

NYS Department of State
Division of Local Government Services
Municipal Restructuring Fund
Request for Applications # 15-MRF-27

Questions & Answers

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions submitted by potential applicants and are hereby incorporated into RFA # 15-MRF-27 issued on February 2, 2016. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Program

- Q1 Does this new program replace the LGE grants entirely, such that this year's CFA round will no longer offer an LGE grant option?
- A1 No, it does not replace the LGE grants program. The LGE program still exists subject to New York State Budget approval.
- Q2 How is this program easier for small Local Governments to use? It seems complicated.
- A2 The design of the MRF includes opportunities for continuous technical assistance from the Department of State. Assistance can be provided by contacting DOS at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355
- Q3 Can you share successful projects done elsewhere over the last 10 years so we can build off those models?
- A3 Information about previous successful projects can be found on the DOS website at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lge/projects.html#GeneralGov>, or by contacting the MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355.
- Q4 Please give us a list of possible projects the program would cover.
- A4 Project ideas can be found on the DOS website at <http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lge/projects.html#GeneralGov> by reviewing previous LGE awards. You may also reach out directly to DOS at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355.

- Q5 Will there still be Local Government Efficiency funds available through the CFA process?
- A5 Yes, pending NYS Budget Approval.
- Q6 Is there a max \$ limit associated with a project?
- A6 There is no maximum limit for funding award. The program is limited by total funding available. Individual projects will be eligible for funding based upon the potential long-term savings not to exceed the total cost of the project. See RFA page 4.
- Q7 Do you have samples of successful charters or plans you can make available?
- A7 The MRF is a new program, there are currently no completed Charters. Please review the DOS website showing previous LGE awards for information on possible projects.
<http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lge/projects.html#GeneralGov> Technical Assistance is also available, by calling or emailing the Department of State at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355
- Q8 We start with the Project Charter – where is that located?
- A8 A Project Charter would include the Project Charter Form, the Tax Levy Impact Worksheet and Implementation Award Calculation sheet and a Work Plan and Budget found at:
<http://www.dos.ny.gov/funding/rfa-15-mrf-27/index.html>
- Q9 Do you have past templates for how the MRF has been applied to two villages that merge police and fire services or consolidations?
- A9 Since this is a new program there are no specific examples or templates available. However, there are studies and examples of projects on the DOS website at
<http://www.dos.ny.gov/lg/lge/projects.html#GeneralGov>.
- Q10 Will I ever have to return money to DOS if my small scale implementation does not go as well as I expect it will?
- A10 No. However, Large Scale implementation funding may be reduced.

- Q11 When are you going to hold the clinics?
- A11 The list of project clinics will be posted on the DOS website, and any local government may request Technical Assistance from the Department of State. Please call or email the Department of State for Information. MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355.
- Q12 Are there are any length restrictions on the project charter document of the application? Can you give any sense of expected length?
- A12 There is no page limitation. However, the project charter is intended to be a short document that provides a concise statement of scope, objectives and participants, required resources and impediments to project success, an estimate of the total project cost as well as cost savings and preliminary budget and work plan. The Project Charter Phase provides the initial framework for evaluating a project's viability and ultimate return on investment.
- Q13 When will awards be announced, after the March 15 and July 12 deadlines?
- A13 Awards will be announced after each funding deadline upon procurement approval.
- Q14 How does MRF differ from the LGE programs, other that the open window? Is it the scoring system?
- A14 The design of the MRF includes opportunities for continuous technical assistance from the Department of State. Assistance can be provided by contacting DOS at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355

Eligibility

- Q15 Can a BOCES collaborate with other BOCES to consolidate a function that affects all component school district within all of the collaborating BOCES regions?
- A15 Yes, however a BOCES must be a partner with one or more eligible applicants. A local government or school district must be the lead applicant. See RFA pages 1 & 7.
- Q16 Would creating regional transportation for multiple school districts be considered a consolidation of service or function?
- A16 Consolidation of **all** transportation services would be a functional consolidation. Regional transportation only would be a service consolidation. Both projects are eligible.

