Eligibility

1. **Who is eligible to receive MCWI grant funds?** To be eligible to receive MCWI grant funds, an Applicant must be a municipality, county, or public utility that is not regulated by the Public Service Commission. Additionally, Applicants must be an operator-member of Mississippi 811, Inc., and have (or will have) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds.

2. **Do I have to have Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds to apply for an MCWI Grant?** Yes. Each Applicant must have or will have Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, as authorized by Section 9901 of ARPA, to use as matching funds for an MCWI Grant.

3. **May a university/college/community college with ARPA Funds apply for an MCWI Grant?** To be eligible to receive funds under the MCWI Program, the applying entity must be a county, municipality or public utility not regulated by the Public Service Commission and have (or will have) Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. While universities did receive ARPA funding under the Higher Education Emergency Relief Fund, these funds are not Local Fiscal Recovery Funds and, as such, do not qualify for MCWI matching grants. Specifically, Higher Education Emergency Relief Funds are authorized under Section 2003 of ARPA while Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds are authorized by Section 9901 of ARPA. In addition, entities qualifying as public utilities for purpose of the MCWI grant program are required to receive compensation for the utility services they provide. Further, MDEQ’s understanding is that the legislative intent of Senate Bill 2822 was to limit eligible public utilities to those entities whose primary purpose is to provide utility services to the public. As the primary purpose of universities / colleges / community colleges is not to provide utility services to the public, those entities would not qualify as public utilities for purposes of the MCWI grant program.

4. **How much funding are Applicants eligible to receive from the MCWI Grant Program?** MCWI Grants will only match Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds. For municipalities that received less than One Million Dollars ($1,000,000.00) in Local Recovery Funds, Grant Funds are available on a two-to-one matching basis. However, the two-to-one fund match is not available for funds transferred to a municipality from another municipality or county. For all other eligible Applicants, Grant Funds are available on a one-to-one matching basis.

5. **What types of Projects are eligible?** Applicants may fund a broad range of drinking water, wastewater, and storm water infrastructure Projects, including those eligible under the EPA’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund, EPA’s Drinking Water State Revolving Fund, and certain additional Projects, including a wide set of lead remediation and storm water infrastructure.

6. **Are costs incurred before the MCWI Grant award is made eligible for reimbursement under the MCWI grant program?** Yes, if the costs are eligible, properly documented, and comply with all applicable federal requirements, such as but not limited to, 2 CFR Part 200. In addition, the costs must have been incurred on or after March 3, 2021, per Treasury’s Final Rule on ARPA.
7. **Can I submit a Project under construction / recently constructed?** Yes, but please see the answer to Question #6 above for further context.

8. **What type of agreement or documentation is necessary to show a Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery funds transfer?** At the time of application, an Applicant may document the availability of Local Fiscal Recovery Funds through a board or council resolution, or similar authorization. However, prior to the MCWI grant execution, a Recipient must provide MDEQ with a legally binding document between the party transferring the funds and the party accepting the transfer.

9. **Can a County or City apply for MCWI funds to perform work for another entity such as a utility authority?** Yes, provided the Project is an eligible type and the County or City is the MCWI grant Applicant. As such, the County or City would be responsible for ensuring all conditions of the MCWI Grant Agreement are met, notwithstanding any additional agreement the City or County may have with the entity that proposed the Project to the City or County.

10. **Can I apply for an MCWI grant to repay a Drinking Water or Clean Water State Revolving Fund (“SRF”) Loan?** No, these funds cannot be used to pay loans for the SRF program.

### Application

1. **Is the MCWI grant program competitive?** Yes, per Senate Bill 2822, the applications for match assistance will be verified for eligibility, and if eligible, scored and ranked against other Applicants’ Projects. There will be multiple rounds for Applicants to seek funding.

2. **How do I apply for an MCWI Grant?** MDEQ will launch an online application portal wherein Applicants can submit applications, upload information and documents, and answer questions. Please see the application portal questions at www.mswaterinfrastructure.com. Due to the amount of information that Applicants will be required to produce, MDEQ encourages potential Applicants to start the process of collecting the information requested in those questions as soon as reasonably possible. The online application portal will be open later in 2022. MDEQ strongly encourages the use of the online portal to submit applications.

3. **Can an application without plans and specifications be submitted?** Yes, an Applicant may submit an application without plans and specifications, but the application must contain a detailed description of the Project. If an Applicant is selected for the funds, the Applicant must submit plans and specifications at the time specified in the grant agreement. Please refer to the scoring system for information on how MDEQ will allocate points for Projects with plans and specifications submitted with the application.

4. **Can construction contingency be included in the MCWI grant request?** Yes, Applicants are encouraged to have contingency plans and funds available in view of present market factors.

