

MCWI GRANT PROGRAM SCORING SYSTEM

The Mississippi Department of Environmental Quality (Department) has developed a scoring system based on the twelve factors set forth in the “Mississippi Municipality and County Water Infrastructure Grant Program Act of 2022” (MCWI) and as more fully discussed below. Each factor is assigned a maximum point value with some of the factors having partial points awarded for sub-factors. If a factor does not include any sub-factors, the points assigned for that factor are all the points indicated or zero points. A total of 100 points may be awarded to an application.

1. What is the applicant’s ability to comply with the deadlines specified by the rules and guidelines of the U.S. Department of Treasury for American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds? To earn points under this factor, an application must clearly show that the applicant can begin construction of the proposed project and complete construction in a timely manner, including requesting and disbursing all related funds, prior to the ARPA/MCWI funds availability deadline of December 31, 2026. A maximum of **24 points** may be awarded for this factor.

- a. Does the application include a proposed schedule and construction contract period, which ensures that construction is completed, and all related costs are requested and disbursed prior to the ARPA/MCWI funds availability deadline, which is December 31, 2026? **10 points AND**
- b. Does the application include 1) completed plans/specifications/contract documents with agency approvals, 2) documentation confirming that all applicable permits, if required, have been obtained; and 3) documentation that the Project is ready to begin construction within six (6) months? **10 points OR**
- c. Does the application include 1) completed plans/specifications/contract documents with agency approvals, 2) documentation confirming that all applicable permits, if required, have been obtained; and 3) documentation that the Project has already started construction? **14 points**

2. What is the proposed project’s impact on disadvantaged and overburdened communities? To earn points under this factor, the scoring system will evaluate population trend(s), median household income, unemployment rates, and water and sewer rates. A maximum of **24 points** may be awarded for this factor.

- a. Did the population of the applicant’s service area decrease between the years 2015 and 2020? **2 points**
- b. Is the median household income for the applicant’s service area less than 30% of the state median household income? \$0.00-\$13,953.30 **18 points**

- c. Is the median household income for the applicant's service area between 30% and 40 % of the state median household income?
\$13,953.31-\$18,604.40 **15 points**
 - d. Is the median household income for the applicant's service area between 40% and 50% of the state median household income?
\$18,604.41-\$23,255.50 **12 points**
 - e. Is the median household income for the applicant's service area between 50% and 65% of the state median household income?
\$23,255.51-\$30,232.15 **9 points**
 - f. Is the median household income for the applicant's service area between 65% and 80% of the state median household income?
\$30,232.16-\$37,128.80 **6 points**
 - g. Is the median household income for the applicant's service area between 80% and 100 % of the state median household income?
\$37,128.81-\$46,511.00 **3 points**
 - h. Is the unemployment rate for the applicant's service area greater than the state unemployment rate? **2 points**
 - i. Is the annual residential water and sewer bill for the applicant's service area greater than 2% of the median household income for the applicant's service area?
2 points
3. What category or type of project does the applicant propose – wastewater, drinking water, or stormwater project? The project category selected will receive a set score based on the proposed project's impacts to the environment and/or public health. Applications with more than one category of infrastructure project will only be scored on the primary category. Applicants will identify the primary category on the application.

Wastewater

- a. The following proposed wastewater projects will receive **15 points**. To earn these points under this wastewater category, an applicant must clearly show:
 - i. The proposed project corrects raw discharge in communities that have sewage collection systems but no treatment facilities;
 - ii. The proposed project upgrades existing facilities that are not meeting final permit limits. The scope of these projects may include only the upgrade, expansion, replacement, rehabilitation, and repair (including infiltration/inflow removal) of existing wastewater transportation and treatment facilities, or drinking water sludge discharge treatment facilities, necessary to bring the existing treatment facility into compliance with final

effluent limitations, or to eliminate existing facilities not meeting final limits; or

