

Full Round Landowner Orientation Questions and Answers

<b>Application and Procedure Questions</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Can I do a Do-it-Yourself Project?	Yes, you may do any combination of DIY/Contractor Design or Install. (i.e. Contractor Design, DIY Install; DIY - Design, Contractor Install; DIY - Design & Install; Contractor - Design & Install) NOTE: Only Participating Contractor (PC) Design and Labor can be expensed. If your're not using a PC, only material costs can be expensed.
Is the cost of the contractor bid reimbursed or part of the \$3K total, or separate?	If the question is about design costs then yes, they can be included in the total \$3000, but no more than \$3000 will be awarded per grant.
What if you don't have the money up front and want to wait on the grant money?	If you can negotiate with a PC to wait to receive funding, that is your option. You will have to ensure you stay under or at the \$3,000 maximum level and also that your PC agrees to this arrangement from the beginning. They are in no way obligated accomodate this request under program standards. The Advanced Payment Option of 1/3 of project costs will be the only funds dispersed until the project has been installed, the completion packet has been received and processed, and the Ground Truthing appointment has taken place.
Since time is limited to get three bids from contractors, is preferential treatment/evaluation given to applicants with three bids?	The cost effectiveness score could possibly reflect this. All bids are not required to be submitted in the application so please include all bids. We will include the bids in the evaluation of project cost effectiveness. Overall we always recommend getting multiple bids.
Why are there no green roof contractors?	Green Roof Blocks has been added to the Participating Contractor List.
Can I submit multiple applications? I have 6 rentals and a business. What about multifamily or duplex homes?	Yes. One grant per residential address and up to 4 grants per commercial address. Each separate location or address counts as a separate property excluding individual buildings with more than one address. Only 1 representative must attend for each property or organization with multiple properties. FOR MULTIFAMILY: If there is a single owner, than you may submit for the total number of units (up to 4). If there are multiple owners, EACH OWNER may submit 1 application (up to 4). NOTE - We do not recommend applying for a Green Roof for shared ownership of a Multifamily home.
Does each feature need to be 100 square feet or everything together?	Together, unless applying for multiple grants. Then each grant needs to include at least 100 square feet.
What is the Application due date	March 27th, 2015

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What is the evaluation criteria?	Please see inside front cover of application "Funding Selection Criteria" section. The Workshops spent a lot of time on the benefits of native plants and the effectiveness of Rain Gardens.
To what level of rainfall do you want homeowners to capture?	If feature is 20% of the size of the impervious area it's draining to, it is optimal.
What happens if you move before 5 years? Do you need to pay money back?	It's okay, we just ask you to tell the new owners and hope they maintain the features – no legal requirement and no funds will need to be returned.
Can we include the computer generated landscape drawing given to us by an approved contractor instead of drawing it on graph paper?	Yes, just make sure it's no larger than 11 x 17.
Can my contractor still get on the Participating Contractor list?	Sorry, no, only green roof contractors will be added.
What if you have many of these eligible features already in play? Do we get credit for them?	Existing Landscaping will not be given points in the evaluation process. Only proposed features in your application will be considered and evaluated.
How many people have taken the workshops?	Over 120 people have attended the Workshops.
Can I be reimbursed for reclaimed/materials purchased from individuals such as in Craigslist? Like used 55 gallon drums for much cheaper, found on Craigslist?	If you purchase from somewhere like Craigslist, please provide a printout of the listing on craigslist, email confirmation and written receipt from the seller.
How do I show the slope or direction of water flow on my property?	Please show the slope with arrows pointing in the direction the water is flowing through your property.
What should we show for a detailed maintenance plan?	Please tell us what you're going to do by month. Please see examples on the "Resources Page" on the <a href="http://www.mobot.org/rainscaping">mobot.org/rainscaping</a> site. ( <a href="http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/sustainable-living/at-home/rainscaping-guide/resources.aspx">http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/sustainable-living/at-home/rainscaping-guide/resources.aspx</a> )
How do I conduct a Percolation Test	On the <a href="http://www.mobot.org/rainscaping">mobot.org/rainscaping</a> site go to: Is a Rain Garden Right for Your Site? > Select "Does a percolation test indicate good drainage?" > "Conduct a Percolation Test" ( <a href="http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/sustainable-living/at-home/rainscaping-guide/is-a-rain-garden-right-for-your-site.aspx?questionid=365&amp;afmid=8228">http://www.missouribotanicalgarden.org/sustainability/sustainability/sustainable-living/at-home/rainscaping-guide/is-a-rain-garden-right-for-your-site.aspx?questionid=365&amp;afmid=8228</a> ) Or slide 45 on the Orientation Power Point.
Will Denials be sent out?	Yes. Denial notices will go out.

