

Resilient Florida Program Planning and Implementation Project Application Q&A

Helpful documents:

- [Standardized Vulnerability Assessment: Scope of Work Guidance.](#)
- [Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook.](#)

The following is a representation of questions and answers provided in discussions, webinars or via email that may assist future applicants to the Resilient Florida Program. Questions or answers may have been modified for accuracy and/or clarity.

Implementation Project Q&As

Are there defined amounts of funds that will be allocated for each project type? Are stormwater and drainage projects more likely to be funded?

There are no criteria in statute that direct the department to distribute funds based on resilience project type. Projects are reviewed for eligibility and then ranked in accordance with the criteria contained in statute. The department will submit a ranked list of all eligible projects in the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan to the Governor, the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives by December 1 of each year.

For eligible special districts/entities given eligibility through the signing of HB 7053, has the application process through the portal/application materials been updated to accommodate these districts? Do these entities need to provide additional materials during the application process to verify their eligibility?

The application portal will accept applications from those entities. Documentation that supports the qualification and determination of the special district or entity can be uploaded in the application portal. The department is developing a guidance document to assist entities in determining eligibility and will make that available when complete.

Is utility undergrounding an eligible use for Resilient Florida Program funds?

Utility lines are typically more at risk of wind damage rather than from the impacts of flooding or sea level rise. A project must demonstrate that a critical asset is at risk of flooding or sea level rise and that the project mitigates that risk to be eligible for Resilient Florida grant funding.

Will the scoring system in the draft rule be used to score implementation projects this year (2022)?

Until the rule is fully adopted, the statutory language will be used to evaluate and rank projects.

What are the match requirements for the Supplemental Resilient Florida grants (federally funded projects)? Should applicants indicate on the application that they would like to be considered for the supplemental/federal grant funds?

The 2022 General Appropriations Act (GAA) for fiscal year (FY) 2022-23 funding requires that implementation projects funded with both state and federal funds be consistent with the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan (Resilience Plan) requirements in Subsection 380.093(5), F.S. Therefore, for the FY23-24 Statewide Plan, each project must have:

- A completed vulnerability assessment (VA) .
- 50% matching funds, unless the applicant is considered a disadvantaged small community in accordance with the statute.

Additionally, the department received the remaining fiscal year (FY) 2021-22 federal funds for implementation projects. The previous GAA oversight guidance for these funds did not specify the need for a vulnerability assessment or local matching funds. However, these funds are limited and the department has not finalized guidance for distribution.

The grant application does not allow the applicant to request the fund type for the project. Where possible, the department encourages applicants to submit all eligible implementation projects and to identify local matching funds for the project. This will benefit the project's scoring and ranking and will increase its chances of being funded.

Is there a limit to how early a match can be started/are there any rules to what is eligible for a pre-award of match funds?

There is no defined limit of how early matching funds can be started, but generally should be within one year prior to the fiscal year award date of the grant funds. Matching fund expenditure types and eligibility are subject to review and approval by the department.

Are wastewater plants impacted by flooding or inflow/infiltration eligible for a grant under this program?

Wastewater treatment facilities and lift stations are defined as critical assets in Subsection 380.093(2), F.S., and would be considered eligible based upon the demonstrated impacts due to sea level rise or flooding.

If applying for funds by Sept. 1, 2022, is there a deadline when the VA must be complete? Does the VA need to be formally approved by the local government?

Prior to Dec. 1, 2023, communities and eligible entities may submit projects for funding without a comprehensive VA completed, provided they demonstrate that the project mitigates the risk of flooding or sea level rise for a critical asset as identified in a locally approved assessment, mitigation strategy, adaptation plan or report that includes an analysis of existing and future sea level rise or flooding impacts. After Dec. 1, 2023, the project must address a risk posed by flooding or sea level rise as identified in a comprehensive vulnerable assessment consistent with statutory requirements listed in Section 380.093(3)(d), F.S. Typically these assessments would be completed by the local government or through contracting with a third party, so additional approvals are not necessary.

Are there rules or guidance regarding eligible match sources for implementation projects?

Eligible sources for match funding may be local, state or federal, but all matching funds are subject to review to ensure that the department's funding source and the match funding source do not have prohibitive language for their use.

Eligible expenditure categories for matching funds, pursuant to the department's grant agreements standard terms and conditions, include contractual services, salary/wages and fringe benefits, and land acquisition. Additional expenditure types may be eligible depending on the project. The documentation required for expenditures to be used as match and cost reimbursement are the same and are outlined in the standard terms and conditions document.

For additional information or to review any of the department's grant agreement documents, email Hanna.Tillotson@FloridaDEP.gov.

Is there a list showing the agencies that received awards?

Previous grant awards can be found on the [Resilient Florida grants webpage](#). There are four different award lists: the 2021-2022 Resilient Florida Program Implementation Grant Awards, 2021-2022 Regional Resilience Entity Projects, 2021-2022 Planning Projects and 2022-2023 Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Resilience Plan.

