

## Bristol Town Administrator

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**From:** Harris, Emily <Emily.Harris@vermont.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 24, 2023 2:44 PM  
**To:** DPS.RPC0ALL@list.vermont.gov; Dps.allemdirectors@list.vermont.gov  
**Subject:** [DPS.AliEMDirectors] Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program  
**Attachments:** VT\_NRCS\_EWPP\_Fact\_Sheet.pdf; VT Sample EWP Assistance Request Letter.docx; VT NRCS EWP Assistance Request Letter Instructions.pdf; ATT00001.txt

Good Afternoon,

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) administers the Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWPP) which responds to emergencies created by natural disasters. NRCS may bear up to 75 percent of the eligible construction cost of emergency measures (90 percent within limited-resource areas as identified by the U.S. Census data). The remaining costs must come from local sources and can be in the form of cash or in-kind services.

**Public and private landowners are eligible for assistance, but must be represented by a project sponsor.** According to Emergency Watershed Protection (EWP) program policy, sponsors (towns) have 60 days to submit "assistance request letters" to NRCS, after the "watershed event" to request financial and technical assistance. (See example request letter attached.) This letter does not obligate the sponsor to any financial commitment, other than promising to supply staff to accompany NRCS personnel when we come out to evaluate these sites. As of today, we have 16 days remaining and less than 20 towns have submitted assistance request letters." **Requests for the current event must be received by September 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022.**

The language in the attached VT Sample EWP Assistance Request Letter template must be included in your letter. The letter must have a penned or digital signature. A typed signature is not considered a signature by Grants and Agreements.

The following are some of the key highlights of the EWP Program:

### **Sponsor Share (25%)**

In Vermont, local municipalities that Sponsor private EWP projects typically require private landowners to cover the Sponsor share and be responsible for the Operation and Maintenance (O&M) of the project on their land.

How municipalities do this varies and NRCS does not get involved with these side agreements.

I've seen where a town required a cashier's check from the landowner before construction would start to where the town filed a document in the town records stating the landowner was responsible for 25% of the construction cost and O&M of the project on their land.

### **EWP Reimbursement – Locally Led Agreement**

With a Locally Led agreement, the Sponsor solicits bids, awards the construction contract, and pays the contractor.

The Sponsor then submits a reimbursement request with the invoices and proof the contractor was paid.

NRCS reimburses the Sponsor 75% of the eligible construction cost.

**IMPORTANT** – NRCS cannot pay for any work that was completed prior to a signed agreement between NRCS and the local sponsor.

### **EWP Funds**

**Financial Assistance (FA) Funds** – Used for construction expenses.

- Reimbursed at 75%.

**Technical Assistance (TA) Funds** – Used for Sponsor administrative and design expenses.

**Note:** With the scope of damage in the state, Vermont NRCS may not have the capacity to provide designs and sponsors may be required to contract the engineering services. NRCS can provide TA funds to help cover some of the cost.

- Reimbursed at 100% up to the maximum allowed in the agreement. Reimbursement caps at the lesser of:
  - TA funds obligated or
  - Percentage of actual construction expenses.
- NRCS typically allows 2.25% for administrative expenses and 5.25% for design services.

If you have questions, please reach out to:

- Bob Thompson, State Conservation Engineer – [bob.thompson@usda.gov](mailto:bob.thompson@usda.gov)
- Michel Lapointe, EWP Program Manager – [michel.lapointe@usda.gov](mailto:michel.lapointe@usda.gov)
- Leslie Wright, Watershed Engineer – [leslie.wright@usda.gov](mailto:leslie.wright@usda.gov)

Robert Thompson  
State Conservation Engineer  
USDA-NRCS, Vermont  
(802)951-6796 x232