- iii. The proposed project eliminates wastewater overflow and sewer system bypass. The scope of these projects may include only the replacement, rehabilitation, and/or repair of existing transportation facilities for a 2-year, 24-hour rainfall event. To be eligible for this category, the bypasses and/or overflows documented in the application must have been reported by the deadline for the submission of the application to the Department.
- b. The following proposed wastewater projects will receive **10 points**. To earn these points under this wastewater category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project constructs eligible sewers and treatment facilities for existing (at the time of facilities plan submittal) residences, businesses and public buildings; or
 - ii. The proposed project upgrades existing facilities that are meeting final permit limits. Included within the scope of these projects may be the upgrade, expansion, replacement, rehabilitation, and repair of existing wastewater treatment and transportation facilities, including the removal of infiltration/inflow. The scope of these projects may not include the construction of new wastewater treatment or transportation facilities if none now exists.
- c. The following proposed wastewater projects will receive **5 points**. To earn points under this wastewater category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project develops new facilities. These projects may include the expansion or upgrade of existing wastewater treatment and transportation facilities and the construction of new wastewater treatment and transportation facilities to accommodate future growth within the design flow for the planning area to be served. Transportation facilities may include interceptors, pump stations, force mains, and collector lines; or
 - ii. The proposed project constructs industrial wastewater treatment and wastewater transportation facilities at an industrial area owned by an applicant.

Drinking Water

- d. The following proposed drinking water projects will receive **15 points**. To earn points under this drinking water category, an applicant must show:
- i. The proposed project facilitates compliance with primary drinking water standards. To qualify for this category, projects must correct deficiencies resulting in non-compliance with the primary drinking water standards.

Depending on the nature of the project, additional treatment requirements may be necessary as part of the proposed project;

- ii. The proposed projects must provide additional water supply to “one well” systems that do not have a backup well or a Mississippi State Department of Health approved emergency tie-in to another system to ensure safe drinking water and protect the health of the existing population. Depending on the nature of the project, additional treatment requirements may be necessary as part of the proposed project;
 - iii. The proposed project rehabilitates dams and reservoirs, provided that the primary purpose of the dam or reservoir is for drinking water supply and the project is necessary for the provision of drinking water;
 - iv. The proposed project corrects documented pressure deficiencies that result in existing systems routinely failing to maintain minimum acceptable dynamic pressure;
 - v. The proposed project replaces the full-length of lead service lines; or
 - vi. The proposed project rehabilitates private drinking water wells, implement testing initiatives to identify contaminants in private wells, and implement treatment activities and remediation projects that address contamination in private wells that meet other federal requirements.
- e. The following proposed drinking water projects will receive **10 points**. To earn points under this drinking water category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project protects source water, such as projects to manage and/or prevent potential sources of contaminants/pollutants from reaching sources of drinking water. The potential contaminants/pollutants and source water protection areas must have been identified in the public water systems Source Water Assessment Plan Report prepared by the Department. If the public water system has not received its Source Water Protection Assessment Plan Report or has documentation that may change the Report, the applicant shall provide suitable documentation of potential sources of contaminants/pollutants that is acceptable to the Department;
 - ii. The proposed project either expands existing system capacity or constructs a new drinking water system to ensure safe drinking water (source, treatment and/or distribution) to serve existing residences/businesses in currently unserved areas; or
 - iii. The proposed project provides additional supply to systems with insufficient back-up water supply sources to ensure safe drinking water. At a minimum, a system using ground water should be able to lose any one of the wells supplying the system and still maintain minimum acceptable dynamic pressure throughout the entire system.

- f. The following proposed drinking water projects will receive **5 points**. To earn points under this drinking water category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project rehabilitates, replaces, protects or upgrades deteriorated, worn, aged or obsolete equipment, facilities, etc., to assure continued, dependable operation of water systems where such systems are already meeting Primary Drinking Water Standards. Depending on the nature of the project, additional treatment requirements may be necessary as part of the proposed project;
 - ii. The proposed project either rehabilitates existing fluoride treatment facilities at well or treatment plant sites or adds new facilities to existing well or treatment plants;
 - iii. The proposed project provides treatment that brings systems into compliance with Secondary Drinking Water Regulations. Depending on the nature of the project, additional treatment requirements may be necessary as part of the proposed project; or
 - iv. The proposed project consolidates separate systems into a single system for purposes other than those set out above in sections 3.d. and 3.e.