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<b>Eligibility Questions</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
What do you mean by institution? What if you are both? Urban farm on my home	Institutional properties include places like churches and schools. An urban farm would be considered a Commercial/ Institutional Project
If our land is an LRA Lease are we eligible and who qualifies as landowner to sign off on documentation?	In order to meet program requirements, please get a copy of the LRA Lease and submit that copy with the application. Have the person who signed the lease sign the Landowner Signature section.
What are the technical/square footage requirements for a rooftop garden/green roof?	There are no minimum or maximum limitations. Green Roof proposals will require sealed statement from an Engineer.
Is Greywater recovery allowed in St. Louis? Can it be incorporated in the landscape?	This would be an extremely expensive project! We are not sure if it would fit into the scope of this program.
When you say “previously landscaped” areas are ineligible, do you include spaces with any previous plantings? How conservatively are you considering “landscaping?”	Any area currently planted with live plants is considered previously landscaped and cannot be altered or removed in order to install features. If area was once planted but has been dead and barren for a long amount of time the area would be eligible for the project.
Is replacing turf considered re-landscaping?	Turf grass does not count as previously landscaped areas and is very much encouraged to replace with rainscaping features.
What if we wanted to add a storage capacity of gravel or something under an existing landscaping?	Please select an area with no existing landscaping for proposed solutions.
Why are soil amendments not allowed for native plantings?	They are allowed and encouraged for any plant based strategy.
I have rain barrels, but I would need to install gutters to connect to the rain barrels. Would gutters be eligible for grant funds?	Gutters alone are not eligible, but if they were a small cost of a larger project, and required for Rain Barrels the material cost would potentially be covered. The labor for any gutter work would not be covered, unless performed by a Participating Contractor.
Do large stepping stones qualify as “permeable pavers”?	No, large stepping stones do not quality as "permeable pavers."
Can I have a rain barrel for an existing garden area AND a lawn alternative adjacent to the existing flower garden?	Yes, this would be an acceptable proposal.
Is a side lot eligible for this project? (i.e. the side lot is next to my primary residence).	If you own the lot this property would be eligible. Although, please do not cross the property boundary with a feature in case property changes hands. You may apply for 1 grant per address.

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My neighbor and I share a piece of property. If she and I both apply and get accepted, will we get \$6,000?	Legally there are no shared properties. You may apply for \$3,000 for your property and features and she may apply for \$3,000 for her property and features. We do not suggest sharing features.
Can multiple sites for rain gardens be eligible if they add up to 100 sq ft or more? Is it still considered one project?	Yes multiple rain gardens are eligible, and if it is a residential project where one project is eligible, then as long as it adds up to 100 square feet it would be fine. If it is more than 100 sq ft that's even better but still one project. If it is a commercial project then there could be more than one grant application. In the commercial scenario each application needs to cover 100 sq ft total for all the features.
Is removing turf grass and replacing with buffalo grass covered?	We suggest being careful as it takes specific place for buffalo grass to thrive.
We have invasive potato vines and English ivy. Does the grant cover this?	The English Ivy would be covered as an invasive. We would have to consider the potato vines.
Is there a minimum width on a lawn feature or rain garden?	Try to keep the Rain Garden at least 5 feet wide.
Can you do a lawn feature that leads into a rain garden?	You may propose a plant based feature that leads into a rain garden. A bioswale would be a great example.
Can I use some ornamentals in with the natives	Ornamentals are fine within the proposal, but we prefer and are looking for a high percentage of native plants.
What if I only have 30 square feet of space, between my house and garage – can I put in a rain garden if I don't want to put it right in the middle?	Based on the 10 foot rule the Rain Garden would work if put in middle. If a Rain Garden is not best solution it may be best to change to a lawn alternative.
If I want to do an above ground cistern and then also use a diverter downspout and connections to other barrels/cisterns; and a pump to help disperse the water (pump cost ~\$30) will all this be covered?	Yes, cisterns are an eligible features, however, we strongly suggest you propose a plant based feature along with it to use the water from the cistern.
Can I plant pawpaws?	Yes
Can an association apply for rainscaping grant for Rain Barrels and distribute the Rain Barrels to residents?	No, applications must be for the actual land or property the features will remain installed on.
Can the application include the free MSD Project Clear initiative to eliminate rain water from going directly to the sewer pipes?	This program can not cover just a disconnect, but it can include this in the mix of efforts – a disconnect to a rain barrel, rain garden or other covered feature. The program Sue mentioned during her presentation is taking place in the separate sewer area, where we find storm connections to the separate sanitary sewer.