5. **May an Applicant submit multiple Projects?** Yes. Applicants can submit multiple Projects. However, Projects will be reviewed, scored, and ranked independently from one another. Grant awards will only be awarded to Projects with Local Fiscal Recovery matching funds. While more than one Project may be submitted by a given eligible entity, and more than one Project may receive MCWI grant funding, the total amount of grant funds available to an entity is limited by the total amount of Local Fiscal Recovery matching funds provided by that entity.
**Ranking and Award**

1. **How will Projects be scored?** Please refer to the scoring criteria information available on the Project website at www.mswaterinfrastructure.com.

2. **If a Project contains Drinking Water and Wastewater components, how will this Project be scored?** Applicants will be asked to identify the primary Project purpose (i.e. Wastewater, Drinking Water or Stormwater) in the application. The Project will be scored according to the primary purpose that is identified by the Applicant.

3. **Will Applicants be able to see how their Project’s score and rank?** Applicants will be able to see rank and score of their Project(s) at the conclusion of each round. If the Applicant is not awarded Grant Funds in the round in which it applies, it may update its application for the opportunity to be funded in the second or subsequent rounds.

4. **When will the first round of MCWI awards occur?** MDEQ anticipates the first awards will be made available before the end of 2022.

5. **Will there be additional rounds of funding?** Yes, at a minimum, there will be two rounds, and perhaps additional rounds, dependent on the availability of funds.

6. **What type of agreement will be required between the Recipient and MDEQ for the MCWI Grant award?** MDEQ will provide each awarded Applicant with a grant agreement that will stipulate the requirements associated with receipt of funds.

**Bid and Construction**

1. **Does American Iron and Steel (AIS) apply to MCWI funds?** No, unless other federal funds subject to AIS requirements are also being used to pay for the Project (e.g. If the Project is partially paid for from Drinking Water or Clean Water SRF funds then AIS requirements apply to the entire Project.).

2. **Does the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) apply to MCWI funds?** Per the US Treasury, NEPA is not triggered as a requirement if the Project is only funded with State and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (SLFRF) funding; thus, the use of MCWI funds does not trigger NEPA. However, if other federal funds are utilized to fund any part of the Project, then NEPA may be applicable.

3. **Do the Davis-Bacon labor standards apply to MCWI funds?** Dependent on the size of the Project, Davis-Bacon may apply. If the total amount of federal funds used on the Project exceed $10M, then Recipients are required to provide documentation of wage and labor standards; these requirements can be met with certifications stating that the Project is in compliance with the Davis-Bacon Act. Recipients may be otherwise subject to the requirements of the Davis-Bacon Act when SLFRF award funds are used on the Project in conjunction with funds from another federal program that requires enforcement of the Davis-Bacon Act.

4. **What procurement procedures does the Applicant need to follow for professional services, materials, supplies, construction, etc. to be eligible for reimbursement?** The Applicant must follow the procurement requirements as established under 2 CFR Part 200 as well as procurement rules established by the State of Mississippi. If the Applicant is not familiar with these
requirements, it is recommended that the Applicant seek professional assistance. It is further recommended that the Applicant have programmatic policies on file which include federal procurement standard operating procedures.

5. **If a Project is additionally funded with sources other than MCWI, are portions not funded by MCWI/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds required to follow the same procurement procedures?** Only the portions of the Project funded by MCWI/Coronavirus Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, or other applicable federal funding streams, must adhere to 2 CFR Part 200 procurement requirements. However, the Applicant must be able to clearly delineate the portions of Project from one funding stream to another relative to procurement requirements. Failure to adequately delineate the funding streams may result in the claw-back of funds.

6. **Will additional MCWI funds be available for bid overruns?** The Applicant should assume that funds will not be available for bid overruns and should be prepared to complete Projects with other funds available to them.

**Reimbursement**

1. **How will Applicants receive reimbursements? What needs to be submitted to receive reimbursement?** MCWI is a reimbursement grant program. Recipients will only be reimbursed for costs after submission of detailed invoices and cost reports, including receipts, that substantiate all costs to which they seek to have reimbursed. All requests must be substantiated on the record with proper documentation. Projects must be undertaken and completed in a manner that is technically sound, meaning that they must meet design and construction methods and use materials that are approved, codified, recognized, fall under standards or acceptable levels of practice, or otherwise are determined to be acceptable by the design and construction industry. Specific standard operating procedures to be determined prior to grant award will further detail specific requirements of the grantees.

2. **Can pre-construction activities be submitted for reimbursement prior to construction bids?** Yes, pre-construction costs are generally permissible expenditures as long as those costs are proper in view of federal requirements.

3. **How will the 4% professional fee limit be applied?** The dollar amount for professional fees allowed to be reimbursed under the Program is limited to 4% of the total of the Local Recovery Funds obligated to the Project and the MCWI Grant Funds.