Can you clarify the new language in the statute about special districts, especially the ones that are specifically mentioned? Are they the only types of special districts eligible?

House Bill 7053 (2022) was codified in Chapter 2022-89, Laws of Florida, and allows certain special districts that are responsible for the management and maintenance of inlets and intracoastal waterways or for the operation and maintenance of a potable water facility, a wastewater facility, an airport, or a seaport facility, eligible to apply for and receive Resilient Florida funding for projects that address risks of flooding or sea level rise. To be eligible, a special district must meet the definition of "special district" in Section 189.012, F.S.

Water management districts, drainage districts, erosion control districts, flood control districts and regional water supply authorities are also eligible to submit proposals for projects that mitigate risks of flooding or sea level rise on water supplies or water resources of the state.

Do projects need to be listed in the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Plan to be considered for funding?

In accordance with statutes, eligible projects for the Statewide Flooding and Sea Level Rise Plan must be identified as a vulnerable critical asset or area in a VA or adaptation plan. However, for fiscal year 2022-23, it is anticipated that the program will receive additional federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds that do not require that an asset be identified in a VA to be eligible. However, these funds are non-recurring and are not anticipated beyond FY 22/23. Although a VA should list the vulnerable critical assets, the program recognizes that assessments do not have fully developed strategies or projects for funding. It is encouraged through the adaptation planning process to create an adaptation plan to prioritize focus areas, develop adaptation strategies and recommend projects for funding.

How can projects be prioritized at a local level? How can a project rank higher for funding consideration?

The state recognizes that some local decisions must be made as to priority and cannot provide a prescriptive means for prioritization of projects by the local government. In our proposed rule language, if two or more projects score the same amount of points in the scoring criteria, the projects that are most ready to proceed will be prioritized by the state. The Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook provides a framework for determining adaptation strategies and in Section 4.1.1 some recommendations on prioritization.

Planning Grants

Do planning grants require an applicant match?

The planning grants do not require a match; they are fully funded through the Resilient Florida Program. If entities have local costs to support the project, then that will leverage Program funds and allow additional projects to be awarded.

How will planning project proposals be ranked and scored?

There are no scoring criteria in statute to prioritize Planning or Regional Resiliency Entity grants. Until July 2025, the program aims to support as many Florida communities as possible in completing statutorily compliant vulnerability assessments and updates to existing assessments. Applications will be reviewed for eligibility and cost effectiveness to ensure that state planning funds are available for as many eligible projects as possible.

Does the program prioritize project types?

The program is prioritizing the development of comprehensive vulnerability assessments for all of Florida's 67 counties and 410 municipalities

Is there a spending limit for hiring a consultant to perform the vulnerability assessment?

Proposals should demonstrate what costs are necessary to meet the VA requirements in statute. Costs may need to be justified on a case-by-case basis. The standard scope of work contains general costs estimates for common tasks

Where is the VA Scope of Work guidance document located on the website?

The comprehensive VA scope of work guidance document can be found on the department's [Resilience Resources](#) page.

Is the standard scope of work more attuned to the coastal communities, or does it cover both coastal and inland standards?

The scope of work will be largely the same for coastal and inland communities except for what the prominent future threats may be (i.e., rainfall, riverine, compound flooding and, if appropriate, sea level rise). The program is developing technical guidance that will assist all communities in assessing future conditions, especially inputs into the models that would be necessary as part of the standard scope of work. It will also contain sea level rise estimation methodology for coastal communities. This guidance will be available prior to award announcements.

If awarded planning funds, should entities use the VA guidance to direct the grant work plan? Or will that information be preset as the Resilient Florida grant managers provide documentation for the work plan and scope?

Work plans are recommended to align with the department's comprehensive VA [scope of work guidance](#) to ensure consistency with statutes. Additional tasks relative to completing the comprehensive VA may be considered. If awarded, the department grant managers will work with the grantee to modify the standard scope of work tasks and deliverables as they best fit the project.

Is the \$20 million in preconstruction ONLY for small communities?

For the FY 23-24 Statewide Plan, an additional \$20 million will be available for the Resilient Florida planning grants and preconstruction activities for small, and small financially disadvantaged communities. Preconstruction activities are defined in CS/HB 7053 (2022) as "activities associated with a project that occur before construction begins, including, but not limited to, design of the project, permitting of the project, surveys and data collection, site development, solicitation, public hearings, local code or comprehensive plan amendments, establishing local funding sources and easement acquisition. Preconstruction activities from non-financially disadvantaged communities will be considered if included as part of the overall project scope and cost."

Our municipality received an email from DEP titled "Apply for a Resilient Florida Grant." The email states, "a statewide inventory of VAs indicated that your community has not prepared a VA or currently has one that is not in compliance with current statutory requirements." To clarify, DEP is requesting that entities submit an application to complete a VA?