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Can I also submit for my home and my community organization?	Yes, as long as the applications are signed by the person authorized to sign as the landowner.
Is this the correct program for mid-size commercial projects with a 10,000 sq feet roof?	This project is possible. It really depends on what you are looking to accomplish.
May our feature cross a public alley?	No, features may not cross the property boundary.
Can “ lawn alternatives” be approved to replace existing pavement?	Yes, lawn alternatives may replace existing pavement. Be as descriptive as possible in plans.
Are vegetable gardens eligible?	No, vegetable gardens are not eligible features for the program.
Can city strips (tree lawn) be turned into rain gardens?	Yes they can and there are examples in the community. Although, we would recommend making other areas the priority, as strip management can be more difficult areas to plant. In addition, municipalities often have jurisdiction over this space. You may need a permit from the municipality.
Along with 10 feet from structures, do plantings also need to be 10 feet from alleys, dumpsters, etc.?	A buffer is recommended anywhere it is possible. We do realize that there are some space limitations and rain gardens are the only feature with a mandatory buffer.
May I install features on half of backyard and leave the rest as lawn? Acceptable?	Yes, this is acceptable as long as you meet the 100 square foot requirement.
If a neighborhood association owns common property, can they get a grant to do work on that area?	Yes, this would be an institutional project. As long as they have an association board of trustees and they sign the application(s), then the common areas will be fine.
May I incorporate a retaining wall into a feature?	As long as the retaining wall is solely for purpose of building the feature it would be acceptable. However, it may reduce cost effectiveness.

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<b>Technical Questions</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Are plants seasonal?	This is dependent on your plant selection.
Are gutters a requirement for bioswales, rain gardens and rainwater harvesting?	Gutters are not a requirement for plant based features such as bioswales and rain gardens. But non- plant based features, such as rain barrels typically get the water from the gutters and downspouts.
How can I find out my soil type?	Finding your soil type is not necessary. Conduct a percolation test for drainage. If you want to know your soil type, the University of Missouri Extension does testing for a small fee: <a href="http://extension.missouri.edu/stlouis/documents/SoilTestFlyer2014.pdf">http://extension.missouri.edu/stlouis/documents/SoilTestFlyer2014.pdf</a> .
Would rainscaping be more effective on a flat surface or a slanted surface?	This really depends on the feature you prefer.
How deep should my rain garden be?	The typical basin is 4-8" inches. The deeper the garden, the more potential it has for retaining and soaking up water.
Does a Rain garden have to be 10ft from home or all structures?	Yes, a rain garden must be 10 f.t away from all structures.
You mentioned that the rain garden should be 10' from any structure. Does that include a short retaining wall that (3') is at the border of my neighbor's yard?	We recommend having a buffer zone for these areas, but this is one exception to the 10' ft rule. In this case, the rain garden does not need to be 10' ft away.
How do I clean permeable pavement (do I need any type of chemicals)?	This depends on pavement. Cleaning typically involves vacuum or suction.
Are there things that must be added on to structures on top of which we'd like to put a green roof with 6-8" of gravel?	Structural adjustments may be necessary. Green Roof proposals will require a sealed statement from an Engineer.
Rain barrel and mosquitos	Mesh fitting should be adequate enough to keep mosquitos out. Talk to contractors for additional expertise.
Any resources for directing water? French drains, etc.	At this time we do not have any resources for directing water.
I understand that the space needs to be at least 100 sq ft, but does it need to be 10ft x 10ft or can it be oddly shaped?	Oddly shaped is completely acceptable.
If installing your own rain garden, do you have suggestions on what to do with the removed dirt?	The removed dirt could be reused for the berm, or to fill other holes around the yard.
How do green roofs rank in managing stormwater	This depends on the size of and materials included in the solution.

