Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Assistance Grant Program

Boston Water and Sewer Commission

Resource Guide: *How to Enroll in BWSC's New Grant Program*

Your Stormwater Charge

Currently, BWSC customers pay for stormwater service through their sewer service charges. Property owners in the BWSC service area will see a new line item on their BWSC bills for stormwater service beginning on April 1, 2024. The good news is that it will be accompanied by a reduction in the sewer rate.

The stormwater charge is based on each property owner's **impervious area.** This includes hard surfaces such as pavement, concrete, structures, and compacted soil. Impervious areas cause more runoff to flow from a property and increases the amount of pollutants in runoff.

Properties are categorized as small residential properties (**SRP**) or non-small residential properties (**NSRP**) and will be charged accordingly.

The Equivalent Residential Unit (**ERU**) is the billing unit used for stormwater. One ERU represents the amount of impervious area on a typical small residential property in Boston.
Here are examples:

Stormwater is water that originates from precipitation events, such as rain or snow, and flows over land or impervious surfaces.

Runoff is water that flows over land or other surfaces and is not absorbed or infiltrated into the ground.

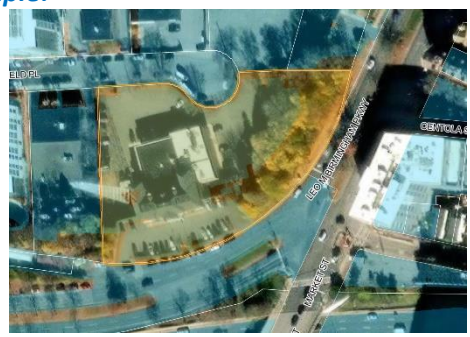
Green Infrastructure describes stormwater management practices that use natural or engineered systems to capture and treat stormwater runoff.

For more terms and definitions, please visit https://www.bwsc.org/news-and-events/news/stormwater

Small Residential Properties (SRP)
Properties with 1-6 residential units
Typical impervious area is 2,164 square feet, that's an **ERU**
Each property owner will be charged a single rate for **1 ERU**

Non-Small Residential Properties (NSRP)
All other properties including institutional, industrial, and commercial
Will be charged **per ERU of impervious area** measured on the property
To calculate the stormwater charge the impervious area is divided by 2,164 square feet

Example:



66,684 sq ft of impervious area measured on property
66,684 sq ft ÷ 2,164 sq ft = 31.8, rounded to **32 ERUs**

Should you have any questions about the stormwater charge or the Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Assistance Program, please contact stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org.

How to Apply for a Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Assistance Grant

Grants may be awarded to help offset the cost of stormwater and green infrastructure projects that BWSC determines are in support of its stormwater management goals. Grants will be awarded only to projects or programs that are not already required by regulation. Any property owner in Boston who pays a stormwater charge is eligible to apply for a grant. BWSC will pay half the cost of the eligible project costs up to **$4,000**. **Only practices, activities or projects that have yet to be constructed or completed will be considered eligible for a grant**. The practice must help meet one of BWSC's stormwater management goals, described below, and meet the criteria specified for each goal.

Grant applications will be reviewed and approved monthly by BWSC's grant committee. Approved applications will have eligible costs reimbursed to the applicant following completion of the project. At the conclusion of the project, the applicant must submit detailed expense reports and receipts for reimbursable cost items. The Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Assistance Grant is limited to one grant per property, every ten years (with the exception of the Education Grant).

Environmental Education

BWSC may award grants to schools, faith-based organizations, after-school programs, or other community organizations that host a program to educate K-12 students about stormwater and environmental stewardship. The grant covers half the cost of transportation and materials for each program up to $4,000. The grant does not cover labor costs.

Example Educational Programs
Field trips with an educational component such as an outdoor classroom (may be hosted by BWSC)
Outdoor programs (tree plantings, native vegetation plantings, school garden)
Stormwater-themed lessons, labs and activities
Developing educational materials for stormwater (videos, worksheets, etc.)

The applicant must provide a program report detailing their practice, including the number of attendees, location, and duration. Customers may apply for the education grant on an annual basis.

Schools, faith-based organizations, after-school programs, or other community organizations that host a program to educate K-12 students about stormwater using BWSC's **approved curriculum** may also be eligible for a **Stormwater Credit**.

Habitat Restoration

BWSC may award grants to property owners and community organizations who implement natural habitat restoration projects and practices on properties within the City of Boston. The grant will reimburse half the cost of contracted labor and materials up to $4,000 for performing the restoration practice.

Example Habitat Restoration Practices
Vegetation management
Invasive plant control
Stream and wetland restoration
Stream buffers
Revegetation

The applicant must provide a project report detailing their practice, including number of participants, issues addressed by the practice, and before and after photos of the restored area.

The applicant must implement an approved restoration practice for the property's habitat type, as listed by the Massachusetts Department of Fisheries and Wildlife. More information on habitat restoration practices can be found at https://www.mass.gov/habitat-restoration-resources.

Local, state, and federal agencies have authority over certain restoration activities. The applicant must obtain all local, state, and federal permitting as required by the selected activity.

Water Quality

BWSC recognizes that SRP customers may wish to install stormwater control measures that help treat, prevent, and reduce stormwater pollution. BWSC may award grants to SRP customers wishing to install small practices. The grant will reimburse half the cost of materials and contracted labor to install the practice up to $4,000. This grant is for practices that are not required as part of the new development/site plan process.

BWSC may consider cost, location and volume of runoff captured in prioritizing and selecting projects for grants.

Pictured: Rain garden planted with native vegetation

Example Eligible Practice	Requirement for Grant
Infiltration infrastructure	Installation of infiltration infrastructure such as: • Cistern or French Drain must be capable of handling at least 200 gallons of runoff. • Rain Garden must be at least 100 sq. ft. in area
Tree plantings*	*BWSC recognizes tree planting as a tool for managing stormwater runoff. Trees help by reducing erosion, soaking up rainwater, and promoting infiltration. For more information please visit https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-trees-help-reduce-runoff* Trees must be spaced apart by at least 30 ft. Trees must be native to Massachusetts. A list of eligible species can be found at: *https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass_North_American_Plants_for_New_England_Gardens.pdf*
Native vegetation*	Planting area must cover at least 100 sq. ft. All vegetation must be native to Massachusetts. A list of eligible species can be found at: *https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass_North_American_Plants_for_New_England_Gardens.pdf*

*Tree plantings and native vegetation are subject to certain BWSC limitations and must be approved in order to be eligible for grants.