

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

### Your Stormwater Charge

BWSC implemented stormwater billing in 2024 along with a credit and grant awards program for customers. This step-by-step guide is meant to assist all customers who would like to apply for a stormwater grant. Grants are awarded on a per parcel basis and all customers must submit an application to be considered. Customers are eligible if they meet BWSC specified requirements. Please see the information and instructions below and if you need further assistance with your application please do not hesitate to contact the Stormwater team at 617-989-7899 or via email at [stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org](mailto:stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org).

The stormwater charge is based upon each property's **impervious area**. Impervious area includes hard surfaces such as pavement, concrete, structures, roofs, compacted soil and crushed stone. Impervious areas cause more runoff to flow from a property and increase the number of pollutants, which flow to catch basins and enter the sewer system that BWSC is required to treat.

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:



#### Small Residential Properties (SRP)

1-6 residential family homes (excluding condominiums).  
Typical impervious area is 2,164 square feet which equals **one ERU**.  
Each property owner will be charged a single rate for **one 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 and rounded up to the next ERU.

**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.

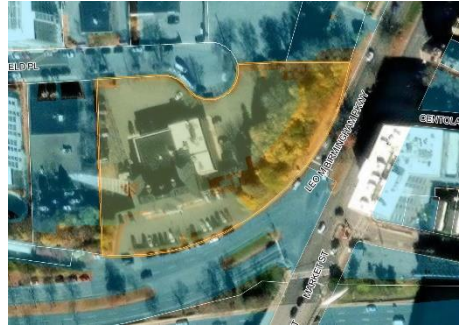


**Green Infrastructure** describes stormwater management practices that use natural or engineered systems to capture and treat stormwater runoff.



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

**Example:**



66,684 sq ft of impervious area measured on property.  
 $66,684 \text{ sq ft} \div 2,164 \text{ sq ft} = 31.8$ , rounded to **32 ERUs**.

Should you have any questions about the stormwater charge or the Stormwater & Green Infrastructure Assistance Program, please contact us at 617-989-7899 or via email at [stormwaterinfo@bwsc.org](mailto: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. All grant applications must be pre-approved by BWSC as part of the award process. Any property owner in Boston who pays a stormwater charge is eligible to apply for a grant. BWSC will pay 100% of eligible project costs but capped at **\$8,000**. **Only practices or activities 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 result in eligible costs being reimbursed to applicants following completion of the projects. 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. BWSC will pay 100% of grant eligible project costs but capped at **\$8,000**. 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 100% of materials but capped at \$8,000 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. 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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cistern or French Drain must be capable of handling at least 200 gallons of runoff.</li> <li>• Rain Garden must be at least 100 sq. ft. in area</li> </ul>
Tree plantings*	<p><i>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 <a href="https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-trees-help-reduce-runoff">https://www.epa.gov/soakuptherain/soak-rain-trees-help-reduce-runoff</a></i></p> <p>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:  <a href="https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass North American Plants for New England Gardens.pdf">https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass North American Plants for New England Gardens.pdf</a></p>
Native vegetation*	<p>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:  <a href="https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass North American Plants for New England Gardens.pdf">https://grownativemass.org/sites/default/files/documents/UMass North American Plants for New England Gardens.pdf</a></p>

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