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How much maintenance do green roofs require?	The maintenance for a Green Roof is the same as any garden, with watering in the first year depending on the type of green roof.
Are green roofs installed by landscapers or by roofers?	Green Roof contractors should be well versed in roofing and should also understand the plants utilized in their solution.
Are permeable paver types required to be approved by MSD?	MSD is not determining what permeable pavers should be proposed. Make sure you provide as much information as possible about the materials and the percolation at the site.
For residential grants, what do you consider "larger" in terms of rain barrels – do you have a minimum gallon recommendation?	The average rain barrel size is between 50-150 gallons. Size varies widely.
Is it okay to plant a rain garden around a tree?	It may be okay, but please take the tree into consideration and be sure not to jeopardize any of the existing roots. It may be best to stay away from the tree. Remember, trees have a huge capacity to soak up water.
What should they plant in the tree line between the street and sidewalk?	Please be careful and verify if the city can come in and modify those areas. Beware of safety and security issues. You may need a permit from the municipality.
What if neighbors have Bermuda grass or zoysia on their side of the fence, right next to where I want to put a feature?	It may be best to go to another location as you will have issues. It would be wise to make a 3 foot buffer zone, or put in a metal or plastic edging that you can maintain since rhizomes will go over the top.
Is historic brick considered permeable?	Most likely not.
If the rain barrel overflow goes to a rain garden does that affect desirability of small vs. large rain barrels?	The rain barrel overflow would not necessarily impact the likelihood of approval for a large or small rain barrel. Although, we do want to make sure the rain garden is getting enough water. If water does not overflow into the garden it would not be optimal if it is the garden's only source.
Dry creek beds – due to slopes all over the yard. This would prevent water to running against neighbor's foundation. (not sure what the ? is). If the question is – is it okay to install these and do they count?	It's best if it's a true bioswale – with plants.
Are there any specific rules, tips for a new construction home or lot?	Start with the <a href="http://mobot.org/rainscaping">mobot.org/rainscaping</a> page and walk through the system to determine the most effective strategies for the property.

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Where can I get a native plant list that shows if they are butterfly, bee, hummingbird and/or bat friendly?	The Audubon Society and Missouri Department of Conservation may have books and resources. Also resources and templates at: <a href="http://showmeraingardens.org/">http://showmeraingardens.org/</a>
Please give suggestions for native tree/shrubs that produce edible fruit?	Paw Paw, Persimmon, and the American Plum are all examples of edibles.
Is there a minimum distance that larger rain barrels should be from a foundation of a building?	Consult with a Contractor for larger rain barrels that could affect a foundation. Most rain barrels are installed very close to homes and structures. Make sure elevated barrels are anchored so they cannot fall over and cause injury.
For Rain barrels, is there an automatic switch on the gutter to change it back to sewer if overflows?	Talk to rainwater harvesting contractors to be sure. We know of manual switches but are unaware of automatic switches.
I have a steep slope front garden, vegetated. Could I augment aging railway ties with compost filter socks? Is this a feasible DIY job for a homeowner?	This could help to slow down the velocity of the water, although we do not permit landscaping of pre-existing features.

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<b>Miscellaneous Questions</b>	
<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
Does MSD have Rain Barrels & If so what is the cost?	No, MSD does not sell rain barrels.
Will there be monitoring/data collection on these projects?	We do not intend to put monitoring equipment at the small grant sites. Minor data will be collected on the proposals, completions, and confirmed projects.
Are the combined sewers sending raw sewage into rivers during heavy rains?	The Combined Sewer Overflows (CSO's) are locations where sewage and rainwater discharge to the river, during large rain events, instead of backing up into basements or causing street flooding. This is part of the water quality issues MSD is addressing through MSD Project Clear.
What is the location of The Ville rainscape project?	It is on North Sarah Street near Cote Brilliante.
It seems like the possible development of the Northside will really affect this project, especially in the case of the NGA (National Geospatial Intelligence Agency) as it will replace a lot of green space with concrete and buildings.	All new developments must meet MSD's stormwater requirements. Any federal building must also adhere to very strict stormwater requirements from the Federal Government.
Are there any plans for native plant or prairie restoration projects in store for Tower Grove Park?	At this time we are unaware of any Native Plant or Prairie Restoration Projects in Tower Grove Park. It is not under the jurisdiction of MSD or MBG.
Comment: a few rain barrels will fill up in 5 minutes and won't protect the sewage treatment plant from overflow.	While that may be true, the hope is to continue efforts that could have a collective impact between the installations and the education from various projects in the community. Additionally, there is a wide range in Rainwater Harvesting capacity. Check with a Contractor on the right option for you. Emptying the barrels between rain events is essential to produce stormwater benefits.
When is the next round?	What will be included in MSD Project Clear's Rainscaping Program after this year will be outlined in the Pilot Program Final Report, which will be complete at the end of 2015. Check back with us in 2016 to see if and when future rounds will be held!
Are Early Action Grants still going?	No. The answer above also applies to the Early Action grants.
General Project Clear Question: Drain disposal can we drop oil?	Please do not put oil down the drain. It causes clogs in your lateral which can back up into your home, and causes clogs in the system which can cause issues for everyone!