The department's priority is to ensure that all Florida cities and counties conduct a VA compliant with Subsection 380.093(3), F.S. If your community has not indicated that you have a VA or has completed an assessment prior to the statutory enactment, the department assumes that your community does not have a statutorily compliant VA. Those communities who have been awarded Resilient Florida planning grants to either update an assessment or perform a full assessment are considered to be working toward statutory compliance.

If you have a VA that you believe meets the requirements in Subsection 380.093(3), F.S., you can submit it to the department with the compliance checklist in [Appendix E of the Scope of Work Guidance](#) document.

For VAs, is the Peril of Flood compliance only a requirement for coastal communities?

Yes, only local governments that are subject to the requirements of Paragraph 163.3178(2)(f), F.S., are required to prepare and adopt a peril of flood comprehensive plan amendment. The department, in coordination with the Department of Economic Opportunity, can help determine if a peril of flood amendment is required by your community.

Would a physical vulnerability assessment (VA) of seawalls and stormwater inlets/outlets (involving field data collection) be included within the eligible project types?

This would technically be considered an eligible project type as an "assessment that encompasses a smaller geographic area or a portion of critical assets," which is subject to approval by the department;

programmatically, we would like every community to have a baseline VA that meets our statutory requirements. That means including inventory of the critical assets and assessing their vulnerability for the entire jurisdiction.

Is a standard scope of work for adaptation plans being developed?

The department is currently working on a scope guidance document for adaptation plans based on the [Florida Adaptation Planning Guidebook](#), available on our website. Please refer to Chapter 3 in the Guidebook until the scope guidance document is complete.

Is developing an adaptation plan based on an existing VA eligible for this funding? How would it fit into the scoring criteria?

The current VA must meet standards according to F.S. 380.093(3)(d). If your current VA does not meet the standards, you may submit a project proposal that includes updating the VA in addition to developing the adaptation plan

In developing the grant work plan for planning grants, several of the deliverables are more expansive than those estimated in the original task budget. Can we omit the deliverables that go beyond what was originally budgeted? How strictly do we need to remain to the deliverables in the bank of tasks?

The bank of tasks and deliverables provided for work plans are suggested standard language to ensure that projects with similar tasks are consistently completed and documented. The bank of tasks is meant to provide options of tasks for applicants to pick and choose from based on their scope of work, and the language can be modified to best fit the project. Unnecessary tasks may be omitted if the applicant chooses. However, in performing VAs, applicants should make sure to include tasks that address all the statutory requirements.

Should counties and their municipalities jointly submit a planning application for a vulnerability assessment/adaptation plan or should they be separate applications?

The program encourages collaborating within your regional groups and or city/county work groups to not only maximize project funding but to ensure some scale of consistency in your area.

Can social and economic impact analyses be included in a vulnerability assessment?

Subject to available funding, the department may consider funding social and economic impact analyses. To be considered, they should be presented as line-item expenses in the project proposal. Social and economic impact analyses are not in the requirements of F.S. 380.093(3)(d).

What is the total amount of funding for planning grants this Fiscal year (22-23)? Is there a max an individual community can receive?

The program anticipates having \$20 million available for planning grants in the 2022-23 Fiscal year. There is not a maximum award amount at this time. Priority is given to communities that do not have a VA. Expenses beyond of the minimum requirements of 380.093(3)(d) are not guaranteed funding.

If we apply this round, when would award likely occur?

The program's goal is to select projects and execute grant agreements in advance of July 1, 2022, when the grant funding comes available. Grant execution dates will vary from project to project. Regional

resilience entity grants need to be completed and funds expended within a single fiscal year (July 2022 – June 2023). Planning grants have a three-year timeframe for project completion.

General Questions

Are consultants excluded from submitting on behalf of or working on projects they assisted in grant applications with?

We are unaware of any state limitations that would exclude a consultant preparing the application from bidding, competitively or otherwise, on the proposal. However, we defer to local procurement procedure, rules and requirements to ensure that a conflict-of-interest situation does not arise. Additionally, some funds are federally appropriated, and any federal procedures, rules or requirements will apply unless otherwise exempted.

Can a federal funding source to be used as match funds for Resilient Florida Program grants?

Potential matching funds should be identified in the grant proposal. The program will determine eligibility on a case-by-case basis. While not required for planning grants, matching funds are beneficial to leverage program funds, provide additional support and achieve additional initiatives.

Does the program account for regional challenges facing communities when allocating funding?

Yes, the program understands there are differences across the state that create different challenges for assessing vulnerability such as the number of assets, the presence or absence of large water bodies and/or tidally influenced waters.

Will the regional resilience entity grants receive a grant award by July 1?

The program will execute grant agreements as quickly as possible. Comprehensive VAs will be prioritized for funding.

What types of projects will be prioritized for funding of the regional resilience entity grants?

Projects that assist counties and municipalities to complete a comprehensive VA or to update an existing VA to compliance with Section 380.093, F.S. will be prioritized for grant award.