- Q17 Would the examination of court consolidation between a village and a town qualify for this kind of funding?
- A17 A court consolidation project is eligible.
- Q18 Can communities that have been awarded LGE Implementation funds apply for additional funding through the MRF program?
- A18 Yes, however any expenditures that were previously funded through Shared Municipal Services Incentive (SMSI), Local Government Efficiency (LGE), Citizens Reorganization Empowerment Grant (CREG), Local Government Performance and Efficiency Program (LGPEP), Financial Restructuring Board (FRB) or Municipal Restructuring Funds are ineligible. See RFA page 6.
- Q19 Can a Town and School district partner in a project?
- A19 Yes
- Q20 If the County were to share in some administrative duties with their Community College (ex. Purchasing) would that be considered?
- A20 Community colleges are not eligible applicant or partner. However, a county taking over administrative duties for local governments within the county or on a regional basis is eligible. The Tax Levy Impact & Implementation Award Calculation Worksheet would only include any cost savings for an eligible applicant or eligible local entity listed in the RFA (pages 1 & 7.)
- Q21 Would shared services between local highway municipalities for services of plowing, paving and road repair be considered?
- A21 While regionalization of services is eligible, the MRF program is intended to prioritize larger scale projects.
- Q22 Can an MRF grant be used to augment a NY Rising Project?
- A22 The Department will work with the applicant to determine if projects are eligible for funding. MRF funds cannot be used as match for other programs. MRF grants are required to be used for projects that are transformative and have substantial impact on governmental operations and functions, and they must yield permanent property tax reductions.

- Q23 Would this program cover costs associated with combining buildings for a Town and Village. In other words, selling one building and building out the other to support both entities. The Town would be absorbing/ combining functions of Clerks and others.
- A23 This would depend on the specifics of the restructuring. Capital costs are eligible but must be integral to a consolidation.
- Q24 Are public/private projects considered? For example a building for a town public safety and a non-profit emergency squad?
- A24 The MRF must be led by a county, city, town, village or school district. Other eligible partners are listed in the RFA. Non-profit organizations are not eligible partners as listed in the RFA, page 1. Eligible applicants are encouraged to look for partnerships or savings to satisfy the Charter's scoring requirements.
- Q25 Would consolidation of two different municipalities libraries be something that would be considered?
- A25 Yes. Although public libraries and association libraries are listed as eligible partners, an application would need an eligible applicant, a county, city, town, village or school district.

Scoring

- Q26 Will these applications be reviewed by the local Regional Economic Development Councils? It would appear no since the applications are not being submitted via the CFA but I'd like to confirm.
- A26 Municipal Restructuring Funds applications are not subject to separate Regional Economic Development Council review.
- Q27 Why does the scoring start at zero at the beginning of each phase?
- A27 At the beginning of each Phase the scoring starts over at zero so the points earned in the previous phase do not artificially increase the score in the new phase.

Tax Savings

- Q28 Is this RFA ONLY for tax levy savings or does sustainable/permanent savings achieved through collaboration between a neighboring Town for water system operations qualify?
- A28 Savings can be achieved through the tax levy or a fee for service model. With a fee for service model, applicants should substitute the tax levy for the entire amount to be raised through fees in a given fiscal year.

- Q29 The RFA states the project must result in significant tax savings-what is the definition of significant?
- A29 Significance is based on the percentage of the overall levy as shown in the Impact on Tax Levy point values.
- Q30 Can you review the taxpayer savings calculation? If a county assumes a town's function, will both the county and the town levy be used?
- A30 The Tax Levy Impact & Implementation Award Calculation Worksheet averages the Tax Levy Impact for all partners involved with the project.

Technical Assistance

- Q31 If we have an idea but don't quite know how to proceed, can we get help?
- A31 Yes, please request Technical Assistance from the Department of State at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355.
- Q32 Is there any free technical assistance to help evaluate for local municipalities possibilities for change. Some may need help getting out of the box and started.
- A32 Please call or email the Department of State for Information. MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355 for technical assistance.
- Q33 I have a project on my whiteboard. How should I choose whether to proceed down the Fast Track or the Venture Track? Or is this something the DOS will decide?
- A33 The Department of State will work with applicants to assist in determining if a project is ready for Fast Track or the Venture Track. This is dependent upon the amount of planning and development work already completed by the local government.
- Q34 Since MRF is non-competitive would you be able to share other municipalities' ideas on your site?
- A34 Projects under consideration by the MRF will be posted on the DOS website. DOS is also always available to discuss and share ideas. Technical Assistance is also available, by calling or emailing the Department of State at MRFprogram@dos.ny.gov or (518) 473-3355

Miscellaneous

- Q35 Why is the first funding date on March 15th? I thought it was continuous?
- A35 While the recruitment is continuous, final award of funds is subject to State procurement requirements. To satisfy procurement requirements, awards will be batched for approvals. Additional funding deadlines will be provided.
- Q36 Is it required that 30% of award spending go to M/WBE, or is it just that we need to consider using such businesses?
- A36 If your project is selected for an award, you will be required to comply with all the contractual requirements, including making a good faith effort to meet the goals for certified MWBE firms participation as stated in your contract and in accordance to Article 15-A. If you are unable to comply with the MWBE requirements, you will be required to secure a waiver.
- Q37 What is the impact on a project that does not lend itself to the 30% MWBE target threshold?
- A37 Grantees that are unable to comply with the MWBE goals will be required to secure a waiver.