursement expenses 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 that exceeds the threshold stormwater capture requirements made applicable by MS4 permit requirements.

All projects funded through this program shall conform to applicable environmental laws and applicable permits. Except for projects that have been completed prior to ----, 2010, the County must review all plans and specifications and verify that the proposed incorporation of Green Infrastructure will contribute to the reduction of stormwater run-off that exceeds the threshold stormwater capture requirements made applicable by MS4 permit requirements. This review will be required before construction begins for the project to remain eligible for reimbursement.

**Application Process:**

The GIF application process will be on a rolling, first come/first served basis. An 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 upon review and approval by County.

**Available Funding:**

Applicant **Property Owner of a commercial, business or 501(c)(3) facility** determined to be eligible for a GIF reimbursement grant by WEP can receive a grant of:

Up to 100% of the eligible costs for the Green Infrastructure component of the project, 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. Eligible projects shall have a **minimum** total project cost of \$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 (square footage) of impervious surfaces replaced by pervious surfaces; (5) location for visibility and education; (6) inclusion of an effective maintenance plan; and (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 (sixty) 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.

**Construction and Monitoring Requirements:**

All recipients of GIF funding must comply with the following requirements. 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.

The Applicant must demonstrate that there is 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 run-off 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/run-off 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 run-off 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 run-off.

## **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 signing 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 \$20,000 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 (sixty) days of the issuance of the Certificate of Completion.

# Green Improvement Fund Application Form



## *I. Applicant Information*

1. Business/Organization Applicant: \_\_\_\_\_

What does your business/organization do? \_\_\_\_\_

2. Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

3. Contact Person: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Fax Number: \_\_\_\_\_

6. E-Mail Address: \_\_\_\_\_

7. Type of Business Entity:

Sole Proprietorship

Partnership

For-Profit Corporation

Nonprofit Corporation

Limited Liability Company

8. Provide the Street Address, Tax ID, and Property Identification Number of the property (or properties) where green infrastructure will be constructed (hereafter known as "Project").

Note, property information may be obtained on-line: [www.maphost.com/syracuse-onondaga/main.asp](http://www.maphost.com/syracuse-onondaga/main.asp)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

9. Does the Applicant currently own or lease the property? (Check one)

Own  Lease  Other

If Other, explain: \_\_\_\_\_

If Applicant does not own the property, provide a copy of any existing lease or lease option contract, and a Letter of Consent to construct Project from Owner.

**II. Project Description**

10. Check all appropriate project type(s):

- Green Roof
- Cistern
- Bioswale/bioretenion area/garden
- Porous Pavement
- Tree planting boxes/trenches
- Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

11. Attach any plans, drawings, or sketches that illustrate the proposed project. Attach a property survey of the location where green infrastructure will be constructed, if available.

12. Existing impervious area to be managed through green technologies: \_\_\_\_\_ square feet

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

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

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15. Is green enhancement part of a larger construction project? If so, briefly describe:

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16. Amount of GIF funding requested: \_\_\_\_\_

17. Attach Project Budget with details on anticipated costs including breakdown by design, construction, maintenance, permitting, other etc.

18. Project Proposed Schedule:

- Design completed (month/day/year): \_\_\_\_\_
- Construction start: \_\_\_\_\_
- Construction completed: \_\_\_\_\_

19. Has any other government assistance (funds, tax incentives, or other economic benefits) been provided to the applicant, the Project or the property? (Check one):  Yes  No

If Yes, describe the type and amount of assistance provided (Federal, State, Other):

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**III. Maintenance Agreement**

20. Applicant must enter into a long-term general maintenance agreement to receive GIF funding. Briefly describe the maintenance plan for this project:

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**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. I certify that I am authorized to initiate the GIF funding application process on behalf of the project described, that the green infrastructure project will be constructed in its entirety on property owned or leased by the Applicant.

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. Additional information may be requested to consider this application complete. Applicant must comply with all applicable federal, State and local laws, including environmental laws and permitting requirements.

**Application with all 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.*