Stormwater

- g. The following proposed stormwater projects will receive **15 points**. To earn points under this stormwater category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project addresses non-point and stormwater pollution correction projects, which may include program costs, conservation easements, sedimentation basins, levees, canals and other structures for the purpose of correcting non-point and stormwater sources of pollution; or
 - ii. The proposed project addresses stormwater subsurface drainage and water management, reduction, treatment or recapture of stormwater.
- h. The following proposed stormwater projects will receive **10 points**. To earn points under this stormwater category, an applicant must clearly show:
- i. The proposed project implements green infrastructure, which may include a range of measures that use plant or soil systems, permeable pavement or other permeable surfaces or substrates, stormwater harvest or reuse, or landscaping to store, infiltrate, or evapotranspire stormwater and reduce flows to sewer systems or to surface waters; or
 - ii. The proposed project implements nonpoint source management plan, National Estuary Program Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plan, or a stormwater management plan with the goal of providing a water quality benefit.

- i. The following proposed stormwater projects will receive **5 points**. To earn points under this stormwater category, an applicant must clearly show:
 - i. The proposed project manages gray infrastructure stormwater, including piping, storage and treatment; or
 - ii. The proposed project is for culverts and other road-stream crossings for stormwater management, which includes repair, replacement, or removal of culverts and other road-stream crossing infrastructure the purpose of which is to manage stormwater.
4. How many people and how many communities are served by the proposed project? A maximum of **10 points** may be awarded for this factor.
- a. Does the proposed project serve a population greater than 10,000? **5 points**.
 - b. Does the proposed project serve a population between 10,000 and 3,301? **4 points**.
 - c. Does the proposed project serve a population between 3,301 and 501? **3 points**.
 - d. Does the proposed project serve a population less than 500? **2 points**.
 - e. Does the proposed project serve multiple communities within the applicant's service area? **1 point**
 - f. Does the proposed project serve more than 75% of the applicant's service area? **4 points**.
 - g. Does the proposed project serve between 75% and 50% of the applicant's service area? **3 points**.
 - h. Does the proposed project serve between 50% and 25% of the applicant's service area? **2 points**.
5. Does the application include documentation of long-term plans for the operation and maintenance of the proposed project? To earn points for this factor, the documentation must include a certification that the applicant has already developed an Asset Management, Fiscal Sustainability, or similar plan. A total of **4 Points** may be awarded for this factor.
6. Does the proposed project serve more than one political subdivision? A total of 4 points may be awarded for this factor.
- a. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates the proposed project benefit more than four political subdivisions? **4 points**

- b. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates the proposed project benefit four political subdivisions? **3 points**
 - c. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates the proposed project benefit three political subdivisions? **2 points**
 - d. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates the proposed project benefit two political subdivisions? **1 point**
7. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates that the proposed project will enhance public service infrastructure, including transportation and emergency access? A total of **4 points** may be awarded for this factor.
8. Does the application include documentation which clearly supports that the proposed project addresses noncompliance with state and federal laws and regulations? A total of **4 points** may be awarded for this factor.
9. Does the application include documentation which clearly supports that the proposed project promotes economic development in the community/service area? A total of **4 points** may be awarded for this factor.
10. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates the applicant's prior efforts to secure funding to address the objectives of the proposed project? A total of **4 points** may be awarded for this factor.
- a. Does the application include documentation of prior efforts to secure funding on or after March 2021, whether partially successful or unsuccessful? **4 points**
 - b. Does the application include documentation of prior efforts to secure funding before March 2021, whether partially successful or unsuccessful? **2 points**
11. Does the application include documentation which clearly supports the applicant's commitment to contribute other non-ARPA funds or in-kind cost-sharing for a portion of the total project cost? A total of **2 points** may be awarded for this factor.
12. Does the application include documentation which clearly demonstrates that the proposed project is on the applicable municipal or county engineer's approved list? A total of **1 point** may be awarded for this factor.